Research Assessment Exercise 2026
Panel 5 – Computer Science / Information Technology
Panel-specific Guidelines on
Assessment Criteria and Working Methods
(October 2024)

Content:

Introduction

1.   This document sets out the assessment criteria and working methods that the Computer Science / Information Technology 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 Computer Science / Information Technology 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 Computer Science / Information Technology 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 the respective unit of assessment ("UoA") under purview. It also provides a common approach to the working methods applied within the Panel.

Section A: Submissions

UoA under the Panel

3.		The Computer Science / Information Technology Panel will assess universities' submissions from the following UoA –

Code	UoA

13		computer studies/science (incl. information technology)

4.		The Panel expects to receive submissions whose primary research focus falls within the respective remit of the above UoA. The UoA under the Panel's remit covers the full spectrum of computer studies and information technology as characterised, for example, by the 2012 ACM Computing Classification System (https://www.acm.org/publications/class-2012)

UoA descriptors and boundaries

UoA 13: computer studies/science (incl. information technology)

4.1	The UoA includes the study of methods for acquiring, storing, processing, communicating and reasoning about information, the application of such methods, and the role of interactivity in natural and artificial systems, through the implementation, organisation, management and use of computer hardware, software, human resources and other resources. The subjects are characterised by the rigorous application of analysis, experimentation and design.

Inter-disciplinary Research

5.		The Panel recognises that certain aspects of research are naturally inter-disciplinary or span the boundaries between individual UoAs, whether within the Panel or across panels. The Panel will adopt the arrangements for assessing inter-disciplinary submissions as set out in paragraphs 39-40 of the General Panel Guidelines.

6.		The Panel recognises the increasingly pervasive role that computer science and information technology plays across the full spectrum of scholarly disciplines. Therefore, the Panel has no presumption about any

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limits on the areas of inter-disciplinary research that are relevant to the Panel. However, inter-disciplinary submissions to the Panel are still expected to contain significant contributions to computer science and information technology (and possibly significant contributions to other areas) and not merely be applications of existing computing techniques to other areas. The Panel will rely on its inter-disciplinary champion to resolve questions regarding the assessment of inter-disciplinary outputs.

Assignment of Eligible Academic Staff in Each UoA

7.	Pursuant to paragraphs 7-11 of the General Panel Guidelines, the Computer Science / Information Technology Panel will not make use of information on sub-discipline(s) in relation to eligible academic staff and their respective research outputs.

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 the eligible staff according to paragraphs 10-11 of the General Panel Guidelines. The Panel also recognises its responsibility to handle submissions arising from any re-assignment of eligible academic staff to the Panel.

Section B: Assessment Criteria: Research Outputs

Output Types

9.	The Computer Science / Information Technology 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 item in detail and will not assess outputs mechanistically according to the publication venue. The Panel recognises that there can be work of the highest quality in various output forms, and no distinction will be made between types of output submitted

nor whether the output has been made available electronically or in a physical form.

11. Forms of research outputs that are admissible and specifically relevant to the Computer Science / Information Technology Panel include the following examples. This should not be regarded as an exhaustive list. Equally, there is no implication of priority or importance in the ordering of examples in this list –

- Outputs that contain an abstract and/or table of contents:
    i. published papers in peer-reviewed conferences.
    ii. published papers in peer-reviewed journals.
    iii. review articles where these incorporate new research, or new hypotheses.
    iv. books, book chapters and research monographs.
    v. patents awarded.

Abstracts must include a clear indication of what new insights or innovation are presented; abstracts lacking such information should be supplemented with a statement of up to 100 words as required by paragraph 18(a) of the General Panel Guidelines.

In addition, the following are examples of other admissible outputs that require additional information of up to 300 words as at paragraph 18(b) of the General Panel Guidelines:

- devices
- software and computer code
- algorithms
- prototypes and demonstrations
- datasets
- products
- processes

12.　　Research outputs will be assessed for the quality of original research they include. The Panel will accept the submission of review articles only where they contain a significant component of unpublished research or new insight. Such outputs will be judged only on their original research or novelty of insight. In general, the Panel recognises that the process of peer review entails careful refereeing of papers submitted to academic publishing outlets.   The Panel therefore discourages the submission of outputs that have not undergone a peer-review/refereeing process prior to publication, apart from new devices software, computer code, algorithms, prototypes, demonstrations, datasets, products and processes, which the Panel considers to be non-traditional outputs.

13.　　The Panel will consider subsequent editions of previous work only where they contain significant new materials and research contribution. In situations where authors have published a conference paper and then subsequently extended it for journal publication, with both publications having appeared within the assessment period, the Panel disallows submission of both the conference paper and journal paper, either by the same author or by different authors. More generally, the Panel discourages submission of two or more outputs containing a significant overlap in content.

14.　　Other than the requirement in paragraph 18(a) of the General Panel Guidelines, the Panel does not require a brief statement of no more than 100 words be submitted for each output item to specify the originality and significance of the output.

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. However, given the prevailing publication patterns in its UoA, this Panel does not expect to receive any items proposed for double-weighting.

16.　　*(Template paragraph deleted)*

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.   The Panel considers co-authorship to be a normal element of research activity in its UoA and expects all co-authors named on an output to have made a significant contribution to the research process leading to the output. For outputs having more than six authors, the Panel requires a short explanation of no more than 100 words to be provided describing the contribution of the submitting author.

Non-traditional Outputs

19.   The Panel will handle research outputs in non-traditional form according to paragraphs 35-37 of the General Panel Guidelines and as stipulated at paragraph 11 above. The Panel expects to receive the said additional description of up to 300 words about each non-traditional output in terms of its originality, significance, method used to ensure academic rigour in the production of the output, deliverables, and dissemination method.

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 Computer Science / Information Technology 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; 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.

- 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.

- 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.

23.   In addition, the Panel provides the following advice on their understanding of the quality definitions adopted for assessing research outputs. The Panel will consider the following characteristics for assigning a quality level to an output –

- scientific rigour and excellence with regard to the design, research method, execution and analysis of the work.

- whether or not the output has been subject to peer-review.

- significant addition to knowledge and to the conceptual framework of the field.

- potential and actual significance of the research both within and beyond the field concerned.

- the scale, challenge and logistical difficulty posed by the research.

- the logical coherence of argument.

- contribution to theory-building or establishment of a new area of study.

- significance of the work to advance knowledge, skills, understanding and scholarship in theory, practice, application, education, management and/or policy.

- academic impact achieved by the output.

Metrics/Citation Data

24.　Pursuant to paragraph 24 of the General Panel Guidelines, the Panel acknowledges that metrics and citation data may serve as advisory or secondary information, and that they should not be used in any algorithmic or deterministic way for the evaluation of research quality.

25.　While the Computer Science / Information Technology Panel will examine each output in detail for the assessment, the Panel may use recognised sources of citation data and information about the quality, impact factor or ranking of publication venues to inform its assessment of the significance and impact of an output. However, such metrics and data will not be used in any algorithmic or deterministic way for the evaluation of research quality. The Panel is aware of the limitations of such 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 and may not have been published in the highest-ranked venue of its field.

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, no other information should be provided, and the Panel will take no account of any such information if submitted.

Section C: Assessment Criteria: Research Impact

Range of Impacts

27.   The Computer Science / Information Technology 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. Given the increasingly pervasive reach of computer science and information technology across the range of scholarly disciplines, the Panel recognises that impact can be manifested in many different ways and may occur in a wide range of spheres whether locally, regionally or internationally.

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

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 impact, such as a new machine learning algorithm that achieves productivity gains through automation and also leads to improvements in the diagnosis of a medical condition, or a new general-purpose sensor network design applicable to both environmental monitoring and preservation of cultural heritage.

Table A: Examples of Impact[1]

Impacts on the economy	• Demonstrated gains in productivity have been realised as a result of research-led practices. • A spin-out or new business has been created, established its viability, or generated revenue or profits. • Demonstrated contribution to economic prosperity, innovation and entrepreneurial activities.
Impacts on the environment	• The management of an environment risk or hazard has changed. • The management or conservation of natural resources (e.g. water) has been improved. • A new technology for awareness of usage of natural resources and conservation of natural resources has been adopted.
Impacts on health	• A new drug delivery, diagnostic or medical technology has been adopted. • Decisions by health service or regulatory authority have been informed by research. • Adoption of new approaches or new indicators of health or well-being. • A new technology to support the work or training of medical personnel has been adopted.
Impacts on public policy and services	• Policy decisions or changes to legislation, regulations or guidelines have been informed by research.

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[1] 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/impactsubmissions.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> of the United Kingdom Research Excellence Framework 2021.

	• Policy or public debate has been stimulated or informed by research evidence. • Evidence of influence on the work of public or non-governmental organisations.
Impacts on quality of life and welfare	• Improved provision or access to services. • Improved standards of training. • The user experience has improved.
Impacts on society and culture	• Evidence that the awareness, attitudes or understanding of or interactions among (sections of) the society have been informed or enhanced. • Enhancements to preserving, conserving and presenting culture heritage have been achieved. • Enhancements to the security and privacy of information and communications have been realised.

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 should be precise and coherent, clearly explaining the relationship between the research and impact, and the nature of the changes or benefits arising.

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, when the impact occurs/occurred, and the relationship between the case study and how it has/had sustained further innovation and impact.

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

Table B: Examples of Evidence or Indicators for Impact[2]

Quantitative indicators	• Quantitative data relating to cost-effectiveness or scalability. • Computational performance measures. • External performance measures (e.g., employment, sales, turnover, profits associated). • Customer numbers, clickstream data or download figures.
Documentary evidence	• Documented changes to public policy / legislation / regulations / guidelines. • New professional codes and standards. • Licences awarded and brought to market. • Generation of royalties from licensed patents.
Engagements	• Commercial adoption of new technology, process, knowledge or concept. • Application or incorporation in professional best practice, training and continuing development materials. • Evidence of policy or public debate.
Independent testimony	• Formal acknowledgements/testimonials of and/or evaluations by relevant beneficiaries, bodies and organisations.
Reviews and citations	• Citations and reviews outside the academic literature, such as in policy, regulatory and practice documents. • Citations in reports and white papers of technology consulting firms.

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[2] see footnote 1.

35.   The Panel will consider any impact case study that is substantially, but not necessarily exclusively, underpinned by research contributions in computer science and information technology.

Underpinning Research

36.   The Panel acknowledges the level of quality required for research underpinning impact cases, i.e. equivalent to at least 2 star (2*) or international standing, as stipulated in the General Panel Guidelines. Impact case studies should include bibliographic information and an accessible reference to the underpinning research (e.g., DOI or URL), so that the Panel may make its own assessment that the underpinning research achieves the required quality threshold.

37.   Provided that the Panel is satisfied that the quality threshold has been met, any assessment of the quality of the underpinning research will not affect the assessment of the quality of impact. In particular, the quality of impact may be scored higher or lower than the assessed quality of the underpinning research. Underpinning research referenced in a case study may also be submitted for separate assessment under the research output element, in which 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.

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 Computer Science / Information Technology 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 in Hong Kong or elsewhere.

- significance: the degree of beneficial effects to policies, practices, perspectives, lifestyle, productivity, efficiency, cost-effectiveness, security, privacy, safety or awareness of organisations, communities or individuals.

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.

Section D: Assessment Criteria: Research Environment

Research Environment

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

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, and define their prime activities, how they operate and their main achievements.

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's policies as set out in the university-level environment overview statement.

44.   Within the terms of the Guidance Notes, the Computer Science / Information Technology 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 transfer), developing a sustainable research culture (including open access and open data policies, approach to contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals, how inter-disciplinary and collaborative research has been supported, how research integrity and research ethics are embedded in the institution), 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, etc.) and evidence of their effectiveness; how individuals at the beginning of their research careers are being mentored, supported and integrated into the research culture of the submitting unit; information on postgraduate recruitment, training and support mechanisms; measures/facilities for development and supervision of research students; policies and achievements with respect to diversity, including gender and cultural diversity; support for engagement of students in research and entrepreneurship.

- 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; provision and operation of research infrastructure and facilities, including special equipment, library, technical support, space and facilities for research groups and research students; information on joint-university or cross-institution shared or collaborative use of research infrastructure.

- collaborations: information on support for and exemplars of research collaborations; mechanisms to promote collaborative research at local and international level; support for collaboration with industry; support for inter-disciplinary research collaborations; research collaboration with research users.

- esteem: prestigious/competitive research fellowships held by individual researchers, including both funded fellowships and recognition as fellows of local, national and international professional societies; best paper, distinguished paper, and test-of-time awards for research publications; institutional

awards for excellence in research or graduate student mentoring; external prizes and awards in recognition of research achievement.

- contribution to the discipline or research base: exemplars of leadership in the academic community such as advisory board membership; participation in the peer-review process for grants committees, academic program reviews and departmental/faculty reviews; service on editorial boards, conference organisational committees and conference program committees; service in leadership positions for professional societies.

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 as evidence for statements appearing in it. The Panel will consider the environment data within the context of the information provided in the environment overview statement, and within the context of the disciplines concerned.

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 the "people" (section (4) of the UoA-level environment overview statement).   Data on "on-going research grants/contracts" obtained during the assessment period will be used to inform the Panel's assessment on the "income (e.g. grants received)" (part of section (5) of the UoA-level environment overview statement). Additional relevant quantitative data or indicators 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, and will not judge automatically in terms of the scale of research environment concerned.

48.   In assessing environment, the Panel will consider research environment in terms of vitality and sustainability, including its contribution to the vitality and sustainability of the wider discipline or research base. The Panel will grade each environment submission with weighting attached to individual aspects as follows –

- research and impact strategy – 15%

- research integrity and research ethics – 5%

- people – 15%

- income (e.g. grants received), infrastructure and facilities – 25%

- collaboration – 20%

- esteem – 10%

- contribution to the discipline or research base – 10%

The Panel will use one or more of the five categories of quality level as specified in paragraphs 63-65 of the General Panel Guidelines for assessing each aspect within the environment element and by aggregating assessments of individual aspects according to the weights shown above to form an overall assessment for each UoA-level environment submission.

49.   The Computer Science / Information Technology 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 and international research and user communities and is able to attract excellent faculty, research staff, postgraduate students 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 infrastructure, and the extent to which activity is supported by a continual portfolio of research funding.

50.   The Panel will make an overall judgement about the vitality and sustainability of research environments, rather than assessing each criterion separately.

Section E: Working Methods

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

51.   There will not be any sub-group or sub-panel formed under the Computer Science / Information Technology Panel.

Allocation of Work in the Assessment Process

52.   The Convenor, consulting the Deputy Convenor and other panel members, as appropriate, will allocate work 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 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. 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 members of the whole

Panel, and the final grading of individual submissions will be a collective decision of the Panel.

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

57. *(Template paragraph deleted)*

58. *(Template paragraph deleted)*

External Advice

59. This 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.

Trial Assessment

60. With reference to paragraphs 91-93 of the General Panel Guidelines, the Panel will conduct a trial assessment using a sample of submissions selected from universities' submissions. These sample submissions will be assessed by all members of the Panel. Members will share among themselves any important observations in the assessment to calibrate a consensus on quality ratings and to ensure fairness and consistency in the actual assessment. Submissions used for the trial assessment will be assessed afresh during the main assessment period

regardless of their assessment results during the trial. The Panel will decide on the sample size after the submissions are received.

Panel Feedback Report

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 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 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.