

REF 2021 Decisions

Name

Date

Event/location



Cyngor Cyllido Addysg
Uwch Cymru
Higher Education Funding
Council for Wales

hefcw



REF 2021

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REF - overview

REF2021

- Undertaken by the REF team on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies
- Key purposes:
 - To provide accountability for public investment in research and produce evidence of the benefits of this investment.
 - To provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks, for use within the HE sector and for public information.
 - To inform the selective allocation of funding for research –ca. £2bn per year.
- Assessed across three areas:
 - Outputs (e.g. publications, performance, prototypes) – 60%
 - Impact (the benefit of research for wider society) – 25%
 - Research environment (resources, strategies to support research) – 15%
- Assessed by expert sub-panels (of senior academics and research users) in 34 disciplined-based ‘units of assessment’, overseen by 4 main panels

The Stern Review

- Independent review of REF commissioned by Minister and led by Lord Nicholas Stern. Reported in July 2016.

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

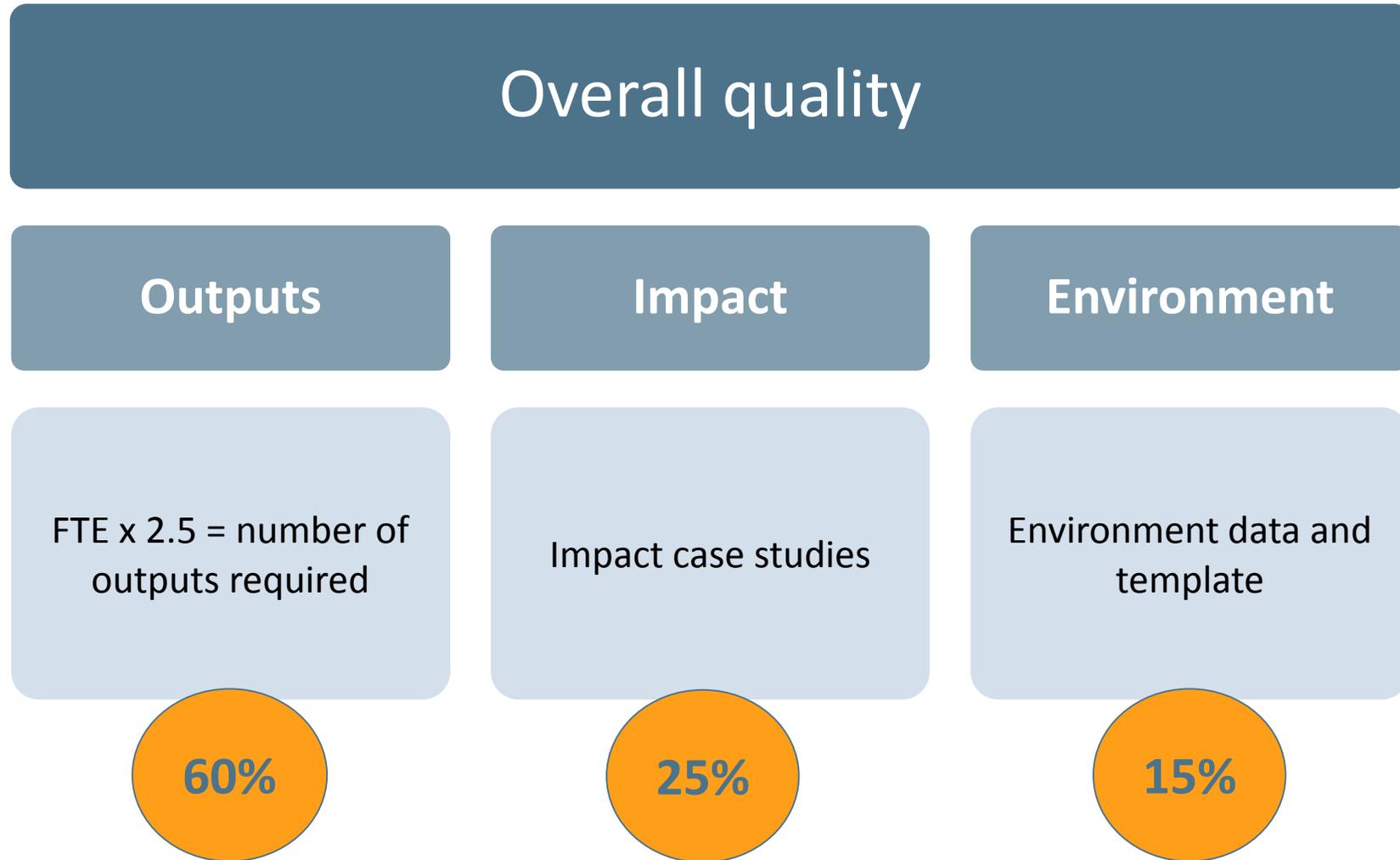
Key changes since REF 2014

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- Submission of all staff with significant responsibility for research
- Transitional approach to non-portability of outputs
- Decoupling of staff from outputs
- Additional measures to support interdisciplinary research
- Broadening and deepening definitions of impact
- Open access requirements
- More structured environment statement with additional sections
- Weightings

2021 framework

REF2021



Expert panels

- 34 sub-panels working under the guidance of four main panels

Main panel responsibilities

- Developing the panel criteria and working methods
- Ensuring adherence to the criteria/procedures and consistent application of the overall assessment standards
- Signing off the outcomes

Sub-panel responsibilities

- Contributing to the main panel criteria and working methods
- Assessing submissions and recommending the outcomes

- Consultation feedback – maintain consistency with UOA structure in 2014, except in couple of key areas

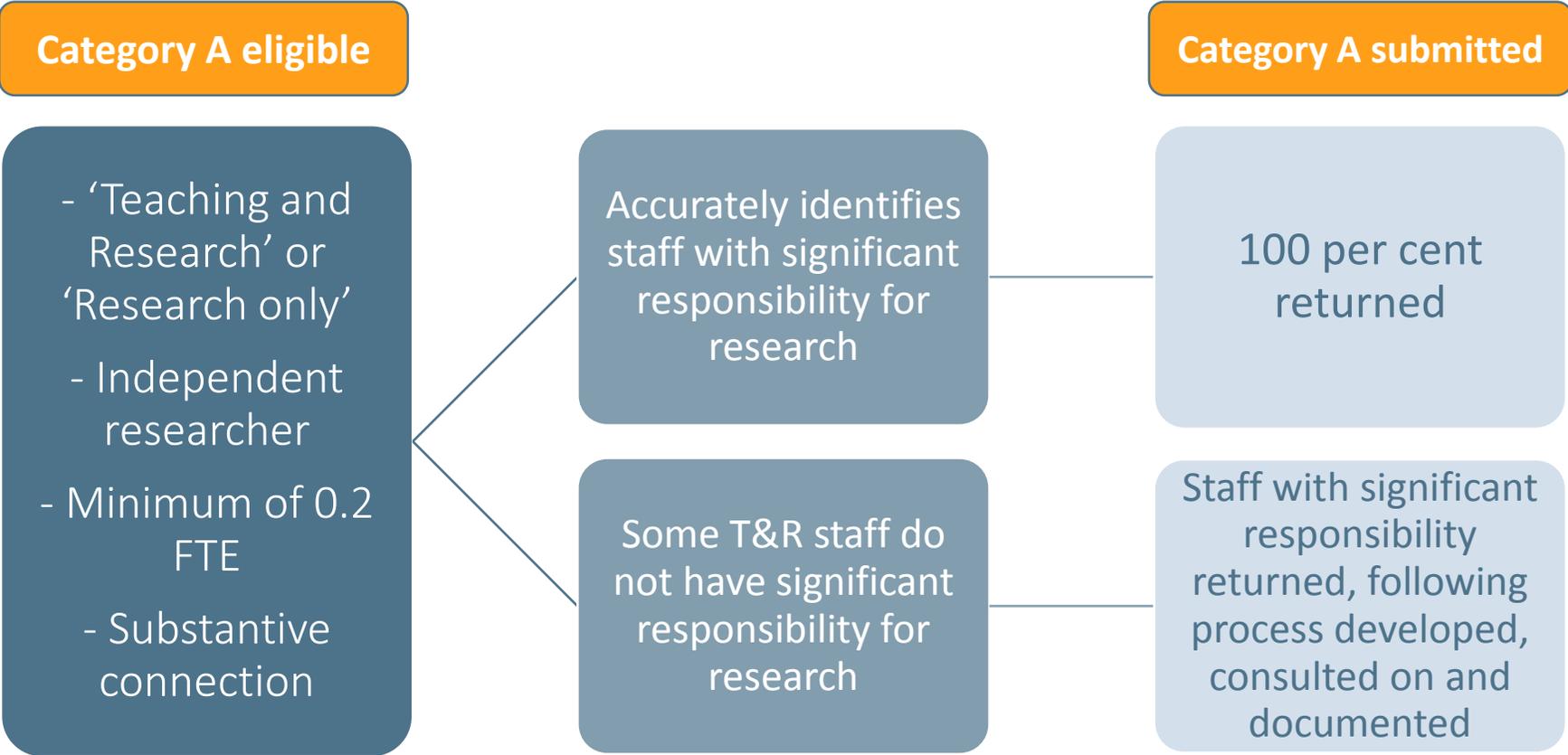
Submissions – summary

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- Each submission in a UOA provides evidence about the activity and achievements of a ‘submitted unit’
- Responsibility for mapping staff into UOAs with institutions – guided by UOA descriptors
- Institutions will normally make one submission in each UOA they elect to submit in
- Joint submissions are encouraged where this is an appropriate way of describing collaborative research
- Consistency with 2014 process for multiple submissions – **only** by exception and with permission from the REF manager

Submissions – staff

- All staff with significant responsibility for research should be returned to the REF



- Approach may vary by UOA where employment practices vary at this level

Submissions – staff

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Significant responsibility for research

- ‘those for whom explicit time and resources are made available to engage actively in independent research, and that is an expectation of their job role.’
- No clear consensus in consultation on generic criteria – variations across disciplines and institutions
- Guidance will set out a ‘menu’ of what we consider may be appropriate indicators of significant responsibility.

Independent research

- Variation in key attributes also identified in the consultation
- Guidance will build on generic definition used in REF 2014 (undertaking ‘independent research, leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on a research grant or significant piece of research work’.)

Submissions – staff

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Category C

- Contribution of ‘Category C’ staff should be captured in environment element
- Definition will follow 2014

Individuals employed by an organisation other than an HEI, whose contract or job role (as documented by their employer) includes the undertaking of research, and whose research is primarily focused in the submitting unit on the census date.

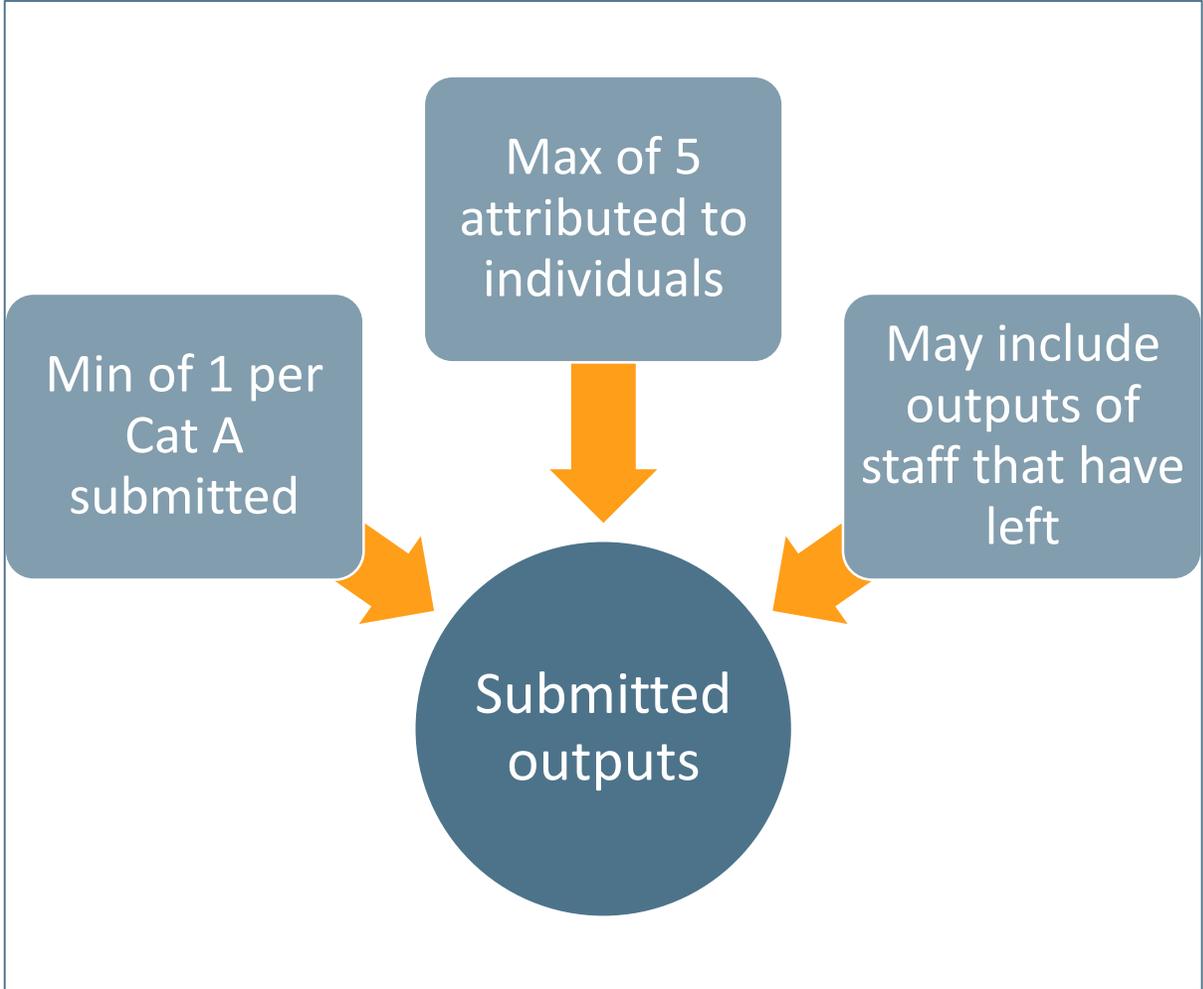
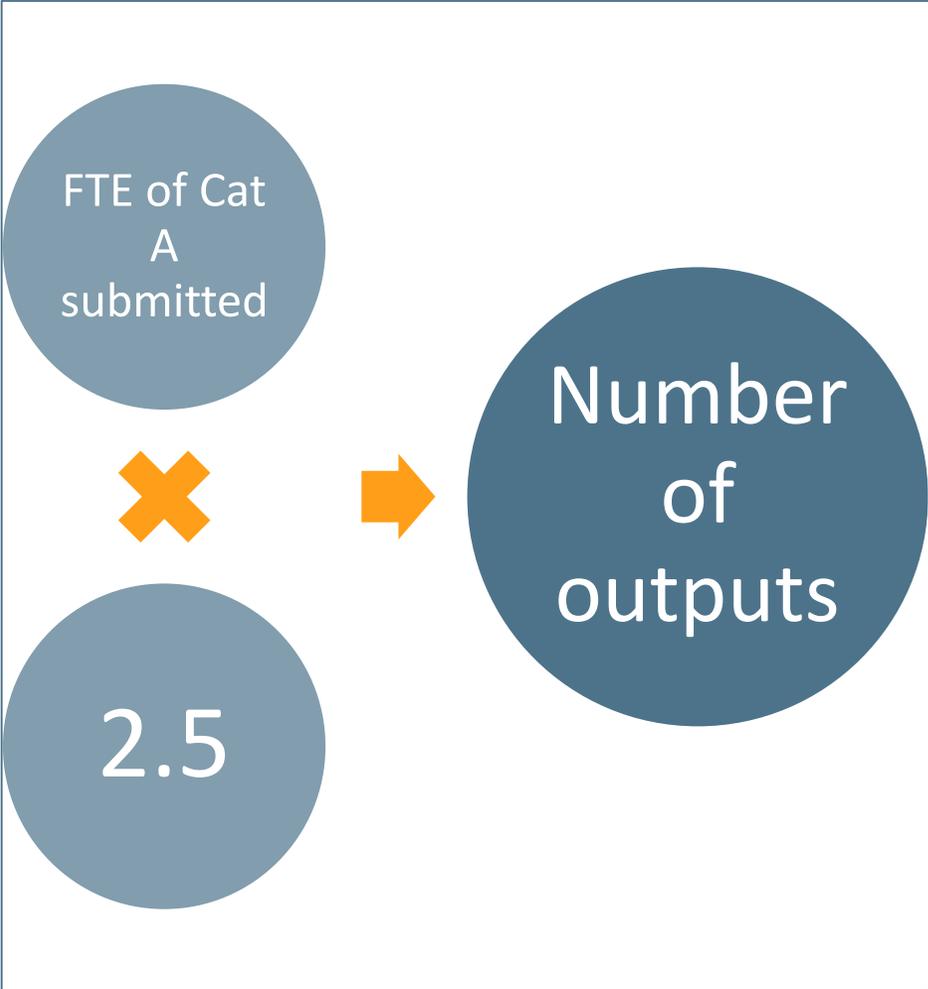
Submissions – small units

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- Fewer than 5 FTE
- Concerns about burden of meeting submission requirements
- Request an exclusion in exceptional circumstances:
 - One or a very small number of staff
 - Usually in UOA in which institution has not previously submitted

Submissions – decoupling

- Number of outputs per submission
- Output pool to include



Submissions - outputs

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- Transitional approach to non-portability
- Outputs may be submitted by:
 - the institution employing eligible staff member when the output was demonstrably generated; and
 - the institution employing the staff member on the census date
- ‘Demonstrably generated’ – date when the output was first made publicly available
- Full eligibility criteria to be defined by panels

Submissions – circumstances

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- Funding bodies' aim to promote measures to support equality and diversity
- Informed by consultation feedback

Individual circumstances

- Exceptional individual circumstances
- Staff may be returned without min of one output
- Unit's output requirement reduced by one

Unit circumstances

- Measures to account for units with higher proportions of staff not able to research productively due to individual circumstances
- Optional reduction in unit's output requirement, in relation to proportion of staff meeting set criteria

Submissions – codes of practice

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Code of practice to cover:

Process for ensuring a fair approach to selecting outputs

Process(es) for identifying Category A submitted staff in any UOAs where not submitting 100 per cent

- Guidance and template will be developed with EDAP and provided to institutions mid-2018.
- Provisional timetable for submission is spring 2019.
- Publication intended by end of 2019.

Submissions – interdisciplinary research

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- Developed with advice from the Interdisciplinary Research Advisory Panel

Interdisciplinary advisers

- Oversee and participate in the assessment of IDR

Interdisciplinary identifier

- Identify IDR outputs, clearer guidance on use

Section in environment

- Unit's structures in support of IDR

Outputs

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Open access

- Outputs deposited as soon after the point of acceptance as possible, and **no later than three months** after this date from 1 April 2018.
- Deposit exception from 1 April 2018 – outputs remain compliant if they are deposited up to three months after the date of publication.

Assessment metrics

- Quantitative data may be used to inform the assessment of outputs, where panels consider this appropriate for the discipline



Definitions and guidance

- 'Academic' and 'wider' impact
- Criteria of 'reach and significance', impact arising from public engagement, impact on teaching
- Number of case studies

Consistency with 2014

- Non-portability of impact
- Quality threshold
- Timeframe

Refinements

- Impact template
- Case study template
- Evidence

Environment template

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- More structured template
- Sections will include:
 - equality and diversity
 - approach to enabling impact
 - approach to supporting collaboration
 - structures to support interdisciplinary research
 - section on open research

Environment data

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- Research income, degrees awarded and income-in-kind
- Use of more quantitative data – advice from working group of Forum for Responsible Research Metrics



Institutional level assessment of environment

- 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.

Key issues for the panels

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- Eligibility of staff and outputs
- Continuing case studies, and bodies of work underpinning impact
- Environment guidance (incl. impact, interdisciplinarity, and open research)
- Individual and unit circumstances
- Joint submissions
- Multiple submissions
- Timing and criteria for requesting exclusions for small submissions

Timetable

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Early 2018	Appoint main and sub-panel members
Spring 2018	Panels meet to develop criteria Develop detailed guidance, including COP guidance and template
Summer to autumn 2018	Publish draft Guidance on Submissions Consultation on panel criteria
January 2019	Publish final guidance and criteria
2019	Spring: provisional deadline for submission of COPs Complete preparation of submission systems Winter: provisional publication of COPs
2020	Submission phase
2021	Assessment phase

Further information

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- www.ref.ac.uk (includes all relevant documents and FAQs)
- Enquiries from staff at HEIs should be directed to their nominated institutional contact (will make available on www.ref.ac.uk)
- Other enquiries to info@ref.ac.uk

Our subpanel so far:

2018:

Tara Brendle, Glasgow
John Greenlees , Sheffield
Philip Jonathan, Shell
John King*, Nottingham
Adam Letchford, Lancaster
Guy Nason, Bristol
Bill Spence, QMUL

2020:

Simon Blackburn, Royal Holloway
Richard Craster, Imperial
Paul Fearnhead, Lancaster
Martin Hairer, Imperial
Paul Harper, Cardiff
Mark Haskins, Bath
Des Higham, Strathclyde
Jeanine Houwing-Duistermaat, Leeds
Aleksandar Mijatovic, KCL
Beatrice Pelloni, Heriot-Watt
Jonathan Pila, Oxford
Eugene Shagorodsky, KCL
Fiona Steele, LSE
[Michael Wemyss, Glasgow](#)
Andrew Wood, Nottingham
Grae Worster ,Cambridge
Sarah Zerbes, UCL