



Printable summary of your responses

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Your responses

Generic questions

1a

Overall draft panel criteria and working methods

The generic and four main panel statements achieve an appropriate balance between consistency across the exercise and allowing for justifiable differences between the four main panels.

Disagree

1b

Are there particular aspects of the criteria and working methods that should be more consistent across all the main panels? Are there differences between the disciplines that justify further differentiation between the main panel criteria? Where referring to particular main panels, please state which one(s).

Our membership has expressed concerns regarding the lack of regard the overly-generic requirement for the number, scope and weighting of outputs across the Framework. It seems particularly problematic that the requirement for four outputs is standardised across all the main panels, when working methods, publication timetables and typical output types vary considerably between the humanities and social sciences as compared to medicine, science and mathematics.

We would appreciate much clearer guidance on the particular criteria on which outputs will be judged suitable for double-weighting in Main Panel D, which may address and/or mitigate the effect of these differences. We also appreciate and welcome the ability for submissions to include "reserve outputs" in Main Panel D.

We suggest, in addition, that the number of impact case studies to be submitted be more sensitive to the number of researchers in submission. We would argue for the provision for a submission to include only a single impact study should the number of researchers in a submission be below 5, in order that small departments and subject areas within HEIs are not unfairly disadvantaged by virtue of their size.

2a

Individual staff circumstances

The proposals for determining the number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty, for staff with a range of individual circumstances, are appropriate (Part 1, Tables 2 and 3).

Strongly disagree

2b

Please comment on these proposals. Respondents are also invited to comment specifically on:

- whether Tables 2 and 3 are set at appropriate levels
- the proposed options for taking account of pregnancy and maternity (Part 1, paragraph 62)
- whether a consistent approach across the exercise is appropriate, or whether there are any specific differences in the nature of research that justify differences in the approach between UOAs or main panels.

If commenting in respect of particular panels or disciplines, please state which.

The AAH understands that HEFCE have already received substantial and substantive feedback on the issue of maternity leave. In the draft criteria, REF seems to be ignoring the issue of maternity leave and suggesting that staff on FTE contracts are required to produce the same number of items for submission (4) as peers who have not taken any maternity leave during the REF cycle. This appears to be an issue of inequality and discrimination, and we wish to strongly add our voice to calls for maternity-leave periods to be accounted for by automatically reducing the number of outputs for the researcher concerned.

With regards to Table 2, the usual publication lag of up to two years from submission to publication within our discipline may place an unreasonable burden on early career scholars. Given the hard deadline of publication of outputs, early career scholars starting in July 2011 would be required to have completed two submissable outputs by September 2011, which seems unreasonable. More flexibility in reductions for Panel D would thus be welcomed.

Main panel D criteria and working methods

D3a

Main panel criteria and working methods

The main panel statement achieves an appropriate balance between consistency and allowing for discipline-based differences between the sub-panels.

Disagree

D3b

Please comment on the balance between consistency and allowing for discipline-based differences between the sub-panels within this main panel. Please state the UOA(s) on which you are commenting.

For UOA34, in paragraph 27, art history is not sufficiently demarcated as a distinct discipline ("technical art history" is too narrow; "historical, social and cultural studies" is too broad). We would insist on the recognition of art historical study be explicitly included in the list of expected subject areas.

We retain concerns about the plausibility and feasibility of serious assessment of academic art history alongside fine art practice and – even more so—the feasibility of assessing equally critically and in critical and commensurate relation to each other specialist art historical research and, e.g., management and innovation studies.

D4a

Submissions and units of assessment (Section 1)

Do the UOA descriptor and boundary statements provide a clear and appropriate description of the disciplines covered by the UOAs? Please include any suggestions for refining the descriptors and state which UOA(s) you are commenting on.

The areas covered in the description are, in fact, not all 'disciplines' (eg visual and material culture'); some are subsections of disciplines or even methodological approaches within a range of disciplines.

D4b

Please comment on the main panel's criteria in relation to multiple submissions in its UOAs.

We welcome the recognition that multiple submissions are expected in UOA34, given the fact that the UOA straddles disciplines which are often (even usually) distinct within HEIs (such as fine art and history of art). Nevertheless, we would appreciate clearer guidance on when multiple submissions are appropriate, and a less onerous approach in requesting and preparing them.

D5a

Assessment criteria: outputs (Section 2)

Overall, the main panel criteria relating to outputs are clear and appropriate.

Neither agree or disagree

D5b

Please comment on the criteria in Section 2, in particular on where further clarification is required or where refinements could be made.

It is difficult to see how panel for UoA 34 can realistically 'apply the same criteria to all outputs regardless of their form' when form itself is one of the principal variants at play here and form encompasses materials, materiality, content and meaning. This claim seems to undercut and ignore some of the most profound theoretical insights that Art History itself has produced.

We are concerned that a multi-authored output submitted to various UoAs in the same panel or even different main panels may be adversely affected by the differences in assessment criteria, and that these restrictions may even act to deter interdisciplinary collaboration going forward. It is not inconceivable for a single collaborative piece of work to have been undertaken by researchers working in different disciplines who will be submitting to different panels, but whose output's merits are best judged by one panel in particular. There seems to be no mechanism within the output criteria for truly inter- or trans-disciplinary work to be fairly judged on its merits for all researchers involved, even given the (underdeveloped) section of the guidance on cross-referral.

In "Output Types", para. 54, "conference contributions" stands out. Are conference papers to be considered in the same framework as outputs which have a more tangible, published form? If conference contributions are to be considered as outputs, why not research-lead teaching? Further, is it really possible, given the huge variation in output types, that certain types of output will not be advantaged or disadvantaged during their assessment, even unwittingly, due to in-built biases, traditions and expectations?

As discussed earlier, the actual criteria for doubleweighting are not very clear. The welcome provision of the ability to submit "reserve" outputs mitigates the risk of submitting requests for double-weighting, but the exercise still seems more strategic than truly reflective in the way it is currently framed. The criteria for double-weighting and the basis on which requests for double-weighting will be judged must be clarified and, preferably, standardised.

We would also welcome the removal of ambiguity in Table 1 where the terms "internationally excellent" are included. Though the clarification in paragraph 52 is clear, it would seem preferable simply to remove references to "international" altogether.

D6a

Assessment criteria: impact (Section 3)

Overall, the main panel's criteria relating to impact are appropriate and helpful to institutions in preparing submissions.

Disagree

D6b

Please comment on the criteria in Section 3, in particular on where further clarification is required or where refinements could be made.

Sections of our membership have suggested that the assessment of impact which does not take into account the critical impact of research submitted on the intellectual and academic work and on the academy itself, and that an output which is revolutionary in scholarly terms would be judged to have had no impact at all under the terms of reference here.

This category seems to invite self-aggrandisement and unverifiable claims, and we would appreciate clarification as to how impacts will be assessed. What is the balance in assessment between empirical and narrative evidence, for example?

D7a

Assessment criteria: environment (Section 4)

Overall, the main panel criteria relating to environment are clear and appropriate.

Agree

D7b

Please comment on the criteria in Section 4, in particular on where further clarification is required or where refinements could be made.

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D8a

Working methods (Section 5)

Overall, the working methods of the main panel and its sub-panels are clear and appropriate.

Neither agree or disagree

D8b

Please comment on the working methods, in particular on where further clarification is required or where refinements could be made.

As stated above, we appreciate the provisions for cross-referral insofar as it allows for assessment by experts outside the UoA itself, but remain concerned that the particular criteria on which interdisciplinary work will be addressed remains at issue. Will the cross-referred work still be judged under the particular and specific criteria of the originating UoA? Will there be communication between panels and between UoAs in cases where multi-authored, interdisciplinary work is submitted to more than one panel? Will it be possible for the same piece of work to be judged to be of differing quality in such cases?

Finally, we would hope and expect that para. 122 included more much specific and quantified information on how sub-panels will apportion the enormous volumes of outputs they are expected to receive. As it stands, the ways in which panels will decide which work to examine in detail are entirely unclear.

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