

# The REF assessment framework

(updated 23 May 2011)

# The REF (1)

The REF is a UK-wide framework for assessing research in all disciplines. Its purpose is:

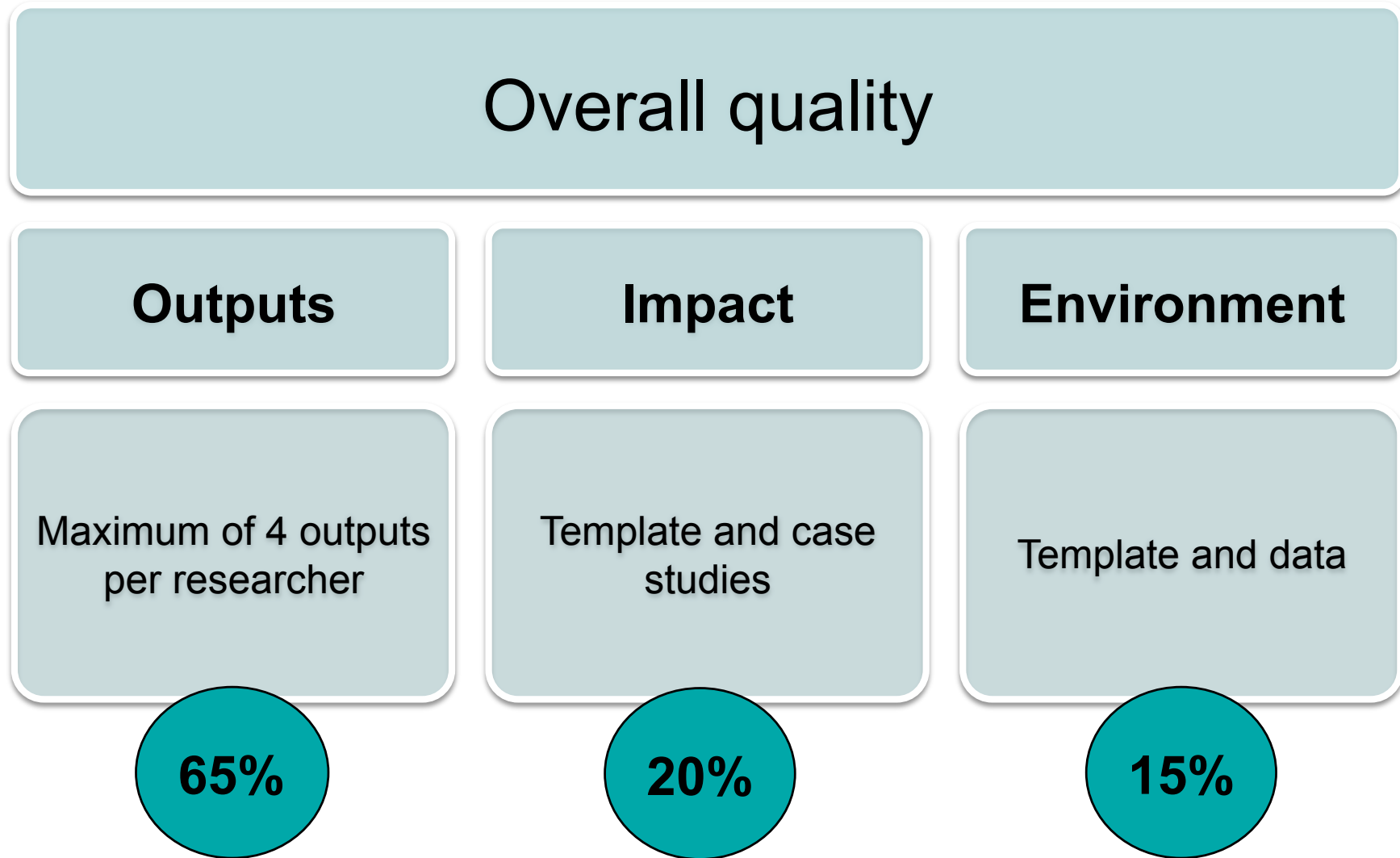
- To inform research funding allocations
- Provide accountability for public funding of research and demonstrate the public benefits
- To provide benchmarks and reputational yardsticks

# The REF (2)

REF is a process of expert review:

- HEIs make submissions in 36 units of assessment
- 36 expert sub-panels undertake the assessment
- Working under the guidance of 4 main panels
- And within a common framework for the assessment

# The assessment framework



# Timetable

## 2011

- Impact decisions (Feb)
- Panel membership (Feb)
- Guidance on submissions (Jul)
- Draft panel criteria and methods (Jul)

## 2012

- Panel criteria and methods (Jan)
- Test submissions system

## 2013

- Submissions deadline(Nov )
- Recruit additional assessors

## 2014

- Assessment
- Publish outcomes (Dec)

# Submissions

Each submission in a UOA will include:

- Details of selected staff in post on the census date (31 Oct 2013)
- Up to four outputs per member of staff ('published' between 1 Jan 2008 and 31 Dec 2013)
- Information about the unit's approach to impact
- Impact case studies
- Data about research income and research students
- A completed template about the research environment

# Research staff

Submissions to include:

- Category A staff:
  - must have a primary employment function of research or research and teaching
  - 0.2 FTE or greater
- Category C staff:
  - Employed by an organisation other than the HEI, to undertake research focussed in the submitting unit

# Research outputs

- Quality to be assessed in terms of ‘rigour, originality and significance’
- Equal treatment of all kinds of research outputs
- Up to 4 outputs per member of staff:
  - This may be reduced without penalty for staff with circumstances that substantially constrained their ability to produce four during the publication period
  - Consistent treatment of these circumstances across all UOAs
- Panels will develop criteria for co-authored outputs, double-weighted outputs, and any required supporting information
- Some panels will use citation data to inform peer review

# Research environment

- A template to describe, for example, the research structure, research strategy, people strategy, infrastructure and collaborations
- Standard data on research income, and research students
  - Aligned with HESA data as far as possible
  - Data for the 'whole unit' rather than linked to selected staff only

# Research impact

- A broad generic definition of (non academic) impact, including any benefit to the economy, society, culture or environment
- Impacts to be assessed in terms of their 'reach and significance'
- Each submission to include:
  - Information about the unit's approach to supporting impact
  - Case studies detailing specific examples of impacts

# Impact case studies

- One case study, plus one further case study per 10 FTE staff in the submission (with a minimum of 2 per submission)
- Impacts that have taken place between 1 Jan 2008 and 31 Jul 2013
- Underpinned by research that:
  - Was conducted between 1 Jan 1993 and 31 Dec 2013
  - In the submitting HEI
  - Meets standards of excellence
  - Whether a single output or a body of work; by an individual or group; conducted solely in the HEI, in collaboration or part of a wider body of knowledge

# Equality and diversity

We have built on the measures taken in the 2008 RAE:

- A consistent approach to individual staff circumstances
- All institutions to adhere to a code of practice on the fair and transparent selection of staff
- Evidence of support for equality and diversity (within the research environment)
- Analysis of selection rates at sector level
- Panels will be fully briefed
- An equality expert panel to support the implementation of these measures

# Next steps and further information

- Guidance on submissions (July 2011)
- Draft panel criteria and working methods (July 2011)

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