University Grants Committee

Research Assessment Exercise 2026

General Panel Guidelines

Purpose

Further to the publication of the Framework and Guidance Notes for the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2026, which set out the objectives, principles, methodology and guidelines to universities and staff members involved in making submissions for the exercise, this document provides guidelines and instructions to the panels of the RAE 2026 in relation to the generic criteria and the procedures for the assessment of submissions. All the above-mentioned documents are available on the University Grants Committee (UGC) website at <http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/ugc/activity/research/rae/rae2026.html>.

Special Note regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The UGC understands that the COVID-19 pandemic (the pandemic) had created a challenging time for universities and their researchers and the impact falls on all the eight UGC-funded universities. As always, the UGC strives to ensure a fair approach in assessing all submissions. Taking into account the effects of the pandemic, some allowance has been made in the submission requirement in paragraph 4.5 of the Guidance Notes, and paragraph 12(a)(iii) of this General Panel Guidelines.

CONTENTS

Overview

The RAE 2026 is the seventh[1] such exercise conducted by the University Grants Committee (UGC) to assess the research quality of the UGC-funded universities in Hong Kong. A list of the eight universities involved is provided at **Appendix A**. The exercise will continue to be an expert review exercise using international benchmarks to delineate universities' areas of relative strength and provide some insight on areas and opportunities for development. It will produce quality profiles of individual units of assessment (UoAs) based on submissions made by universities. The elements of assessment and respective weightings are –

(a) research outputs – 65%;

(b) impact – 20%; and

(c) environment – 15%.

Scope of Research

2. In the context of RAE 2026, research is defined as the process leading to new knowledge, insights, methodologies, solutions and/or inventions. It may involve systematic investigation, use of existing materials, synthesis, analysis, creation of artefacts or concepts, design, performance, and/or innovation.

3. RAE 2026 maintains an inclusive view on the scope of research. The broadened meaning of scholarship as defined by the Carnegie Foundation (see Appendix A to the Guidance Notes) continues to be a guiding reference for RAE 2026, that is, the discovery of knowledge, the integration of knowledge, the application of knowledge and the sharing of knowledge through teaching are regarded as different forms of scholarship on par with each other, so that high quality research in all forms of scholarship including inter-disciplinary and collaborative research will be encouraged and assessed as equally important across a broad front.

Panels and UoAs

4. There are 13 assessment panels for the expert review of submissions, covering 41 UoAs in the RAE 2026. RAE 2026 assessment panels will be expanded by about 10% with increased participation of local members while maintaining sufficient non-local members who have fewer

[1] The first RAE was conducted in 1993.

conflict of interest to ensure that each panel would have sufficient expertise and manpower in completing the assessment in a fair and efficient manner. A complete list of panels and UoAs is at **Appendix B**. Sub-groups(s)/Sub-panel(s) under each panel may also be set up. Each UoA forms the basis of data/submissions for assessment. Each panel is chaired by a Panel Convenor who is assisted by a Deputy Convenor. Composition of each panel will include: academic members (e.g. local and non-local international scholars/experts); and lay members (e.g. local research end-users and professionals in respective fields) outside of academia who are engaged for the assessment of research impact in particular[2]. Each panel will have at least one member to be nominated as "inter-disciplinary champion" with specific role to ensure thorough and appropriate handling of any inter-disciplinary submissions (see paragraphs 39-43 below). With a view to supplementing the panel membership in the assessment of impact, arrangements will be made for panels to engage impact assessors upon request having regard to the submission intentions of universities tentatively after October 2024.

5. All panel members and impact assessors of RAE 2026 are appointed on an **ad personam** basis, and should refrain from representing the interests of their own institutions in the assessment of and deliberations on relevant submissions.

Outline of Assessment Process

6. The census date of RAE 2026 is 30 September 2025. Key dates in respect of the RAE process are as follows –

Time	Major Events
1 December 2025	Due date for universities to submit a list of all eligible academic staff and other staff-related information
15 December 2025	Due date for universities to submit: • Full version of research outputs and information required on research outputs • Information required on research impact and impact case study(ies) • Information required on research environment including university-level environment overview statement,

[2] As in RAE 2020, lay members with suitable expertise may also be involved in the assessment of research outputs and environment if invited by the panels.

Time	Major Events
	UoA-level environment overview statement and related data
January – February 2026	Panels to conduct trial assessment of sample submissions
March 2026	Panel Convenors/Deputy Convenors to assign submissions for Members' assessment
April – July/August 2026	Panel members and impact assessors to assess submissions with specialist advice from external reviewers where necessary
August – September 2026	Panels to meet and conclude assessment
November 2026	Panel Convenors/Deputy Convenors to submit Panel Feedback Reports
January 2027	The UGC to consider and approve the RAE results for announcement

Eligible Academic Staff in Each UoA

7. All academic staff who meet the criteria as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the Guidance Notes will be taken into account in the universities' results for RAE 2026. The application of the eligibility criteria is primarily an administrative matter with regard to the staff's appointment nature, job category and continuous employment period at the universities concerned. It does not involve any academic judgment on individual staff.

8. Universities are required to assign each of their eligible academic staff (including those staff on joint appointment by two or more departments in the same university) to a research area and hence the corresponding UoA as listed out at **Appendix C**. In the context of RAE 2026, the mapping of eligible staff to UoAs is for the purposes of –

(a) determining the number of submissions in respective UoAs (including output, impact and environment) (see paragraph 12 below); and

(b) determining whether assessment results in respect of research outputs at research area level are to be generated (see paragraph 72 below).

9. Submissions in respect of an eligible staff under a UoA will primarily be assessed by the subject RAE panel as shown in **Appendix B**. To

ensure that inter-disciplinary research will receive adequate attention and be evaluated by members with suitable expertise, submissions will be referred to another panel with the relevant expertise and/or external reviewers for assessment, where appropriate (see paragraphs 39-43 and 67 below). Moreover, panels may require universities to provide information on any sub-discipline(s) under a research area at **Appendix C** that each eligible academic staff and respective research output(s) belong to, so as to ensure that the research outputs are assigned to appropriate assessors possessing relevant expertise. Individual panels will specify in their Panel-specific Guidelines on Assessment Criteria and Working Methods ("Panel-specific Guidelines") on this requirement, where necessary.

10. Universities' assignment of eligible academic staff to research area and respective UoAs can be subject to re-assignment by the UGC in case of an anomaly, such as the assignment of certain staff members to a research area and UoA and yet a major part or even all of their research outputs are in the field(s) of other research area(s) or UoA(s) or RAE panel(s). If an anomalous case is suspected, the Panel Convenor of the subject RAE panel (i.e. for the research area and UoA to which the staff member is originally assigned by the university) should bring up the case via the UGC Secretariat, with the panel's observations and recommendation, as early as practicable, and in any case no later than 30 April 2026.

11. Panels' recommendations on any suspected anomalous cases will be reported to the RAE Group (RAEG) of the UGC[3] for consideration. Where appropriate, clarifications from the university concerned and/or views from other RAE panel(s) may be sought through the UGC Secretariat. Any re-assignment, once endorsed by the RAEG of the UGC, will be final and not subject to appeal. The RAE panel of the re-assigned research area and UoA will be responsible for the assessment of the relevant submissions, and the RAE results of the submissions will be logged into the re-assigned research area and UoA.

Submissions for Assessment

12. For the purpose of making a submission for assessment to a UoA, at least three eligible academic staff should be assigned to the concerned UoA. Universities will make submissions for respective elements to be assessed in accordance with the details as set out in the ensuing paragraphs –

[3] The RAEG is established under the Research Group of the UGC to advise on and oversee the planning and implementation of RAE 2026.

(a) Research Outputs
(paragraphs 5.1-5.18 of the Guidance Notes refer)

(i) each eligible academic staff should have up to four research outputs produced during the assessment period from 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2025[4] for submission in full version and with relevant data;

(ii) new researchers, namely those eligible academic staff who first took up an academic appointment (in Hong Kong or elsewhere) on or after 1 August 2021, may reduce the number of research outputs to be submitted according to the scale below –

Duration of appointment prior to the census date	**Date of appointment[5]**	**Number of outputs to be submitted**
39 to 50 months	Between 1 August 2021 and 31 July 2022 inclusive	3 or 4
27 to 38 months	Between 1 August 2022 and 31 July 2023 inclusive	2 to 4
Less than 26 months	On or after 1 August 2023	1 to 4

(iii) pursuant to paragraphs 4.5-4.6 of the Guidance Notes, special consideration/exemption may be granted by the UGC in exceptional cases if an eligible academic staff has been absent for a prolonged period or whose research output has been significantly disrupted, on a case by case basis, under the scope as set out therein. In these circumstances, universities will be exempted from submitting all or part of the required number of research outputs in respect of the eligible academic staff concerned.

(b) Research Impact
(paragraphs 7.1-7.10 of the Guidance Notes refer)

Submissions about research impact are made on a UoA basis. Each submission should include –

[4] In case of an individual output bearing multiple publication dates, the date on which it is firstly published or made publicly available, be it online or printed, should be counted. If an output was published or made publicly available online prior to printed publication, the online publication date should be counted.

[5] "Date of appointment" refers to the date the academic first took up a full-time academic appointment in Hong Kong or elsewhere in staff grades "A" to "I" in Hong Kong as defined at Appendix C of the Guidance Notes, or an appointment not below assistant professorship or equivalent outside Hong Kong.

(i) impact case study(ies) describing specific examples of impacts achieved during the assessment period by the submitting university, underpinned by research, research activity or a body of work derived from research (as equivalent to at least 2-star (2*) quality), undertaken at, or significantly supported by, the submitting university in the period from 1 January 2006 to 30 September 2025, with prescribed quantity and page limit as stipulated below –

Number of eligible academic staff (headcount) in the UoA	**Number of case study(ies) required for submission to the UoA**	**Page limit (A4 size) for each impact case study**
3 – 15	1	4
16 – 30	2	4
31 – 45	3	4
46 or more	4, plus 1 further case study per additional 40 staff (headcount)	4

(c) Environment
(paragraphs 9.1-9.10 of the Guidance Notes refer)

For each submission on research environment, universities are required to provide information and data as specified below –

(i) one university-level environment overview statement setting out the university's context and mission, strategy and resources to support research and enable impact, research culture, etc. during the assessment period, i.e. from 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2025. The prescribed maximum length of the university-level environment overview statement is set out below –

Number of eligible academic staff (headcount) in the university	**Page limit (A4 size) for each environment overview statement (including one page for attachment)**
3 – 300	6
301 – 600	7
601 – 800	8
801 or more	9

This will provide a context for the RAE panels' assessment of the UoA-level information, but will not be separately scored. In addition, a tabular breakdown of a university's eligible academic staff in each UoA by rank and years of eligible appointment at the submitting university as well as the number of new researchers will be provided to the panels by UGC for background information.

(ii) one UoA-level environment overview statement for each UoA describing the research and impact strategy(ies); research integrity, research ethics and research culture; support for research staff and students; research income, infrastructure and facilities; research collaborations, esteem and wider contributions to the discipline or research base, etc. of the administrative units containing the staff in the submitting unit of assessment during the assessment period, i.e. from 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2025. The prescribed maximum length of the UoA-level environment overview statement is set out below –

Number of eligible academic staff (headcount) in the UoA	**Page limit (A4 size) for each environment overview statement**
3 – 15	6
16 – 30	8
31 – 45	10
46 or more	13

(iii) data on staff, graduates of research postgraduate (RPg) programmes and research grants/contracts from different sources of funding etc. during the assessment period from 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2025.

Missing Part of Submission

13. Universities may submit fewer than the number of research outputs specified in paragraph 12 (a) per eligible staff / new researchers / staff granted with special consideration/exemption for RAE 2026. In such a case, the missing item(s) will be deemed as "unclassified". Similarly, in case of nil submission or submission below the respective requirement for impact and environment, the missing submission or the missing part of it will be deemed as "unclassified" and the respective panel will take this into account in the overall rating of the unit concerned.

14. As a general principle, panels' assessment will be solely based on the submissions made by the universities. Panel members and impact assessors should not take into account any personal knowledge (e.g. about other research outputs or impact cases that have not been included in the submission) for consideration and panel deliberation, as inclusion of such factor(s) could lead to unintentional bias in the assessment. To ensure that the assessment will be conducted fairly to all submissions, no additional information may be submitted by the staff members or universities unless it is requested via the UGC Secretariat. If a panel requires any further information after the submission deadline, such request will be handled through the UGC Secretariat with the universities concerned.

Basis of Evaluating Research Outputs

15. In general, all research outputs submitted to RAE 2026 for assessment must meet all the following criteria, no matter whether or not the research activities leading to the output items submitted for assessment are funded by the UGC, or the outputs were produced in or outside Hong Kong and/or whether the eligible staff concerned were employed by the submitting universities at the time of publication or production of the outputs –

(a) the output contains an element of new insights or innovation;

(b) the output and its process contribute to scholarship or transfer of knowledge, generating impact to academia or society at large; and

(c) the output is publicly accessible or effectively shared in the profession.

16. PhD dissertations or proprietary research which does not result in output that is accessible to the public and the profession are not accepted as outputs for assessment. However, output items of exhibitions and demonstrations relating to proprietary research which: (a) are accessible to the public and the profession; (b) are non-traditional output for assessment; and (c) contain enough information for evaluation, may be submitted for assessment.

17. The following cases are considered to be falling in the research outputs as defined above –

(a) any publication, patent awarded or published patent applications, artefact, etc., provided

(i) that it was published or made publicly available in other form within the assessment period; or

(ii) that it is not yet published, but officially accepted for publication (without any prior condition for its publication) within the assessment period, and supported by a letter of acceptance; or

(b) other forms of output that were published or made publicly accessible or effectively shared within the profession, 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.

Individual panels will decide, by exercising their professional judgement and having regard to the definition of research output, whether any other type of submitted item, including a review article, translation or textbook, would be accepted on the basis of the above criteria. **Respective panels will specify in their Panel-specific Guidelines examples on the forms of research outputs that are admissible and specifically relevant for the panels' assessment.**

18. In respect of each output item, the following information should be provided as specified in paragraph 5.17 of the Guidance Notes–

(a) for traditional outputs as referred to in paragraph 17 (a) above, universities are required, as specified in paragraph 5.17 (b) of the Guidance Notes, to provide the originally published or publicly made available abstract or table of content of the output in English and, if applicable, other languages[6], depending on the respective output type. **If the originally published or publicly made available abstract does not indicate** what new insights or innovation are presented in the output, **then this information should be added, *at the end of the abstract,* in not more than 100 words**;

(b) for non-traditional outputs, universities are required to provide additional information as specified in paragraph 5.17 (d) of the Guidance Notes;

[6] The English version shall prevail if there is any inconsistency or ambiguity between the English version and the version in other languages.

(c) as specified in paragraph 5.17 (e) of the Guidance Notes, **where the individual panels consider it necessary**, **a brief statement of no more than 100 words** for each output item to specify the originality and significance of the output, e.g. the amount and nature of overlaps between research outputs, the relationship between different outputs on the research questions, the new elements in a new version of a research output submitted in any previous RAE, etc., should be provided. **Individual panels will specify whether this 100-word statement is necessary in the Panel-Specific Guidelines**.

Grading Research Outputs

19. Research outputs will be assessed in terms of their originality, significance and rigour with reference to international standards. Each submitted output will be graded into one of the following categories –

Category (Abbreviation)		Standard
4 star	(4*)	world leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour
3 star	(3*)	internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour
2 star	(2*)	international standing in terms of originality, significance and rigour
1 star	(1*)	research outputs of limited originality, significance and rigour
unclassified	(u/c)	not reaching the standard of 1 star; or not regarded as research outputs in the RAE 2026; or missing item in the submission

(a) "Originality" will be understood as the extent to which the output makes an important and innovative contribution to understanding and knowledge in the field. Research outputs that demonstrate originality may do one or more of the following: produce and interpret new empirical findings or new material; propose new paradigm shift; engage with new and/or complex problems; develop innovative research methods, methodologies and analytical techniques; show imaginative and creative scope; provide new arguments and/or new forms of expression, formal innovations, interpretations and/or insights; collect and engage

with novel types of data; and/or advance theory or the analysis of doctrine, policy or practice, and new forms of expression.

(b) "Significance" will be understood as the extent to which the work has influenced, or has the capacity to influence, knowledge and scholarly thought, or the development and understanding of policy and/or practice.

(c) "Rigour" will be understood as the extent to which the work demonstrates intellectual coherence and integrity, and adopts robust and appropriate concepts, analyses, sources, theories and/or methodologies.

20. The five categorisations are broadly defined as follows –

Category	**Description**
4 star	showing evidence of, or potential for, some of the following characteristics: • agenda setting / primary or essential point of reference; • great novelty in thinking, concepts or results, or outstandingly creative; • developing or instrumental in developing new paradigms or fundamental new concepts for research; • research that is leading or at the forefront of the research area, or having major / profound influence.
3 star	falling short of the highest standard of excellence, but showing evidence of, or potential for, some of the following characteristics: • important point of reference or makes important contributions likely to have a lasting influence; • significant influence.
2 star	showing evidence of, or potential for, some of the following characteristics: • a recognised point of reference or of some influence; • provides useful or valuable knowledge / influence; • incremental advances in knowledge / thinking / practices / paradigms.
1 star	showing evidence of, or potential for, some useful contribution of minor influence.

Category	Description
unclassified	falling below the quality level of "1 star"; not meeting the definition of research used for RAE 2026; or a missing item in the submission.

21. To minimise any possible divergence in judgment with regard to the use of international standards, all panels should make evaluation with regard to the quality, rather than the publication venue of the published item, pitching at the best international norms and the standards of rigour and scholarship expected internationally in respective disciplines or sub-disciplines. Should there be divergent views on the assessment of particular submissions, such cases should be fully discussed by the panels. Panels should give due consideration to individual assessors' comments, and make a considered judgement and collective decision on the final grading.

22. Individual panels will provide further elaboration or amplification (with examples, where appropriate) of the criteria on research output as they see appropriate yet without linking to any particular quality levels, in order to avoid the risk of inconsistent interpretations of the quality levels. Efforts will be made to ensure broad comparability between disciplines through the implementation process, including implementation and calibration of guidelines and assessment standards, conduct of forum and trial assessments, etc.

23. In principle, the quality of each output will be judged on its own merits and not in terms of its publication category (e.g. a journal paper is not necessarily of higher or lower merit than a book chapter), medium or language of publication. Panels are advised to assess the substance of individual output instead of giving mechanical gradings according to the medium of publication. Panels will neither advantage nor disadvantage any form of output. They are expected to recognise that there can be quality output items in different media and should not adopt a mechanical approach during the assessment.

24. While panels are requested to study each output in detail for assessment, some panels may decide to use metrics or citation data to inform their assessment of individual items. However, while such metrics and data may serve as advisory or secondary information for reference, they will not be used in any algorithmic or deterministic way for the evaluation of research quality. Panels should be aware of the limitations of citation data, in particular their variability within as well as between disciplines, and the need to consider that some excellent work takes time to demonstrate its full achievements. Individual panels will provide specifications on the use of metrics/citation data in the Panel-specific Guidelines.

Assignment of Outputs for Assessment

25. Panel Convenors, with the assistance of Deputy Convenors where appropriate, will assign individual outputs to panel members (including their good selves) and/or external reviewers for assessment based on the match of members' expertise and caseload. Panel members will examine in detail the outputs, and put forward a recommendation with preliminary grading and comments to the panel or sub-group/sub-panel (if a panel decides to have sub-group(s)/sub-panel(s) for assessment) for a collective decision on the final grading. To ensure fairness and consistency, each research output will be assessed by at least two members[7], one of whom should be a non-local member to the extent possible. For those UoAs which are only housed at one or two submitting university(ies), each output should be assigned to at least two members, at least one of whom must be non-local, in order to ensure fair and impartial assessment. Where appropriate, lay member(s) with suitable expertise may also be invited to take part in the assessment of research outputs.

26. To ensure research outputs receive adequate attention, panels may consider setting up sub-group(s)/sub-panel(s) within their panels to evaluate such items separately and to make recommendations to the panels in plenary sessions. Each panel will decide if it would be necessary to have sub-group(s)/sub-panel(s) having regard to the nature and spread of subjects as well as caseload under its purview. If a sub-group/sub-panel is to be formed, the relevant panel would need to work out the procedures for the operation of the sub-group/sub-panel and ensure that the yardstick for assessment would be consistent between the sub-group(s)/sub-panel(s) and the panel. Alternatively, panels may refer doubtful cases to panel members or "inter-disciplinary champion" (see paragraph 39 below) with relevant expertise or external reviewers for advice, as and when necessary.

27. Panel Convenors, Deputy Convenors, panel members and external reviewers should not be assigned submissions from their affiliated university(ies), departments/units or academic staff at other universities in respect of whom they have any conflict of major interest (see paragraphs 80-88 for more details regarding declaration of interest).

28. In handling assignment of submissions which involves any declared or potential conflict of interest, the Panel Convenor may make reference to the guidelines in paragraphs 80-88 below to decide whether the submissions in question need to be re-assigned to another panel member for assessment. For cases of conflict of interest involving the Panel Convenor, the Deputy Convenor will take up the role as the Panel Convenor when the

[7] Including external reviewers, if applicable.

submissions in question are handled. If both the Panel Convenor and Deputy Convenor have declared conflict of interest of the same submission, one of the panel members should be assigned to take up the role.

Double-weighting of Research Outputs

29. Universities may request that outputs of extended scale and scope be double-weighted (i.e. be counted as two outputs) in the assessment. No single output may be counted as more than double-weighted. While universities may submit a maximum of four outputs in respect of each eligible staff member, no more than two outputs of an individual staff member should be double-weighted. For each double-weighting request, the submitting university may place a "reserve" output in the submission in respect of the concerned staff member. The university should provide justification in not more than 100 words as to why the output merits double-weighting, e.g. how the research output (e.g. in terms of its scale or scope) required research effort equivalent to that required to produce two single outputs, and indicate whether a "reserve" item is submitted for each double-weighting request.

30. Panels will first evaluate the claim for double-weighting of an output. Panels will decide whether to double-weight the output so requested in the light of the justification provided by the submitting university, the publication patterns in respective disciplines as well as the output declared to be double-weighted, before proceeding on the assessment of the quality of the output concerned. Where a panel does not accept the case for double-weighting, it will count the submitted output as a single output, and assess the corresponding "reserve" output as well. If no reserve output is submitted, the missing item will be deemed as "unclassified". There is no presumption that double-weighted outputs will be assessed at a higher quality. Assessment and grading of an output with double-weighting request will be against the same quality standards as that for single-weighted output items.

31. Journal articles, book chapters or conference papers are not normally permitted to be double-weighted, whereas outputs such as single-authored books (including monographs) may be considered without ruling out other types of outputs such as publications based on patents or non-traditional outputs. Co-authored items may in principle be identified and double-weighted by one or more of their authors, bearing in mind that the double-weighting claim should apply to the effort of the author of the submitting university. However, the rule in paragraph 5.16 of the Guidance Notes shall prevail, i.e. multiple submission of the same output in respect of two or more academics within the same university will only be counted as one output under the submitting university, while a co-authored research output submitted by different universities may be counted as one output for each of

the universities as long as the co-author of each submitting university has made a substantial contribution to the co-authored output (see paragraphs 32-34 below). Individual panels will specify their position on double-weighting requests in their Panel-specific Guidelines.

Co-authored Research Outputs

32. A co-authored (or jointly-produced) research output submitted by different universities may be accepted and counted as one output for each of the universities as long as the co-author of each submitting university has made a substantial contribution to the co-authored output. Multiple submissions of a co-authored research output in respect of two or more academics within the same university (regardless if they are from the same UoA or not) will however be counted as one output under the submitting university.

33. If a co-authored research output is submitted by a university under the name of two or more academics within the university, the university is required to flag this and specify the academic (i.e. one of the co-authors) under whose name the output is submitted for rating, so that the relevant panel will rate it once, whereas the submission of the same output under the other academic(s)'s name within the same university will be deemed as "unclassified". If a co-authored output by the same university is submitted to two or more panels, while the panels will collectively decide how to rate the concerned output as in the case of handling other inter-disciplinary research (see paragraphs 39-40 below), the rating will be logged into the submitting university once.

34. Other than the above principle, panels will consider co-authorship to be a normal element of research activity in the field and expect all named co-authors to have made a significant contribution to the research process leading to the output concerned. Panels will specify their position on co-authored research outputs, and may require information (e.g. role and contribution of individual staff member of the submitting university to a co-authored output) to support the inclusion of co-authored outputs. If a panel is not persuaded that the individual staff member has made a significant contribution to a co-authored output, it may, exceptionally, seek further verification for the inclusion of the output. If the panel is satisfied that a significant contribution to the production of a co-authored output has been made by the individual staff member of the submitting university, the panel will assess the quality of the co-authored output taking no further regard of the individual staff member's contribution. The co-authored output will be judged on its merits independent of authorship arrangements, and be counted as a single output. If the panel is not satisfied that a significant contribution

to the production of a co-authored output has been made by the staff concerned, the output will be graded as "unclassified".

Assessment of Non-traditional Outputs

35. In the case of research outputs in non-traditional form as described in paragraph 18 (b) above, the submitting university must provide additional information on (a) novelty of the work; (b) the deliverables; and (c) the dissemination method. The description required for each non-traditional output item is limited to 300 words.

36. For submissions relating to performing arts, such as drama, music composition, stage performance or a piece of creative work, including documentary film, they should include recordings which need to be made available to the panel members and external reviewers. For submission in the areas of design, buildings, multi-media, or visual arts, photographs of the originals must include dimensions and good reproduction. Panels are to specify any other additional requirement on non-traditional outputs as well as the format and method of access to such outputs in their Panel-specific Guidelines.

37. Assessment and grading methodologies of a non-traditional output should be same as that for regular research outputs. A sub-group/sub-panel with suitable membership (including members drawn from outside academia, where appropriate) may be constituted under a panel to evaluate non-traditional outputs separately. Panels may also seek specialist advice from external reviewers for assessing the outputs, where necessary.

Assessment of Non-English Outputs

38. As stressed in paragraph 5.12 of the Guidance Notes, **all output items will be assessed without regard to the medium or language of publication**. Non-English items will be indicated by the submitting universities to the panels to which they are submitted. If the panels do not have relevant expertise to assess such items, Panel Convenors will take the role to solicit at least two appropriate experts for assessing each of the non-English items as early as practicable, so that the UGC Secretariat can make necessary arrangements with the external experts to conduct the assessment. Panel Convenors will be expected to provide guidance to the external experts concerned on the panels' specific criteria and requirements.

Inter-disciplinary Research

39. Research submissions will normally be assessed by the panel that is designated for the relevant UoA as set out at **Appendix B**. While panels will be required to set out as far as possible the boundaries of what should be included/excluded in each UoA, panels recognise that certain aspects of research are naturally inter-disciplinary or span the boundaries between individual UoAs, whether within the panel or across panels. Each panel will have at least one member designated as the "inter-disciplinary champion" with the role to provide specific input and support in overseeing the assignment and assessment of inter-disciplinary submissions and in liaising with relevant panel members to ensure the submissions will receive adequate attention and be evaluated by members with suitable expertise.

40. Where a research output is inter-disciplinary in nature, the submitting university is invited to flag this and indicate the "primary field" and "secondary field" of the output for relevant panel's consideration. In the event that an output is deemed to fall into the expertise of another UoA(s) (under the same or different panel), the Panel Convenor of the subject panel, in consultation with the "inter-disciplinary champion", will make referral to other UoA(s) with the relevant expertise for assessment. The final grade of the output will be logged into the UoA to which it is submitted or re-assigned (see paragraphs 10-11 above), as appropriate.

Cross-Panel Referrals

41. In assigning research outputs to panel members for assessment, a Panel Convenor may, in consultation with the "inter-disciplinary champion" and/or Deputy Convenor, make appropriate judgment to refer any submitted outputs to another UoA within his/her panel or other panel(s), such that the outputs will be assessed by members with relevant expertise. The Panel Convenor may also consult other relevant panel member(s) in deciding such referrals of outputs which may be inter-disciplinary in nature and/or deemed to fall into the expertise of another/other UoA/panel(s).

42. Cross-panel referral may be initiated either (a) by Panel Convenors or (b) by Deputy Convenors or the "inter-disciplinary champions" or panel members with the endorsement of respective Panel Convenors. Any such referral requests, in particular those involving inter-disciplinary assessment, should be initiated as soon as practicable so as to allow sufficient time for the assessment. The Panel Convenor of the "original panel" is encouraged to communicate and discuss the cross-referred submission with the Panel Convenor of the "receiving panel" in initiating a cross-panel referral request. If the referral request is turned down by the "receiving panel", the

Panel Convenor of the "original panel" will approach the UGC Secretariat to arrange for due assessment of the submission concerned by other means.

43. Cross-panel referral can be requested for (a) assessment by another panel or (b) collective assessment by two or more panels, which are required mainly for inter-disciplinary outputs.

(a) Assessment by another panel

Under this category, if a referral request to another panel is accepted, the Panel Convenor of the "receiving panel" will assign the submission to at least two panel members[8] for assessment. Grading and comments on the referred submission given by the two panel members will be forwarded to the Panel Convenor of the "original panel". Specific criteria and methods which the "receiving panel" has used in the assessment will also be made available to the "original panel" for reference. Subject to endorsement by the Panel Convenor of the "original panel", the assessment grading given by the "receiving panel" should be accepted without modification. A panel should not make more than one cross-panel referral request for each output concurrently.

(b) Collective assessment by two or more panels

For this category, assessment of the output is intended to be conducted jointly by the "original panel" and one or more "receiving panel(s)". The "original panel" may request up to two other panels to jointly assess an output item. If such a request is accepted, the Panel Convenors of the "original panel" and "receiving panel(s)" will each assign one panel member[9] to conduct the assessment. Grading and comments given by the panel member(s) of the "receiving panel(s)" will be forwarded to the Panel Convenor of the "original panel". Specific criteria and methods that the "receiving panel(s)" have used in the assessment will also be made available to the "original panel" for reference. The ultimate assessment methodology and the decision on the final grading of the item in question should rest and remain with the "original panel".

[8] Including external reviewers, if applicable.

[9] Including external reviewers, if applicable.

Assessment of Impact and Environment

44. Universities' submissions in respect of impact and environment will be initially assessed by members either of the whole panel (save for those having a conflict of interest) or of respective sub-group(s)/sub-panel(s) before the whole panel decides on the final grading. Each impact case study should be assigned to more than two assessors, one of whom must be a lay member of the panel. While lay members are engaged for assessment of impact submissions in panels, impact assessors from non-academic sectors such as industry, research user groups, charities or the government may be engaged additionally, upon the panel's request, to take part in the assessment of impact. Panel Convenors may assign certain members/impact assessors of the panel who have conducted initial assessments of these submissions to lead the presentation of the initial assessments to facilitate the discussion at the panel meetings. Individual panels are to specify their working methods on the assessment of impact and environment in their Panel-specific Guidelines.

45. Panels assess the quality of universities' submissions based on their merits according to international standards. Submissions in respect of impact and environment should be assessed solely on their merits with no consideration given to the differences among the submitting universities/units in terms of staff size, resources, histories, and there should be no discounting/crediting factor arising from the career stage and staff profile information of individual universities/units.

Basis of Evaluating Research Impact

46. Universities will make submissions about impact of research on UoA basis and impact case study(ies) according to the generic requirements and templates as set out in paragraphs 7.7-7.10 and Appendix F of the Guidance Notes.

47. To be eligible for assessment in the RAE 2026, the impact must meet the definition and criteria as set out below –

Definition

(a) impact is defined as the demonstrable contributions, beneficial effects, valuable changes or advantages that research qualitatively brings to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life whether locally, regionally or internationally; and that are beyond academia. Impact in this context includes, but is not limited to –

(i) positive effects on, constructive changes or benefits to the activity, attitude, awareness, behaviour, capacity, opportunity, performance, policy, practice, process or understanding, of an audience, beneficiary, community, constituency, organisation or individuals; or

(ii) the reduction or prevention of harm, risk, cost or other negative effects;

(b) academic impact of research, i.e. the contribution that research brings to academic advances across and within disciplines, is valuable, but will be assessed through the outputs and/or environment elements in the exercise. As the impact element concerns impact beyond academia, the scope of impact as a distinct element –

(i) excludes impacts on research or the advancement of academic knowledge within the higher education sector;

(ii) excludes impacts on students, teaching or other activities within the submitting university; and

(iii) includes other impacts on teaching or students where they extend significantly beyond the submitting university, or on other fields (e.g. impact of text mining technologies in linguistics or computer science research in the medical or commercial field);

Criteria

(a) the impact must have been enabled or generated or substantially supported by the submitting university during the assessment period from 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2025, and may occur in any geographical location whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally;

(b) the impact must be underpinned by research undertaken at, or significantly supported by, the submitting university during the period from 1 January 2006 to 30 September 2025, i.e. the underpinning research made a distinct and material contribution to the impact taking/taken place, such that the impact would not

have occurred or would have been significantly reduced without the contribution of that research; and

(c) while impact is not in any way meant to be a reflection of the quality of the initial research outputs, the quality of underpinning research should be equivalent to at least attaining 2 star (2*), i.e. of international standing. Panels will specify in their Panel-specific Guidelines the references that a submitting unit is required to provide as evidence of the quality of underpinning research. Based on the information submitted, the panel will use its expert judgement to determine in how much detail the panel needs to review the underpinning research in order to assure that the quality threshold has been met. Provided that the panel is satisfied that the quality threshold has been met, the quality of the underpinning research will not be taken into consideration as part of the assessment of the claimed impact. Panels will also specify their approach to evaluating the quality of underpinning research in their Panel-specific Guidelines.

48. While impacts could be at different stages of development, the impacts to be assessed should occur in the assessment period. This may include, for example, impacts at an early stage, or impacts that may have been submitted in RAE 2020, started prior to 1 October 2019 but have new or expanding impact enabled during the assessment period from 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2025. For the latter, i.e. continuing impact case studies, clear evidence of the manner and extent to which the development of the impact goes distinctly beyond that presented in the previously submitted impact case study in RAE 2020 should be provided.

49. Impacts underpinned by research of non-eligible academic staff (e.g. part-time researchers and staff appointed after 1 September 2023) may be selected by universities in the submission. It does not matter if the researchers concerned are not eligible academic staff of the submitting university or no longer employed by the university.

Impact Case Study(ies)

50. Universities are required to submit case study(ies) to support the impact claims. The impact case study(ies) should be based on the strongest example(s) available to present the impacts that are generated or substantially supported by the submitting unit. While impact may take place in a wide variety of areas and in different forms across disciplines, panels will provide in the Panel-specific Guidelines examples or a guide, as appropriate, on the

range of potential impacts that may be eligible as case study(ies). The examples provided should not be expected to be exhaustive, or exclusive, and should not be ranked in anyway.

51. In each impact case study, the submitting unit must include evidence appropriate to the types of impact that supports the claims. The submission of an impact case study should contain –

(a) summary of impact: a brief summary of the impact, including who and what has benefitted, been influenced or acted upon;

(b) underpinning research: descriptions of the knowledge, insights, methodologies, solutions and/or inventions brought about by research that underpinned the impact, an outline of the underpinning research, when it was undertaken and the key researchers concerned. For continuing impact case studies as described in paragraph 7.5 of the Guidance Notes and paragraph 48 above, clear evidence of the manner and extent to which the development of the impact goes distinctly beyond that presented in the previously submitted impact case study in RAE 2020 should be provided;

(c) references to the research: references to key outputs from the underpinning research, including name of author(s), title of output, year and location of publication, and evidence of the quality of the research, as requested by respective panels in their Panel-specific Guidelines;

(d) details of the impact: a detailed narrative explaining how the research led to or underpinned the impact, the beneficiaries and the nature of the impact, when the impact occurs/occurred, evidence (e.g. indicators) illustrating the extent of the impact, the relationship between the case study and how it has/had sustained further innovation and impact, and how the submitting unit made contributions to the impact in the assessment period from 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2025; and

(e) sources to corroborate the impact: sources external to the submitting university that could provide corroboration to support the statements and claims in the impact case study, and details on how the sources can be accessed for audit purposes.

52. The focus of assessment is the impact achieved by the submitting unit, not the impact of individuals or individual research outputs, although they may contribute to the evidence of the submitting unit's impact. The assessment should solely be based on the four-page impact case studies, rather than the content and quality of other supplementary information, such as any video links that may be included in the case study submission, or any supplementary information as required by the Panels during the assessment in accordance with paragraph 14. Panels will consider the evidence of the quality of individual research underpinning the impact cases (with research being understood as broadly as defined in paragraphs 2-3 above) and where necessary will review the outputs concerned to ensure that the quality of the research is of at least 2 star (2*), i.e. of international standing. A case study will be regarded as not eligible and deemed as "unclassified" if the respective panel considers that the underpinning research outputs are not up to the required standard. Individual panels will specify the kinds of information and evidence expected in the impact submissions.

Grading Research Impacts

53. Research impacts will be assessed in terms of their reach and significance, regardless of the geographic location in which they occurred. The generic assessment criteria of "reach and significance" will be understood as –

(a) "reach" is the extent and/or diversity of the beneficiaries of the impact, as relevant to the nature of the impact. Reach will be assessed in terms of the extent to which the potential constituencies, number or groups of beneficiaries have been reached; it will not be assessed in purely geographic terms, nor in terms of absolute numbers of beneficiaries. The criteria will be applied wherever the impact occurred, regardless of geography or location, and whether in Hong Kong or elsewhere; whereas

(b) "significance" is the degree to which the impact has enabled, enriched, influenced, informed or changed the performance, policies, practices, products, services, understanding, awareness or wellbeing of the beneficiaries.

54. Panels will assess the reach and significance of impacts on the economy, society and/or culture that were underpinned by research conducted in, or significantly supported by, the submitting unit/university, as well as the submitting unit's approach to enabling impact from its research. In assessing the impact described within a case study, the panel will form an overall view

about its reach and significance taken as a whole, rather than assessing reach and significance separately.

55. Taking the case study(ies) into account, panels will exercise their expert judgement and give a collective rating based on the merits of each impact submission. A panel may choose to give a profile rating using the following five categories as appropriate –

Category (Abbreviation)		Standard
4 star	(4*)	outstanding impacts in terms of their reach and significance
3 star	(3*)	considerable impacts in terms of their reach and significance
2 star	(2*)	some impacts in terms of their reach and significance
1 star	(1*)	limited impacts in terms of their reach and significance
unclassified	(u/c)	the impact is of either no reach or no significance; or the impact was not eligible; or the impact was not underpinned by research produced by the submitting unit; or nil submission

56. 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. Submissions will be assessed having regard to disciplinary differences. Panels will provide further elaboration on the assessment criteria in respective disciplines under their ambit, as well as any further clarification that they may wish to give on the categories of quality levels for the assessment of impact.

Basis of Evaluating Research Environment

57. Universities will make submissions about research environment relating to the assessment period from 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2025. A research environment submission includes one University-level Environment Overview Statement across the same university, and one UoA-level Environment Overview Statement and environment data for each UoA according to the generic requirements and templates as set out in paragraphs 9.6-9.9 and Appendices G and H of the Guidance Notes.

58. For the purpose of RAE 2026, research environment refers to the strategy, resources (e.g. grants obtained, people) and infrastructure that support research giving rise to collaborations, esteem and contributions to the discipline or research base. Particularly, a UoA-level environment submission may relate to a single coherent faculty, and equally to multiple departments, where the scale may vary or research focus be inter-disciplinary. Universities may as well depict the commonalities and dynamics among faculties and departments within the submitting unit, and show how a good research environment is provided in the submission. As scale alone does not inevitably entail a good environment, universities will have to show what they do to ensure a good environment regardless of their scale (whether large or small).

University-level Environment Overview Statement

59. The university-level environment overview statement should include –

(a) context and mission: an overview describing the submitting university's size, structure, mission and stage of development in view of its role statement so as to provide a context for the submission;

(b) research policy and strategy: describing the institutional strategy for research (including research strengths, research focus areas, distribution of research activities across research areas), enabling impact (including stakeholder engagement and knowledge transfer), developing a sustainable research culture (including open access and open data policies, approach to contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals, how interdisciplinary and collaborative research has been supported, how are research integrity and research ethics embedded in the institution), and how the overall institutional policy and strategy contribute to government priorities;

(c) people: institutional staffing strategy, staff development and training (e.g. leave policies, equality and diversity agenda, measures/facilities for early career researchers/junior scholars/research students, etc.), and development, training and supervision of research students;

(d) research funding sources: breakdown by funding source as a percentage total of overall funding; and university-level resources,

infrastructure, and facilities available to support research and impact.

Reference should be made to paragraphs 9.5 and 9.6 as set out in in Guidance Notes and paragraphs 57 and 58 above in completing the other parts of the statement. The university is also required to attach its role statement as drawn up with UGC.

Unit-of-Assessment-level Environment Overview Statement

60. The UoA-level environment overview statement should include –

(a) UoA context and structure: describing the organisation and structure of the submitting unit, so as to provide a context for the submission;

(b) research and impact strategy: in the context of the university's policies as stipulated in the University-level Environment Overview Statement, providing evidence about the achievement of strategic aims for research and impact during the assessment period, current/future strategic aims and goals for research and impact, how these relate to the structure of the unit, and how they will be taken forward;

(c) research integrity and research ethics: highlighting specific examples of success and challenge with the UoA;

(d) people: providing evidence about staffing strategy, staff development and training within the submitting unit (e.g. leave policies, equality and diversity agenda, measures for junior scholars, etc.), as well as evidence of the support measures/facilities for the development, training and supervision of research students;

(e) income (e.g. grants received), infrastructure and facilities: covering research income and grants obtained/received, including funds from the university central allocation and external funding bodies, be they competitive or non-competitive grants and donations; facilities (e.g. accommodation and equipment) for carrying out research;

(f) collaborations: including local or international research collaborations, with individual academics, industry and other

institutions; collaborative arrangements, partnerships, networks and joint research projects, intra-university or inter-disciplinary research collaborations may be included;

(g) esteem: covering recognition conferred by a body outside the university; esteem should demonstrate the distinguished achievement of individual researchers, groups or the unit as a whole; it may include, but is not limited to, research-based awards, honours, or prizes;

(h) contribution to the discipline or research base: including positive contribution within respective discipline(s) and profession of the submitting unit, as well as wider contribution to the discipline(s) and research base.

Reference should be made to paragraphs 9.5 and 9.6 as set out in Guidance Notes and paragraphs 57 and 58 above in completing the other parts of the statement.

Environment Data

61. The environment data in conjunction with the UoA-level Environment Overview Statement should cover: (i) staff employed by the university proper, be they wholly funded or partially funded by General Funds[10] or wholly self-financed, by staff category; (ii) graduates of research postgraduate programmes, be they UGC-funded or non-UGC-funded; and (iii) on-going research grants/contracts, by source of funding and by role of university in terms of the funding received, in each of the years from 2019/20 to 2024/25 in line with the relevant cut-off dates of the UGC Common Data Collection Format (CDCF). Where a grant/contract is held across more than one unit/institution, it should be divided between submissions in different units/universities according to the way the grant/contract income has been used. Similarly, research projects with multiple sources of funding should have the grant income reported under respective funding source categories.

62. Respective panels will further specify in their Panel-specific Guidelines the kinds of information, evidence and indicators that the panels are looking for in the environment submissions.

[10] General Funds comprise the total income received by the university, except that from specific funds (which include income received for specific or designated purposes, examples of which are earmarked grants and Research Grants Council (RGC) research grants). General Funds include income from the UGC block grant, tuition fees, interest and investment income, donations for general purpose, etc.

Grading Research Environments

63. Research environment will be assessed in terms of vitality and sustainability, including its contribution to the vitality and sustainability of the wider discipline or research base. The generic assessment criteria of "vitality and sustainability" will be understood as –

(a) "vitality" refers to the extent to which a unit supports a thriving and inclusive research culture for all staff and research students, that is based on a clearly articulated strategy for research and enabling its impact, is engaged with the local and international research and user communities and is able to attract excellent postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers; and

(b) "sustainability" refers to the extent to which the research environment ensures the future health, diversity, wellbeing and wider contribution of the unit and the discipline(s), including investment in people and in infrastructure.

64. Panels will consider the environment data within the context of the information provided in both University-level and UoA-level Environment Overview Statements, and within the context of the disciplines concerned. Panels will decide whether to assess each UoA-level submission as a whole, or to attach weighting to individual aspects within the environment element (e.g. research and impact strategy, people, esteem, etc.) in their assessment. Panels will specify their working methods and provide details of the weighting, if applicable, in their Panel-specific Guidelines.

65. Irrespective of whether the assessment is made on the environment submission as a whole or by aggregating assessments of individual aspects within the environment element, panels will give a profile rating using one or more of the following five categories as appropriate. The rating will be based on the following five categories –

Category (Abbreviation)		Standard
4 star	(4*)	an environment that is conducive to producing research of world-leading quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability
3 star	(3*)	an environment that is conducive to producing research of internationally excellent quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability

Category (Abbreviation)		Standard
2 star	(2*)	an environment that is conducive to producing research of internationally recognised quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability
1 star	(1*)	an environment that is conducive to producing research of limited quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability
unclassified	(u/c)	an environment that is not conducive to producing research of 1 star quality; or nil submission

66. 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. Views on appropriate sizes and organisational structures of research environments will be for specific panels to consider. As a general principle, though, evidence of attention to achieving a suitable level of diversity in the make-up of a research environment will be regarded positively. Panels will provide further elaboration on the assessment criteria as well as any further clarification that they may wish to give on the categories of quality levels for the assessment of environment. Where appropriate, lay member(s) with suitable expertise may be invited to take part in the assessment of research environment.

External Advice

67. Panels may seek expert advice from external reviewers in exceptional circumstances when they consider it will facilitate quality assessment of the submissions including outputs and impact case studies. Referral to external reviewers generally applies to submissions which the panels do not have adequate expertise for assessment, including when outputs are written in a language outside panel members' expertise. Normally, an output or an impact case study may be referred to not more than two external reviewers for specialist advice. External reviewers should not be referred for assessing submissions from their affiliated university(ies), departments/units or academic staff at other universities in respect of whom they have any conflict of major interest (see paragraphs 80-88 below for guidelines on conflict of interest). Panel members may raise the requests for external advice with the Panel Convenor. Panel members may recommend external reviewers from their knowledge. The UGC Secretariat also maintains a database of individuals who were nominated for external reviews and research assessment. Upon the Panel Convenor's endorsement, the UGC Secretariat will follow up on such requests.

Assessment Interface

68. Submissions for RAE 2026 will be processed through an electronic system with allowance for hardcopy submission for cases like non-traditional outputs or printed works which cannot be fully submitted electronically. Data on research outputs (e.g. title, publication date, etc.) and supplementary information (if applicable), together with overview statements, impact case studies and environment data are expected to be available for assessment through an online interface. Panel members, impact assessors and external reviewers will be given access to full version of the research outputs or underpinning research referenced in particular impact case studies, either in electronic mode via links to universities' repositories or in hardcopy mode via separate dispatch arrangements. Panel members will be invited to give a preliminary grading and remark/comment through the online interface on individual research outputs and other submissions as assigned to them for assessment. Operational guidance on conducting assessment through the online interface will be provided to panel members and other users separately for reference.

Handling of Assessment Results

69. The primary purpose of RAE 2026 is to assess the research performance of UGC-funded universities by UoA; it is not intended to evaluate individual staff. Based on the preliminary grading and comments given by panel members, each panel will meet to deliberate and make a collective decision on the final grading of individual submissions. Panels will produce assessment results in the form of quality profiles for each university's submission by UoA.

70. Quality profiles of a university's submission to a UoA in respect of research outputs, impact and environment will be combined to form an overall quality profile of the university's performance in that UoA. Overall quality profiles and sub-profiles of individual elements of assessment will be published by UoA and by panel at both individual university level and sector-wide level. The same set of results of RAE 2026 mentioned above will be released to universities and the public. An illustration on building a quality profile by UoA is at **Appendix D**.

71. Moreover, research output data (except for the 100-word statement as specified in paragraph 18 above), impact submissions and environment submissions (including university-level and UoA-level environment statements as well as environment data) will be published by unit of assessment and by university for public information after the release of RAE results.

72. In addition to the published results, each university will receive their own RAE results in respect of research outputs at research area level under confidential cover (except for those research area(s) consisting of fewer than three eligible staff of the university, or where, in providing the RAE results, the research output results of any of the individual eligible staff of the university may be revealed indirectly).

Panel Feedback Report

73. Panels will submit reports to the UGC with feedback from the assessment process. Panel Convenor on behalf of the whole panel will submit the panel feedback report, which is expected to cover the following major aspects of the exercise –

(a) approach and methodology;

(b) composition and meetings of the panel;

(c) an overview on the research quality in areas under the panel's purview;

(d) feedback on individual universities' submissions in each UoA;

(e) impressionistic international comparison by non-local panel members;

(f) difficulties encountered and recommendations for future exercise;

(g) other comments or suggestions; and

(h) summary on sector-wide comments of the panels.

Description of the above items in a recommended format of the panel feedback report is at **Appendix E**. Guidelines for non-local panel members in offering an impressionistic international comparison are at **Appendix F**. The panel feedback reports will be due for submission to the UGC by November 2026. Sector-wide comments by each of the panels will be published.

Anonymity and Information Security

74. As the purpose of RAE 2026 is to assess the research quality of universities by UoA, not individual staff, results of RAE 2026 will be published without disclosing the identities of individual academic staff

members. Hence, the principle of anonymity should be strictly applied throughout the assessment process. Records to be kept in respect of the panels' deliberation and grading of submissions should make no reference to the names or identities of any individual academic staff concerned.

75. All members involved in RAE 2026 including Panel Convenors, Deputy Convenors, panel members, impact assessors, external reviewers and the panel secretariat are bound by information security agreement with the UGC. Communications concerning the business of RAE 2026 including documentary information, deliberations at panel meetings, discussions and grading of submissions should be kept **in confidence and restricted** for use by members solely in their respective capacities in the RAE 2026. No part of such communications, documentary information and panels' deliberations should be disclosed or divulged to any third party during or after the exercise, unless the information or document has been passed for publication or public disclosure by the UGC.

76. In addition, working papers and related information kept by Panel Convenors, Deputy Convenors, panel members, impact assessors and external reviewers should be destroyed or returned to the UGC Secretariat as soon as they are no longer needed for carrying out their function or on the request of the UGC Secretariat, whichever may be sooner. This provision applies equally to paper copies or those stored in electronic or other non-paper formats. All members involved in the RAE should take every reasonable step to ensure that other people cannot have access to the information, whether held in paper or electronic copy. In particular, it is noted that computer systems and specifically e-mails are not necessarily secure and appropriate caution should be exercised when using them.

77. A university's submission may contain material which is: patented or patentable / subject to other intellectual property rights / commercially sensitive, or which in the interests of the university and/or its researchers is required to be given a restricted circulation. Universities make submissions to RAE 2026 on the understanding that their position in these regards will not be prejudiced. Panel Convenors, Deputy Convenors, panel members, impact assessors and external reviewers have to respect and honour that understanding and act accordingly. They are reminded of the risk of "prior disclosure" in the case of potentially patentable material, and the paramount need to safeguard information security of such materials.

78. To this end, the information that will be released on individual universities' submissions should be limited to the following –

(a) the overall assessment results: these include the overall quality profiles and sub-profiles in respect of outputs, impact and environment (see paragraph 70 above) which will be announced by the UGC to universities and the public and will be accessible in the public domain;

(b) results in respect of outputs at research area level: these results (save for those research area(s) consisting of fewer than three eligible staff of the university, or where, in providing the RAE results, the research output results of any of the individual eligible staff of the university may be revealed indirectly) will be issued to the relevant university(ies) in strict confidence and not made public; and

(c) written feedback on individual universities' submissions: the feedback drawn from the panel feedback reports will be provided to the relevant university(ies) in strict confidence and not made public.

79. All Panel Convenors, Deputy Convenors, panel members and impact assessors are bound by the above responsibility during and after their service for RAE 2026 with the UGC. If there is any doubt about anonymity and information security arrangements, members are advised to seek assistance from the UGC Secretariat.

Declaration of Interest

80. To ensure the fairness and impartiality of the RAE, all members involved in RAE 2026 including Panel Convenors, Deputy Convenors, panel members, impact assessors and external reviewers are requested to declare any conflict of interests within 30 days of appointment and thereafter upon any changes in circumstances that would lead to any real or perceived conflict of interests in the course of assessment. It will be incumbent upon them to declare interests whenever there is a possibility of a conflict or of a perceived conflict, on a case by case basis, erring on the side of declaring interests even if the possibility that they will be material is remote. If they have any affiliation with the submitting universities, departments/units, academic staff or individual submissions, they should make the declaration to the respective Panel Convenors through the UGC Secretariat. In the case of the Panel Convenors, they should make their declaration to the Convenor of the RAEG through the UGC Secretariat. All members share the responsibility for guarding against influence of personal interests or potential biases, including conscious or unconscious biases based on gender, ethnicity, or institutional affiliation. In handling a declaration of conflict of interests case, depending

on whether the interest involved is a major or minor one, the procedures set out in paragraphs 81-88 below should be followed.

81. The following situations which take effect on or after 1 October 2019 are considered **major** interests for the purpose of RAE 2026 –

(a) currently employed by one of the eight UGC-funded universities;

(b) having been an employee of one of the eight UGC-funded universities;

(c) engaging / having been engaged in substantial teaching, research, advisory, consultancy, academic or research review at one of the eight UGC-funded universities (other than those mentioned in paragraph 84 below which are considered minor interests);

(d) holding / having held adjunct, honorary or visiting position(s) at one of the UGC-funded universities;

(e) involving / having involved in the authorship or co-authorship of project(s), publication(s) or patent(s) that is/are submitted to RAE 2026; and

(f) any other interest(s) ruled by a Panel Convenor / the Convenor of RAEG to be treated as a major interest.

82. Under situations (a) and (b) in paragraph 81 above, individual members should not take part in the assignment, assessment, comment and final grading of any submissions from the concerned university(ies). The members concerned (be they Panel Convenors, Deputy Convenors or panel members) must be excused from panel deliberation when any submissions from the university(ies) concerned are being discussed.

83. Under situations (c) to (f) in paragraph 81 above, the Panel Convenor shall decide on whether the members concerned should refrain from the assessment, comment and final grading of all submissions from the subject university(ies) or particular submissions in relation to particular UoA(s) or individual staff of the subject university(ies) having regard to the circumstances of individual cases. In the case of the Panel Convenor having a major conflict of interest under situations (c) to (f) in paragraph 81 above, the decision shall rest with the Convenor of the RAEG on whether the Panel Convenor is required to withdraw from discussions of all or particular submissions from the subject university(ies) where circumstances warrant.

84. Any interest other than those mentioned above, that could lead a reasonable observer to doubt the impartiality of a member's assessment will be treated as a **minor** conflict of interest for RAE 2026. Examples of these include the following situations which take place on or after 1 October 2019 –

(a) currently supervising or co-supervising student(s) at one of the eight UGC-funded universities;

(b) supervised / advised or being supervised / advised by any staff member(s) who is / are involved in a submission;

(c) serving / having served as co-investigator, collaborator, co-holder of a grant with one of the eight UGC-funded universities;

(d) serving / having served on the editorial board of a publication (e.g. academic journal) published by a submitting department / unit at one of the UGC-funded universities;

(e) serving / having served as an external examiner of a postgraduate thesis or an undergraduate programme for a submitting department / unit at one of the UGC-funded universities;

(f) co-organising / co-organised academic events or programmes (e.g. conference, summer class) with a submitting department / unit / staff member(s) at one of the UGC-funded universities;

(g) holding co-authored project(s) / co-authored publication(s) (e.g. book or papers) or patent(s) with any submitting staff that is/are not submitted for RAE 2026;

(h) having close personal relationship (e.g. partner, spouse, immediate family member, long-term close friend) or enmity with any submitting staff;

(i) being employed by a "user" organisation that is the focus of an impact case study;

(j) acting as an external advisor to a submitting unit/university on their research or RAE strategy or having pre-reviewed a submission; and

(k) serving / having served as an external assessor on staff / personnel matters or a member of an appointment or promotion committee for one of the eight UGC-funded universities.

85. It shall be for the Panel Convenor to decide what effect the existence of a minor interest shall have on a member's participation in the assessment. Depending on the nature of the minor interest, the Panel Convenor may decide that –

(a) the minor interest should be noted by the panel, but it should not affect the member's participation in the assessment of the submissions;

(b) the member concerned should refrain from assessing the particular submission(s) or the submission(s) from the relevant university(ies) in relation to the particular UoA(s) that is/are affected by the minor interest; or

(c) the minor interest or a group of minor interests in relation to a UGC-funded university declared by a member shall be treated as a major interest, and the member concerned should not take part in the assessment, comment and final grading of all submissions from the relevant university.

86. In the case of the Panel Convenor having conflict of interest, the decision on what effect a declared interest would have upon his/her role in the assignment, assessment and final grading of submissions shall rest with the Convenor of the RAEG. Relevant provision on handling conflict of interest in paragraph 28 will apply.

87. A register of declared interests of members involved in RAE 2026 will be maintained by the UGC Secretariat, and the declaration forms should be made available for inspection on request by any member of the public. Individual members should update the Secretariat when there is any change in their declared interests as soon as practicable within 21 days of such change during their appointment and until the completion of the exercise. A summary of declared conflicts of interests and potential conflicts of interest will be made known to and considered by the Panel Convenors and Deputy Convenors in the panel formation phase and throughout the assessment process, in particular before they assign submissions for assessment. Panel members are advised to declare any conflict or potential conflict of interest before the preliminary assessment and panel meetings or discussions take place.

88. The situations described above and the examples cited are by no means exhaustive. It is not possible to cover every situation where a conflict of interest may arise. In circumstances not specifically covered, members should seek advice from the UGC Secretariat if in doubt.

Timeline in Developing Panel-Specific Guidelines

89. Individual panels will exercise collective professional judgments and develop working methods and assessment criteria for their panels, within the overall framework for assessment. An indicative timetable is set out below –

Time	Major Events
February to April 2024	• Initial consultation on the draft General Panel Guidelines and template for Panel-specific Guidelines
May to June 2024	• Refinement of the draft General Panel Guidelines in consultation with RAE panels, as appropriate • Commencement of drafting Panel-specific Guidelines by respective RAE panels
July to August 2024	• Consultation forum on RAE assessment criteria cum meetings of RAE panels for setting respective Panel-specific Guidelines • Finalisation of the General Panel Guidelines and Panel-specific Guidelines
September 2024	• Announcement of the General Panel Guidelines and Panel-Specific Guidelines

90. Relevant stakeholders including Panel Convenors, Deputy Convenors and universities will be involved in the initial consultation on the draft General Panel Guidelines and template for Panel-specific Guidelines. Feedback from universities on the guidelines will be conveyed to panels to facilitate their consideration on the relevant issues during the assessment process. Panel Convenors and Deputy Convenors of all 13 RAE panels as well as local members of the panels will be invited to participate in a consultation forum and attend plenary meetings and group sessions tentatively scheduled in July 2024. The plenary meetings are intended to let the Panel Convenors and Deputy Convenors converge on the generic criteria and principles to be adopted across panels in the assessment process, while the consultation forum will aim to extend dialogue with stakeholders from the

eight UGC-funded universities on the assessment criteria of RAE 2026. Meetings of Panel Convenors and Deputy Convenors with panel members will discuss discipline specific criteria.

Trial Assessment

91. To ensure consistent adherence to the published guidelines and assessment criteria within and across panels, a trial assessment involving all 13 RAE panels will be conducted around January/February 2026 after the submission phase. Panel Convenors and Deputy Convenors in cognate groups will be invited to formulate the guidelines and arrangements for the trial assessment, which will provide a platform for panel members to conduct trial assessment, with a view to aligning the standards and achieving a common understanding of the application of the assessment criteria and working methods.

92. Making reference to the practice in previous RAEs, panels will be invited to decide the sample size and the source of sample for trial assessment. It is proposed that the trial assessment covers a sample of research outputs from different academic staff members submitted to a panel as well as a sample of impact and environment submissions. The trial assessment should, as far as possible, include a mix of sample submissions from the eight UGC-funded universities that may or may not come from the same UoA.

93. It is proposed that, in the trial assessment, the sample submissions will be trial assessed by all members of a panel. Panel members are encouraged to discuss with fellow members on the trial assessment and share among each other important observations, with which the Panel Convenors and Deputy Convenors may consider whether there is a need to modify, fine-tune or further elaborate the panel-specific criteria and working methods of the panel, so as to ensure fairness and consistency in the assessment.

Publication and Further Information

94. For transparency of RAE 2026, these general guidelines will be published for information. Where appropriate, the UGC Secretariat will provide supplementary information to assist panels in devising the assessment criteria and working methods throughout the assessment process.

* * * * * * * * * * *

UGC Secretariat
XXX 2024

Appendix A

List of UGC-funded Universities

(in alphabetical order)

Name in Full	Abbreviation
City University of Hong Kong	CityU
Hong Kong Baptist University	HKBU
Lingnan University	LU
The Chinese University of Hong Kong	CUHK
The Education University of Hong Kong	EdUHK
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	PolyU
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	HKUST
The University of Hong Kong	HKU

Appendix B

Research Assessment Exercise 2026
List of Panels and Units of Assessment

Panel (code & name)	Unit of Assessment (code & name)
1 Biology	1 biological sciences (incl. environmental biology, biotechnology, agriculture & food science, veterinary studies)
	2 pre-clinical studies
2 Health Sciences	3 clinical medicine
	4 clinical dentistry
	5 pharmacy, nursing, optometry, rehabilitation sciences and other health care professions
	6 Chinese medicine
3 Physical Sciences	7 physics & astronomy
	8 materials science and materials technology
	9 chemistry
	10 earth sciences (incl. oceanography, meteorology) and other physical sciences (incl. environmental science)
	11 mathematics and statistics
4 Electrical & Electronic Engineering	12 electrical & electronic engineering
5 Computer Science / Information Technology	13 computer studies/science (incl. information technology)
6 Engineering	14 mechanical engineering, production engineering (incl. manufacturing & industrial engineering), textile technology and aerospace engineering
	15 chemical engineering, biomedical engineering, other technologies (incl. environmental engineering & nautical studies) and marine engineering
7 Built Environment	16 civil engineering (incl. construction engineering & management) and building technology
	17 architecture
	18 planning and surveying (land, geo-spatial and other)

Panel (code & name)	Unit of Assessment (code & name)
8 Law	19 law
9 Business & Economics	20 accountancy
	21 economics and finance
	22 business
	23 hotel management & tourism
10 Social Sciences	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
11 Humanities	30 Chinese language & literature
	31 English language & literature
	32 translation
	33 linguistics & language studies
	34 history
	35 area studies (e.g. Japanese studies, European studies, etc.), cultural studies and other arts/humanities
	36 philosophy
	37 religious studies
12 Creative Arts, Performing Arts & Design	38 visual arts, design, creative media, other creative arts and creative writing
	39 music and performing arts
13 Education	40 physical education, sport, recreation & physical activities
	41 education (incl. curriculum & instruction, education administration & policy and other education)

Appendix C

Mapping of Units of Assessment and Respective Research Areas

Unit of Assessment in RAE 2026 (code & name)		Research Area (code & name)	
1	biological sciences (incl. environmental biology, biotechnology, agriculture & food science, veterinary studies)	1a	clinical veterinary studies
		1b	biological sciences
		1c	other biological sciences (incl. environmental biology)
		1d	agriculture & food science
		1e	biotechnology
2	pre-clinical studies	2a	pre-clinical studies
3	clinical medicine	3a	clinical medicine
4	clinical dentistry	4a	clinical dentistry
5	pharmacy, nursing, optometry, rehabilitation sciences and other health care professions	5a	pharmacy
		5b	nursing
		5c	other health care professions
		5d	optometry
		5e	rehabilitation sciences
6	Chinese medicine	6a	Chinese medicine
7	physics & astronomy	7a	physics & astronomy
8	materials science and materials technology	8a	materials science
		8b	materials technology
9	chemistry	9a	chemistry
10	earth sciences (incl. oceanography, meteorology) and other physical sciences (incl. environmental science)	10a	earth sciences (incl. oceanography, meteorology)
		10b	other physical sciences (incl. environmental science)
11	mathematics and statistics	11a	mathematics & statistics
12	electrical & electronic engineering	12a	electrical engineering
		12b	electronic engineering
13	computer studies/science (incl. information technology)	13a	computer studies/science (incl. information technology)
14	mechanical engineering, production engineering (incl. manufacturing & industrial engineering), textile technology and aerospace engineering	14a	mechanical engineering
		14b	production engineering (incl. manufacturing & industrial engineering)
		14c	textile technology
15		15a	chemical engineering

Unit of Assessment in RAE 2026 (code & name)		Research Area (code & name)	
	chemical engineering, biomedical engineering, other technologies (incl. environmental engineering & nautical studies) and marine engineering	15b	marine engineering
		15c	other technologies (incl. environmental engineering & nautical studies)
		15d	biomedical engineering
16	civil engineering (incl. construction engineering & management) and building technology	16a	civil engineering (incl. construction engineering & management)
		16b	building technology
17	architecture	17a	architecture
18	planning and surveying (land, geo-spatial and other)	18a	planning
		18b	surveying, land
		18c	surveying, geo-spatial and other
19	law	19a	law
20	accountancy	20a	accountancy
21	economics and finance	21a	economics
		21b	finance
22	business	22a	business
23	hotel management & tourism	23a	hotel management & tourism
24	psychology	24a	psychology
25	political science (incl. public policy & administration & international relations)	25a	political science (incl. public policy & administration & international relations)
26	geography	26a	geography
27	sociology & anthropology	27a	sociology & anthropology
28	social work and social policy	28a	social work
		28b	other social studies
29	communications & media studies	29a	communications & media studies
30	Chinese language & literature	30a	Chinese language & literature
31	English language & literature	31a	English language & literature
32	translation	32a	translation
33	linguistics & language studies	33a	linguistics & language studies
34	history	34a	history
35	area studies (e.g. Japanese studies, European studies, etc.),	35a	other arts/humanities
		35b	area studies (e.g. Japanese studies, European studies, etc.)

Unit of Assessment in RAE 2026 (code & name)		Research Area (code & name)	
	cultural studies and other arts/humanities	35c	cultural studies
36	philosophy	36a	philosophy
37	religious studies	37a	religious studies
38	visual arts, design, creative media, other creative arts and creative writing	38a	visual arts
		38b	other creative arts
		38c	design
		38d	creative media
39	music and performing arts	39a	performing arts
		39b	music
40	physical education, sport, recreation & physical activities	40a	physical education & sports science
41	education (incl. curriculum & instruction, education administration & policy and other education)	41a	curriculum & instruction
		41b	education administration & policy
		41c	other education

Appendix D

Building of Quality Profiles by Unit of Assessment

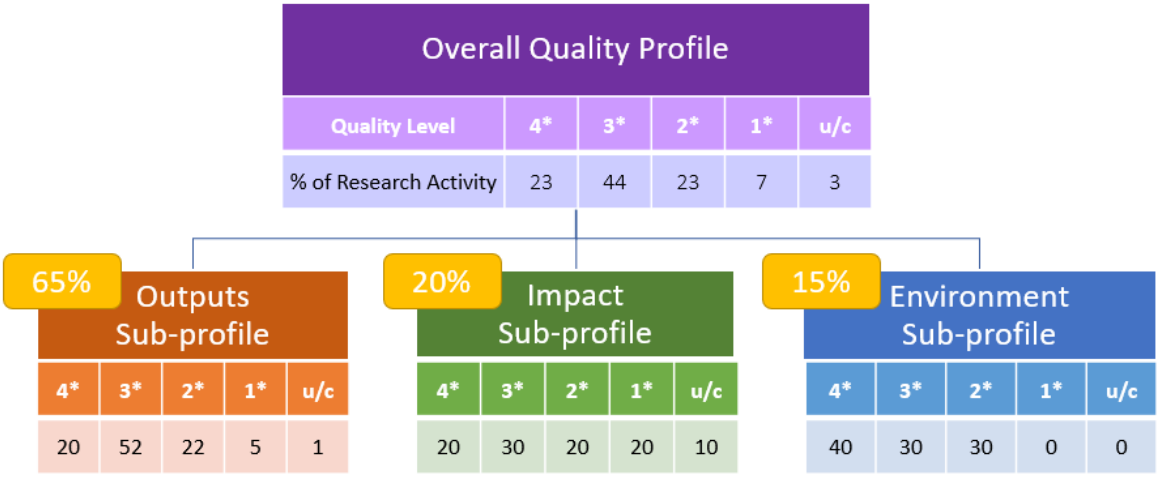
1. The overall quality profile will show the proportion of research activity judged to meet the definitions at each starred level by unit of assessment (UoA). The overall quality profile will be published in steps of 1 per cent (%). The following table shows the overall quality profiles of two universities under the same UoA.

UoA	Number of eligible staff	Percentage (%) of research activity judged to meet the standard of :				
		4 star	3 star	2 star	1 star	unclassified
University X	40	18	41	25	16	0
University Y	60	12	32	45	10	1

2. An RAE Panel will produce an overall quality profile by assessing three elements of a university's submission to a UoA – research outputs, impact and environment – to produce a sub-profile for each element. The three sub-profiles will be aggregated to form the overall quality profile for the university, with each element weighted as follows –

- Outputs: 65%
- Impact: 20%
- Environment: 15%.

Figure 1: Building a quality profile: a worked example



Rounding

3. The sub-profiles will be combined using the weights in paragraph 2 of this appendix. A cumulative rounding process will then be applied to the combined profile, to produce an overall quality profile. This methodology will ensure that the overall quality profile for any submission will always sum to 100 per cent.

4. Using the example in Figure 1, first calculate the initial overall profile, that is, the sum of the weighted sub-profiles for outputs, impact and environment.

	Starred levels				
	4*	**3***	**2***	**1***	**u/c**
Outputs	20	52	22	5	1
Impact	20	30	20	20	10
Environment	40	30	30	0	0
Weighted					
65%	13.00	33.80	14.30	3.25	0.65
20%	4.00	6.00	4.00	4.00	2.00
15%	6.00	4.50	4.50	0	0
Initial profile	23.00	44.30	22.80	7.25	2.65

5. Cumulative rounding works in three stages –

(a) The initial profile is –

4*	3*	2*	1*	u/c
23.00	44.30	22.80	7.25	2.65

(b) Stage 1: Calculate the cumulative totals (for example the cumulative total at 3* or better is 23.00 + 44.30 = 67.30).

4*	3* or better	2* or better	1* or better	u/c or better
23.00	67.30	90.10	97.35	100

(c) Stage 2: Round these to the nearest 1 per cent (rounding up if the percentage ends in exactly 0.5).

4*	3* or better	2* or better	1* or better	u/c or better
23	67	90	97	100

(d) Stage 3: Find the differences between successive cells to give the rounded profile. So, for example, the percentage allocated to 2* is the difference between the cumulative total at 2* or better, minus the cumulative total at 3* or better.

4*	3*	2*	1*	u/c
23	44	23	7	3

University Grants Committee
Research Assessment Exercise 2026

Feedback Report of _____ Panel*

(a) Approach and Methodology

- a general description on how submissions were assigned to panel members (without naming individual panel members) and relevant considerations
- any sub-group(s)/sub-panel(s) formed within the panel
- any guidelines formulated within the panel for the grading of research outputs, impact and environment submissions
- any special guidelines on making reference to metrics/citation data, impact factor

(b) Composition and Meetings of the Panel

- a list of panel membership
- a schedule of formal panel meetings and the sub-group/sub-panel meetings held
- comments on the responsibilities, workload and composition of the panel

(c) Overview of the Research Quality in Areas under the Panel's Purview

- number of universities, number of eligible staff by head count and number of submissions assessed by unit of assessment (UoA), and the relative strength and areas for improvement identified for the various research areas in the UoA, where appropriate
- general overview of the quality of submissions in areas under the panel's ambit and other observation

(d) Feedback on Individual Universities' Submissions in Each Unit of Assessment

- general comments on the performance of individual universities in each UoA having regard to the Unit-of-Assessment Level Environment Overview Statement submitted by universities

(e) Impressionistic International Comparison by Non-Local Panel Members

- performance of the eight UGC-funded universities as a whole in comparison with similar institutions outside Hong Kong, e.g. those in panel members' home countries
- performance of the eight UGC-funded universities by UoA/discipline in comparison with those of individual panel members' affiliated institution(s) and similar institutions outside Hong Kong

  [in all cases without naming particular Hong Kong universities]

(f) Difficulties Encountered and Recommendations for Future RAE

- a brief account of the panel working process
- any problems encountered in considering double-weighting requests, grading of co-authored items, inter-disciplinary items across panels (matters of principle only, no need to report on every case)
- any specific suggestion for revision of the assessment guidelines and other aspects of the exercise

(g) Other Comments or Suggestions

- any cases on which the panel has encountered serious disagreement about the quality of the items assessed (please give examples without naming individuals)

(h) Summary of the Feedback Report

- as Sector-wide Comments of the Panel to be made available in the public domain

Panel Convenor : _____

Date : _____

* While Panel Convenors are free to adjust the format of the feedback report to suit the different needs of their own panels, their feedback reports should cover basically all the issues identified in this sample layout.

Appendix F

Guidelines for Non-Local RAE Panel Members in Offering Comments for an International Comparison

(for non-local members only)

Background

In previous RAEs, non-local members provided an impressionistic international comparison of the quality standard adopted in the exercise with that in other countries/regions. As RAE 2026 is benchmarking against international standards, non-local members of this exercise are invited to offer comments for an international comparison of the research profile of UGC-funded universities as a whole with that in other countries/regions.

2. The information so obtained will be reflected in the panel reports but will not constitute part of the assessment results. Equally important is that these comments should not make identifiable reference to any particular university.

Comments to be offered

3. Members are invited to advise on the following aspects –

(a) how the research performance of UGC-funded universities as a whole compares with the research profile of similar institution(s) outside Hong Kong;

(b) how the research performance of UGC-funded universities by unit of assessment (UoA)/discipline compares with the research profile of similar institution(s) outside Hong Kong; and

(c) other than comments on UGC-funded universities as a whole, any particular area of research (without naming the university/staff concerned) that is worthy of recognition from international peers' perspective.

4. In offering their comments, non-local members should have regard to the different roles and missions in research of the individual universities in Hong Kong. Also, members should avoid relating their comments to particular university in Hong Kong.

5. Non-local members are invited to forward their comments to their respective Panel Convenors as soon as possible after the formal panel meetings for incorporation into the panel feedback reports which are due by November 2026.

6. It will be useful if these comments could be couched in language that could be understood by laymen.

Reference Materials

7. The following materials will be made available to members for reference through the electronic system for RAE 2026, so that members can have a general understanding of the different universities in Hong Kong so as to facilitate them to offer comments on international comparison –

(a) Each UGC-funded university's role statement and quality profiles by UoA in RAE 2020;

(b) Tabular breakdown of each university's eligible academic staff in each UoA by rank and years of eligible appointment at the submitting university as well as the number of new researchers;

(c) Distribution of eligible academic staff and number of submissions in respect of research outputs, impact and environment by UoA;

(d) Summary statistics of environment data by UoA;

(e) Total expenditure of UGC-funded universities as a whole and respective departmental expenditure on research; and

(f) Research outputs by broad subject area by university.

Blank Page