

**Research Assessment Exercise 2026**  
**Panel 12 – Creative Arts, Performing Arts & Design**  
**Panel-specific Guidelines on**  
**Assessment Criteria and Working Methods**  
(October 2024)

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## Introduction

1. This document sets out the assessment criteria and working methods that the Creative Arts, Performing Arts & Design Panel of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2026 will apply. It should be read alongside the General Panel Guidelines of the exercise. The provisions set out in this document serve as further elaboration and amplification on the assessment criteria and working methods as applied to the Creative Arts, Performing Arts & Design Panel. In areas where no additional information has been specified, the provisions in the General Panel Guidelines will prevail and apply in the assessment process of the Panel. These guidelines do not replace or supersede the requirements for submissions that are set out in the Guidance Notes for RAE 2026.

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

## **Section A: Submissions**

### **UoAs under the Panel**

3. The Creative Arts, Performing Arts & Design Panel will assess universities' submissions from the following UoAs –

<u>Code</u>	<u>UoAs</u>
38	visual arts, design, creative technologies and creative media, creative writing and other creative arts
39	music and performing arts

4. The Panel expects to receive submissions whose primary research focus falls within the respective remit of the above UoAs. The UoAs under the Panel's remit cover the full spectrum of related forms of academic research under its purview. The Panel acknowledges and welcomes a diverse range of methods and approaches to research and therefore adopts an inclusive definition of its remit. It will consider outputs in whatever genre or medium that meet the definition of research (as outlined in paragraph 5.7 of the Guidance Notes) and covers the broadest understanding of the subject disciplines within, between and across any cultural, geographical or historical contexts. The Panel expects to evaluate research that encompasses analytical, applied, critical, ethnographical, historical, interdisciplinary, pedagogical, creative practice (practice-based), scientific, technological and theoretical approaches to all of the subject areas within its remit. Where judged necessary by the Panel, expertise will be augmented by external reviewers or work will be cross-referred to relevant panels, according to the process detailed in paragraphs 41-43 of the General Panel Guidelines.

Please note that in these guidelines, we may use the terms author, producer, co-author, co-producer, submitting author, submitting co-author, submitting producer, and submitting co-producer interchangeably. No significance should be given when one term is chosen over another. Terms have been chosen dependent on the context in order to support clarity and readability.

## Unit of assessment descriptors and boundaries

Unit of Assessment 38: visual arts, design, creative technologies and creative media, creative writing and other creative arts

4.1 The UoA includes research into and expects submissions from all aspects of the history, theory and practice of art and design, and disciplines where these relate to visual, material and spatial cultures. It anticipates that outputs will span a range of texts, edited publications, creative media and creative technologies, creative practices (practice-based approaches), as well as artefacts, events and curatorial outputs.

Unit of Assessment 39: music and performing arts

4.2 The UoA includes research into, and expects submissions from, all areas of music, drama, dance, theatre, performance, live and sonic art, and screen studies. It anticipates that outputs will span a range of artefacts, creative practices (practice-based approaches), curatorial outputs, edited publications, recordings, compositions, performances, texts and writings.

## Interdisciplinary Research

5. The Panel recognises that research in Creative Arts, Performing Arts & Design is often inherently interdisciplinary. The Panel will adopt the arrangements for assessing interdisciplinary submissions as set out in paragraphs 39-40 of the General Panel Guidelines.

5.1 The Panel expects to assess submissions that do not always map onto institutional structures. The Panel will assess, on an equal basis, submissions that reflect the work of coherent administrative units such as departments or centres, alongside submissions that do not map neatly onto departmental or other administrative structures within the submitting institution. In either case, there will be no advantage or disadvantage in the assessment of outputs or impacts that are identified as interdisciplinary nor will there be any advantage or disadvantage if submissions contain some work that overlaps UoA boundaries of the Panel or of other panels.

5.2 The Panel will apply the standards of excellence defined by the starred quality levels equally to research whether or not it is interdisciplinary or is research that falls within a distinct discipline. The Panel considers that interdisciplinary research is capable of displaying the highest standards of quality.

5.3 The Panel will adopt the arrangements for assessing interdisciplinary submissions as set out in paragraphs 39-40 of the General Panel Guidelines. These will include: the appointment of at least one Interdisciplinary Champion to the Panel; use of the cross-referral system to other panels; and the appointment of additional specialist reviewers where appropriate and necessary.

6. We will always take the broadest and most inclusive view of what constitutes interdisciplinary research, whether that incorporates: (i) disciplines within a single UoA of the Panel, (ii) disciplines from the UoAs within the Panel, or (iii) disciplines from the UoAs of other panels.

### **Assignment of Eligible Academic Staff in Each UoA**

7. Pursuant to paragraphs 7-11 of the General Panel Guidelines, the Panel expects all submissions to include sub-disciplines of research areas for each submitted output (please see the “List of Sub-disciplines” below). The Panel requires this information so as to ensure that research outputs are assigned to appropriate assessors.

#### List of Sub-disciplines

<b>Research Areas (code and name)</b>	<b>Sub-disciplines</b>
38a visual arts	38a-01 Chinese crafts, applied and decorative arts
	38a-02 crafts, applied and decorative arts
	38a-03 Chinese fine arts
	38a-04 fine arts
	38a-05 graphic arts
	38a-06 photography, film and animation
	38a-07 other visual arts
38b other creative arts	38b-01 creative arts in applied contexts
	38b-02 other creative arts
38c design	38c-01 architectural design

Research Areas (code and name)	Sub-disciplines
	38c-02 industrial and product design
	38c-03 information design
	38c-04 service design
	38c-05 interaction and game design
	38c-06 interior, landscape and environmental design
	38c-07 other design
38d creative media	38d-01 creative technologies
	38d-02 creative media
39a performing arts	39a-01 Dance
	39a-02 Drama
	39a-03 live and sonic art
	39a-04 Performance
	39a-05 Theatre
	39a-06 performing arts in applied contexts
	39a-07 other performing arts
39b music	39b-01 Chinese music and opera
	39b-02 music composition
	39b-03 Musicology
	39b-04 music performance
	39b-05 music in applied contexts
	39b-06 other music

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

## **Section B: Assessment Criteria: Research Outputs**

### **Output Types**

9. The Creative Arts, Performing Arts & Design Panel will consider the eligibility of research outputs as described in paragraphs 15-17 of the

General Panel Guidelines, paragraphs 5.7-5.11 and Appendix E of the Guidance Notes.

10. The Panel will assess the quality of each eligible output on its own merits and not in terms of its publication category, medium or language of publication. The Panel will examine each output in detail and will not assess outputs mechanistically according to the publication venue. The Panel recognises that there can be work of the highest quality in various output forms, and no distinction will be made between types of output submitted nor whether the output has been made available electronically or in a physical form.

10.1 The Panel will neither advantage nor disadvantage any form of research output whether it is physical or virtual, textual or non-textual, visual or sonic, static or dynamic, digital or analogue so long as it meets the definition of research as set out in paragraphs 2-3 of the General Panel Guidelines.

11. Forms of research outputs that are admissible and specifically relevant to the Creative Arts, Performing Arts & Design Panel include the examples listed below. This should be regarded as an indicative rather than an exhaustive list. Equally, there is no implication of priority or importance in the ordering of examples in this list and the Panel will assess the research content of the material submitted regardless of the output type.

- Artefact
- Archival/special collection
- Architectural design
- Authored book
- Chapter in book
- Confidential report
- Creative writing
- Curatorial project
- Design
- Design process/program
- Devices and products
- Digital or visual media

- Exhibition
- Edited book/special journal issue/anthology where the researcher has made a demonstrable contribution to the research published (in addition to any chapter and/or creative contribution published in the same work)
- Film and screen media
- Journal article
- Materials
- Multi-component output (see paragraphs 12.2-12.6 below)
- Music composition
- Awarded or published patent
- Performance
- Policy report
- Published conference proceedings and/or open data sets/databases
- Research dataset/database
- Software
- Translated work
- Other

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

12.1 Where additional information is provided in a 100-word statement (see paragraphs 12.2, 13.1, 13.3, 16, 18), the submission should not include claims for the perceived quality of the research output; the Panel will ignore these if they are included.

12.2 The Panel will expect edited books, anthologies or special journal issues to have a significant and original contribution by the submitting author. Where the researcher has made a demonstrable contribution to the research published (in addition to any chapter published in the same work) and where such a research contribution is part or all of the output to be assessed, the whole work should be submitted. The submitting unit should

use the 100-word statement to clarify the nature of the individual's research contribution.

12.3 The Panel will expect a review article to have a significant and original contribution by the submitting author.

12.4 The Panel will expect translations, transcriptions of interviews, or reproductions of documents to be accompanied by a significant and original analytical contribution by the submitting author. Research should be inherent in the translation or interview process itself but should also be reflected in the critical apparatus associated with the translated text, interviews or documents.

#### *Multi-component Outputs*

12.5 A submission may take the form of an individual output (single-component output) or a multi-component output (see paragraph 11).

12.6 For the purposes of RAE 2026 a multi-component output is defined as: a single coherent work presented in two or more distinct constituent components of knowledge production and/or practice, which share the same research imperative. Each of these constituent components could take the form of one of the categories listed in paragraph 11 above.

12.7 A multi-component output may include a number of constituent components that each address different aspects of a clearly identifiable overall research imperative. A multi-component output submission therefore, must offer a coherent account of the research that would not be evident from any single constituent component if submitted by itself. Indicative examples include: a design program that involves multiple channels of investigation to arrive at a single artefact or a system; a music composition that has led to a performance or recording; a solo exhibition or performance in which the thematic nature of the production requires various avenues of enquiry and different forms of dissemination; substantial dictionary or encyclopaedia entries and groups of short items including for example portfolios



of creative writing and/or related critical works; a performance with associated research-led educational and outreach activities; a film disseminated over numerous venues/locations or with different editions; an artistic work with accompanying interviews; thematic exploration of a particular motif or artefact from different perspectives.

12.8 Any multi-component output submission must be in digital format and uploaded as a single file to a repository to which the Panel will have access. In the 300-word statement, include a URL (Uniform Resource Locator) for the location of the multi-component output (see paragraph 19 below).

12.9 The criteria for double-weighting will apply equally to a multi-component output as to a single-component research output (see paragraphs 15-16).

13. The Panel will consider subsequent editions, performances, compositions, broadcasts or exhibitions of previous work only where they contain significant new research.

13.1 Two output submissions with material in common, that may, for example, be in a different format, language or edition, should not be submitted unless there is substantial new (non-overlapping) research material. Such outputs will be judged only on the original research or novelty of insight of that new research material. The 100-word statement should be used to explain how the research or insights identified in the earlier output were revised to incorporate new research or insights in the subsequent output.

13.2 Where two or more research outputs submitted by one university share significant material, the Panel will assess each output taking account of the common material only once. If the Panel judges that the outputs do not contain sufficiently distinct material, and should be treated as a single output, an “unclassified” score will be given to one of the outputs in accordance with paragraph 31 of the General Panel Guidelines.

13.3 Where a submitted output includes significant material in common with an output published prior to 1 October 2019, the

submission should use the 100-word statement to explain how far the earlier work was revised to incorporate new research.

14. Where the output is not considered “non-traditional”, the Panel does not require any statement on originality, significance or rigour. Other than the requirement in paragraph 18(a) of the General Panel Guidelines, the use of the 100-word statement is only required in the instances described in paragraphs 12.2, 13.1, 13.3, 16 and 18 of the Panel-specific Guidelines.

### **Double-weighting of Research Outputs**

15. Paragraphs 29-31 of the General Panel Guidelines indicate that in exceptional cases, a submitting university may request that outputs of extended scale and scope be double-weighted in the assessment. In view of the established practice in creative arts, performing arts and design of publishing and/or disseminating major research outputs in the form of, for example, monographs, texts, exhibitions, compositions, films, performances or designs, the Panel recognises that there may be a wide range of outputs of such scale and scope. The Panel welcomes requests for double-weighting in line with the guidance provided in paragraph 16.

16. When requesting for an output to be double-weighted, universities should use the 100-word statement to explain in what ways the output is of sufficiently extended scale and scope to justify the claim. The Panel will decide whether to double-weight the output on the basis of the following characteristics –

- the production of a longer-form output (e.g. book, long-duration creative work or multi-component output) demonstrating sustained research effort;
- the production of a research output which was contingent upon the completion of a complex and extensive period of workshop/studio practice (collective or individual);
- the production of a creative output that investigates a given theme in considerable depth, from different perspectives, or in relation to different contexts;
- the generation of an extensive or complex concept or proposition;

- the collection and analysis of a considerable body of material;
- the use of primary sources which were extensive, complex or difficult to access;
- the presentation of a critical insight or argument which was dependent upon the completion of a lengthy period of data collection or investigation of materials.

16.1 The Panel will be happy to consider claims for all possible output types, for example, a sole-authored monograph, music composition, theatrical dance or music performance, identification of new creative practices arising from the use of emerging technologies, solo exhibitions, or design schemes, where the research contribution is equivalent to requiring research effort for producing two single outputs. Such claims will not be automatically accepted and will be the Panel's decision. Should a claim not be accepted, however, the reserve output will be assessed exactly like any other output (i.e., with no penalty).

### **Co-authored/Co-produced Outputs**

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

18. For outputs with less than four co-authors the Panel will accept that all co-authors have made a significant contribution to the research process leading to that output. In the case of outputs with four or more co-authors, the submission should use the 100-word statement to identify the contribution of the submitting author. Once the Panel has determined that the co-author's/co-producer's contribution to the research content of the output is identifiable and substantial, it will assess the quality of the output as a whole, taking no further regard to the submitting co-author's/co-producer's contribution.

### **Non-traditional Outputs**

19. The Panel will handle research outputs in non-traditional form(s) according to paragraphs 35-37 of the General Panel Guidelines. Non-traditional research outputs may be submitted as either a single or a multi-component output (see paragraphs 12.1 to 12.10).

19.1 For the purposes of RAE 2026 the definition of “non-traditional” is: a research output that does not, by itself, reveal its research imperative and associated processes of investigation in order to establish a permanent legacy that can be effectively shared.

19.2 Where the output of research fulfils the definition for a non-traditional output (e.g. an artefact, composition, performance, design or system where the research imperatives and associated methods have been articulated and made accessible) then the following additional information is required within the associated 300-word statement:

- Any information that is not accessible from the research output itself but is essential to its assessment.
- Delineation of the submitting researcher’s role if this is not clear (e.g. designer, director, composer, curator), or if there may be overlapping roles in the production of the output.
- An identification of the output type as listed in paragraph 11.
- For a multi-component output, a list identifying its constituent components.

19.3 Whereas the Panel has no explicit expectation of the most appropriate and effective way to structure a non-traditional output submission, the 300-word statement may engage with standard elements of any research endeavour such as:

- the research imperative;
- outcomes of the research;
- the research question(s);
- the research field and key works referenced;
- the research methods and materials;
- how the research was tested and the feedback used;
- the research conclusions;
- the novelty of the research outputs; and

- the dissemination and distribution of the research findings.

19.4 Where non-traditional outputs do not reveal their research imperatives and associated research processes through the output together with the 300-word statement, then they will be regarded as practice that is not research.

## Criteria and Quality Levels for Assessing Research Outputs

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

21. In assessing outputs, the Panel will look for evidence of originality, significance and rigour, and will grade each output into one of the five categories of quality level as set out in paragraph 19 of the General Panel Guidelines. The generic description of the quality levels as set out in paragraph 20 of the General Panel Guidelines will be applied in the Panel's assessment.

22. The Creative Arts, Performing Arts & Design Panel provides the following amplifications on the criteria of assessing research outputs –

- 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 and/or ideas; 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 practice, and new forms of expression.
- significance: will be understood as the extent to which the work has influenced, or has the capacity to influence, disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary understanding, future knowledge production and future research methodology and activity.

- **rigour:** will be understood as the extent to which the work demonstrates intellectual and/or creative coherence and integrity, and adopts robust and appropriate concepts, analyses, sources, theories and/or methodologies.

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

4*	3*	2*	1*	Unclassified
Outstandingly novel, innovative and/or creative.	Significantly novel or innovative or creative.			
Instrumental in developing new thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences.	A catalyst for, or important contribution to, new thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences.	An incremental and cumulative advance on thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences.	An identifiable contribution to knowledge and understanding, that does not advance existing paradigms of enquiry or practice.	
A major expansion of the range and the depth of research and its application.	A significant expansion of the range and the depth of research and its application.	A useful contribution to the range or depth of research and its application.		
A primary or essential point of reference.	An important point of reference.	A recognised point of reference.	Based on existing traditions of thinking, methodology and/or creative practice.	
Of profound influence.	Of considerable influence.	Of some influence.	A useful contribution of minor influence.	
				Below the quality threshold for one star.
				Does not meet the definition of research used for the RAE.

## Metrics/Citation Data

24. The Panel will neither receive nor make use of any bibliometric data or citation data to inform its judgement.

25. In assessing the quality of outputs, the Panel will not privilege any journal or conference ranking/lists, the perceived standing of the publisher, or the medium of publication, or where the research output is published, exhibited, performed, or, in the case of some design artefacts, the place and context of their usage.

## **Additional Information on Research Outputs**

26. Other than the information required on research outputs as specified in the Guidance Notes, and unless specifically required by the Panel during the assessment process (see paragraphs 12.2, 13.1, 13.3, 16 and 18), no other information should be provided. The Panel will take no account of any such information if submitted.

## **Section C: Assessment Criteria: Research Impact**

### **Range of Impacts**

27. The Creative Arts, Performing Arts & Design Panel will accept submissions on research impacts that meet the generic definition and criteria as set out in paragraphs 47-49 of the General Panel Guidelines.

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

29. Examples in Table A, illustrate both the range of potential impacts from research, along with indicators of reach and significance. These examples are indicative only, and are not exhaustive or exclusive. Equally, there is no implication of priority or importance in the ordering of examples in the list.

30. Universities are expected to submit their strongest impact cases and not to align submitted cases specifically with the particular types of impact listed, as an impact case may describe more than one type of indicative impact set out in Table A below.

Table A: Examples of Impact<sup>1</sup>

Areas of Impact	Types of Impact	Indicators of Reach and Significance
<p><u>Impacts on creativity, culture and society</u></p> <p><i>Impacts where the beneficiaries may include individuals, groups of individuals, organisations or communities whose behaviours, creative practices, rights, duties and other activity have been influenced</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration with museum and/or industry professionals results in enhancements to (cultural) heritage preservation and interpretation, including museum and gallery exhibitions.</li> <li>• Co-production of new cultural artefacts, including for example, films, novels, theatre productions, music or dance performances and/or TV, radio or streaming programmes.</li> <li>• Generating new ways of thinking that influence creative practice, its artistic quality or its audience reach.</li> <li>• Inspiring, co-creating and supporting new forms of artistic, literary, linguistic, social, economic, religious, and other expression.</li> <li>• The diversification and/or broadening of the artistic repertoire</li> <li>• Research-led engagement with marginalised, under-engaged and/or diverse audiences leads to increased cultural participation.</li> <li>• Developing stimuli to cultural tourism and contributing to the quality of the tourist experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testimonials from creative practitioners, curators, media professionals.</li> <li>• Publication and sales figures both in Hong Kong and overseas, audience or attendance figures (including demographic data where relevant), broadcasting data and other forms of media, download figures, or database and website hits over a sustained period.</li> <li>• Evaluative reviews of impact in the media.</li> <li>• Tourism data, including audience figures and visitor numbers at exhibitions, events, performances.</li> <li>• Professional evaluations of exhibitions, performances or other outputs.</li> <li>• Audience/visitor/participant feedback (e.g. through surveys, interviews or focus groups).</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Examples of impact case studies in RAE 2020 may be accessed online at <<https://impact.ugc.edu.hk/>> and <<https://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/ugc/activity/research/rae/2020/impacts/submissions.html>>. Other examples of research impact as assessed in other jurisdictions may be accessible online such as <<https://results2021.ref.ac.uk/impact>> from the United Kingdom. Universities may also refer to examples of impacts and indicators detailed in Annex A of <[https://2021.ref.ac.uk/media/1450/ref-2019\\_02-panel-criteria-and-working-methods.pdf](https://2021.ref.ac.uk/media/1450/ref-2019_02-panel-criteria-and-working-methods.pdf)> of the United Kingdom Research Excellence Framework 2021.



Areas of Impact	Types of Impact	Indicators of Reach and Significance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements to legal and other frameworks for securing intellectual property rights.</li> <li>• Increased understanding of local traditions leading to enhanced cultural preservation.</li> </ul>	
<u>Impacts on health, and wellbeing</u> <i>Impacts where the beneficiaries are individuals and groups whose health outcomes have been improved and whose quality of life has been enhanced (or potential harm mitigated)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The design of new products, devices or processes that have protected the health of individuals or supported the performance of the human body.</li> <li>• The application of creative practices in the visual arts, theatre, performance or music to improve the health and wellbeing of, patients, individuals or groups.</li> <li>• The improvement of patient health outcomes through, for example, the design of new medical devices, technologies or care products, or the training of health practitioners.</li> <li>• Public health and quality of life has been enhanced through, for example, the design of information campaigns to enhance public awareness of a health risk, enhanced disease prevention or, in developing countries, improved water quality or access to healthcare.</li> <li>• Development of policy and practice with regard to medical ethics, health or wellbeing services, including improved take-up or use of services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of take-up and use of new or improved products and processes that improve quality of life and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Evidence of enhancement of patient experience.</li> <li>• Measures of improved clinical outcomes, public behaviour or health services.</li> <li>• Measures of improved wellbeing, improved patient outcomes, public health or health or wellbeing services.</li> </ul>
<u>Impacts on commerce and the economy</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributing to economic prosperity via design and the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping arts- or crafts-based producers, sole</li> </ul>

Areas of Impact	Types of Impact	Indicators of Reach and Significance
<i>Impacts where the beneficiaries may include businesses or other types of organisation which undertake activity that may create wealth</i>	<p>creative sector including publishing, music, theatre, museums and galleries, film and television, fashion, textiles, products, tourism, and computer games.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved support for the development of “small scale” craft processes and batch-production technologies.</li> <li>• A spin-out or new business has been created, established its viability, or generated revenue or profits.</li> <li>• Contributing to innovation and entrepreneurial activity through the design and delivery of new products or services.</li> <li>• Decisions are made not to introduce a new process or product as a result of research.</li> <li>• Social enterprise initiatives have been created.</li> <li>• Gains in productivity have been realised as a result of research-led changes in practice.</li> <li>• The performance of an existing business has been improved through the introduction of new, or the improvement of existing products, processes or services; the adoption of new, updated or enhanced technical standards and/or protocols; or the enhancement of strategy, operations or management practices.</li> <li>• Performance has been improved, or new or changed technologies or processes</li> </ul>	<p>traders and/or microbusinesses to establish cost effective business models.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of improved cost-effectiveness in design and manufacturing processes.</li> <li>• Sales of new products/ services.</li> <li>• Business performance measures (for example, turnover/profits, trends in key technical performance measures underlying economic performance).</li> <li>• Employment figures.</li> <li>• Licences awarded and brought to market.</li> <li>• Demonstrable collaborations with industry (including knowledge transfer partnerships, and contracts).</li> <li>• Commercial adoption of a new technology, process, knowledge or concept.</li> <li>• Business performance measures, for example, sales, turnover, profits or employment associated with new or improved products, processes or services.</li> <li>• Jobs created or protected.</li> <li>• Investment funding raised from Hong Kong and/or non-Hong Kong agencies for start-up businesses and new activities of existing businesses.</li> <li>• Evidence of critical impact on particular projects,</li> </ul>

Areas of Impact	Types of Impact	Indicators of Reach and Significance
	<p>adopted, in companies or other organisations through highly skilled people having taken up specialist roles that draw on the research, or through the provision of consultancy or training that draws on the research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The strategy, operations or workplace practices of a business have changed.</li> </ul>	<p>products and processes confirmed by independent authoritative evidence, which should be financial where possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of research leading to avoidance of negative outcomes.</li> <li>• Tourism data, including audience figures and visitor numbers at exhibitions, events, performances.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Impacts on public services and policy</u>  <i>Impacts where the beneficiaries are usually government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), charities and public sector organisations and local communities, either as a whole or groups of individuals in society</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In delivering a public service, a new approach, technology or process has been adopted or an existing approach, technology or process improved.</li> <li>• Research is used to re-design current processes or services, or to identify new services to be provided.</li> <li>• (Sections of) the public or local communities have benefited from the design of public service improvements.</li> <li>• The work of an NGO, community group, charitable or other organisation has been influenced by the research.</li> <li>• Policy decisions or changes to legislation, regulations or guidelines have been informed by research evidence.</li> <li>• Research stimulates critical public debate that either leads to the adoption or non-adoption of policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measures of improved public or community services, including, where appropriate, quantitative information.</li> <li>• Satisfaction measures (for example, with services).</li> <li>• Formal partnership, consultancy agreement or research collaboration with major institutions, NGOs, community groups or public bodies.</li> <li>• Acknowledgements to researchers on webpages, in reports or briefings.</li> <li>• Distinctive contributions to expert panels and policy committees or advice to government (at local, regional, national or international level).</li> <li>• Quantitative indicators or statistics on the numbers of attendees or participants at a research event, or website analytics for online briefings.</li> <li>• Testimonials from</li> </ul>

Areas of Impact	Types of Impact	Indicators of Reach and Significance
		Members, Committees, officials, chief executives or community leaders where available.
<p><u>Impacts on practitioners and the professions</u></p> <p><i>Impacts where beneficiaries may include organisations or individuals, including service users, and community leaders involved in the development and/or delivery of professional services and ethics</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practices have changed, or new or improved processes have been adopted, in companies, businesses or other public or community organisations, through the provision of training or consultancy.</li> <li>• Professionals, businesses and organisations are able to adapt to changing cultural values, market demands and new production processes as a result of research.</li> <li>• Professional methods, processes, ideas or ethics have been influenced by research.</li> <li>• Educational or pedagogical practices and methods have changed in primary, secondary, further or higher education, within or beyond the submitting unit.</li> <li>• Professional bodies and learned societies have used research to define best practice, formulate policy, or to lobby government or other stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documented change to professional standards or behaviour.</li> <li>• Evidence of adoption of best practice (for example, by educators, arts commissioners or design studios).</li> <li>• New or modified technical standards, processes or protocols.</li> <li>• Evidence of debate among practitioners, leading to developments in attitudes or behaviours.</li> <li>• Literature/web information from practitioners and advisers, including the research findings and how they are applied in practice.</li> <li>• Traceable reference to inclusion of research in national or international standards or authoritative guidance.</li> <li>• Traceable references by practitioners to research papers that describe their use and the impact of the research.</li> </ul>

Areas of Impact	Types of Impact	Indicators of Reach and Significance
<p><u>Impacts on the environment</u></p> <p><i>Impacts where the key beneficiaries are the natural and/or built environment, together with societies, individuals or groups of individuals who benefit as a result</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement of the environment through creative interventions or the design of new systems, product(s), process(es) or service(s).</li> <li>• In the design of consumer products the reduction of wastage through environmentally friendly design solutions that extend the life cycle of products.</li> <li>• The creation of new materials and processes that are environmentally friendly and enhance the built environment.</li> <li>• Influence on professional practices.</li> <li>• Changing public perceptions, practices or policies on environmental issues through the design of information campaigns.</li> <li>• Changing the operations of a business or public service to achieve environmental (green) objectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sales of new products or the implementation of new systems that bring quantifiable environmental benefits.</li> <li>• Verifiable influence of design solutions or creative interventions that bring environmental benefits.</li> <li>• Traceable reference to the inclusion of research into new creative and design practices, industry, guidance or legislation.</li> <li>• Traceable impacts on particular projects or processes which bring environmental benefits.</li> <li>• Documented case-specific improvements to environment-related issues.</li> <li>• Traceable reference to impact of research in planning decision outcomes.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Impacts on understanding, learning and participation</u></p> <p><i>Impacts where the beneficiaries are individuals, communities and organisations whose awareness, understanding, participation or engagement have been enhanced as a result of research</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced cultural understanding of issues and phenomena; shaping or informing public attitudes and values to the creative and performing arts and design.</li> <li>• Public or political debate has been shaped or informed by research; this may include activity that has challenged established norms, modes of thought or practices.</li> <li>• Research in the creative and performing arts and design has challenged conventional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documented evidence that public understanding has been enhanced through active collaborative involvement in research.</li> <li>• Documented evidence of policy debate (for example, in Legislative Council, the media, material produced by NGOs).</li> <li>• Public debate in the media.</li> <li>• Documented shift in public attitude (for example, to gender issues, or social factors in education).</li> </ul>

Areas of Impact	Types of Impact	Indicators of Reach and Significance
	<p>wisdom, stimulating debate among stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased understanding of gender roles has improved equality.</li> <li>• Contributing to processes of commemoration, memorialisation and reconciliation.</li> <li>• Influencing the design and delivery of curriculum and syllabi in schools, higher education (HE) institutions, non-HE institutions or other educational organisations in terms of the value of learning through the creative arts and design.</li> <li>• Influencing a wider public debate on the contribution of creative arts and design to public space and identity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citation in a public discussion, consultation document or judgement.</li> <li>• Citation by journalists, broadcasters or social media.</li> <li>• Measures of increased attainment and/or measures of improved engagement with the creative and performing arts and design in non-HE education.</li> <li>• Evidence of use of education materials arising from the research.</li> </ul>

## Impact Strategy

31. Universities are reminded to set out their impact strategy in the University-level and UoA-level Environment Overview Statements.

## Impact Case Study(ies)

32. Following paragraphs 7.7 (a) and (b), 7.9-7.10 and Appendix F of the Guidance Notes and also paragraph 51 of the General Panel Guidelines, submitting units are required to provide a narrative account in each case study that clearly explains the relationship between the research and impact, and the nature of the consequent changes or benefits.

33. Each impact case study should include appropriate evidence and indicators that support the claims for the impact achieved, including: who and what has/have benefitted, and/or been influenced and/or acted upon; when the impact occurred; and what has changed as a result of the impact.

Individual case studies may draw on various evidence and indicators, which may take different forms depending on the type of impact. All claims made should be fully substantiated through qualitative and/or quantitative evidence.

34. Table B provides indicative examples to illustrate potential evidence or indicators that may be mostly relevant to the Panel. Equally, the ordering of examples in the list does not imply priority or importance.

Table B: Examples of Evidence or Indicators for Impact<sup>2</sup>

Quantitative indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantitative data relating to cost-effectiveness.</li> <li>Performance measures (e.g. sales, turnover, profits associated).</li> <li>Audience or attendance figures.</li> <li>Webpage access figures.</li> </ul>
Documentary evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documented changes to public policy / legislation / regulations / guidelines.</li> <li>New professional codes and standards.</li> <li>Licences awarded and brought to market.</li> </ul>
Engagements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial adoption of new technology, process, knowledge or concept.</li> <li>Application or incorporation in professional best practice, training and continuing development materials.</li> <li>Evidence of policy or public debate.</li> </ul>
Independent testimony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal acknowledgements of and/or evaluations by relevant beneficiaries, bodies and organisations.</li> </ul>
Reviews and citations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Citations and reviews outside the academic literature, e.g. in policy, regulatory, practice documents, or industry handbooks.</li> <li>Citations in media.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 1.

Other evidence or indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal partnership agreements.</li> </ul>
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35. To assist the Panel, the first section of the impact case study (summary of the impact) should clearly summarise the impact being claimed (i.e. what has changed) with some brief indication of its reach and significance. It should not be an abstract of the case study as a whole or a description of the research it contains.

### **Underpinning Research**

36. Research outputs considered to have attained at least 2 star (2\*) or international standing, should underpin impact cases. Impact case studies should include appropriate evidence or indicators of the quality of the underpinning research. Where necessary, the Panel will review the outputs concerned in order to ensure the quality of the research is of at least 2 star (2\*).

37. Provided that the Panel is satisfied that the quality threshold has been met, the quality of the underpinning research will not be taken into account in the assessment of the quality of impact. Underpinning research referenced in a case study may also be submitted for assessment as a research output. In this case, the guidance on output types and criteria for assessing research outputs as stipulated in paragraphs 9-14, 20-23 above would apply.

### **Criteria and Quality Levels for Assessing Research Impact**

38. 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. The submitting unit should not include claims for the perceived quality of the research impacts; the Panel will ignore these if they are included.

39. In assessing impacts, the Panel will look for evidence of reach and significance, and will grade each impact submission as a whole and give a rating using one or more of the five categories of quality level following paragraphs 53-55 of the General Panel Guidelines. In respect of the Creative Arts, Performing Arts & Design Panel, the criteria of reach and significance will be understood as follows –



- reach: 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 the impact is local, regional, national or transnational. For example, the Panel will evaluate the extent to which society as a whole, communities or individuals have benefitted from the commercial development of a new design or product.
- significance: the degree of beneficial effects to policies, practices, perspectives or awarenesses of organisations, communities or individuals, constructive change to the prevention or reduction of harm, risk or cost. For example, the Panel will evaluate the degree of heightened awareness of a social or cultural issue resulting from the production of a new film, programme, design or exhibition.

40. The Panel will make an overall judgement about the reach and significance of impacts, rather than assessing each criterion separately. The criteria will be applied in the assessment of the research impact regardless of the domain to which the impact relates. In addition, the Panel understands the quality standards for assessing research impact as follows:

- While case studies need to demonstrate both reach and significance, the balance between them may vary at all quality levels. The Panel will exercise its judgement without privileging or disadvantaging either reach or significance.
- Reach will be assessed in terms of the extent to which the potential constituencies, number or groups of beneficiaries have been affected; it will not be assessed in geographic terms, nor in terms of absolute numbers of beneficiaries. The criteria will be applied wherever the impact has been felt, regardless of geography or location, and whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.

Institutions may submit case studies describing impacts at any stage of development or maturity. However, the assessment will be made solely on

the impact achieved during the assessment period, regardless of its stage of maturity. No account will be taken of anticipated or future potential impact, nor of impact that occurred outside the assessment period.

## **Section D: Assessment Criteria: Research Environment**

### **Research Environment**

41. The Creative Arts, Performing Arts & Design Panel will accept submissions on research environment according to paragraphs 57-58 of the General Panel Guidelines. The Panel recognises that excellent research can be undertaken in a wide variety of research structures and environments. The Panel has no pre-formed view of the ideal size or organisational structure for a research environment. The Panel will assess each submission based on what has been presented in relation to the work of the submitting unit in nurturing and supporting a vital and sustainable environment.

42. 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. The UoA submissions may relate to a single coherent faculty and equally to multiple departments, and may depict the commonalities and dynamics among faculties and departments within the submitting unit, modes of operation, and ways of realising their strategic goals.

### **Environment Overview Statements (One University-level Environment Overview Statement across the University and One UoA-level Environment Overview Statement for Each UoA)**

43. Following paragraphs 9.6 (a) and (b), 9.7, 9.8 and Appendix G of the Guidance Notes, and also paragraphs 59 & 60 of the General Panel Guidelines, the Panel will use the information provided in the University-level Environment Overview Statement to inform and contextualise their assessment of relevant sections of the UoA-level environment overview statement. Submitting units are required to describe how they have supported the conduct and production of research, in the context of the University-level Environment Overview Statement.

44. Within the terms of the Guidance Notes, the Creative Arts, Performing Arts & Design Panel will expect in particular to see the following in the –

#### 44.1 University-level Environment Overview Statement

- 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.
- 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 exchange), 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 research integrity and research ethics are embedded in the institution, including the open, responsible and ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI)), and how the overall institutional policy and strategy contribute to government priorities.
- people: institutional staffing strategy, staff development and training (e.g. recruitment, leave policies, equality and diversity agenda, measures/facilities for early career researchers, research students, etc.), and development, training and supervision of research students.
- 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.

In the context of research environment, the university is encouraged to comment on the extent to which generative AI technologies have been addressed, applied or used within any of the above elements.

## 44.2 UoA-level Environment Overview Statement

In the context of the university's policies as stipulated in the University-level Environment Overview Statement –

- UoA context and structure: submission in this part is expected to briefly describe the organisation and structure of the unit, which research groups are covered in the submission and how research is structured across the submitting unit.
- research and impact strategy: evidence of the achievement of strategic aims for research and impact during the assessment period, details of current/future strategic aims and goals for research and impact; how these relate to the structure described above; and how they will be taken forward; methods for monitoring attainment of targets; new and developing initiatives not yet producing visible outcomes but of strategic importance; identification of priority developmental areas for the unit, including research topics, funding streams, postgraduate research activity, facilities, administration and management.
- research integrity and research ethics: give evidence of the steps taken to ensure that research is undertaken in an ethical manner with rigour, honesty and care and respect for those involved in the process. Research conducted with integrity leads to findings people can trust and have confidence in. Disciplinary best practice may consider, but is not limited to, issues ranging from approaches to training, ensuring dissemination and accessibility of results, data availability, registration of protocols, ethical compliance, authorship policies, reproducibility, open research, participatory research, the handling of conflicts of interest and intellectual property, and approaches to dealing with allegations of research misconduct and questionable research practices.
- people: evidence of staffing strategy, staff development and training (e.g. leave policies, equality and diversity agenda, measures for early career researchers, and those returning from maternity leave, etc.) and evidence of their effectiveness; how individuals at the beginning of their research careers are being supported and integrated into the research culture of the

submitting unit; secondments to industry; information on postgraduate recruitment, training and support mechanisms and evidence of the efficacy.

- income (e.g. grants received), infrastructure and facilities: information on research funding portfolio; evidence of successful generation of research income; major and prestigious grant awards made by external bodies on a competitive basis; support for creative practice research; provision and operation of research infrastructure and facilities, including special equipment, library, technical support, space and facilities for research groups and research students; information on joint-university, industry or cross-institution shared or collaborative use of research infrastructure.
- collaborations: information on support for and exemplars of research collaborations; mechanisms to promote collaborative research at local, regional, national and international level; support for interdisciplinary research collaborations; research collaboration with research users and/or industry partners; secondments to industry.
- esteem: prestigious/competitive research fellowships held by individual researchers; external prizes and awards; elections to fellowships and academy memberships in recognition of research achievement; the awarding of visiting and honorary professorships and/or fellowships.
- contribution to the discipline or research base: exemplars of leadership in the academic community such as advisory board membership; governance or advisory roles in the creative industries; participation in the peer-review process for grants committees or editorial boards; journal or book series editing; mentoring, coaching or sponsorship roles.

In the context of research environment, the submitting UoA is encouraged to comment on the extent to which generative AI technologies have been addressed, applied or used within any of the above elements.

## Environment Data

45. Following paragraphs 9.6 (d) and (e), 9.9 and Appendix H of the Guidance Notes, and also paragraph 61 of the General Panel Guidelines, submitting units are required to provide environment data in conjunction with the UoA-level Environment Overview Statement. The Panel will consider the environment data within the context of the information provided in the Environment Overview Statement, and within the context of the disciplinary areas concerned. Irrespective of size, each submission will be judged on its own merits against the criteria set out. Consideration will also be given to the career stage of individuals within the UoA(s).

46. Data on “staff employed by the university proper” and “graduates of research postgraduate programmes” will be used to inform the Panel’s assessment in relation to “people” (section (4) of the UoA-level Environment Overview Statement). Data on “on-going research grants/contracts” will be used to inform the Panel’s assessment on “income (e.g. grants received)” (part of section (5) of the UoA-level Environment Overview Statement). Additional quantitative data or indicators that are particularly relevant to the Panel are indicated in paragraph 44 above. Such additional information should be submitted within the appropriate section(s) of the UoA-level Environment Overview Statement.

## Criteria and Quality Levels for Assessing Research Environment

47. Panels will exercise their expert judgement in assessing the merits of each environment submission. They will consider each case on its own merits against the criteria as set out and will not judge automatically in terms of the scale of the research environment concerned.

48. In assessing environment, the Panel will consider the research environment in terms of vitality and sustainability, including its contribution to the vitality and sustainability of the wider discipline or research base. Given the primary role that people play as the key resource in the creative and performing arts and design, the Panel will attach differential weight to each of the components of the environment template. The Panel will grade each environment submission with weighting attached to individual aspects under seven headings as follows –

- research and impact strategy – 10%

- research integrity and research ethics – 10%
- people – 25%
- income (e.g. grants received), infrastructure and facilities – 25%
- collaboration – 10%
- esteem – 10%
- contribution to the discipline or research base – 10%

The Panel will use the five categories of quality level as specified in paragraphs 63-65 of the General Panel Guidelines for assessing each of these seven headings and by subsequently aggregating assessments under these headings to form an overall assessment for each UoA-level environment submission.

49. The Creative Arts, Performing Arts & Design Panel provides the following amplifications to supplement the generic criteria for assessing research environment –

- vitality: 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, regional, national and international research and user communities and is able to attract excellent postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers through a worldwide reputation.
- sustainability: 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 investment in infrastructure.

50. The Panel will make an overall judgement about the vitality and sustainability of research environments, rather than assessing each criterion separately. The Panel understands the quality standards for assessing the research environment overall will have the following general characteristics:



4*	3*	2*	1*	Unclassified
A major positive influence in supporting and stimulating the work of research staff and students.	A significant influence in supporting and stimulating the work of research staff and students.	Useful support for the work of research staff and students.	Some support for the work of research staff and students.	
A major influence in developing practices and standards for research and scholarship in the sector both locally and internationally.	A significant contribution in helping to develop practices and standards for research and scholarship in the sector both locally and internationally.	A useful contribution to the development of practices and/or standards for research and scholarship in the sector locally.		
Instrumental in developing, leading and/or participating in important research collaborations and/or networks with a range of stakeholders.	Played a major part in developing, leading and/or participating in research collaborations and/or networks with a range of stakeholders.	Participating in important research collaborations and/or networks with a range of stakeholders.	Some participation in research networks.	
Instrumental in developing and/or implementing approaches to diversity and equality for research staff and students.	Made a major contribution to the development and/or implementation of approaches to diversity and equality for research staff and students.	Had an important role in the successful implementation of equality and diversity policies for research staff and students.	Some evidence for the implementation of equality and diversity policies for research staff and students.	
				Below the quality threshold for one star.
				Nil submission.

## **Section E : Working Methods**

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

51. The Panel may constitute sub-groups across different disciplinary areas as necessary to provide robust assessment across all areas of assessment.

### **Allocation of Work in the Assessment Process**

52. The Convenor and the Deputy Convenor, in consultation with other panel members, as appropriate, will allocate assessment to members and, if necessary, lay members, impact assessors and/or external reviewers in light of their expertise and workload. In allocating the work, the Convenor and Deputy Convenor will also take into account any potential



conflicts of interest of respective panel members and assessors. All panel members will take account of the requirements of the General Panel Guidelines to ensure that the exercise is conducted fairly and equitably.

53. Panel members will examine the submitted outputs in detail, and put forward a recommendation to the panel for a collective decision on the final grading. To ensure fairness and consistency, each research output will be assessed in detail by at least two members, one of whom should be a non-local member to the extent possible. A third member will be used to ensure robust assessment where necessary or appropriate. For UoA(s) which is (are) only housed at one or two local universities, submissions will be assigned to at least one non-local member in order to ensure fair and impartial assessment. Final grading on research outputs will be decided by the Panel as a whole.

54. Subject to conflicts of interest of individual members, the impact and environment submissions will be assessed by at least two members of the Panel having appropriate expertise. They will then recommend a profile to the whole Panel which will make a collective decision to agree the assessment profile.

55. Where appropriate, the Panel will decide, by exercising their professional judgement, whether lay members (local “research end-users” or professionals in respective fields from business, government, industry and the arts, who need not be academics) with suitable expertise will be invited to take part in the assessment. Lay members who are academically qualified may also be invited for assessment of research outputs and research environment. The engagement of lay members will be by invitation from the Panel only.

### **Cross-Panel Referrals**

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

57. Because much research in the creative and performing arts and design is inherently interdisciplinary, or multidisciplinary, there may be instances where work is cross-referred to or from other panels as appropriate.

58. *(Template paragraph deleted)*

### **External Advice**

59. The Panel will follow the procedure in paragraph 67 of the General Panel Guidelines when referral to external reviewers for expert advice becomes necessary for panel assessment. External reviews may be sought in the cases for which members of the panel do not have the necessary expertise, such as outputs in a language where panel members do not have competency or in specialised areas of research where the panel do not have sufficient expertise.

### **Trial Assessment**

60. With reference to paragraphs 91-93 of the General Panel Guidelines, the Panel will conduct a trial using a sample of submissions selected from universities' submissions. Sample submissions will be assessed by all members of the Panel in order to calibrate the application of assessment criteria for outputs, impact and environment. The Panel will decide on the sample size after the submissions are received.

### **Panel Feedback Report**

61. With reference to paragraph 73 and Appendices E and F of the General Panel Guidelines, the Panel will provide feedback to the University Grants Committee (UGC) after the assessment process. Non-local panel members will be involved in offering comments for an impressionistic international comparison. The Convenor and Deputy Convenor - on behalf of the whole panel - will submit the panel feedback report to the UGC by November 2026. Sector-wide comments in the panel feedback report will be released for public information after the announcement of the RAE results. Comments on individual universities will be provided to the respective universities under confidential cover in accordance with paragraph 11.3 of the Guidance Notes.