The UK's European university

Research Impact

OPEN FORUM EVENTS

University of Kent

Reflections on REF 2021

Strengthening the Excellence Framework

Sept 14th, Manchester

Simon Kerridge

Director of Research Services

University of Kent

orcid.org/0000-0003-4094-3719

@SimonRKerridge

#OFEREF

raaapworldwide.wordpress.com

Chair casrai Connecting Research

Immediate Past Chair arma

Overview

- Kent
- REF2021
- Outputs
- Impact
- Worries

University of Kent

- 20,000 students
- 4,000 staff
  - 950 REF2021 eligible staff
- £253m turnover
- £17m research income
- Canterbury, Medway, Tonbridge, Brussels
  - Paris, Athens, Rome
- 17th for Research Intensity, 16th for Teaching Quality [gold]
- Honoured with Queen's Anniversary Prizes twice in the past ten years
- THE World Ranking 301-350; and 93rd under 50 (hmmm)

REF2021

University of Kent

- Impact… up 5%
- Case Studies
  - Up from 16% → 25% … an increase of 56¼%
- Impact Template (was 5%) …
  - now in Environment Template
- Outputs… down 5%
  - 65% → 60% is a drop of $8^1/_3$%
- Relative differential ICS:Outputs = + 69.3%

Outputs

- #REF2014
  - 4 outputs per person
  - Reductions (without penalty) for
    - ISCs eg PT, ECR, “babies”
    - CSCs eg protracted illness affecting work
  - Total 191,150 outputs

- #REF2021
  - 190k outputs

  - ???

Outputs - possibilities

University of Kent

- #REF2014
  - 52,061 staff selected
  - 190,150/52,061 → ~3.67 per FTE
- #REF2021
  - “All” staff… ??? How many… 100k?
- So 100,000 staff the value would be ~1.9 per FTE
- Kent
  - #2014 ~590 FTE, 2090 outputs → ~ 3.5 per FTE
  - #2021 ~750 FTE → ~2.8 per FTE

Outputs - selection

University of Kent

- #REF2014
  - Up to 4 per person
  - ➔ select best 4 per person

- #REF2021
  - 0…? If not → need for ISC, or change of contract?
  - 1..6 per person
    - Why a maximum?
    - How many last time had 4x4*?
    - How many will have > 6x4*?
  - ➔ select best 6 per person
    - … and try to cross rank

over half supported setting a minimum requirement of one output per person. Over one-third were in favour of no minimum at all. REF2017_02

Overall, just under 50 per cent of respondents supported a maximum of six outputs per person. Fewer than 5 per cent expressed explicit disagreement with a maximum of six; however, a large number of respondents were in favour of an alternative maximum of four or five, or implied they would be flexible on this issue. REF2017_02

Outputs – REF2014 example

A	1	4	3	2	2	3	1	4		
B	3	2	4	1	-	-	-	-		
C	2	1	4	1	4	-	-	-		
D	1	2	3	3	2	1	3	1		
E	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-		
F	1	2	3	-	-	-	-	-		
G	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	-		
H	3	1	3	-	-	-	-	-		

										GPA
A	4	4	3	3	2	2	1	1		3.50
B	4	3	2	1	-	-	-	-		2.50
C	4	4	2	1	1	-	-	-		2.75
D	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	1		2.75
E	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-		1.25
F	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-		1.5
G	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	-		2
H	3	3	1	-	-	-	-	-		1.75
										2.88

8 staff with between 2 and 8 outputs

Rank & grade each person's outputs

Use a GPA threshold to select staff

Office for Scholarly Communication

#OFEREF RAAAPworldwide.wordpress.com

Outputs – REF2021 scenario

University of Kent

A	1	4	3	2	2	3	1	4
B	3	2	4	1	-	-	-	-
C	2	1	4	1	4	-	-	-
D	1	2	3	3	2	1	3	1
E	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
F	1	2	3	-	-	-	-	-
G	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	-
H	3	1	3	-	-	-	-	-

										GPA
A	4	4	3	3	2	2	1	1		
B	4	3	2	1	-	-	-	-		
C	4	4	2	1	1	-	-	-		
D	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	1		
E	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-		
F	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-		
G	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	-		
H	3	3	1	-	-	-	-	-		
									2 => 16	3.25
									2.75 => 22	2.91

8 staff with between 2 and 8 outputs

Simpler?

Rank & grade each person's outputs

But now ***rank against the whole Dept***

Select the best n outputs

Which 2* output(s) do you select?

Outputs – Issues

University of Kent

"In particular, it was felt that the changes around staff submission, along with the decoupling and portability of outputs, would require actions that were incompatible with Lord Stern's aims to reduce burden and maintain continuity." REF2017_02

- Added Burden!
- Being selective…?
  - Selection best from across a department
  - Complications of co-authorship, re 1..6 selection
- Being inclusive…?
  - ~same # for all staff?
  - Better for environment?

Where there is no formal account of the rationale for the number of outputs by each staff member selected for submission, there may be additional stigma for staff associated with fewer outputs and potential perceptions relating to the quality of research they produce. REF2017_02

Outputs – REF2017_02

University of Kent

- Respondents commented on the burden associated with the proposal to decouple staff from outputs, as it was perceived to be **more difficult to select outputs than select staff**. **The majority of responses indicated that the proposals would increase or at least maintain the administrative burden on HEIs.** This was thought to be a result of the transfer of work from selecting staff to what was felt the **more difficult task of selecting outputs,** and would be **further increased** by the introduction of a minimum and maximum number of outputs **as opposed to 'true decoupling'** of staff from outputs.

Impact

University of Kent

- Was 20%
- Now 25% plus a bit in the Environment template

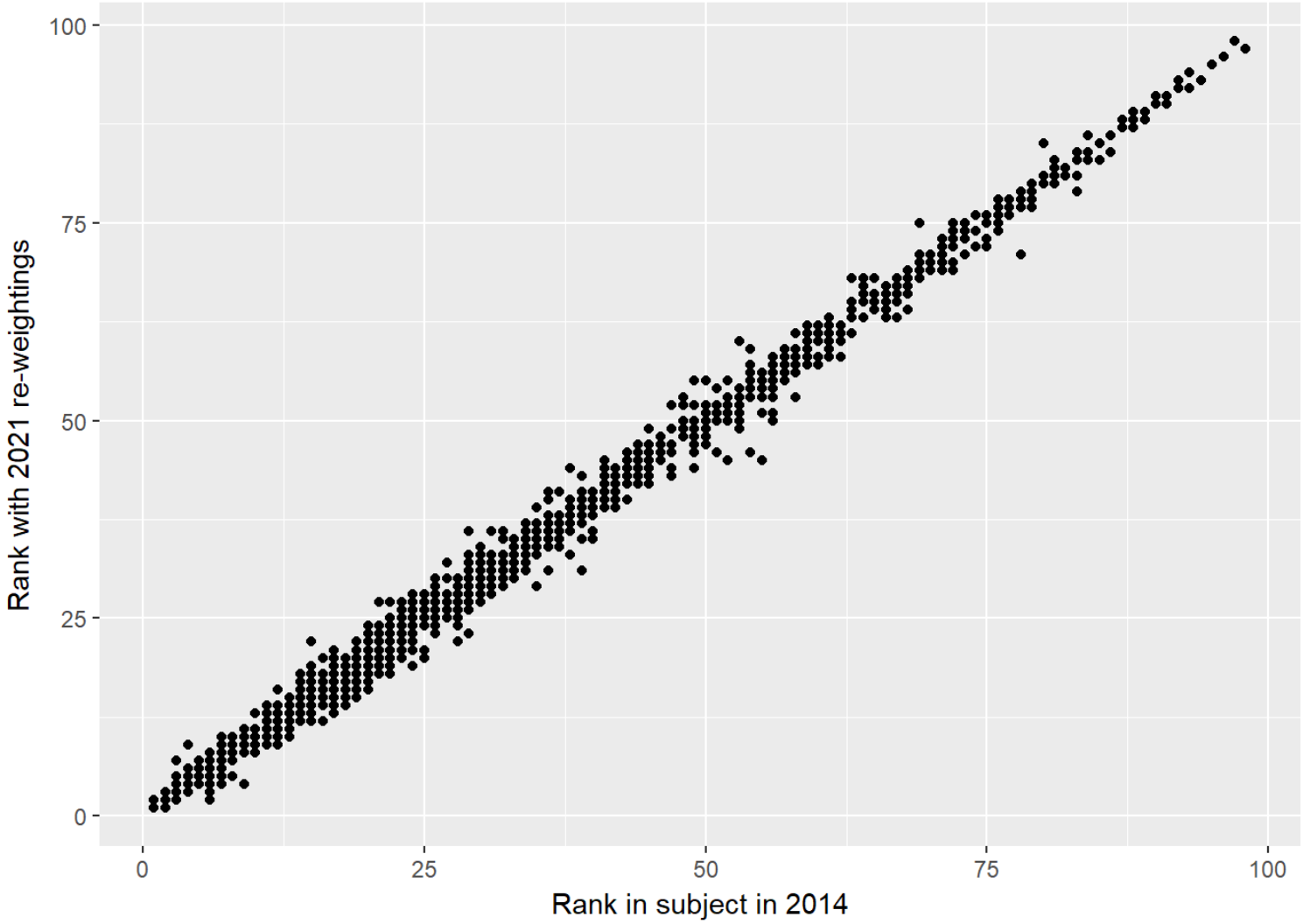
- Will it make a big difference…?

- In Absolute Terms… (England) ICSs
  - ~£6k → ~£90k; **average ~£49k per annum**
  - 56¼% more [16% → 25%]
  - ~£9K → ~£141k; **average ~£76k per annum**

http://www.fasttrackimpact.com/single-post/2017/02/01/How-much-was-an-impact-case-study-worth-in-the-UK-Research-Excellence-Framework

Impact

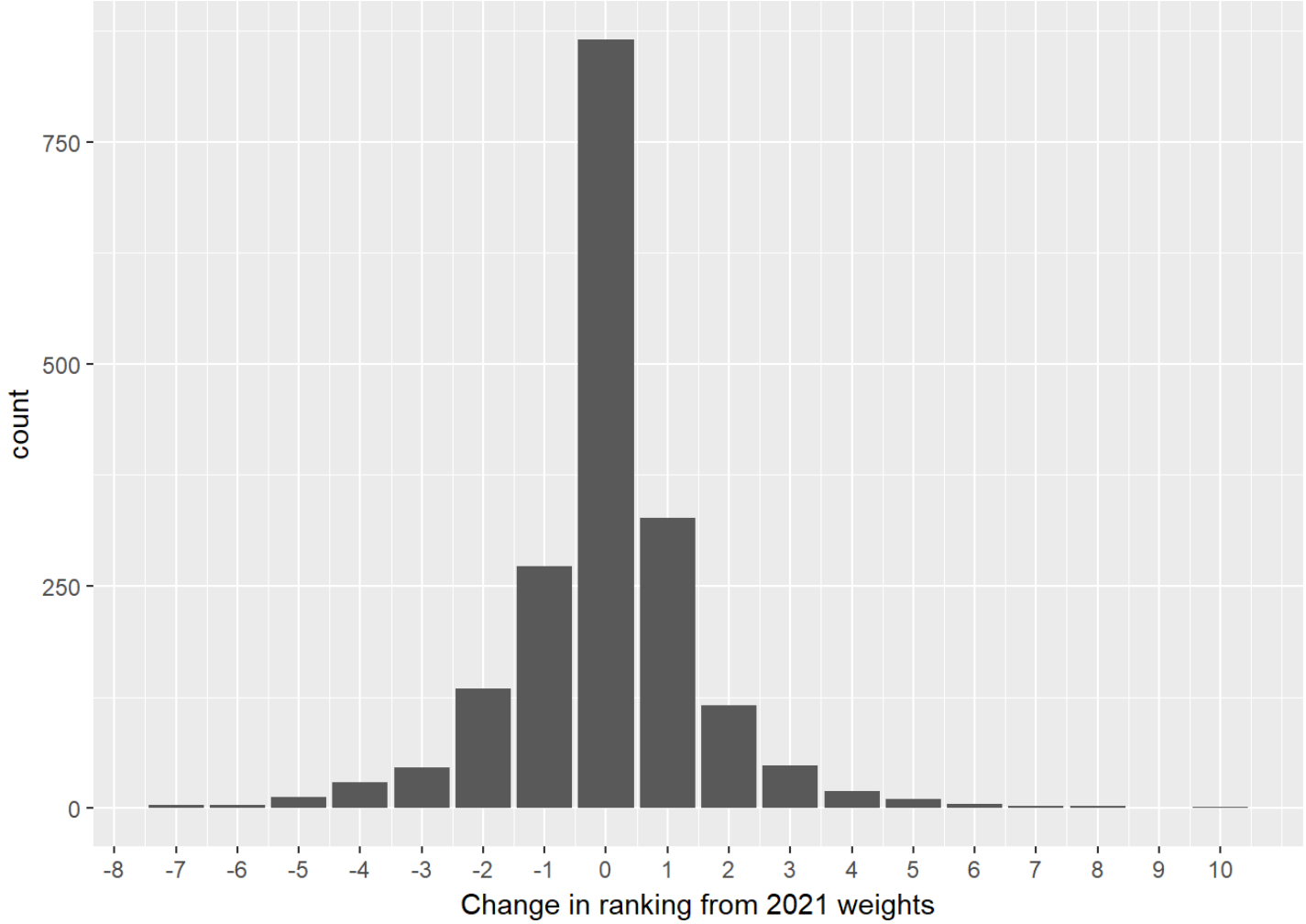
Stephen McKay, University of Lincoln (8/9/17)



- http://rpubs.com/smckay/305617

Impact

Stephen McKay, University of Lincoln (8/9/17)

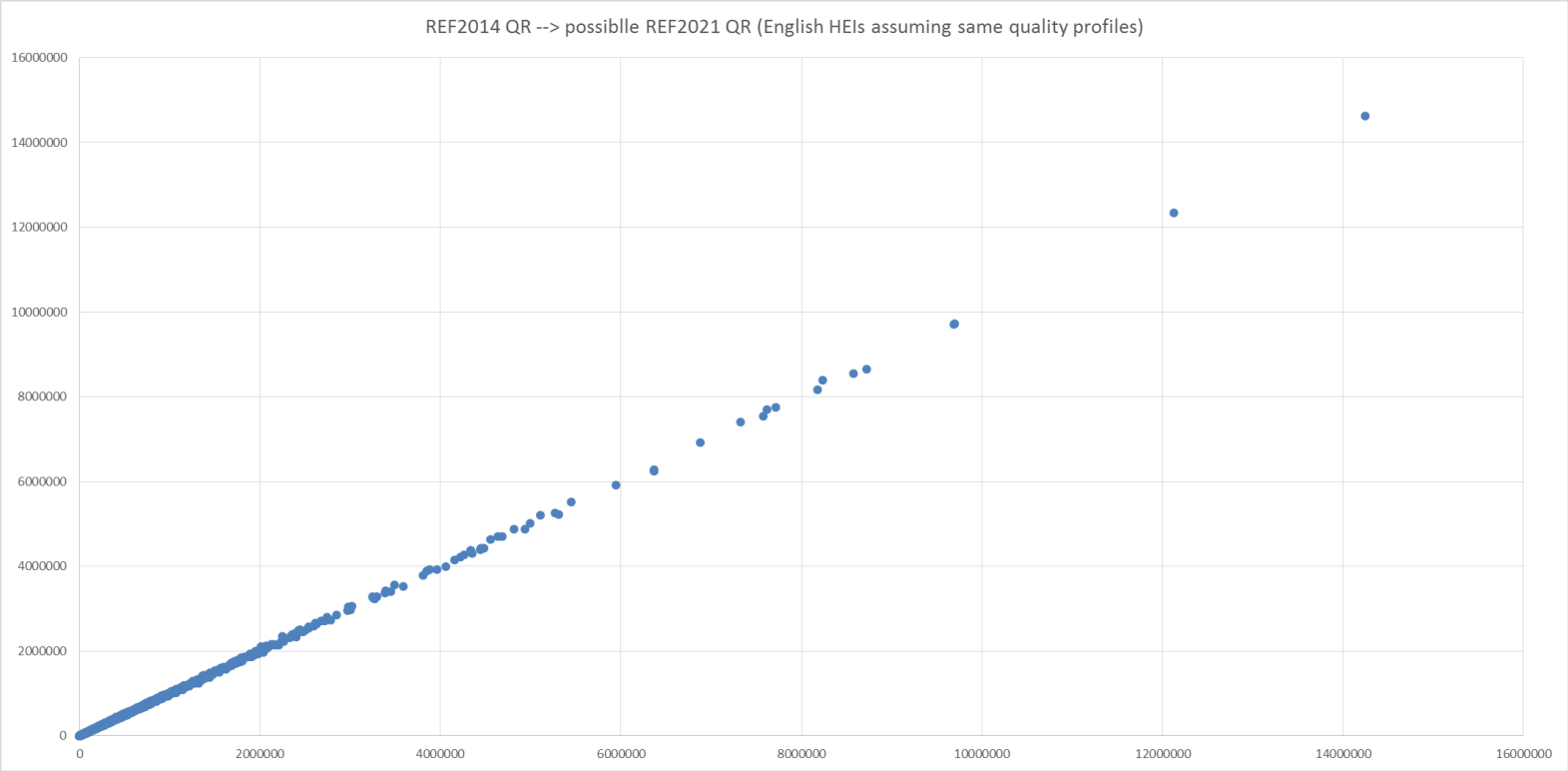


• http://rpubs.com/smckay/305617

#OFEREF RAAAPworldwide.wordpress.com

Monetary Impact…

- Not that huge, as Outputs and Impact were correlated



Monetary Impact…

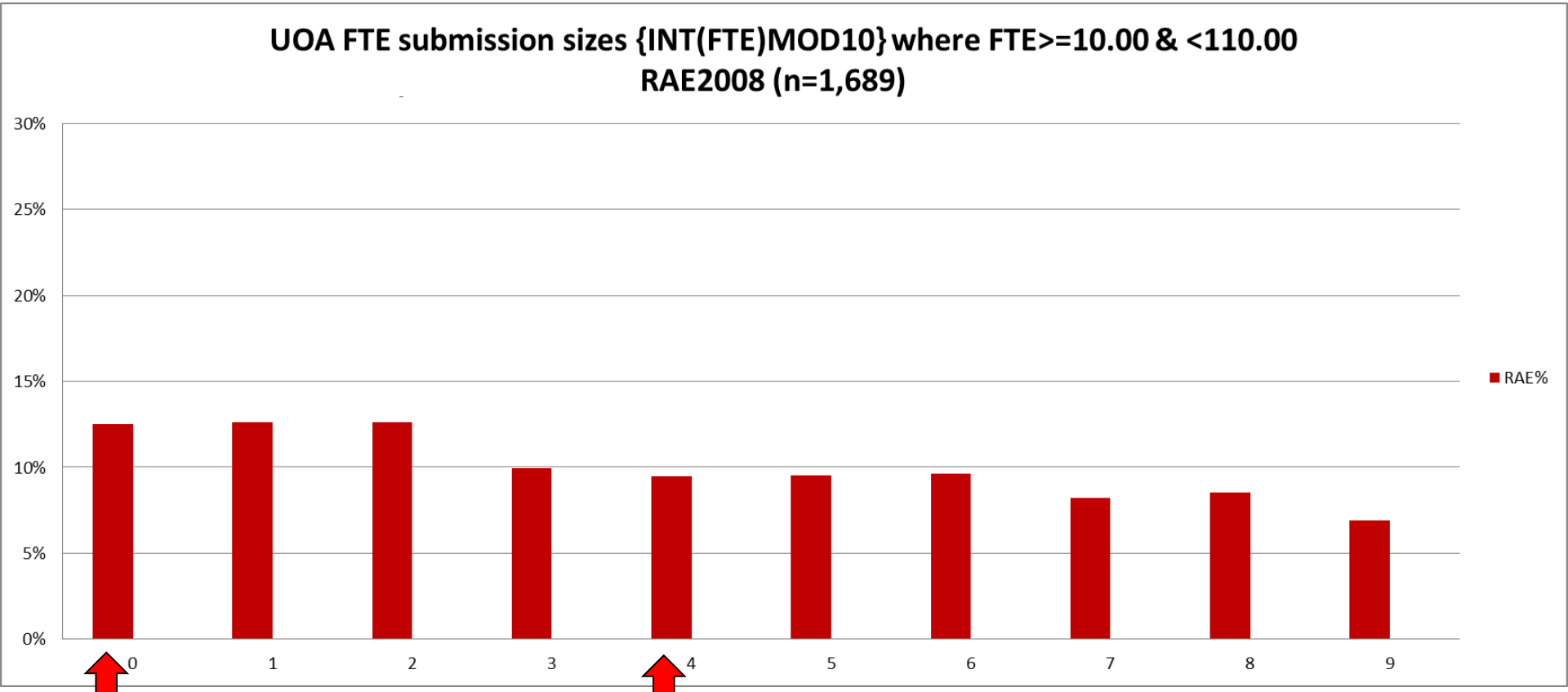
- But of course some outliers
- -7.39% [£18.705] → +25.00% [£1,326]
- -£117,290 [-1.84%] → +£368,127 [2.58%]
- So what is all the fuss about?

Worries

University of Kent

- Remembering
- ICSs are now worth 69% more compared to outputs that in REF2014
- So what…?
- Lots of variables… but
  - #REF2014 ICS=4.37 outputs (av. English funded)
  - #REF2021 ICS~7.4 outputs (~same #s of each)
- So what…?

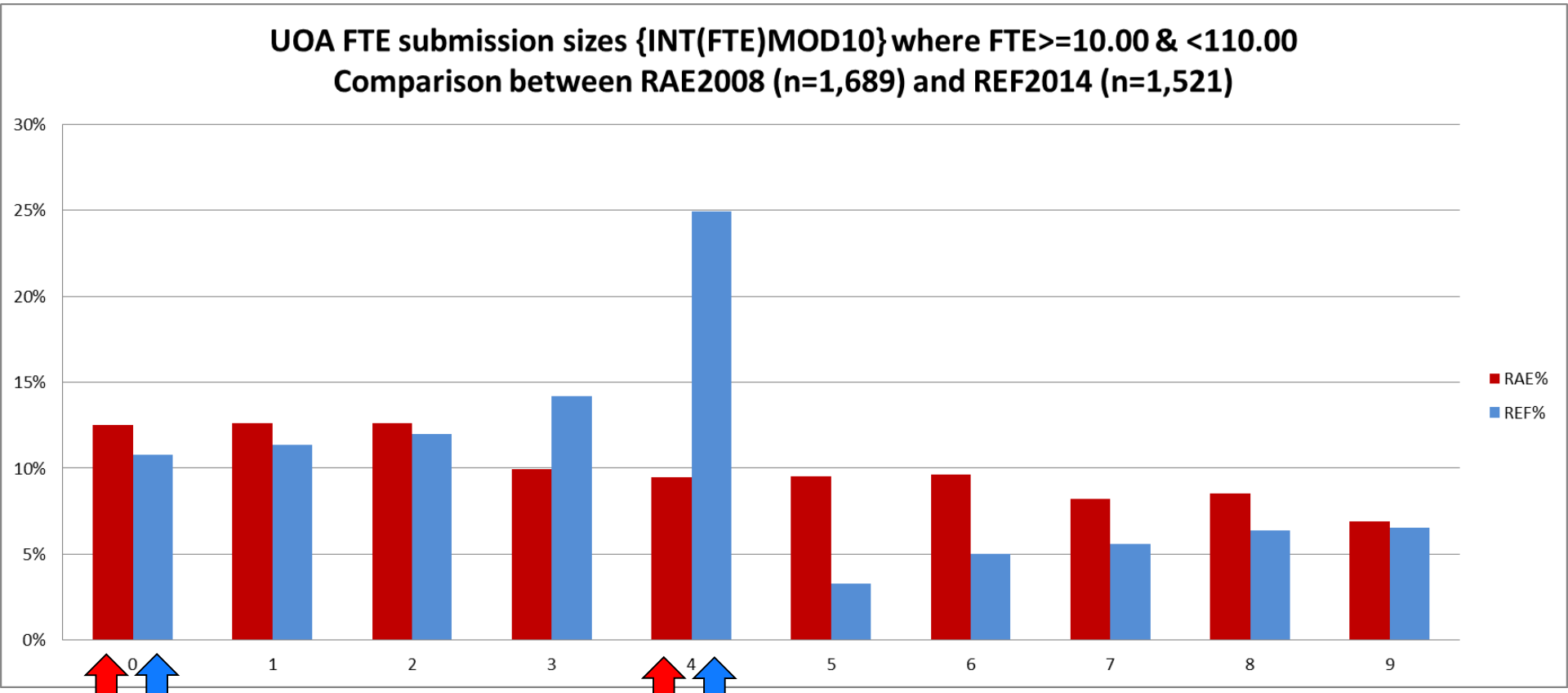
Impact Case Study Threshold



10.00-10.99,
20.00-20.99,
30.00-30.99,
40.00-40.99,
…

14.00-14.99,
24.00-24.99,
34.00-34.99,
44.00-44.99,
…

Impact Case Study Threshold



10.00-10.99,
20.00-20.99,
30.00-30.99,
40.00-40.99,
…

14.00-14.99,
24.00-24.99,
34.00-34.99,
44.00-44.99,
…

Worried?

University of Kent

- The driver for this behaviour is now 69% bigger
- #REF2021 staff eligibility (selection) rules still pending
  - but...
- #REF2014 non-selection – a stigma
- #REF2021 non-selection – a contract change?

  T&R → T only

  somewhat more than a stigma!?

Some respondents specifically mentioned equalities implications, suggesting that contract changes might differentially apply to staff with protected characteristics. REF2017_02

Over a third of respondents suggested that the proposal might result in changes to contractual status, with some staff being moved to Teaching-only contracts. REF2017_02

Other highlights (REF2017_02)

University of Kent

- Most respondents who commented on Question 11 **supported the introduction of a mandatory requirement for the use of ORCID** as a staff identifier, which was perceived to promote good research practice through data linking and better interoperability of research data administration systems.
- A number of respondents suggested that it would be feasible to **add an additional field to the HESA staff record** to reflect a research area or REF UOA for future assessment exercises.
- A significant majority supported the proposed timeframe for the underpinning research activity (1 January 2000 – December 2020). Of the HEIs who replied to Question 30, over 90 per cent were in favour of the proposal. Several respondents **acknowledged the benefits of ensuring consistency with the timeframe used for REF 2014**.
- Overall, there was **strong agreement with the proposal to maintain the weightings of impact and outputs at 20 and 65 per cent respectively**. The proposal was particularly strongly supported by HEIs and subject associations, while a smaller proportion of individuals and charities were in favour.

Other highlights (REF2017_02)

University of Kent

Question 41. Given the proposal that the weighting for outputs remain at 65 per cent, do you agree that the overall weighting for impact should remain at 20 per cent?

Respondent type	Yes	No	No response
Individual	21	17	34
Business	0	0	4
Charity	2	1	8
Department or research group	8	2	3
HEI	126	15	6
Other	6	3	8
Public sector organisation	4	1	3
Representative body	17	3	19
Subject association or learned society	46	5	18
Total	230	47	103

University of Kent

THE UK'S EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

www.kent.ac.uk