Taking the Stern Review Forward

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Open Forum, Manchester

REF2021

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- Where we are now (Lord Stern's review, consultation)
- Initial decisions on REF 2021
- Decisions outstanding and further consultation
- Timeframe

The Stern Review

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- Purpose of the REF goes beyond funding and league tables

Key principles

- Lower burden
- Less game-playing
- Less personalisation, more institutionally focused
- Recognition for investment
- More rounded view of research activity
- Interdisciplinary emphasis
- Broaden impact

Consultation on REF 2021

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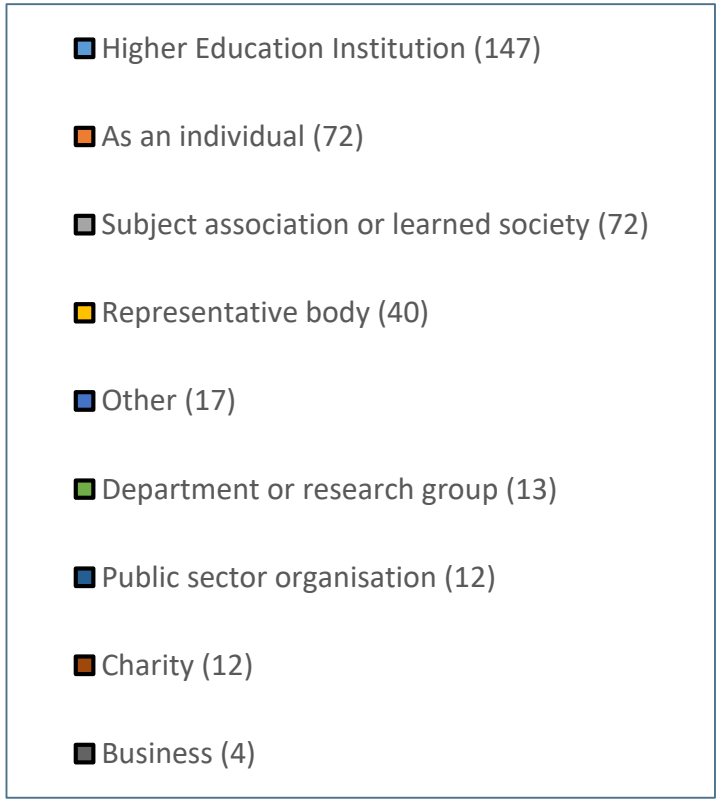
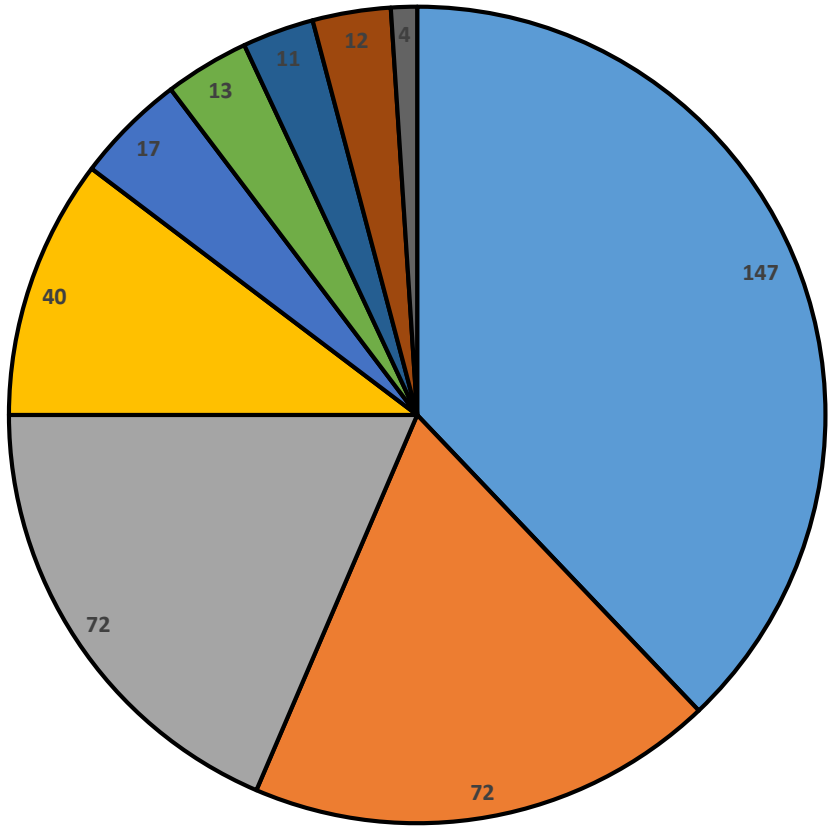
- 388 formal responses
- More than 1.3 million words





Consultation on REF 2021

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Key points

- Broad support for Stern principles
- Questions around their implementation
- Desire for continuity with REF 2014 in many areas
- Concerns around burden arising from changes
- Importance of equality and diversity measures

Outputs

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- Measures to support interdisciplinary research
  - At least one appointed member on each sub-panel to oversee and participate in the assessment of interdisciplinary research
  - Interdisciplinary identifier for outputs in submission system
  - Discrete section in environment template for interdisciplinary research
- Submission of reserve output permitted where publication of the preferred output will postdate the submission deadline
- Quantitative data may be used to inform the assessment of outputs, where panels consider this appropriate for the discipline

Environment

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Unit of Assessment level

- Introduction of a more structured template, including information on:
  - equality and diversity
  - approach to enabling impact
  - approach to supporting collaboration
  - structures to support interdisciplinary research
  - section on open research

Institutional Level Assessment

- Institutional-level information **will be included** in the UOA-level environment template and **will be assessed** by the relevant sub-panel in REF 2021.
- Pilot of the standalone assessment of the institutional-level environment will draw on this submitted information.
- Outcomes from the separate pilot exercise **will not be included** in REF 2021.

Institutional Level Assessment - impact

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- Institutional-level impact case studies **will not be included** in REF 2021.
- Pilot of assessment of institutional-level impact case studies will instead inform decisions about the most appropriate way to give recognition and reward to institutions for this activity **in future exercises**.

Impact

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- Consistency with REF 2014:
  - Impact remains with institution where research was generated
  - Impact must be underpinned by excellent research of minimum 2* quality
  - Timeframe:
    - 1 January 2000 - 31 December 2020 for underpinning research
    - 1 August 2013 - 31 July 2020 for impacts
- Impact template to be included as explicit section in environment element
- Broaden and deepen definitions of impact
  - Public engagement
  - Impact on teaching
  - Impact arising from research activity and bodies of work
- Case studies continued from examples submitted in 2014 will be eligible for submission in 2021

Unit of Assessments and Panel recruitment

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- Revisions to the following UOAs following consultation:
  - Creation of a single UOA for Engineering
  - Restructure of UOA 17: Geography, Environmental Studies and Archaeology
  - 'Film and Screen Studies' located and included in the name of UOA 33: Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies.

- Panel recruitment:
  - Two-stage recruitment process
  - Additional equality and diversity measures
  - Nominations invited from all bodies with an interest in research, **excluding** mission groups, individual HEIs (and groups within HEIs), and self-nominations

Outcomes and weightings

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- Overall excellence profile and three sub-profiles (outputs, impact, and environment)
- Five-point scale: 1*-4* and Unclassified
- Weightings :
  - Outputs – 60 per cent.
  - Impact – 25 per cent.
  - Environment – 15 per cent

Submission of staff

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- Broad support for recommendation to include ‘all staff with significant responsibility to carry out research’ but concerns around use of HESA cost centres and contractual status
- HESA cost centres will not be used to assign staff to UOAs
- Contractual status may be a starting point for eligibility but is not the sole measure of responsibility for research.
- Staff eligibility:
  - Teaching and Research or Research-only
  - Independent researcher
  - Minimum of 0.2 FTE
  - Substantive connection
- Option to submit 100% of eligible staff

Outputs

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- Stern review identified need to recognise and incentivise investment in research by institutions
- Concerns around implementation of non-portability proposals
  - unintended consequences for staff mobility and publication behaviour,
  - burden, practical implementation and retrospective application.
- Decision to introduce transitionary arrangements for REF 2021
- Consultation with sector on mechanism for implementation:
  - Simple model – eligible for submission by both originating and current institutions

    OR
  - Hybrid model – more precise, but complex
- Average and min./max. numbers to be determined based on results from survey on staff submission

Further development

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- Consultation on staff submission and portability of outputs
  - Guiding questions can be found here: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2017/CL,332017/
  - Email responses to researchpolicy@hefce.ac.uk by **29 September.**
- Survey of institutions to estimate number of staff to be submitted in REF 2021. **Deadline 9 October.**
- Consultation and workshops to develop guidelines relating to impact (public engagement, underpinning research, additionality) in autumn 2017. Outcomes will feed into development of guidance on submissions and panel criteria in 2018.

Timetable

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Autumn 2017	Appoint sub-panel chairs Invite nominations for panel members Further decisions on the arrangements for submitting staff and outputs
Winter 2017-18	Appoint panels
Spring 2018	Panels meet to develop criteria
Summer to Autumn 2018	Publish draft guidance, and consultation on panel criteria
Winter 2018-19	Publish final guidance and criteria
2019	Complete preparation of submission systems
2020	Submission phase
2021	Assessment phase