

Changes for REF2021

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History of REF

- **1986 Research Selectivity Exercise RSE**
37 subject-based units, 5 best publications in past 5 years
- **1989 Research Selectivity Exercise RSE**
152 UoAs, 2 publications per member of staff
- **1992 Research Assessment Exercise RAE**
Rating 1-5, 27 UoAs, 2 publications & other outputs
- **1996 Research Assessment Exercise RAE**
Rating 1 – 5*, 69 UoAs, 4 publications per staff member
- **2001 Research Assessment Exercise RAE**
1 – 5*, 69 UoAs, Up to 4 outputs per staff member
- **2008 Research Assessment Exercise RAE**
1*- 4*, 67 UoA, 4 outputs per staff member
- **2014 Research Excellence Framework REF**
Rating 1*- 4*, 36 UoAs, 4 outputs per staff member
Impact Case Studies
- **2021 REF.....**

What/Why REF?

- Historically, research assessment exercises have had three main purposes:
 - providing accountability for public money spent on research;
 - providing information for benchmarking;
 - informing the allocation of selective (QR) funding.
- The Stern review of the REF in 2015 identified three further reasons:
 - providing a rich evidence base to inform strategic decisions about national research priorities;
 - creating a strong performance incentive for HEIs and individual researchers;
 - informing decisions of resource allocation by individual HEIs.

Elements of REF2021

- **Outputs:** 60% of the assessment (65% in 2014) and consists of outputs produced by the Unit during the assessment period (1st January 2014 to 31st December 2020).
- **Impact:** 25% of the assessment (20% in 2014) and consists of case studies detailing the benefits from the research of the Unit. Approx one case study for every ten members of staff will be needed. Crucially, the impact stays with the institution where the research was conducted, i.e. it doesn't move with the member of staff.
- **Environment:** 15% of the assessment (15% in 2014) and describes the environment a Unit has to support its research: research strategy, staff development and support for PGRs, collaboration both inside and outside academia and equality and diversity. It also includes data on research income and post-graduate degrees awarded.

Changes since 2014

- All staff to be entered with SRR.
- Pool of outputs ranging from 1-6 for total number of staff (average 2.5 outputs/fte)
- broader definition of impact to emphasise public engagement and to include impact on teaching

Impact and REF2021

- Notion of Impact first introduced in 2014
- Defined as: an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia.
- Impact has been considered a beneficial addition to the REF and will be worth 25% in the REF2021 assessment. Demonstrating the effect of research on the economy and wider society has had many positive uses beyond obtaining quality related (QR) funding.

What is an Impact Case Study?

- A **REF Impact case study** (ICS) is a narrative that describes how research, conducted during a specific time-frame at a named institution, resulted in a change, had an effect on or benefited culture, the economy, the environment, health, public policy, quality of life or society using qualitative and quantitative evidence. The impacts must have occurred during the REF census period.

Latest guidance on Impact from RE

- final guidance and procedures for REF2021 are still subject to a short consultation, with the final documents to be published in January 2019.
- Key headlines:
 - The detailed guidance is largely as expected following the publication of the 'initial decisions' last year.
 - Impact from research conducted by Category C Staff is eligible.
 - There is additional guidance on Impact from teaching.
 - The impact case study template is now available and is subject to a 5-page limit. Although the word limits for the underpinning research and details of the impact sections have not increased.

ICSs required per fte for REF2021

Up to FTE	No REF2021 case studies
19.99	2
34.99	3
49.99	4
64.99	5
79.99	6
94.99	7
109.99	8
159.99	9
209.99	10
259.99	11
309.99	12
359.99	13
409.99	14
459.99	15
509.99	16
559.99	17
609.99	18
659.99	19
709.99	20

Guidance....

- Case studies can be based on a broad body of work or research activity rather than be linked to individual outputs;
- Where impact on teaching within the submitting unit's own institution is included in a case study, sub-panels will give consideration to the following:
 - the **reach** of the impact, that is the extent or diversity of the communities affected by the change to teaching practice;
 - the **significance** of the impact, that is, the extent to which teaching practice was enriched, influenced or changed at the organisation(s) involved and/or the extent to which individuals experiencing changed teaching practice were enriched, influenced or changed.
- Audit evidence of impact to be submitted by January 2021.

Case Studies from 2014

- Case studies continued from examples submitted in 2014 will be eligible for submission in REF 2021 (REF 2017/01, paragraph 26.b.).
- All continued case studies will have to meet the same eligibility criteria as new case studies, including timeframes.
- Submitting units will need to identify continued case studies in the case study template.
- Continued or developed case studies will need to provide evidence of additionality to the example submitted in 2014.