

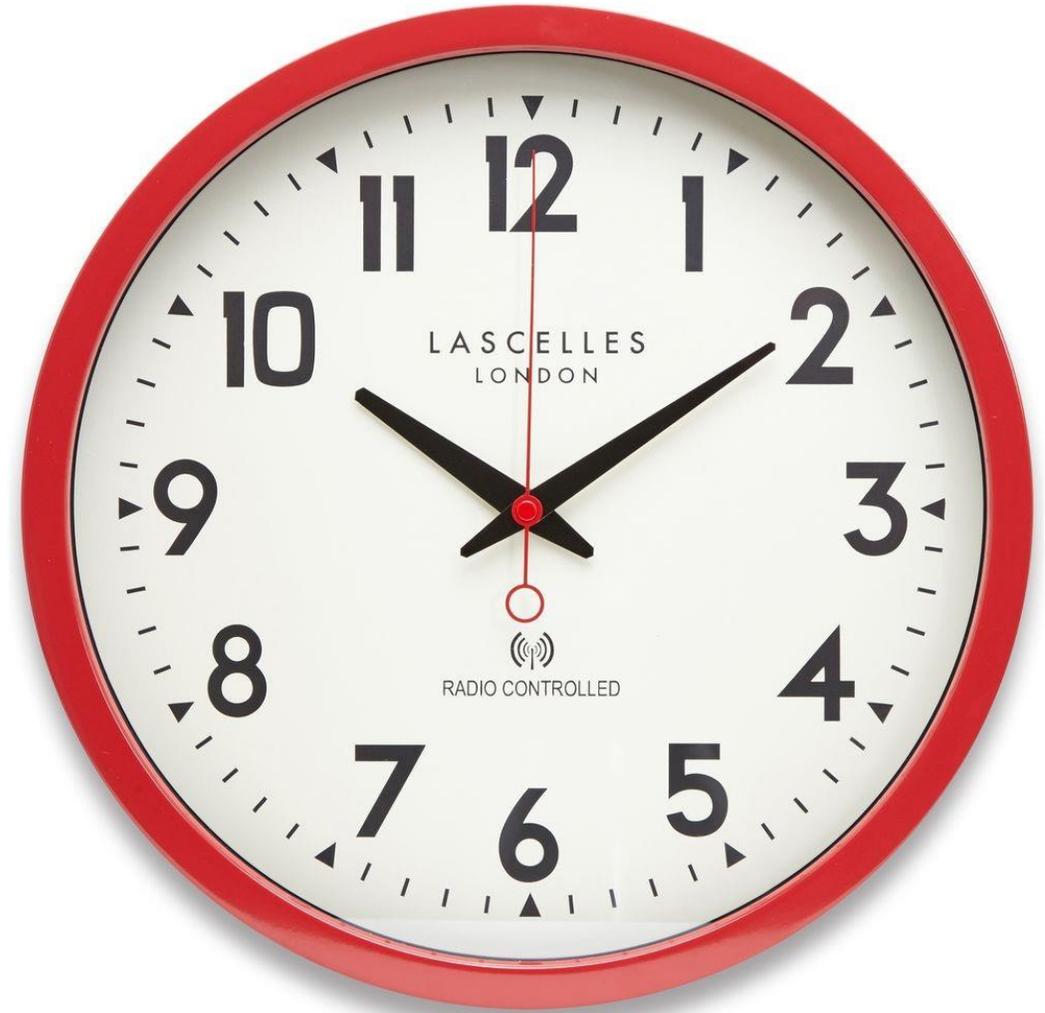
#REF2021

REF2021 – the countdown

REF census
31 July 2020

REF submission
27 November 2020

679 days to go....



Jane Millar
Chair Main Panel C
UCLan
18th January 2019

REF 2021

Follow us on Twitter
[@REF_2021](https://twitter.com/REF_2021)

Email us: info@ref.ac.uk



Research
England



Scottish Funding Council
Promoting further and higher education

Cyngor Cyllido Addysg
Uwch Cymru
Higher Education Funding
Council for Wales

hefcw



Department for the
Economy
www.economy-ni.gov.uk

Today's session:

REF2021

1. Overview and key changes since 2014
2. REF organisation & governance – who does what & when?
3. Consultation - Main Panel C issues
4. Q and A

REF - overview

REF2021

- Undertaken by the REF team on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies
- Key purposes:
 - To provide accountability for public investment in research and produce evidence of the benefits of this investment.
 - To provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks, for use within the HE sector and for public information.
 - To inform the selective allocation of funding for research –ca. £2bn per year.
- Assessed across three areas:
 - Outputs (e.g. publications, performance, prototypes) – 60%
 - Impact (the benefit of research for wider society) – 25%
 - Research environment (resources, strategies to support research) – 15%

Key changes since REF 2014

REF2021

- Submission of all staff with significant responsibility for research
- Transitional approach to non-portability of outputs
- Decoupling of staff from outputs
- Open access requirements
- Additional measures to support interdisciplinary research
- Broadening and deepening definitions of impact

Timetable

REF2021

Spring 2018	Panels met to develop criteria
Summer to Autumn 2018	Consultation on draft guidance and criteria Draft guidance on codes of practice Consultation deadline: noon, 15 October 2018
Early 2019	Publish final guidance and criteria
2019	Complete preparation of submission systems Submission deadline for codes of practice: noon, 7 June 2019
2020	Submission phase Submission deadline: noon, 27 November 2020
2021	Assessment phase Publication of results: December 2021

Key committees and panels

REF2021

REF Steering Group

- Responsibility for policy and programme of work. Members of each of the UK higher education funding bodies, chaired by Stephen Hill, Director of Research at Research England.

Expert panels

- The main panels oversee the assessment, the sub-panels review submissions.

Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP)

- To advise the funding bodies, the REF team and the REF panels on the implementation of equality measures in the REF. Eight members, chaired by Professor Dianne Berry.

Interdisciplinary Research Advisory Panel (IDAP)

- To advise the REF team, REF panel chairs and the UK funding bodies on interdisciplinary research. Fifteen members, chaired Professor Dame Athene Donald.

Environment Pilot Panel

- To pilot the assessment of the institutional-level environment submissions. Eighteen members chaired by Professor Chris Day.

Data Collection Steering Group

- To provide oversight and direction in the development of the REF submissions system.

Expert panels

34 sub-panels working under the guidance of four main panels

Main panel responsibilities

- Developing the panel criteria and working methods
- Ensuring adherence to the criteria/procedures and consistent application of the overall assessment standards
- Signing off the outcomes

Sub-panel responsibilities

- Contributing to the main panel criteria and working methods
- Assessing submissions and recommending the outcomes

Main Panel members: chairs of SPs, international, user, interdisciplinary

Panels supported by REF Team at Research England, including seconded secretariat

Main Panel C: sub-panels

REF2021

- 13 Architecture, Built Environment and Planning
- 14 Geography and Environmental Studies
- 15 Archaeology
- 16 Economics and Econometrics
- 17 Business and Management Studies
- 18 Law
- 19 Politics and International Studies
- 20 Social Work and Social Policy
- 21 Sociology
- 22 Anthropology and Development Studies
- 23 Education
- 24 Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism

Membership still to be finalised

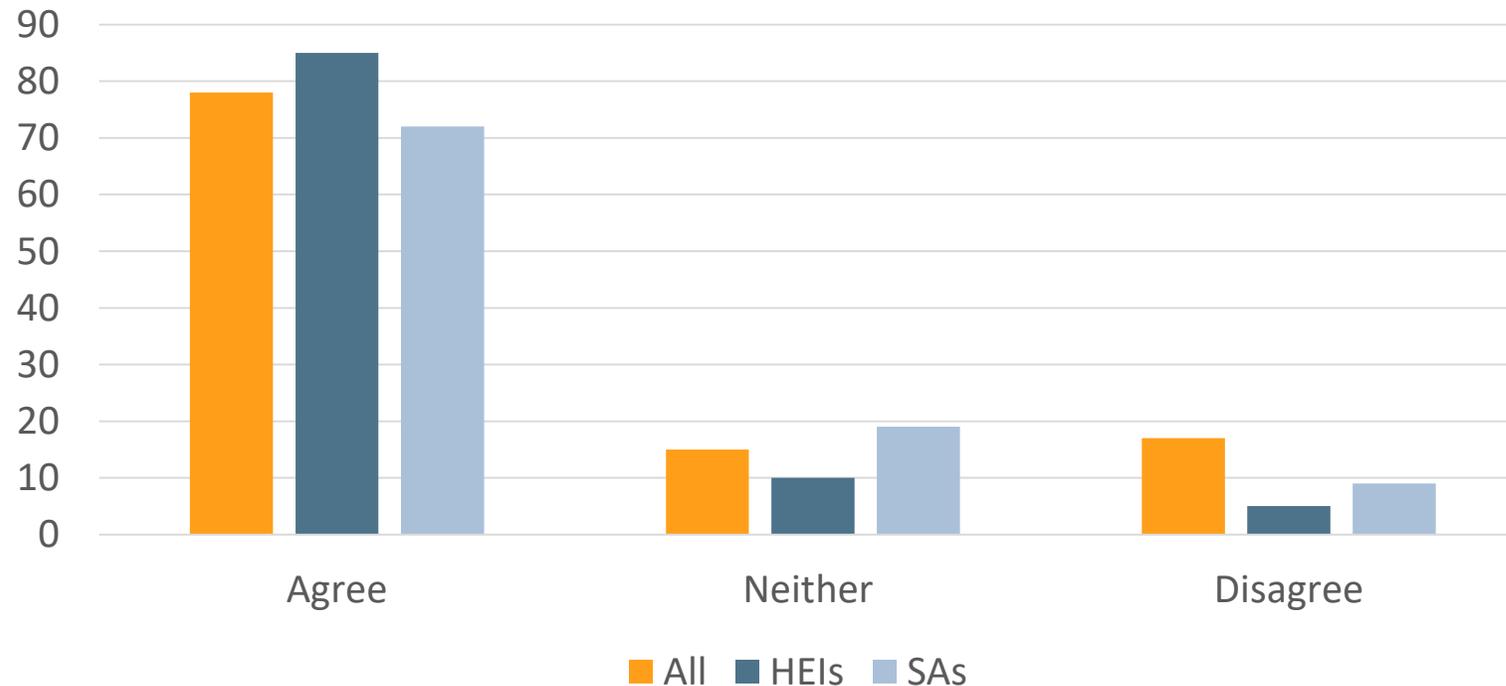
REF2021

- Academic, interdisciplinary, user
- Two-stage appointment process (via nominations):
 1. Criteria-setting phase – sufficient members appointed to ensure each sub-panel has appropriate expertise
 2. Assessment phase – recruitment in 2020 of additional panel members and assessors to ensure appropriate breadth of expertise and number of panel members necessary for the assessment phase, informed by the survey of institutions' submission intentions in 2019.

Consultation

REF2021

Overall, the 'Panel criteria and working methods' achieves an appropriate balance between consistency and allowing for discipline-based differences between the panels



- Around 80% agreed that criteria are clear and appropriate
- Issues:
 - Consistency
 - Clarity
- In response:
 - Balance guidance & prescription

Panel criteria consultation document REF2021

Aims

- Build on REF 2014 criteria to create continuity
- Achieve consistency across the main panels and sub-panels, where possible, while taking into account disciplinary differences

Structure

- Unit of assessment (UOA) descriptors
- Panel criteria (submissions, outputs, impact, environment)
- Working methods

NB – final version to be published 31st January

Assessment criteria

REF2021

Outputs

193. 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 new empirical findings or material; engage with new and/or complex problems; develop innovative research methods, methodologies and analytical techniques; show imaginative scope; provide new arguments, 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.

194. 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.

195. Rigour will be understood as the extent to which the work demonstrates intellectual coherence and integrity, and adopts robust and appropriate concepts, analyses, theories and methodologies.

Assessment criteria

REF2021

Impact

276. **Reach** will be understood as the extent and/or diversity of the beneficiaries of the impact, as relevant to the nature of the impact.

277. **Significance** will be understood as the degree to which the impact has enabled, enriched, influenced, informed or changed the performance, policies, practices, products, services, understanding, awareness or well-being of the beneficiaries.

278. The sub-panels will make an overall judgement about the reach and significance of impacts, rather than assessing each criterion separately. While case studies need to demonstrate both reach and significance, the balance between them may vary at all quality levels. The sub-panels will exercise their judgement without privileging or disadvantaging either reach or significance.

279. Reach will be assessed in terms of the extent to which the potential constituencies, number or groups of beneficiaries have been affected; it will not be assessed in geographic terms, nor in terms of absolute numbers of beneficiaries. The criteria will be applied wherever the impact has been felt, regardless of geography or location, and whether in the UK or abroad.

Assessment criteria

REF2021

Environment

318. **Vitality** will be understood as 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 national and international research and user communities and is able to attract excellent postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers.

319. **Sustainability** will be understood as the extent to which the research environment ensures the future health, diversity, well-being and wider contribution of the unit and the discipline(s), including investment in people and in infrastructure.

320. In assessing the environment element of submissions, panels will assess vitality and sustainability in terms appropriate to the scale and diversity of the research activity the submitting unit supports, and as appropriate for its subject area(s). They will assess vitality and sustainability in terms of both the research environment within the submitting unit, and its participation in and contribution to its subject discipline, academic community and wider society.

204. In assessing outputs, the sub-panels will look for evidence of originality, significance and rigour, and apply the generic definitions of the starred quality levels as follows:

a. In assessing work as being **four star** (quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour), sub-panels will expect to see some of the following characteristics:

- outstandingly novel in developing concepts, paradigms, techniques or outcomes
- a primary or essential point of reference
- a formative influence on the intellectual agenda
- application of exceptionally rigorous research design and techniques of investigation and analysis
- generation of an exceptionally significant data set or research resource.

b. In assessing work as being **three star** (quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence), sub-panels will expect to see some of the following characteristics:

- novel in developing concepts, paradigms, techniques or outcomes
- an important point of reference
- contributing very important knowledge, ideas and techniques which are likely to have a lasting influence on the intellectual agenda
- application of robust and appropriate research design and techniques
- of investigation and analysis
- generation of a substantial data set or research resource.

c. In assessing work as being **two star** (quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour), sub-panels will expect to see some of the following characteristics:

- providing important knowledge and the application of such knowledge
- contributing to incremental and cumulative advances in knowledge
- thorough and professional application of appropriate research design and techniques of investigation and analysis.

Main Panel C supplementary criteria – level definitions

REF2021

d. In assessing work as being **one star** (quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour), sub-panels will expect to see some of the following characteristics:

- providing useful knowledge, but unlikely to have more than a minor influence
- an identifiable contribution to understanding, but largely framed by existing paradigms or traditions of enquiry
- competent application of appropriate research design and techniques of investigation and analysis.

e. Research will be graded as **'unclassified'** if it falls below the quality levels described above or does not meet the definition of research used for the REF.

MPC issues in consultation

REF2021

- Criminology
- Outputs: co-authored; double-weighting; interdisciplinary research
- Impact: broader and deeper; scrutiny
- Environment: weighting

Further information

- www.ref.ac.uk (includes all relevant documents and FAQs)
- Enquiries from staff at HEIs should be directed to their nominated institutional contact (available at www.ref.ac.uk/contact)
- Other enquiries to info@ref.ac.uk