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The Development of REF: Current Thinking and Progress

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The end of RAE2008: lessons learnt

- There were 6 sub-panels under Panel G (Engineering)
- Approximately 25% of the overall quality profile was awarded on the basis of metrics
- At the last main Panel G meeting several aspects were identified



- Confidence was expressed in assessment of the research outputs including applied research
- Converting the two metrics of PhDs awarded and research income into a profile was difficult



- Small submissions skewed the metrics approach: size of return vs quality is important
- Discrimination arising from profiling across groups
- Early career researchers – issues with the assessment
- Rounding to 5% in quality levels



REF: Expert Advisory Groups

- Drawn largely from Chairs and members of RAE panels plus nominations from RCs and other key stakeholders
- Over 100 members with broad coverage (5 from Engineering)
- 3 rounds of meetings covering all key features of REF:

February 2009

April/May 2009

June 2009



Proposed timetable:

- Up to summer 2009:
 - conclude the bibliometrics pilot
 - take advice from EAGs
 - hold discussions with a wide range of stakeholders
- Autumn 2009:
 - publish proposals on the key features of the REF for consultation with the sector



Proposed timetable (contd):

- Early 2010:
 - announce outcomes of the consultation
- 2013:
 - complete full assessment of all subjects through the REF to drive funding from 2014



Questions being considered by the EAGs

- Panel/subject configuration options
- How can HEIs reflect the impact of research
- Key generic elements of assessment
- Types of evidence and indicators
- Options for combining evidence/indicators to produce overall quality profiles



Questions being considered by the EAGs (contd)

- Eligibility
- Output creditation/number of outputs
- Number of expert panels
- Consistency aspects across panels
- Scope for reducing burden of data collection
- Alignment of REF to an institution's research management



Some reflections from the EAGs

- Scope for fewer panels but:

Increase in members per panel, not necessarily reduce burden

Coverage/lack of coherence

Larger disciplines in broad panels, impact on 'smaller' disciplines

Limited scope for fewer, broader panels



- Impact:

Important to take more explicit account

HEIs might produce a portfolio involving longer and shorter term impacts using case studies

Enabling impact: KT engagement with users and the public

Eligibility:

Retain this but consider the use of a more consistent methodology



- **Outputs:**
4 outputs suggested to be roughly right but some flexibility needed, e.g. '2 in A&H but 4 in STEM'
- **Output creditation:**
To follow the individual
- **Consistency:**
Use same % outputs for all panels
Propose the use of a 'template' for RA5 and better guidelines
International experts on all panels



- Burden reduction:
 - Communication needed ASAP on what data collection to enable HEIs to introduce appropriate IT systems
 - High level aggregation will reduce work
 - Use of more pro-formas



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To
Discover
And
Understand.