Research Assessment and its impact on institutional strategy: an international comparison

EARMA Digital Sessions

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Agenda

1. Research Assessment in the UK

2. Research Assessment in Sweden

3. Our Experiences and Observations

Support

Strategy

Questions
Research Assessment in the UK

• Delivered through the Research Excellence Framework:
  • Providing **accountability** and evidence for public investment in research
  • **Benchmarking** for the sector and public
  • To distribute quality-related **funding** (around £1bn p.a.)
The REF process

- Overall score based on:
  - Outputs (60%)
  - *Impact (25%)
  - Research environment (15%)
- All are ranked on a 1-4 star system
- Assessment by peers

*Impact outside academia on “economy, society, public policy, culture and the quality of life”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Star</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4*</td>
<td>Quality that is <strong>world-leading</strong> in terms of originality, significance and rigour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3*</td>
<td>Quality that is <strong>internationally excellent</strong> in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2*</td>
<td>Quality that is <strong>recognised internationally</strong> in terms of originality, significance and rigour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1*</td>
<td>Quality that is <strong>recognised nationally</strong> in terms of originality, significance and rigour.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>Quality that falls below the standard of nationally recognised work. Or work which does not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of this assessment.</td>
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Characteristics and drivers – UK REF

- Sector-wide benchmarking quality against **international standards**
- Published **league tables** provide rankings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>The Guardian Research Power Top 10</th>
<th>THE Quality (GPA) Top 10</th>
<th>Top 10 for highest % with ‘World Leading’ Research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>University of Oxford</td>
<td>Imperial College London</td>
<td>London School of Economics</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>University College London</td>
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<td>Cardiff University</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>University of Nottingham</td>
<td>University of Warwick</td>
<td><strong>University of Edinburgh</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>University of Bristol</td>
<td><strong>University of Edinburgh</strong></td>
<td>University of Warwick</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>University of Leeds</td>
<td>University of Bristol</td>
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- **High levels of investment** in REF preparation and delivery
- Underpins **business cases** and influences **strategy** and decision-making
Rankings and the Impact of Impact

- Each submission requires 2.5 outputs per FTE and two impact case studies, plus one for every additional 15 FTE staff.
- A unit with 34 staff would require 85 outputs (≈0.75% of total score per output) and 3 impact case studies (≈8.3% of total score per case study).
Research Assessment in Sweden

• The (not so) short story
• Research and collaboration is to be included in the: *Institutional review of the HEIs’ quality assurance processes* – starting 2021 (ongoing pilot)
  • Bottom-up approach
  • Focus on quality assurance (not research outputs)
  • Does not include a funding mechanism
Characteristics and drivers for RED19

• Decision by the University Board – content and structure: bottom up through interviews
• Aims to identify ways to enhancing the quality of research & research environments
• Focus on the processes and prerequisites for performing research of high quality
• Based on background material, self-evaluation, validated and informed by external expert panels
Key Themes in RED19

❖ **Background** and **Research Standing**

❖ **Leadership**, including recruitment, career structure, funding, feedback and evaluation

❖ **Complete Academic Environment**, including collaborations, relevance and impact on society, research-teaching linkages

❖ **Academic Culture**, including publications, facilities and infrastructure, transverse perspectives

❖ **Research Support**

**Assessment criteria for institutional review (UKÄ)**

- governance and organisation
- preconditions
- design, implementation and outcomes
- student and doctoral student perspective
- working life and collaboration
- gender equality
RED – a part of the quality assurance system at UGOT

- Panel report provides recommendations
- Results owned by heads of evaluation units (Departments, Faculties, University Management) & integrated in an action plan for each level
- Follow up – underpins plan for the next cycle
- At a University Management level the recommendations feed in to a new vision (coming up)

Aims to demonstrate effective quality assurance system and deliver continuous improvement
Impact on Institutional Strategy

• Key areas of strategy influenced by research assessment include:
  • Academic recruitment, performance and progression
  • Time allocation models
  • Use of research metrics
  • Investments in people, infrastructure, resources and support services
Experiences & Observations