

# Research Assessment Exercise 2014

## General Panel Guidelines

(June 2014)

### **Purpose**

Further to the publication of the Framework and Guidance Notes for the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2014, which lay down the basic principles, methodology and guidelines to institutions and staff members involved in making submissions for the Exercise, this document provides guidelines and instructions to the panels of the RAE 2014 in relation to the criteria setting and the process of assessment of submissions.

### **Overview**

2. The RAE 2014 is the fifth such exercise conducted by the University Grants Committee (UGC) to assess the research quality of the eight UGC-funded institutions in Hong Kong<sup>1</sup> and to delineate their areas of relative strengths and weaknesses. It will produce quality profiles of individual cost centres, based on submissions made by institutions, using international benchmarks and sharpened measures. The dimensions of assessment include (i) research outputs, which account for 80% of the weighting, (ii) external competitive peer-reviewed research grants and (iii) esteem measures which correlate 20% of the weighting.

### **Scope of Research**

3. The UGC maintains an inclusive view on the scope of research. A broad range of forms of output of high quality research will be treated as equally important. On the scope of research for the RAE 2014, the Carnegie Foundation's definition of scholarship is adopted as a guiding reference as in the previous two RAEs, covering discovery, integration, application and teaching. Since all types of research outputs will be assessed on an equal basis, institutions are not required to classify outputs into one of the four types of scholarship in their RAE submission.

4. A brief definition of these four types of scholarship, adapted from the Carnegie Foundation's Special Reports entitled 'Scholarship

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<sup>1</sup> The eight UGC-funded institutions are namely, City University of Hong Kong (CityU), Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), Lingnan University (LU), The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), The Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd), The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), and, The University of Hong Kong (HKU).

Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate’ (1990) and ‘Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate’ (1997) is at [Appendix A](#).

### **Panels and Cost Centres**

5. There are 13 assessment panels in the RAE 2014, covering 68 cost centres. A complete list of panels and cost centres is at [Appendix B](#). Each cost centre forms the basis of data/submissions for assessment. Each panel is chaired by a convenor (“Panel Convenor”) who is assisted by a deputy convenor (“Deputy Convenor”).

6. All panel members of the RAE 2014 are appointed in their personal capacities, and should refrain from representing the interests of their affiliated institutions in the assessment of and deliberations on relevant submissions.

### **Outline of Process**

7. The census date of the RAE 2014 is 30 September 2013. Key dates in respect of the RAE process are as follows:

2 December 2013	Due date for institutions to submit a list of all eligible academic staff on cost centre basis
16 December 2013	Due date for institutions to submit the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research Strategy Statement of the institution</li> <li>- Research Strategy Statement of each cost centre of the institution</li> <li>- Data on research outputs</li> <li>- Data on external competitive peer-reviewed research grants and esteem measures</li> </ul>
January – February 2014	Panel members to conduct trial assessment
March 2014	Panel Convenors to assign submissions to Panel Members for assessment
April – July 2014	Panel members to assess submissions, including external reviews where necessary
August – September 2014	Panels to meet and finalise assessment results
1 November 2014	Panels to submit their Panel Reports
January 2015	The UGC to endorse preliminary results of the RAE 2014

## **Eligibility for Making Submissions to the RAE 2014**

8. All academic staff who meet the criteria as set out in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.2 of the Guidance Notes will be taken into account in the institutions' results for the RAE 2014. A copy of the Notes can be found at the UGC website (<http://www.ugc.edu.hk>). The defining of the eligibility criteria is primarily an administrative matter with regard to the staff's appointment nature, job category and continuous employment period at the institutions concerned. It does not involve any academic judgment on individual staff.

9. Institutions are required to assign each of their eligible academic staff (including those staff on joint appointment by two or more departments in the same institutions) to a primary cost centre by head count in accordance with the mapping of their academic departments and research units. The number of eligible academic staff members in each institution's cost centre must be three or more.

### **Submissions for Assessment**

10. Each eligible staff member will submit up to four research outputs to his/her primary cost centre for assessment under the following arrangements:

- (a) up to four items published in the period of "assessment years" from 1 October 2007 to 30 September 2013, or
- (b) up to three items published in the period of "assessment years" plus up to one item published in the period of "gap year" from 1 January 2006 to 30 September 2007.

For the purpose of assessing research outputs, items in the "assessment years" and the "gap year" are treated equally.

11. As regards external competitive peer-reviewed research grants and esteem measures, the data to be submitted for assessment should fall within the period from 1 October 2007 to 30 September 2013 on a cost centre basis.

12. Individual eligible staff may choose to submit fewer than four research outputs for the RAE 2014. In such a case, the missing item(s) will be counted as "unclassified".

13. New researchers, namely those eligible academic staff who first took up an academic appointment (in Hong Kong or elsewhere) on or after 1 August 2009, may reduce the number of output items to be submitted according to the scales set out in paragraph 5.15 of the Guidance Notes without the reduced item(s) being regarded as missing and deemed as “unclassified”. However, a new researcher may choose to submit up to four research outputs if he/she so wishes.

14. As a general principle, panels’ assessment will be solely based on the submissions made by the institutions. Personal knowledge on the part of panel members (e.g. about other research output items that have not been submitted) should not enter into consideration and panel deliberation, as inclusion of such factor(s) could lead to unintentional bias. To ensure that the assessment will be conducted fairly to all submissions, no additional information may be submitted by the staff members or institutions after the submission deadline of 16 December 2013, unless it is requested by the UGC Secretariat. If a panel requires any further information after the submission deadline, such request will be handled through the UGC Secretariat with the institutions concerned.

### **Materials for Background Information**

15. Background information in the form of “Research Strategy Statement” will be submitted by each institution and each cost centre in the institution. These statements will not be assessed, but they will provide a context for panels in assessing comparable submissions under a cost centre and for the UGC in viewing the quality profiles of the institutions as a whole upon completion of the RAE 2014. An institution’s research strategy statement is expected to reflect the institution’s research philosophy, vision and priorities in relation to its role and stage of development, as well as the distribution of research efforts across disciplines. A cost centre’s research strategy statement will describe the research strategy of the cost centre during the assessment period and its research activities during the same period. In addition, a tabular breakdown of an institution’s submitting staff in each cost centre by rank and years of eligible appointment at the submitting institution as well as the number of new researchers will be provided to panels by UGC for background information.

### **Basis of Evaluating Research Outputs**

16. In general, all research outputs submitted to the RAE 2014 for assessment must meet all of the following criteria, no matter whether or not

the research activities leading to the output items submitted for assessment are funded by the UGC:

- (a) the output contains an element of innovation;
- (b) the output and its process contribute to scholarship; and
- (c) the output is publicly accessible.

PhD dissertations are not accepted as outputs for assessment.

17. Proprietary research that does not result in output that is accessible to the public and the profession is not accepted as an output for assessment. However, output items of exhibitions and demonstrations relating to proprietary research which are (i) accessible to the public and the profession, (ii) non-traditional output for assessment, and (iii) contain enough information for evaluation, may be submitted for assessment.

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

- (a) any publication, patent awarded or published patent applications, artifact, etc., provided it was –
  - (i) published or made publicly available in other form within the assessment period; or
  - (ii) not yet published, but officially accepted for publication (without any prior condition for its publication) within the assessment period, and supported by a letter of acceptance; or
- (b) other forms of output that may or may not be published, e.g. performance recording, video tape, computer software programme, architectural drawings, or any creative work, that can be evaluated for merit and an assessment obtained.

Individual panels will decide whether a submission would be accepted on the basis of the above criteria.

### **Grading Research Outputs**

19. Research outputs will be assessed in terms of their originality, significance and rigour with reference to international standards. Each

submitted output will be graded into one of the following categories:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Standard</b>
4 star	4*	world leading
3 star	3*	internationally excellent
2 star	2*	international standing
1 star	1*	regional standing
unclassified	u/c	below the starred levels above, or not regarded as research outputs in the RAE 2014

20. The five categories of research output grading are broadly defined for all panels as follows:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>
4 star – world leading	<p>showing evidence of, or potential for, some of the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● agenda setting / primary or essential point of reference;</li> <li>● great novelty in thinking, concepts or results, or outstandingly creative;</li> <li>● developing or instrumental in developing new paradigms or fundamental new concepts for research;</li> <li>● research that is leading or at the forefront of the research area, or having major / profound influence.</li> </ul>
3 star – internationally excellent	<p>falling short of the highest standard of excellence, but showing evidence of, or potential for, some of the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● important point of reference or makes important contributions likely to have a lasting influence;</li> <li>● significant influence.</li> </ul>
2 star – international standing	<p>showing evidence of, or potential for, some of the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● a recognised point of reference or of some influence;</li> <li>● provides useful or valuable knowledge / influence;</li> <li>● incremental advances in knowledge / thinking / practices / paradigms.</li> </ul>

Category	Description
1 star – regional standing	showing evidence of, or potential for, some of the following characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• useful contribution of minor influence</li> </ul>
unclassified	falling below the “1 star” quality level, not meeting the definition of research output for the RAE 2014

21. To minimize any possible divergence in judgment with regard to the use of international standards, all panels will be asked to make reference to the following amplifications:

International excellence : **This should not be equated with output items published outside of Hong Kong or the region; rather it is intended that evaluation should be made with reference to the best international norms in that discipline or sub-discipline. It is possible that in some particular disciplines, such norms are set by output items published in Hong Kong or the region.**

International vs. Regional : **A distinction should be made in qualitative terms between (a) a publication that is regional because it addresses regional or local issues, and (b) a publication that is regional because it does not meet the standards of rigour and scholarship expected internationally in that discipline. In the former case, the categorization of the item will not be adversely affected; in the latter, it will be.**

22. Individual panels may provide further elaborations or amplifications (with examples if possible) of the criteria on research output grading as they see appropriate yet without linking to any particular quality levels, in order to avoid the risk of inconsistent interpretations of the quality levels. Efforts will be made to ensure broad comparability between similar disciplines.

23. In principle, the quality of each item is judged on its own merit and not in terms of its publication category (e.g. a journal paper is not necessarily of higher or lower merit than a book chapter), medium or language of publication. Panels are expected to recognize that there can be quality output items in media that may not be prestigious. With a view to

assessing research on sharpened measures, panels need to study each item in detail and not judge it automatically according to the medium of publication.

24. While panels are requested to study each item in detail for assessment, some panels may use citation data to inform their consideration of individual items. However, such data will not be used in any algorithmic or deterministic way for the evaluation of research quality. Panels are aware of the limitations of citation data, in particular their variability within as well as between disciplines, and the need to consider that some excellent work takes time to achieve its full impact.

### **Assignment of Outputs for Assessment**

25. Panel Convenors, with the assistance of Deputy Convenors where appropriate, will assign individual outputs to panel members (including their good selves) and/or external reviewers for assessment based on the match of members' expertise and caseload. Panel members will examine in detail the outputs, and put forward a recommendation to the panel or sub-group (if a panel decides to have sub-groups for assessment) for a collective decision on the final grading. To ensure fairness and consistency, each research output will be assessed by at least two members, one of whom should be a non-local member to the extent possible. Similarly, for those cost centres which are only housed at one or two local institutions, submissions should be assigned to at least one non-local member in order to ensure fair and impartial assessment.

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

27. In accordance with the policy on declaration of interest in paragraphs 59-65, Panel Convenors, Deputy Convenors, panel members and external reviewers should not be assigned submissions from their affiliated institution or from any institutions and academic staff with declared interests.



If they have any relationship with the academic staff whose research outputs are assigned to them for assessment, they should declare the relationship to the Panel Convenors and the UGC Secretariat while the Panel Convenors to the Convenor of the RAE Group of the UGC and the UGC Secretariat.

28. In case of any potential conflict of interest, the Panel Convenor will decide whether the submissions in question need to be re-assigned to another panel member for assessment. For cases of conflict of interest involving the Panel Convenor, the Deputy Convenor will take up the role as the Panel Convenor when the submissions in question are handled. If both the Panel Convenor and Deputy Convenor have conflict of interest in the same submission, the Panel Convenor will assign one panel member to take up his/her role. Panel Convenors, Deputy Convenors and panel members must be excused from panel deliberation when submissions from institutions in which they have declared a major interest are being discussed. They must also excuse themselves when their own submissions and/or items which they have co-authored are being discussed at panel meeting.

### **Double-weighted Outputs**

29. An academic may request that outputs of extended scale and scope be double-weighted (i.e. be counted as two outputs) in the assessment. No single output may be counted as more than double-weighted. Given that a maximum of four outputs may be listed against each staff member, no more than two outputs listed against an individual member should be double-weighted. When requesting for double-weight, the academic must reduce the number of outputs by one, but may submit a “reserve” output for each double-weight request. The panels will decide whether to double-weight each output so requested. Where a panel does not accept the case for double-weighting, it will count the submitted output as a single output, and grade also the corresponding “reserve” output. If no reserve output is submitted, the “missing” output will be graded as “unclassified”.

30. Academic staff requesting their outputs be double-weighted should provide justification in not more than 100 words and indicate whether a “reserve” item is submitted for the double-weighting request. Panels will assess claims for double weighting separately from assessing the quality of the output. There is no presumption that double-weighted outputs will be assessed at a higher quality. Assessment and grading of a double-weight request item will be against the same quality standards as that for single-weighted output items. The general procedures and criteria for double-weighting an output are set out in Appendix C. Individual panels

will specify their position on double-weighting requests in their panel-specific guidelines.

### **Co-authored Outputs**

31. A co-authored research output submitted by academics from different institutions may be accepted and counted as one output for each of the institutions as long as each submitting academic has made a substantial contribution to the co-authored output. Submission of a co-authored research output by two or more academics within the same institution (irrespective of whether or not they are from the same or different cost centres) will however be counted as one output.

32. If a co-authored research output is submitted by more than one academic within an institution, the institution is required to specify the academic (i.e., one of the co-authors) under whose name the output is submitted for rating, so that it will be rated once by the relevant panel, with the submission(s) of the same item by other academics (i.e., the other co-authors) from the institution counted as “unclassified”. If two or more panels are involved, the panels will collectively decide how to rate such a co-authored item from the same institution.

33. Other than the above principle, panels will consider co-authorship to be a normal element of research activity in the field and expect all named co-authors to have made a significant contribution to the research process leading to the item submitted for assessment. Panels will not require further evidence to support the inclusion of co-authored outputs. If a panel is not persuaded that the individual has made a significant contribution to the submitted output, it may, exceptionally, seek further verification for the inclusion of the output. If the panel is satisfied that a significant contribution to the production of the output has been made by the submitting staff, there will not be any discounting of the grading of the output.

### **Assessment of Non-traditional Outputs**

34. In the case of research outputs in non-traditional form as described in paragraph 18(b) above, the submitting staff member must provide additional information on (i) novelty of the work, (ii) the deliverables, and (iii) the dissemination method. In addition, particular attention should be drawn to the following:

- (a) for submissions relating to performing arts, such as drama, music composition, stage performance or a piece of creative work, they should include recordings which need to be made available to the panel members and external reviewers (as separately specified by the UGC); and
- (b) for submission in the areas of design, buildings, multi-media, or visual arts, photographs of the originals must include dimensions and good reproduction (method of access also to be separately specified by the UGC).

The description required for each non-traditional output item is limited to 150 words. Other than this, no other additional textual description will be permitted for assessing individual output items.

35. A sub-group with suitable membership (including members drawn from outside academia, where appropriate) may be constituted under a panel to evaluate non-traditional items separately. Panels may also seek specialist advice from external reviewers for assessing the outputs as appropriate.

### **Assessment of Non-English Outputs**

36. As stressed in paragraph 5.11 of the Guidance Notes, **all output items will be assessed without regard to the medium or language of publication.** Non-English items will be indicated to the panels to which they are submitted. If the panels do not have relevant expertise to assess such items, Panel Convenors will take the role to solicit at least two appropriate experts for assessing each of the non-English items as early as practicable, so that the Secretariat can make necessary arrangements with the external experts to conduct the assessment. Panel Convenors will be expected to provide guidance to the external experts concerned on the panels' specific criteria and requirement.

### **Cross-Panel Referrals and Interdisciplinary Research**

37. For the RAE 2014, each eligible staff member is required to submit up to four outputs to his/her primary cost centre as assigned by his/her affiliated institution. The research submissions will normally be assessed by the panel that is designated for the relevant cost centres. Panels recognize that individual cost centres do not have firm or rigidly definable boundaries, and that aspects of research are naturally interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary or span the boundaries between individual cost centres,

whether within the panel or across panels. For inter-disciplinary research outputs, institutions will be invited to flag this and indicate the “primary cost centre” and “secondary cost centre” for each of these outputs. In the event that an output is deemed to be inter-disciplinary or fall into the expertise of another cost centre (under the same or different panel), the panel of the staff member’s primary cost centre will make referral to another cost centre for assessment and grading. The final grade of the output will be logged into the primary cost centre of the submitting staff member.

38. In assigning research outputs to panel members for assessment, a Panel Convenor may make appropriate judgment to refer any submitted outputs to another cost centre within his/her panel, such that the outputs will be assessed by relevant expert members. The Panel Convenor may consult the Deputy Convenor and/or relevant panel member(s) in deciding such referrals of outputs.

39. Cross-panel referral may be initiated either (i) by Panel Convenors or (ii) by Deputy Convenors or panel members with the endorsement of respective Panel Convenors. In both cases, in particular those for interdisciplinary assessment, it is advised that such referral requests be initiated as soon as practicable so as to allow sufficient time for assessment. The Panel Convenor of the “original panel” will relay the cross-panel referral request to the Panel Convenor of the respective “receiving panel”, and is encouraged to communicate and discuss the cross-referred material with the Panel Convenor of the “receiving panel”. If the referral request is turned down by the “receiving panel”, the Panel Convenor of the “original panel” will consult with the Secretariat for due assessment of the item in question.

40. Cross-panel referral can be requested for (a) assessment by another panel or (b) collective assessment by two or more panels, which are required mainly for interdisciplinary outputs. For type (a): if a referral request to another panel is accepted, the Panel Convenor of the “receiving panel” will assign the item to at least two panel members for assessment. Grading and comments on the referred item given by the two panel members will be forwarded to the Panel Convenor of the “original panel”. Specific scoring methods which the “receiving panel” has used in the assessment will also be sent to the “original panel” for reference. Subject to endorsement by the Panel Convenor of the “original panel”, the assessment grading given by the “receiving panel” should be accepted without modification. A panel should not make more than one cross-panel referral request for each output at one time for this type of cases.

41. For type (b): assessment of the output is intended to be conducted jointly by the “original panel” and one or more “receiving panel(s)”. Up to two other panels may be requested per output item. If such a request is accepted, the Panel Convenors of the “original panel” and “receiving panel(s)” will each assign one panel member to conduct the assessment. Grading and comments given by the panel member(s) of the “receiving panel(s)” will be forwarded to the Panel Convenor of the “original panel”. Specific scoring methods which the “receiving panel” has used in the assessment will also be sent to the “original panel” for reference. The ultimate assessment methodology and the decision on the final grading of the item in question should rest and remain with the “original panel”.

### **External Advice**

42. Panel members may seek expert advice from external reviewers in exceptional circumstances when they consider it will facilitate quality assessment of the outputs. Referral to external reviewers generally applies to items which the panels do not have adequate expertise for assessment, such as outputs that are written in a language outside panel members’ expertise or novel outputs. Normally an output may be referred to not more than two external reviewers for specialist advice. Panel members may raise the requests for external advice with the Panel Convenor. Panel members may recommend external reviewers from their knowledge. The UGC Secretariat maintains a database of individuals who were nominated for external reviews and research assessment.

### **External Competitive Peer-reviewed Research Grants and Esteem Measures**

43. While the assessment of outputs is by peer review of at least two panel members and collective grading of the panels, institutions’ performance in respect of external competitive peer-reviewed research grants and esteem measures will be initially assessed by all panel members (except those with a conflict of interest) before the whole panel decides on the final grading. Panel Convenors may consider assigning certain members of the Panel to lead the presentation of these aspects of submissions and assist in facilitating the discussion at the panel meetings.

44. Taken together, external competitive peer-reviewed research grants and esteem measures account for 20% of the overall assessment weighting, as against 80% for research outputs. External competitive peer-reviewed research grants must be funded from outside the institutions by

competition, whereas other research grants and awards and distinguished achievement of individual researchers, for instance, are regarded as esteem measures. The default weighting split between external peer-reviewed research grants and esteem measures is 10:10 respectively, but a panel may justify a departure from the default weighting split to either 15:5 or 5:15. Panels will assess on data submitted by institutions on external competitive peer-reviewed research grants and esteem measures separately on a cost centre basis. Esteem measures should be assessed solely on their merits with no consideration given to the career stage of the individual(s) to which the esteem measure is associated and there should be no discounting/crediting factor arising from the career stage and staff profile information of the cost centre. The same principle should apply to the assessment of external competitive peer-reviewed grants.

### **Basis of Evaluating External Competitive Peer-reviewed Research Grants**

45. Institutions will provide information on the amount of external competitive peer-reviewed research grant income of each cost centre by academic year and funding source, as well as overall grant income per capita. Moreover, institutions will submit an attachment listing details of external competitive peer-reviewed grants received by each cost centre.

46. The maximum number of research grants to be listed should be two times the number of eligible staff members in the cost centre, or 20 for a cost centre with eligible staff size below 10. Details on how institutions are required to submit relevant data are specified in paragraphs 7.1 to 7.3 and Appendix G of the Guidance Notes.

47. A panel will consider the level of cost centres' external competitive peer-reviewed research funding and the sources from which this is drawn. The panel recognizes that the level and profile of funding may be influenced by the size of the cost centre, its areas of specialisation and research strategy. The panel will produce a profile for each cost centre using one or more of the following five categories as appropriate, by evaluating its performance against other comparable cost centres within the same panel. A panel may choose either to produce a rating profile distributed across several categories or to give a single quality rating to one category. The rating will be based on the following five categories:

Category	Abbreviation	Standard
4 star	4*	exceptional
3 star	3*	excellent
2 star	2*	very good
1 star	1*	good
Unclassified	u/c	below the starred levels above, or not regarded as external competitive peer-reviewed research grants in the RAE 2014

### **Basis of Evaluating Esteem Measures**

48. Institutions will provide information on the esteem measures of each of their cost centres in respect of individual eligible staff members and of groups of staff or cost centre as a whole. Esteem measures should be recognition conferred by an external body. They may include, but are not limited to, editorship of academic journals, research-based awards, honours or prizes, significant grants or donations for research which are not competitive or peer-reviewed (e.g. industry research grants). Each separate item of esteem listed should cover a single incidence (for example, Editor of the Journal of x studies). Multiple indicators of esteem reported as a single item will not be taken into account (for example, “Editor of the journal of x studies, Editor of journal of y” or “Eight invited presentations at conferences”).

49. An institution may list up to four esteem measures against each eligible staff member in a cost centre. The total number of esteem measures to be entered by institutions for individual staff members, groups of staff or the whole cost centre should not exceed two times the number of eligible staff in the cost centre. Description of each esteem measure relating to an individual should be limited to 20 words, and those for group esteem measures should be limited to 50 words each. The format of submissions on esteem measures is at Appendix H of the Guidance Notes.

50. In rating esteem measures, a panel benchmarks against international standard and evaluates an institution’s performance in a cost centre against comparable cost centres within the same panel. The panel will produce a profile for each cost centre using one or more of the following five categories as appropriate. A panel may choose either to produce a rating profile distributed across several categories or to give a single quality rating to one category. The rating will be based on the following five categories:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Standard</b>
4 star	4*	exceptional
3 star	3*	excellent
2 star	2*	very good
1 star	1*	good
Unclassified	u/c	below the starred levels above, or not regarded as esteem measures in the RAE 2014

## **Assessment Interface**

51. Submissions for the RAE 2014 will be processed through an electronic system with allowance to hardcopy submission for cases like non-traditional outputs or printed works which cannot be fully submitted electronically. Data on research outputs (e.g. publication year) and supplementary information (if applicable), together with data on external competitive peer-reviewed research grants and esteem measures are expected to be available for panel members' reading and assessment through an online interface. Panel members and external reviewers will be given access to full version of the research outputs, either in electronic mode via links to institutional repositories or in hardcopy mode via separate dispatch arrangements. Panel members will be invited to give a preliminary grading and remark / comment through the online interface on individual research outputs and other submissions as assigned to them for assessment. Operational guidance on conducting assessment through the online interface will be provided to panel members separately for reference.

## **Handling of Assessment Results**

52. The primary purpose of the RAE 2014 is to assess the research performance of UGC-funded institutions by cost centre; it is not intended to evaluate individual staff. Based on the preliminary grading and comments given by panel members, each panel will meet to deliberate and make a collective decision on the final grading of individual submissions. Panels will only produce assessment results in the form of quality profile for each institution's submission by cost centre.

53. Quality profiles of a cost centre's submissions in respect of research outputs, external competitive peer-reviewed research grants and esteem measures will be combined to form a quality profile of the institution's performance in that cost centre. Overall quality profiles will be



published by cost centre and by panel at both institutional level and sector-wide level. The same set of results of the RAE 2014 will be released to institutions and the public. Further illustration on building a quality profile of a cost centre is at [Appendix D](#).

## **Panel Report**

54. As in previous Exercises, panels will submit reports to the UGC with feedback from the assessment process. Panel Convenor on behalf of the whole panel will submit the panel report, which is expected to cover the following major aspects of the Exercise:

- (a) approach and methodology;
- (b) composition and meetings of the panel;
- (c) an overview on the research quality in areas under the panel's purview;
- (d) feedback on individual institutions' submissions in each cost centre;
- (e) impressionistic lateral comparison by non-local panel members;
- (f) difficulties encountered and recommendations for future exercise; and
- (g) suggestion of case studies.

Description of the above items in a recommended format of the panel report is at [Appendix E](#). Guidelines for non-local panel members in offering an impressionistic lateral comparison are at [Appendix F](#). The panel reports will be due for submission to the UGC by 1 November 2014.

## **Anonymity and Confidentiality**

55. As mentioned, the purpose of the RAE 2014 is to assess on a cost centre basis, not individual staff. Therefore the principle of anonymity should be strictly applied throughout the assessment process. Records to be kept in respect of the panels' deliberation and grading of items should make no reference to the names of the academic staff concerned.

56. In line with the confidentiality agreement, working papers and related information kept by Panel Convenors, Deputy Convenors, panel members and external reviewers should be destroyed or returned to the UGC

Secretariat as soon as they are no longer needed for carrying out their function or on the request of the UGC Secretariat, whichever may be sooner. This provision applies equally to paper copies or those stored in electronic or other non-paper formats. In addition, communications concerning the business of the RAE 2014 including documentary information as well as deliberations at panel meetings should be kept **strictly confidential**; no part of the panels' deliberation or grading should be disclosed or divulged to any third party during or after the exercise. All members involved in the RAE should also take every reasonable step to ensure that other people cannot have access to the information, whether held in paper or electronic copy. In particular, it is noted that computer systems and specifically e-mails are not necessarily secure and appropriate caution should be exercised when using them.

57. An institution's submission may contain material which is patented or patentable / subject to other intellectual property rights / commercially sensitive, or which the interests of the institution and / or its researchers is required to be kept confidential or given a restricted circulation. Institutions make submissions to the RAE 2014 on the understanding that their position in these regards will not be prejudiced by the fact of submission. Panel Convenors, Deputy Convenors, panel members and external reviewers have to respect and honour that understanding and act accordingly. They are reminded of the danger of "prior disclosure" in the case of potentially patentable material, and the paramount need to respect the confidentiality of such materials.

58. All Panel Convenors, Deputy Convenors and panel members are bound by the above responsibility during and after their service for the RAE 2014 with the UGC.

### **Declaration of Interest**

59. To ensure the fairness and transparency of the RAE, all Panel Convenors, Deputy Convenors, panel members, external reviewers, panel secretaries and assistants are requested to declare their interests upon formal appointment of service. It will be incumbent upon them to declare interests whenever there is a possibility of a conflict or of a perceived conflict, on a case by case basis, erring on the side of declaring interests even if the possibility that they will be material is remote. All of the above members share the responsibility for guarding against influence of personal interests and potential biases. The procedure to be followed in case of any conflict of

interests depends on whether an interest is a major interest or a minor interest as set out below.

60. The following situations which take effect on or after 1 January 2006 are considered **major** interests for the purpose of the RAE 2014:

- (a) currently employed by one of the eight UGC-funded institutions;
- (b) previously employed by one of the eight UGC-funded institutions;
- (c) engaging / having been engaged in substantial teaching, research, advisory, consultancy, academic or research review at one of the eight UGC-funded institutions;
- (d) holding / having held adjunct, honorary or visiting position(s) at one of the UGC-funded institutions; and
- (e) any other interest(s) ruled by a Panel Convenor / the Convenor of RAE Group to be treated as a major interest.

61. Individual members should not take part in the assignment, assessment, comment and final grading of any submissions from the institution(s) in which they have declared a major interest. In addition to submissions of their own authorship / co-authorship, they are required to withdraw from panel meetings when submissions from institution(s) in which they have declared a major interest are being discussed.

62. Other than major interests, any interest that could lead reasonable observer to doubt the impartiality of a member's assessment will be treated as a **minor** interest for the RAE 2014. Examples of minor interests are as follows:

- (a) currently supervising or co-supervising student(s) at one of the eight UGC-funded institutions;
- (b) supervised / advised or being supervised / advised by any staff member(s) who is / are involved in a submission;
- (c) serving / having served as co-investigator, collaborator, co-holder of a grant with one of the eight UGC-funded institutions;
- (d) serving / having served on the editorial board of a publication (e.g. academic journal) of a submitting department / unit at one

of the UGC-funded institutions;

- (e) serving / having served as an external examiner of a postgraduate thesis or an undergraduate programme for a submitting department / unit at one of the UGC-funded institutions;
- (f) co-organising / co-organised academic events or programmes (e.g. conference, summer class) with a submitting department / unit / staff member(s) at one of the UGC-funded institutions;
- (g) holding co-authored project / co-authored publications (e.g. book or papers) or patents with any submitting staff; and
- (h) having close personal relationship (e.g. partner, spouse, immediate family member, long-term close friend) or enmity with any submitting staff.

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

- (a) the minor interest should be noted by the panel, but it should not affect the member's participation in the assessment of the submissions;
- (b) the member concerned should refrain from assessing the particular submission(s) that is/are affected by the minor interest; or
- (c) the minor interest or a group of minor interests in relation to a UGC-funded institution declared by a member shall be treated as a major interest, and the member concerned should take no part in the assessment, comment and final grading of all submissions from the relevant institution.

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

65. A register of declared interests of members involved in the RAE 2014 will be maintained by the UGC Secretariat. Individual members will be asked to update the Secretariat when there is any change in their declared interests. A summary of declared conflicts of interests and potential conflicts of interest will be reported to the RAE Group and be made known to the Panel Convenors and Deputy Convenors in the panel formation phase and throughout the assessment process, in particular before they assign submissions for assessment. Panel members are advised to declare any conflict or potential conflict of interest before the preliminary assessment and panel meetings or discussions take place.

### **Panel-Specific Working Methods and Assessment Criteria**

66. Individual panels will exercise collective professional judgments and develop working methods and assessment criteria for their panels, within the overall framework for assessment set out in these Panel Guidelines. To facilitate the process, meetings for setting ground rules and an open forum for consultation on the assessment criteria were scheduled for 18-20 March 2013 in Hong Kong. All of the 13 Panel Convenors and 12 Deputy Convenors attended the plenary meetings and group sessions with local panel members. The plenary meetings were intended to let the Panel Convenors and Deputy Convenors converge on the ground rules to be adopted across panels in the assessment process, while the open forum was to extend dialogue with stakeholders from the eight UGC-funded institutions on the assessment criteria of the RAE 2014. The Panel Convenors and Deputy Convenors also met with local panel members to discuss discipline or cost centre specific criteria on 18 or 19 March 2013 respectively. Prior to that, the UGC Secretariat had obtained feedback from institutions on the panel working methods and assessment criteria, which had been conveyed to panels for consideration in making collective decisions on a number of issues in relation to the assessment process at the aforesaid meeting. Panel-specific working methods and assessment criteria are expected to be finalised by mid 2013.

### **Trial Assessment**

67. A trial assessment will be conducted around January/February 2014 after the submission phase. Making reference to the practice in the RAE 2006, Panel Convenors will be invited to decide the sample size and the source of sample for trial assessment. It is proposed that the trial assessment cover a sample of outputs from different academic staff members submitted to a panel. The trial assessment should, as far as possible, include

a mix of sample outputs from the eight UGC-funded institutions that may or may not come from the same cost centre. It is also proposed that the trial assessment cover the general principles for evaluating external competitive peer-reviewed research grants and esteem measures.

68. The trial assessment is proposed to be that the sample output submissions will be trial assessed by all members of a panel. Panel members are encouraged to discuss with fellow members on the trial assessment and share among each other important observations, with which the Panel Convenors and Deputy Convenors may consider whether there is a need to modify the ground rules and assessment criteria of the panel.

### **Publication and Further Information**

69. For transparency of the RAE 2014, these general guidelines will be published for information. The UGC Secretariat will provide supplementary information to assist panels in devising ground rules and assessment criteria and throughout the assessment process.

\* \* \* \* \*

UGC Secretariat  
June 2014

**Scholarship as defined by the Carnegie Foundation**

Following the 2006 RAE, the UGC has decided that a wider definition of scholarship as defined by the Carnegie Foundation in “**Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate**”<sup>2</sup> should continue to be adopted in the RAE 2014 as a guiding reference. In the report, the Carnegie Foundation argues that scholarship should have a broader and more efficacious meaning that would go beyond just teaching and research. The discovery of knowledge through research, the integration of knowledge, the application of knowledge and the sharing of knowledge through teaching should be treated as different forms of scholarship on a par with each other.

*The Four Scholarships*

2. The Carnegie Foundation considers that there is a more inclusive view of what it means to be a scholar - a recognition that knowledge is acquired through research, synthesis, practice, and teaching. Scholarship should comprise four separate, yet overlapping functions: They are the scholarship of discovery; the scholarship of integration; the scholarship of application; and the scholarship of teaching.

(a) Scholarship of Discovery

The scholarship of discovery, at its best, contributes not only to the stock of human knowledge but also to the intellectual climate of an institution. It is a scholarly investigation, closest to what is meant when academics speak of “research”, that confronts the unknown and creates new knowledge. It is not just the outcomes, but also the process, and especially the passion, that gives meaning to the effort.

(b) Scholarship of Integration

It is a serious, disciplined work that seeks to interpret, draw together and bring new insight to bear on original research. This type of scholarship is closely related to that of discovery. Such work is increasingly important as traditional disciplinary categories prove confining, forcing new topologies of knowledge. This scholarship also means interpretation, fitting one’s own research – or the research of others – into larger intellectual patterns. A variety of scholarly trends – interdisciplinary, interpretive, integrative – are examples of scholarship of integration.

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<sup>2</sup> A Special Report of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, by Ernest L Boyer, 1990

(c) Scholarship of Application

It is a dynamic process of creating new intellectual understandings arising out of theory and practice. The term itself may be misleading if it suggests that knowledge is first “discovered” and then “applied”. The process is in fact more dynamic; new intellectual understanding can arise out of vital interaction between theory and practice and one renews the other.

(d) Scholarship of Teaching

It is a process that transforms and extends knowledge while transmitting an intelligible account of knowledge to the learners. As a form of scholarship, teaching encompasses a wide range of activities beyond classroom instruction.

*Assessment of Scholarship*

3. The broadening of the definition of scholarship helps ensure that scholarly work in areas both within and outside discovery can be appropriately recognized and rewarded, yet it does not seek to open the floodgate by treating anything as scholarship. This leads to the question of how the work should be documented and the criteria that should be used to assess its quality.

4. Academics feel relatively confident about their ability to assess specialized research, but they are less certain about what qualities to look for in other kinds of scholarship, and how to document and reward that work. In “Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate”<sup>3</sup>, the authors suggest that the four kinds of scholarly activities, regardless of how variable their products, must be evaluated according to a common set of criteria (referred to as ‘quality standards of excellence’ in the publication set out in footnote 2) that captures and acknowledges what they share as scholarly acts. They are:

- clear goals;
- adequate preparation;
- appropriate methods;
- significant results;
- effective presentation; and
- reflective critique.

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<sup>3</sup> A Special Report of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, by Charles E Glassick, Mary Taylor Huber, and Gene I. Maeroff, 1997



5. The authors of the book also suggest a list of questions (see below) for each criterion to be considered when assessing a scholar's achievements in a particular category of scholarship. In return, scholars should also take into account these guiding questions when preparing their work for evaluation :

- (a) For clear goals, the possible questions include whether the scholar states the basic purposes of his or her work clearly; whether the objectives are realistic and achievable; and whether he or she identifies important questions in the field.
- (b) For adequate preparation, the possible questions include whether the scholar shows an understanding of existing scholarship in the field; whether the necessary skills are brought to his or her work; and whether the necessary resources are brought together to move the project forward.
- (c) For appropriate methods, the possible questions include whether the scholar uses methods appropriate to the goals; whether they apply methods effectively; and whether they are ready to modify procedures in response to changing circumstances.
- (d) For significant results, the possible questions include whether the scholar actually achieves the goals he or she was aiming for; whether the scholar's work adds consequentially to the field; and whether the scholar's work opens additional areas for further exploration.
- (e) For effective presentation, the possible questions include whether the scholar uses a suitable style and effective organization to present his or her work; whether they use appropriate forums for communicating work to intended audiences; and whether the scholar presents his or her message in all of these forms with clarity and integrity.
- (f) For reflective critique, the possible questions include whether the scholar critically evaluates his or her own work; and whether they bring an appropriate breadth of evidence to their critique. For instance, do they talk to other people, to their peers, to their students, to their clients, and does the scholar use evaluation to improve the quality of their future work?

6. If a particular piece of work is going to be evaluated as scholarship, an important and critical audience of the scholar is his or her peers. In other words, the work would not be considered as a form of scholarship until it has been documented and could be exchanged in a generalisable way so that people beyond the very local context can learn from, can critique and can build on that knowledge. For example, an interesting piece of teaching material used in a class can at most be considered a scholarly work, as it is only presented in a private encounter between a teacher and a

group of students. It will not be considered a work of scholarship of teaching unless it is systematically documented and disseminated to peers of the relevant field for wider debate and exchanges. In short, the six criteria set out in paragraph 5 above will form the basis on which the respective panels would evaluate the output in a particular category of scholarship. In order to be evaluated, outputs should be properly documented to produce evidence and the panels will seek to measure the impact on the basis of benchmark to be operationalised later.

7. To summarize, the quality dimensions proposed above allow sufficient flexibility for the same set of criteria to be applied judiciously to different types of projects from different disciplinary traditions, while enabling one to keep in view the qualities that discovery, integration, application and teaching share as scholarly activities.

**Research Assessment Exercise 2014**  
**List of Panels and Cost Centres**

<b>Panel</b>		<b>Cost Centre</b>	
1	Biology	6	biological sciences
		9	other biological sciences (incl. environmental biology)
		10	agriculture & food science
		22	biotechnology
2	Health Sciences	1	clinical medicine
		2	clinical dentistry
		3	clinical veterinary studies
		4	nursing
		5	other health care professions
		7	pre-clinical studies
		60	Chinese medicine
		62	optometry
63	rehabilitation sciences		
3	Physical Sciences	11	physics & astronomy
		12	chemistry
		13	materials science
		14	earth sciences (incl. oceanography, meteorology)
		15	other physical sciences (incl. environmental science)
		32	mathematics & statistics
4	Electrical & Electronic Engineering	17	electrical engineering
		18	electronic engineering
5	Computer Science / Information Technology	33	computer studies/science (incl. information technology (IT))
6	Engineering	16	mechanical engineering
		19	chemical engineering
		20	production engineering (incl. manufacturing & industrial engineering)
		21	marine engineering
		23	materials technology
		24	textile technology
		26	other technologies (incl. environmental engineering & nautical studies)
		65	biomedical engineering

Panel		Cost Centre	
7	Built Environment	25	civil engineering (incl. construction engineering & management)
		27	architecture
		28	building technology
		29	planning
		30	surveying, land
		31	surveying, other
8	Law	34	law
9	Business & Economics	35	accountancy
		37	business
		39	hotel management & tourism
		40	economics
		66	finance
10	Social Sciences	8	psychology
		36	political science (incl. public policy & administration & international relations)
		41	geography
		42	social work
		61	sociology & anthropology
		43	other social studies
		49	communications & media studies
11	Humanities	44	Chinese language & literature
		45	English language & literature
		48	translation
		50	history
		51	other arts/humanities
		67	area studies (e.g. Japanese studies, European studies, etc.)
		68	philosophy & religious studies
		69	linguistics & language studies
		70	cultural studies
12	Creative Arts, Performing Arts & Design	52	visual arts
		53	performing arts
		54	music
		55	other creative arts
		56	design
		64	creative media
13	Education	58	physical education & sports science
		71	curriculum & instruction
		72	education administration & policy
		73	other education

**Guidelines on Handling Double-weighted Outputs**

(a) **Justification for a Double-weighting Request**

An academic requesting the double-weighting of a research output should justify in a statement not more than 100 words as to why the output merits double-weighting, e.g. how the research output (e.g. its scale or scope) required research effort equivalent to that required to produce two or more single outputs.

(b) **“Reserve” Item for Double-weighting Request**

An academic may request to double-weight an item produced in the “gap year” period or in the “assessment year” period. He/She is required to indicate whether a “reserve” item will be submitted for the double-weighting request. In any case, an academic can submit only one “gap year” item, whether it is submitted as a regular output item, double-weight request item or “reserve” item. For any request to double-weight a “gap year” item, the corresponding “reserve” item must be within the “assessment year” period.

(c) **Double-weighting Request for a Co-authored Item**

Co-authored items may in principle be identified and double-weighted by one or more of their authors, bearing in mind that the double-weighting claim should apply to the effort of the submitting author. However, the guiding principles on co-authorship in paragraph 5.16 of the Guidance Notes shall prevail, i.e. submission of the same output by multiple academics from the same institution will only be counted as one output, while a co-authored research output submitted by different institutions may be counted as one output for each of the institutions as long as each submitting academic has made a substantial contribution to the co-authored output.

(d) **Criteria for Consideration**

In general, journal articles, book chapters or conference papers are not normally permitted to be double-weighted, whereas single-authored monographs, for instance, may be considered. Assessment and grading of a double-weight request item should be same as that for regular output items. There is no presumption that double-weighted outputs will be assessed at a higher quality.

**Quality Profile of a Cost Centre**

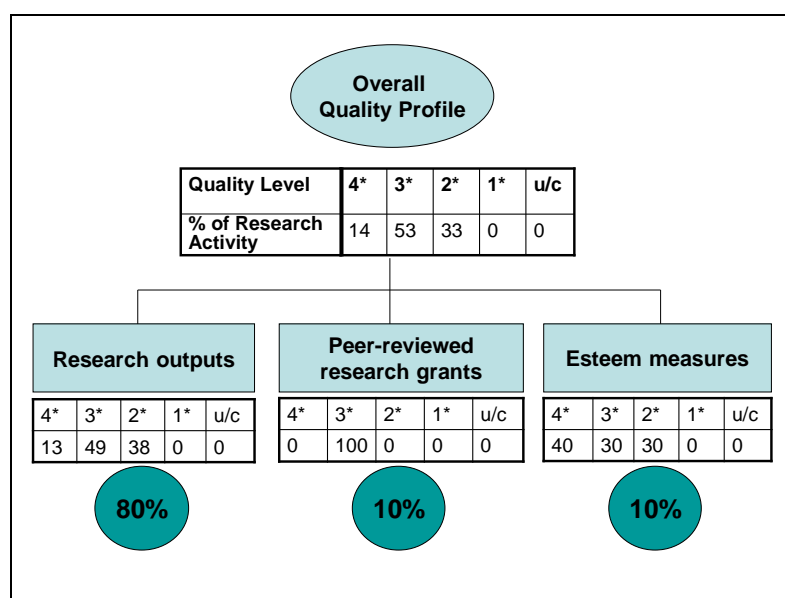
1. The overall quality profile will show the proportion of research activity in a cost centre judged to meet the definitions at each starred level. The overall quality profile will be published in steps of 1 per cent. The following table shows the overall quality profiles of two institutions under the same cost centre.

Cost centre A	Number of eligible staff	Percentage of research activity judged to meet the standard for:				
		4*	3*	2*	1*	u/c
Institution X	40	18	41	25	16	0
Institution Y	60	12	32	45	10	1

2. A panel will produce an overall quality profile by assessing three distinct elements – research outputs, peer-reviewed research grants and esteem measures – and produce a sub-profile for each element. The three sub-profiles will be aggregated to form the overall quality profile for the cost centre, with each element weighted as follows (assuming that the panel has split the 20% weighting equally between competitive peer-reviewed research grants and esteem measures):

- Outputs: 80 per cent
- External competitive peer-reviewed research grants: 10 per cent
- Esteem measures: 10 per cent.

**Building a quality profile: a worked example**



## Rounding

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

4. Using the worked example above, first calculate the initial overall profile, that is, the sum of the weighted sub-profiles for outputs, grants and esteem measures.

	Starred levels				
	4*	3*	2*	1*	u/c
<b>Outputs</b>	13	49	38	0	0
<b>Peer-reviewed research grants</b>	0	100	0	0	0
<b>Esteem measures</b>	40	30	30	0	0
<b>Weighted</b>					
<b>80%</b>	10.4	39.2	30.4	0	0
<b>10%</b>	0	10.0	0	0	0
<b>10%</b>	4.0	3.0	3.0	0	0
<b>Initial profile</b>	14.4	52.2	33.4	0	0

5. Cumulative rounding works in three stages:

(a) The initial profile is:

4*	3*	2*	1*	u/c
14.4	52.2	33.4	0	0

(b) Stage 1: Calculate the cumulative totals (for example the cumulative total at 3\* or better is  $52.2 + 14.4 = 66.6$ ).

4*	3* or better	2* or better	1* or better	u/c or better
14.4	66.6	100	100	100

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

4*	3* or better	2* or better	1* or better	u/c or better
14	67	100	100	100

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

4*	3*	2*	1*	u/c
14	53	33	0	0



**University Grants Committee  
Research Assessment Exercise 2014**

**Report of \_\_\_\_\_ Panel\***

**(a) Approach and Methodology**

- a general description on how output items were assigned to panel members (without naming individual panel members) and relevant considerations
- any sub-group(s) formed within the panel
- any guidelines formulated within the panel for the grading of research outputs, external peer-reviewed research grants, and esteem measures
- any special guidelines on making reference to metrics, impact factor

**(b) Composition and Meetings of the Panel**

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

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

- number of institutions, number of eligible staff by head count and number of submissions assessed by cost centre
- general overview of the quality of submissions in areas under the panel's ambit and other observation

**(d) Feedback on Individual Institutions' Submissions in Each Cost Centre**

- general comments on the performance of individual institutions in each cost centre having regard to the Research Strategy Statements submitted by institutions

**(e) Impressionistic Lateral Comparison by Non-Local Panel Members**

- performance of the eight UGC-funded institutions as a whole in comparison with similar institutions outside Hong Kong, e.g. those in panel members' home countries
- performance of the eight UGC-funded institutions by cost centre/discipline in comparison with those of individual panel members' affiliated institution(s) and similar institutions outside Hong Kong  
[in all cases without naming particular Hong Kong institutions]

**(f) Difficulties Encountered and Recommendations for Future RAE**

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

**(g) Suggestion of Case Studies**

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

Panel Convenor : \_\_\_\_\_

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Guidelines for Non-Local RAE Panel Members  
in Offering Comments for a Lateral Comparison**

(for non-local members only)

**Background**

In the RAE 2006, overseas members provided an impressionistic lateral comparison of the quality standard adopted in the exercise with that in other countries/regions. As the RAE 2014 is benchmarking against international standards, non-local members of this exercise are invited to offer comments for a lateral comparison of the research profile of UGC-funded institutions as a whole with that in other countries/regions.

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

**Comments to be offered**

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

- (a) how the research performance of UGC-funded institutions as a whole compares with the research profile of similar institution(s) outside Hong Kong; and
- (b) how the research performance of UGC-funded institutions by cost centre/discipline compares with the research profile of similar institution(s) outside Hong Kong.

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

5. Non-local members are invited to forward their comments to their respective Panel Convenors as soon as possible after the formal panel meetings for incorporation into the panel reports which are due by 1 November 2014.

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

### **Reference Materials**

7. In order that members are in a better position to offer comments on lateral comparison, it is useful for members to first acquire a general understanding of the different institutions in Hong Kong. In this regard, the following materials will be made available to members for reference:

- (a) Research Strategy Statement of each UGC-funded institution;
- (b) Research Strategy Statement and summary of research activities by cost centre of each UGC-funded institution;
- (c) Roles and missions of UGC-funded institutions;
- (d) Summary of funding for new research projects by institution;
- (e) Summary of funding for on-going research projects by institution; and
- (f) Research outputs by broad subject area by institution.