

Research Excellence Framework Impact pilot exercise

Guidance to expert panels

HEFCE, 30 March 2010

Introduction

1. HEFCE on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies is piloting the assessment of the social and economic benefits of research, as part of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) – the future arrangements for assessing and funding research in UK higher education institutions (HEIs).
2. This reflects policy aims in all parts of the UK to maintain and improve the achievements of the HE sector both in undertaking ground-breaking research of the highest quality and building on this research to achieve demonstrable benefits to the wider economy and society. Our starting point is that an excellent department or unit should meet the highest standards in both these elements, and should be rewarded for delivering strong impacts by building on their portfolio of excellent research activity.
3. In a recent consultation exercise on the REF,¹ we proposed that the impact of research should be assessed as a distinct element in the assessment, contributing 25% towards the overall outcomes (with the quality of research outputs contributing 60%, and the vitality of the research environment contributing 15%). Consultation respondents broadly supported the inclusion of an explicit assessment of impact, subject to the development of a robust method for assessing impact, and an appropriate weighting for this element. Respondents also provided a wealth of feedback on the challenges involved in defining, evidencing, attributing and assessing impact.²
4. We are now running a pilot exercise that will be vital to developing our approach to assessing the impact of research. The pilot involves 29 higher education institutions (HEIs), submitting evidence of impact to be assessed by expert panels in the following Units of Assessment (UOAs):
 - Medicine
 - Physics
 - Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences
 - Social Work and Social Policy
 - English Language and Literature.

¹ 'Research Excellence Framework: Second consultation on the assessment and funding of research' (HEFCE 2009/38).

² The summary of responses and the initial outcomes of the consultation exercise are available at www.hefce.ac.uk/ref.

5. In November 2009 we published guidance to the 29 pilot institutions on how to prepare and make submissions for the pilot exercise.³

6. During early 2010 we recruited an expert panel for each of the five pilot UOAs, to assess the submissions and report on the lessons learned. This document provides guidance to the pilot expert panels on how to undertake these tasks. It includes initial criteria for assessing the submissions, but the panels are expected to refine and develop these further during the course of their work.

7. This document will be published on the HEFCE website, for the purpose of explaining the operation of the REF impact pilot exercise. Guidance to institutions and expert panels for the full REF exercise will be developed and published after the conclusion of the pilot exercise, and many aspects of the pilot guidance documents may therefore change.

Overview

Principles of assessing impact

8. We aim through the pilot exercise to develop an approach to assessing impact that is underpinned by the following principles:

- There should be a wide definition of impact, including benefits to the economy, society, culture, public policy and services, health, the environment, international development and quality of life. Academic impact (intellectual influence and contribution to advancing the discipline) will not be included in this part of the REF assessment as it is fully reflected in the assessment of outputs and environment.
- REF should enable excellent research in all disciplines to demonstrate impacts according to criteria, definitions and indicators that are appropriate to research in each discipline-group; and impacts should be assessed within (not between) each panel.
- REF should only recognise and reward impacts arising from high quality research. It should however recognise the benefits arising from all types of high quality research including applied, translational, basic, blue-skies and practice-based research. In particular the REF should not introduce any disincentive to long-term basic or curiosity-driven research (which are widely believed to generate the most fundamental impacts).
- REF should not seek to predict future impacts; it should assess impacts that have already occurred, underpinned by research over a sufficiently long timeframe to allow the impacts to become evident.

³ See 'REF impact pilot exercise: Guidance on submissions', 19 November 2009, available on the web at www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/impact/.

- REF should not require or imply that all submitted researchers should demonstrate the impact of their research. The assessment should be made in respect of whole submissions, each covering a sufficiently broad portfolio of activity, focusing on a limited number of examples of the strongest impacts.
- Impact should be assessed against equally demanding standards to the assessment of output quality.
- The outcomes of the assessment of impact should be an 'impact profile' for each submission; these should be the product of expert panels' judgements based on an appropriate mix of qualitative and quantitative evidence.
- Representatives of the users and beneficiaries of research should make a substantive input into the assessment of impact, both in terms of developing the criteria and undertaking the assessment, working in partnership with academic members of the expert panels.
- Multiple institutions' or units' contribution to impacts should be recognised, whether through collaborative or cross-disciplinary research, research in one discipline that informed work in another leading to impact, or several units' independent contributions to building up an influential body of knowledge.
- The requirements on institutions to provide evidence should involve the minimal burden that is necessary to enable panels to make robust assessments.

Pilot aims and approach

9. The aim of the pilot exercise is to test and develop our proposed approach to assessing impact in the REF, focusing on the following areas:

- a. Submissions: testing and developing the evidence of impact to be submitted by institutions, to enable robust judgements by panels.
- b. Assessment: testing and refining the criteria and process for panels to assess the submissions and produce impact profiles.
- c. Weighting: generating evidence to inform decisions on the appropriate weighting of impact within the REF, and how it will be combined with 'outputs' and 'environment' to produce the overall outcomes.
- d. Implementation: identifying the operational implications of assessing impact (including costs and burden) for institutions, research users, panels and the funding bodies.

10. The REF consultation document (HEFCE 2009/38) and the guidance to pilot institutions on making submissions sets out the approach to be piloted. In summary:

- a. The 29 pilot institutions will each make submissions to two of the five pilot UOAs (with some exceptions where only one UOA would be relevant). The list of institutions submitting to each UOA is at Annex A. Each submission will comprise of general information about the submitted unit as a whole, and a number of brief case studies providing details of specific impacts that the unit's research has contributed to. The information is qualitative, supported where appropriate by quantitative indicators.
- b. The assessment period for the pilot exercise is as follows:
- impacts that have occurred during the period 2005-09 (inclusive)
 - underpinned by high quality research undertaken within the submitted unit, no earlier than 1993.
- c. The submissions will be assessed by an expert panel for each of the five UOAs. The role of the panels is to:
- Refine the criteria for assessment
 - Assess and grade the submissions
 - Report on the general findings and lessons learned from the exercise.
- d. Panels will grade the submissions to produce an 'impact profile' for each submission. This will show the proportion of the submission that achieved each level on a five-point scale ('Exceptional', 'Excellent', 'Very good', 'Good' and 'Unclassified').
- e. In parallel to the pilot exercise HEFCE will hold a series of workshops to investigate the nature of impact and its assessment in a wider range of disciplines, especially in the arts, humanities and social sciences.
- f. HEFCE will then gather and collate feedback from the pilot panels, the pilot institutions and wider workshops, and draw conclusions with advice from the REF Impact Pilot Steering Group (further details of this Group are at Annex B). We will publish the pilot outcomes, including the panels' reports and samples of submitted material.

Guidance to panels

11. This section provides guidance to the panels in undertaking each of their three main roles:
- Task 1: Refining the criteria for assessment.
 - Task 2: Assessing and grading the submissions.
 - Task 3: Reporting on the lessons learned.

Workplan

12. We expect these tasks to be undertaken broadly as follows:

Task 1: Refine criteria for assessment	15 March	Deadline for HEIs to make submissions. Panel Chairs meeting.
	Late March	Panel members receive a sample of case studies for consideration in advance of the first panel meeting.
	April	First round of panel meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General briefing and discussion of panel guidance • Refine criteria in the light of sample of case studies • Calibrate assessment standards based on the sample of case studies • Allocate work to individual members.
Task 2: Assess submissions	April – May	Between meetings, individual panel members assess case studies.
	May	Second round of panel meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and agree scores for some of the case studies • Start to build up impact profiles • Discuss emerging issues and revise criteria if necessary • Identify 'audit queries' (described below)
	May – June	Between meetings, individual panel members continue to assess case studies, and also consider impact statements. Panel secretaries pursue a sample of 'audit queries'.
	June	Third round of panel meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel receives responses to 'audit queries' • Discuss and agree scores for remaining case studies • Discuss impact statements and agree impact profiles for all submissions • Discuss issues emerging.
	July	(Two of the panels have an additional meeting to complete their assessments)
Task 3: Report on lessons learned	July	Panel chairs' meeting. HEFCE provides impact profiles to pilot HEIs.
	July-Sept	Panel secretaries draft panel reports.
	September	Final round of panel meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss lessons learned and draft panel reports.
	Sept / Oct	Further feedback and reporting to pilot HEIs.
	October	Finalise panel reports for publication.

13. Further guidance on each task is provided below.

Task 1: Refining the assessment criteria

Definition of impact

14. Our initial definition of impact is any benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy and services, health, the environment, international development and quality of life. Some points to note are that:

- a. Academic impact (intellectual influence and contribution to advancing the discipline) is not included in this part of the assessment.
- b. Impacts can occur in any geographic territory, whether a local area, region, devolved nation, the UK or internationally, and these are not regarded in any hierarchy of importance.

Assessment criteria and level definitions

15. This section describes our **initial** views about the assessment criteria and generic definitions of the levels in the five-point scale. Panels are expected to refine these, especially at their first meetings.

16. The intention is to assess the extent of the impacts to which each institution's research has contributed. Our initial view is that there are two key criteria for assessing the extent of the impacts:

- their 'reach' (how widely the impact has been felt)
- and 'significance' (how much difference was made to the beneficiaries).

17. Our initial view is that each case should demonstrate that the institution's research made a significant contribution to the impact, and that this is treated as a 'threshold criteria'; once 'passed' it does not affect the score awarded to the case study. However, panels should consider whether, and to what extent, the level of the HEI's 'contribution' towards the impact should influence the score.

18. When assessing the submissions, panels will need to:

- a. Score each case study on a five point scale, in terms of 'reach' and significance' (or the revised criteria developed by the panel).
- b. By scoring the case studies, panels will build up an impact profile for each submission, that shows the proportion of each submission achieving each level in the scale.
- c. Panels should then take into account the wider 'impact statements' in determining the final impact profiles for each submission.

19. Our initial view is that in order to achieve Four star (exceptional) or Three star (excellent) impacts, a case study should demonstrate a high level of **both** 'significance' **and** 'reach', although further down the scale, either one of these could take precedence, as appropriate to the

particular impact. Initial, generic definitions for these levels (which are intended to reflect 'reach' and 'significance' in this way) are as follows:

Four star	Exceptional: Ground-breaking or transformative impacts of major value or significance, with wide-ranging relevance have been demonstrated
Three star	Excellent: Highly significant or innovative (but not quite ground-breaking) impacts relevant to several situations have been demonstrated
Two star	Very good: Substantial impacts of more than incremental significance, or incremental improvements that are wide-ranging have been demonstrated
One star	Good: Impacts in the form of incremental improvements or process innovation, of modest range have been demonstrated
Unclassified	The impacts are of little or no significance or reach; or the underpinning research was not of high quality; or research-based activity within the submitted unit did not make a significant contribution to the impact.

20. Panel members will be asked to read a sample of case studies in advance of the first meeting, to inform their discussion about the criteria and agree how members will then proceed to assess the submissions. By discussing what they regard as 'exceptional', 'excellent', 'very good' and 'good' impacts, panels should refine the following:

- The definition of impact
- The definitions of levels in the five point scale
- The criteria of 'reach' and 'significance' (and whether 'contribution' should play a role)
- The way these should be combined when scoring case studies.

21. We intend that the outcome of the first meeting will be sufficiently clear criteria and level definitions to enable members to then proceed with assessing submissions. (Although the panel will have a further opportunity to refine the criteria at the second meeting if necessary; and to comment in its final report on the criteria and how they might be developed for a full REF exercise.)

22. We intend that panel chairs will meet in between panel meetings to discuss the development of criteria and the appropriate degree of consistency between the panels' criteria.

Standards of assessment

23. In addition, the first meeting is intended to assist in calibrating standards of assessment amongst the panel members, by discussing which of the sample case studies are regarded as 'exceptional', 'excellent' and so on.

24. In terms of the overall proportion of submissions within each UOA as a whole that achieve each level in the scale, we anticipate a **broadly** similar distribution to the outcomes of the 2008 RAE. For the relevant UOAs, and across the 2008 RAE as whole this was:

	U	1 Star	2 Star	3 Star	4 Star
All Units of Assessment	2	11	33	37	17
Medicine ⁴	1	4	30	45	20
Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences	0	6	30	48	16
Physics	1	8	34	39	18
Social Work and Social Policy & Administration	1	11	36	37	16
English Language and Literature	1	10	33	32	23

Task 2: Assessing submissions

Content of submissions

25. Each submission will comprise the following evidence:

- Contextual information: Information about the size of the submitted unit (in terms of numbers of research active staff) and its main areas of research activity.
- An impact statement: This will provide an overview of activity by the unit as a whole to build on its research to achieve wider impacts, and an outline of the impacts that have occurred between 2005-9. (Word limits apply to the impact statement, scaled according to the number of research active staff.)
- Case studies: The case studies will illustrate and provide evidence of specific examples of impact that the unit's research has contributed to. A total of one case study will be provided for every ten members of research active staff (though we have asked institutions to provide a minimum of two case studies in each submission). The impacts described must have occurred during 2005-09, though the underpinning research may have been undertaken previously, but no earlier than 1993.
- Data about research income from 'users': A profile of research income from key categories of 'research users' will be provided, as a proxy indicator of impact for the unit as a whole. Other quantitative indicators of impact will be provided as supporting evidence within the impact statements and case studies.

Assessing case studies

⁴ The Medicine UOA for the impact pilot exercise covers 5 of the former RAE UOAs. The distribution of RAE scores in this table is a weighted average across these 5 UOAs.

26. We intend that the case studies will provide the bulk of the evidence to be assessed, and that panels will build up an impact profile first by grading the case studies, and then taking the impact statement and research income data into account.
27. Between 45 and 128 case studies in total will be submitted to each panel. At the first panel meeting, case studies will be allocated to individual panel members to assess, according to their expertise. The expectation is that each case study will be assessed by three or four panel members, including at least one with research and one with 'user' expertise. (Each panel member is therefore expected to assess in the order of 10-20 case studies each).
28. Following the first meeting, individual members should assess and provisionally score the case studies allocated to them, according to the criteria and level definitions to be agreed at the first meeting. A template will be provided, for recording scores and comments on each case study.⁵
29. Members should provide their completed assessment templates to the panel secretary one week prior to the meeting, so that secretaries can collate the information. At the second and third meetings, the scores and comments will be discussed, and the panel as a whole should agree the final score associated with each case study. These scores will be recorded by the panel secretary. Through this process, an initial impact profile will be built up for each submission.
30. The initial criteria for scoring the case studies focus on the extent of the impact that has been demonstrated (in terms of 'reach' and 'significance'). In addition to this, panels should make several 'threshold' judgements about each case study, to determine whether it is eligible:
- i. Time of impact: *That the impact occurred – in the particular form being described – during the pilot assessment period (Jan 2005 – Dec 2009).*
 - ii. Contribution by the institution: *That specific research-based activity within the institution made a significant contribution to achieving the impact.*
 - iii. Quality of underpinning research: *That underpinning research, which produced at least some output(s) since 1993, met a sufficient standard of rigour and originality to be considered high quality research.*
 - iv. Evidence: *That there is sufficient evidence to support the judgements about the extent of the impact and the threshold criteria.*
31. Panels should rate a case study as 'Unclassified' if it does not meet one or more of these thresholds. These threshold criteria are explained further below.

Contribution by the institution

32. There are a wide variety of ways in which research creates or contributes to impacts; the processes can be complex, involving many influences over a long period of time. Hence a key

⁵ When recording their provisional scores and comments, panel members are reminded to observe the non-disclosure arrangements as set out in the REF Manager's letter of 19 March 2010.

issue for the pilot is to establish how to 'attribute' impacts to submitted units for the REF, and to identify what kinds of activity within an institution should count as contributing towards impact.

33. For the purpose of the pilot exercise, submissions must show that ***specific research-based activity within the institution made a significant contribution to achieving the impact***. This 'research-based activity' must be either:

a. Underpinning research that was undertaken by staff within the institution. This could be any type of research including basic, practice-based, applied or translational research (that may have built on work done previously or elsewhere) and research undertaken in collaboration with other institutions or organisations.

b. Other research-based activity undertaken by research staff at the institution which drew or built substantially on their own research. This could include, for example, the contribution of an individual as an expert advisor on a committee, where this was based to a significant degree on their personal research record.

34. In either case:

- the 'research-based activity' must have been undertaken within the institution making the submission (but need not have been submitted to any previous assessment exercise, or have been undertaken by staff submitted to an exercise)
- the research or the staff involved should reasonably be associated, albeit retrospectively, with the Unit of Assessment to which the submission is being made
- the underpinning research must meet the threshold of rigour and originality, and have produced an original output (or outputs) during 1993 or later.

35. Ideally the institution would also have been involved in exploiting the research to achieve impact, but need not necessarily have done so. They may have contributed to the impact solely by undertaking the research and making the findings available.

36. The specific contribution of the unit's research activity must be a 'significant' contributing or influencing factor in realising the impact. In principle, this means that the impact would not have occurred, or would have been substantially reduced, had it not been for this activity.

37. More than one institution or unit can submit the same impact, so long as each institution or unit made a significant contribution, in line with the above guidance. In cases where there is a wide range of contributing research (for example, a policy change based on a body of evidence built-up over a period of time, undertaken by numerous institutions), an institution would need to show that its particular contribution was decisive or had a distinct influence.

Quality of underpinning research

38. The policy intention is that impacts must be underpinned by high quality, rigorous and original research. Our initial definition of this is research that broadly meets the standard for 2* research outputs in the 2008 RAE - recognised internationally - in terms of rigour and originality.

(The 'significance' aspect of quality need not be assured for research cited in the case studies, as this is reflected by assessing the impact of the research.)

39. Each case study will provide references to underpinning research outputs. We wish to develop a means of assuring the quality of the underpinning research that does not require the expert panels to review substantial numbers of outputs. We have therefore asked submissions to include justification that the research was rigorous and resulted in original findings by stating, for example, how the research was peer reviewed. We recognise that in some cases, for example grey literature or research commissioned by business or government, there may not have been formal peer review; panels may need to review at least some of these to satisfy themselves that the quality threshold has been met.

40. Where panel members wish to access the cited research outputs, they should seek to do so through their own means, in the first instance. If necessary, panel members should seek assistance from the panel secretary to access the outputs.

Verification of evidence

41. A key challenge in assessing the impact of research will be to ensure that the evidence presented to panels enables robust assessment. The panels will need to make judgements about the credibility of the information presented to them, but there may be a need for panels to query some of the evidence or seek external corroboration of claims made in submissions. We propose to test this in the pilot exercise in two ways:

a. Audit queries: Panels may raise 'audit' queries through the panel secretary, to seek information from the submitting institution to verify that a case study is eligible (for example, to verify that the underpinning research was undertaken within the submitting institution).

b. External corroboration: Pilot HEIs have been asked to include references, where appropriate, to external sources to corroborate claims about impact, or the institution's contribution towards an impact. These could be references to external reports or other information in the public domain; or contact details of research 'users' that could potentially be contacted and asked to corroborate claims made. Panels could follow up references to external information, or request that the panel secretary contacts the 'users' to corroborate claims made in the case study.

42. In neither case should institutions be allowed to submit additional evidence about the extent of the impact, as this would be inequitable for institutions who are not provided with any such further opportunities.

43. Through the pilot, we wish to understand the extent to which these processes may be useful for a full REF exercise. To this end we propose that at each of the first **two** meetings, panels should identify a number of specific audit queries and requests for external corroboration. (At the first meeting, these will be limited to the initial sample of case studies provided to all members). Following each of these meetings, the panel secretary will pursue a **sample** of audit queries and external contacts, and will circulate any information received to the panels.

44. Where panel members wish to access external sources cited in the case studies that are in the public domain, the panel member may follow these up individually where possible, for example through the internet. If necessary, panel members should seek assistance from the panel secretary.

Cross referral

45. In the 2008 RAE, panels could 'cross refer' research outputs to another panel, where more suitable expertise was available. In the impact pilot exercise, we wish to test the potential for cross-referring or seeking comments on case studies from other panels. Given the pilot's scope is limited to five UOAs, we expect this will apply to a modest number of case studies, but is nevertheless worth testing given that the impacts submitted to any one panel may be diffuse, or may involve research inputs from across a range of disciplines.

46. To this end we will ask the panel chairs at the outset of the assessment to identify any particular case studies that could benefit from assessment by a specific member of another pilot panel. These members will then be asked by their chairs to assess these case studies and provide scores and commentary in writing to their panel secretary who will forward them to the appropriate panel.

Producing impact profiles

47. Initial impact profiles will be built up from scores awarded to the case studies. We also expect several panel members to read each impact statement and to consider the research income data, and for this information to be used to moderate or influence the impact profile awarded to each submission. When allocating work, the chair will seek to ensure that individuals assessing the impact statements will also have read case studies from the same submission.

48. At this stage we have identified two possible ways in which to take the impact statements into account:

- A weighted approach: Members could score the impact statement in terms of what proportion of activity meets each of the five levels. A specific weighting could then be attached to the impact statement, and the scores for this and the case studies could then be combined formulaically into an impact profile.
- Moderation: Members could discuss whether the evidence provided in the impact statement accords with the initial profile based on case studies, or whether it provides grounds for moderating the profile, and to what extent.

49. Whichever approach is used, we regard the case studies as providing the bulk of the evidence, and should account for at least 80% of the impact profile.

50. Panel should discuss which approach would be more appropriate, and through discussions between the panel chairs, we intend to identify a single preferred option for all panels to follow.

Supplementary case studies

51. Given the untested nature of the guidance on submissions for the pilot exercise, pilot HEIs have been invited to submit a small number of supplementary case studies that they consider would highlight particular instances where the guidelines are felt to be overly ambiguous or restrictive (for example, to illustrate a case where major impacts during 2005-9 have arisen from research undertaken prior to 1993; or to test the definition of 'impact' or the boundaries of what counts as a research contribution to an impact). These case studies will be provided to panels to consider and to comment on the issues raised. They need **not** be graded and will not affect the sub-profiles awarded to the submission. The panels are invited to comment on the issues raised in their final report.

Reporting outcomes and lessons learned

52. Each panel should produce a report, containing:

- a. An overview of the submissions received by the panel, including:
 - i. A general description of the range of audiences, users and beneficiaries of research included in the submissions; the diversity of impacts that were submitted; the ways in which research had contributed to these (routes to impact); and the types of evidence and indicators that were provided.
 - ii. A sample of case studies and some extracts or examples of 'impact statements' in order to illustrate the above. (We will seek the institutions' consent prior to publishing these.)
- b. Details of the assessment criteria developed by the panel and the process of assessment.
- c. The assessment outcomes, in the form of the impact profiles awarded to each submission. (Either separately or within the panel reports, HEFCE will provide some analysis of the relationship between these impact profiles and the 2008 RAE outcomes.)
- d. Lessons learned from the exercise, including:
 - i. General discussion of key strengths and weaknesses in the submissions, the nature of the evidence provided and use of indicators, and any issues raised by the 'supplementary case studies'.
 - ii. Reflection on the definition of impact, the criteria and process of assessment, including feedback on the roles of 'user' and 'academic' members and the workloads involved.
 - iii. General discussion of the issues and challenges faced by the panel in assessing the submissions, how they were resolved for the pilot exercise, and how they might be taken forward for a full REF exercise.
 - iv. Commentary on some individual case studies to illustrate any of the above issues (for example, to highlight 'good practice' in presenting evidence).

53. The panel secretary will initially compile the information by drawing on the panels' discussions at the first three meetings, recording the outcomes, and analysing the submissions. Working with the chair and the REF Manager, the secretary will produce an initial draft report, for discussion and input by the panel at its final meeting in September. We anticipate that the report will then be finalised through correspondence with members and further meetings with the panel chairs.

Panel working methods

Declarations of interest

54. All panel members and observers must declare any potential conflicts of interest and will not participate in assessing or discussing a case study or submission relating to an organisation or HEI in which they have a major interest. The panel secretary will maintain a register of panel members' interests. Panel members will withdraw from panel meetings when a case study or submission is discussed in which they have a major interest. The formal note of the discussion provided by the panel secretary and agreed with members present shall be the only part of that discussion to which they are party.

Deputy panel chairs

55. The chair of each panel will appoint a deputy chair for planned or unforeseen absence of the chair, and in cases where the chair has declared a conflict of interest.

Members' attendance

56. If a panel member is unable to attend a panel meeting, they should inform the panel secretary as early as possible. The panel members should provide any outstanding case study scores and comments to the secretary one week in advance of the meeting, so that the case study can be considered in the member's absence.

Panel observers

57. A number of individuals have been invited to attend panel meetings as observers. These are:

- Staff of the four UK higher education funding bodies, responsible for the REF
- Members of the Impact Pilot Steering Group
- Nominated individuals from the Research Councils.

58. Observers will not contribute to the assessment, but may be invited to contribute to panel discussions on areas where they have expertise. Members of HEFCE staff in particular may be invited to clarify or explain REF-related policy.

Consistency between the pilot panels

59. Panel chairs will meet at key stages in the process to share information, discuss emerging issues and seek to ensure an appropriate degree of consistency between the panels. HEFCE

staff will also ensure processes adopted by each panel and key issues encountered are shared across all panels as appropriate.

60. HEFCE staff with advice from the Impact Pilot Steering Group will also be responsible for coordinating the individual pilot panel reports, and for drawing together an overview report (including input from pilot institutions and the supplementary workshops).

Non-disclosure

61. Panel chairs, members and observers will need to agree to non-disclosure arrangements, prior to accessing any of the submitted materials, as set out in a letter from the REF manager on 19 March 2010. These arrangements ensure the confidential treatment of:

- a. information contained in institutions' submissions to the REF impact pilot exercise
- b. panels' discussions about submissions, or other information deduced from or generated as a result of submissions.

Feedback to pilot institutions

62. Pilot institutions will be provided with early access to the results and the panels' general findings. Once panels have agreed the sub-profiles to be awarded to the submissions, in July we will provide each sub-profile to the institution concerned, alongside some aggregate statistics for the UOA as a whole. The pilot institutions will also be provided with previews of the panels' reports and the opportunity to correct factual errors or raise other issues, before the reports are finalised and published in late 2010.

63. We do not anticipate that panels will provide the pilot HEIs with further written feedback on their individual submissions, but we intend to arrange events at which panel members can discuss the findings with representatives from the pilot institutions.

Annex A

Pilot institutions and UOAs

CLINICAL MEDICINE	PHYSICS	EARTH SYSTEMS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE	SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL POLICY	ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
University of Bristol			University of Bristol	
		Brunel University		Brunel University
	University of Cambridge			University of Cambridge
			De Montfort University	De Montfort University
	University of Durham	University of Durham		
		University of East Anglia	University of East Anglia	
University of Exeter				University of Exeter
Imperial College	Imperial College			
	Keele University		Keele University	
				Kingston University
	Lancaster University			Lancaster University
		University of Leeds	University of Leeds	
	Liverpool John Moores University			Liverpool John Moores University
			London School of Economics and Political Science	
			London South Bank University	
		University of Manchester		University of Manchester
University of Oxford		University of Oxford		
University of Plymouth		University of Plymouth		
Queen Mary University London				Queen Mary University London
	University College London			University College London
University of Warwick	University of Warwick			
	University of York		University of York	

CLINICAL MEDICINE	PHYSICS	EARTH SYSTEMS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE	SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL POLICY	ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
University of Dundee				University of Dundee
University of Glasgow		University of Glasgow		
	University of St Andrews			University of St Andrews
		University of Stirling	University of Stirling	
Cardiff University				Cardiff University
	Swansea University		Swansea University	
		University of Ulster	University of Ulster	

Annex B

Impact Pilot Exercise Steering Group

Terms of reference

1. HEFCE is managing the REF impact pilot exercise on behalf of the four UK higher education (HE) funding bodies.
2. The Steering Group's role is to advise HEFCE on the implementation of the REF impact pilot exercise and on the pilot exercise outcomes, to assist in the development of a robust, workable and efficient approach to assessing impact in the REF.
3. In particular, the steering group will provide advice on:
 - the aims and objectives of the pilot
 - the selection of UOAs and HEIs
 - the nature and format of submissions and guidance for HEIs
 - the establishment of pilot panels and how they will operate
 - gathering and reviewing feedback from the pilot institutions and panels, and the role of any consultants appointed to assist with this
 - considering relevant aspects of the consultation outcomes
 - the interface between impact and the 'output' and 'environment' elements of REF (especially the 'user significance' of outputs, and engagement aspects of environment)
 - identifying the key findings and lessons emerging
 - reporting of the pilot outcomes.
4. The Steering Group will meet around four times between September 2009 and August 2010, and may also be asked to comment on items by e-mail.

Membership

External members:

- Simon Denegri, AMRC
- Janet Finch, Keele University
- Russell Hamilton, Department of Health
- Alison Hodge, QinetiQ
- Roger Kain, University of Exeter
- Ian Leslie, University of Cambridge
- Ashley Malster, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
- John Rea, DEFRA
- John Stageman, Astrazenaca
- Jeremy Watson, ARUP
- Marie Williams, RCUK

HEFCE members:

- David Sweeney (Chair), Director of Research and Innovation
- Graeme Rosenberg, REF Manager
- Hannah Chaplin (Secretary), Higher Education Policy Adviser

5. HEFCE will report on the progress of the pilot exercise to the other three UK HE funding bodies through the REF Steering Group. The funding bodies will also be invited to comment on the paperwork for the REF impact pilot exercise Steering Group and to attend meetings and other pilot exercise events if they wish.