

# REF 2021

## Institutional-Level Environment Pilot – HEI workshops: May 2019



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# REF 2021

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# Agenda

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- 9.30 - Arrival and refreshments
- 10.00 - Introduction and overview of the day
- 10.05 - Background to Institutional-Level assessment
- 10.15 - Overview of the guidance and criteria
- 10.30 - Panel Q+A
- 10.45 - Breakout to tables for facilitated discussion: Session 1. *Each table appoint a scribe/rapporteur to record/provide feedback*
- 11.25 - Break
- 11.35 – Table discussions: Session 2
- 12.15 - Plenary: feedback from table groups
- 12.45 - Key issues and Q+A
- 12.55 - Summary and next steps
- 13.00 Close

# Background to the IL Pilot

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- Stern Review of REF 2014 - Proposed institutional environment submission.
- Three main goals:
  - Reduce duplication
  - Bring focus on to aspects of the environment which represent institutional activity
  - Capture institution wide strategic and cross cutting activities.

# Feedback from 2017 consultation

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- HEI feedback generally supportive of including IL environment.
- Funding bodies agreed to run a pilot IL environment submission for REF 2021:
  - Pilot assessment to take place alongside Unit Level assessment.
  - Assessed by the Institutional-Level Environment Pilot Panel.
  - Assessment of IL environment will not contribute to final profiles.
  - IL submission will be available to sub-panels to support assessment of the UL environment submission.

# Panel

- Chair: Professor Chris Day – VC Newcastle University.
- Panel members, appointed through EOI:

<b>Professor John Cattell</b>	Historic England	<b>Professor Weiru Liu</b>	University of Bristol
<b>Dr Stephen Conway</b>	University of Oxford	<b>Professor Ruth Northway</b>	University of South Wales
<b>Professor Nandini Das</b>	University of Liverpool	<b>Professor Mark Ormerod</b>	Keele University
<b>Professor Michael Fitzpatrick</b>	Coventry University	<b>Professor Murray Pittock</b>	University of Glasgow
<b>Professor Sir Barry Ife</b>	Guildhall School of Music and Drama	<b>Mr Michael Rayner</b>	University of the Highlands and Islands
<b>Professor Andrew Jones</b>	City, University of London	<b>Dr Rosa Scoble</b>	Brunel University London
<b>Professor Linda King</b>	Oxford Brookes University	<b>Professor Martin Tillotson</b>	University of Leeds
<b>Professor Fiona Lettice</b>	University of East Anglia	<b>Mr Alisdair Wotherspoon</b>	Independent
<b>Professor Dewi Lewis</b>	Independent	<b>Professor Dianne Berry (Observer)</b>	University of Reading

# Principles

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- IL Guidance and criteria supplementary to, and consistent with, main REF Guidance and Criteria.
- Submissions more than an aggregation of UL.
- Should reflect IL strategy and policies and articulate/examine cross-cutting central activities.
- Areas of interest:
  - HEI strategy and underpinning factors;
  - Progress since 2014;
  - Investment decisions, impacts across the institution and how this reflects HEI specialisms;
  - Engagement between central and unit level activities.

# Progress

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- Panel met November 2018 to:
  - Set the framework for the guidance, assessment criteria and panel working methods;
  - Consider the evaluation framework.
- Follow-up work to finalise and publish Draft guidance.
- Identification of the main issues for consultation workshops.
- Appointment of EDAP chair as observer, to support consistent approach across REF and inform equalities considerations.

# Finalising the IL guidance and criteria REF2021

- Three sector workshops May 2019.
- To get the views of the sector on the draft IL guidance and criteria.
- Explore the appropriateness and clarity of the guidance and criteria, and identify any emerging concerns.
- Understand HEI perception of benefit and burden.
- Panel will consider feedback in Summer 2019.
- Finalised guidance and criteria will be published in Autumn 2019.



# Guidance and Criteria

# Guidance and Criteria: REF5a

REF2021

- Submission requirements for REF5a:
  - Context and mission (10%)
  - Strategy (30%)
  - People (30%)
  - Income, infrastructure and facilities (30%)
- Differences to REF5b template
  - Focus on organisational context and mission
  - Collaboration, contribution to research base and economy is not included as a separate section

# Assessment criteria

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- Same criteria of vitality and sustainability as UL assessment.
- **Vitality:** promoting and facilitating a culture of collaboration, enabling and actualising impact within research units, within a thriving and inclusive research culture.
- **Sustainability:** ensuring the future health, diversity, wellbeing and wider contribution of the institution and its research units, including investment in people and in infrastructure.

# Word limits

- Word limits for submissions are based on FTE category A staff to be submitted across the whole institution.

Number of Category A submitted staff returned by institution (FTE)	Word limit for environment statement (REF5a)
1 – 99.99	4,000
100 – 499.99	4,500
500 – 999.99	5,000
1000 or more	5,500

# Considerations for assessment

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- Size, structure and specialisms.
- Impact of central strategy, policy and activities.
- Organisational progress against 2014 objectives.
- Strategic aims and plans for future.
- Research culture.
- Central impact and support for activities at disciplinary/unit level.

# Considerations continued...

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- Support for wider impacts and engagement across institutions and outside of academia.
- Support for staff and students, including organisational approach to:
  - Staffing strategy and staff development;
  - Early career researchers;
  - Research students;
  - Equality and diversity.
- Strategies for generating research income.
- Infrastructure and resources and in-kind funding.

# Data analysis and benchmarking

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- Panel will receive data from UL REF4a/b/c submissions which will be aggregated to IL.
  - Are there risks in missing data through this approach?
- Panel will apply clustering for consistency and comparison.
  - Guidance identifies TRAC clustering, are there other/better alternatives?
- Data will also be aggregated to main panel level for each HEI in order to take into account and compare institutional specialisms and focus.

# Indicators for the IL environment

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- Institutions include indicators relevant to their own context.
  - Consider principles and measures developed by Forum for Responsible Research Metrics.
- Panel key areas of interest:
  - Recruitment by age profile;
  - Professors and senior staff by equalities characteristic;
  - Accreditation standards – demonstrate institution-level commitment to staff support and progression. e.g:
    - Athena Swann;
    - Race Equality Charter;
    - HR Excellence in Research.
- Other key measures to consider?



# Quality profile

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- The panel will undertake assessment using the same 4\* model set out in Annex A of the REF Guidance on submissions (REF01/2019).
- Panel will build an IL environment sub-profile for each submission, assessing the elements within each section, and applying weightings given.
- This will not inform the overall sub-profiles for submitting institutions, but will be used to inform views on the inclusion of IL environment for future REF exercises.

# Working methods

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- Panel members are subject to the same standards and conditions for confidentiality and conflicts of interest as all other panel members.
- The work of the panel will be supported by secretariat to advise on process and record decisions.
- Calibration in advance of assessment, with advice from main panel international members.
  - Ongoing monitoring and moderation throughout the assessment to ensure consistency.

# Assessment

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- Each submission will be read and scored independently by three panel members:
  - At least one with previous REF experience.
  - At least one senior academic or research professional.
- Research users will advise on a range of submissions to inform calibration and assessment standards.

# Recommendations and feedback

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- The panel will publish a report on its work to advise on whether assessment at this level should be included in future exercises.
- The guidance and criteria proposes that individual HEI scores will not be published, but anonymised and aggregated scores may be used to support the conclusions and recommendations.
  - We would like to explore institutions' views on publications.
- Narrative feedback on assessment will be provided to heads of institutions.
- The panel will also contribute to evaluation of the process throughout the assessment phase.

# Breakouts:

- Please appoint someone to take notes of discussions.
  - (and send to [admin@ref.ac.uk](mailto:admin@ref.ac.uk) afterwards).
- Please also appoint someone to be spokesperson to feedback.
- Overall questions to consider:
  - Does the guidance make sense and work for HEIs?
  - Are there relevant aspects of the IL environment which won't be captured under the draft guidance and criteria?
- Two 40 min discussion sessions - with a break in between.
- Feedback from tables.
- Identify key issues and Q+A.

# Table discussions – Session 1

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## General

1. Do you consider that the guidance and criteria are clear in their approach and aims?
  - If not, why, and how could they be improved?
2. Do guidance and criteria give confidence that the panel can assess submissions equitably, taking into account relevant factors?
  - If not, why, and how could they be improved?
3. Do institutions consider that the proposed approach minimises, as far as possible, additional burden?
  - How could this be improved?
4. Are there particular elements which cause concern?
  - How do we address these?
5. The panel will not publish scores following the IL assessment but will provide written feedback: the panel's scores will be used to inform the recommendations of the pilot.
  - Do institutions agree that this is the most appropriate approach?

# Table discussions - Session 2

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## 1: Indicators:

- Are the identified indicators relevant and appropriate for assessment at institutional level and relevant across the range of institutions by size, type and speciality?
- Are there relevant and robust indicators which are not currently included and should be? NB these should be relevant across the range of institutions by size, type and speciality.

## 2: Benchmarking:

- The panel will be provided with comparator benchmarking data using the TRAC clustering. Do HEIs consider that this is a robust and relevant approach or is there a better alternative?

## 3: Guidance for preparing submissions.

- Is the required information across the four sections clear, meaningful and reportable at institutional level?
- Does this approach provide sufficient scope for institutions to demonstrate their approach and mechanisms to support research?
- Are any key aspects missing?