

REF 2029: Overview, Spring 2024

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What is the Research Excellence Framework?

REF is owned and led by the four UK higher education funding bodies



Cyngor Cyllido Addysg
Uwch Cymru
Higher Education Funding
Council for Wales

hefcw



Research
England



- It:
 - informs allocation of around £2bn of block-grant funding each year
 - provides accountability for public investment in research
 - alongside our research base, it continually evolves
 - (given the connection to allocation of funds) inevitably drives behaviour and therefore is a significant policy instrument across the UK

REF 2029
Research Excellence Framework

Key developments for REF 2029:

- **People, Culture and Environment**, global perspective that culture is:
 - Crucial in supporting high-quality research with impact
 - A key component of excellence
 - Linked with long-termism, stability, sustainability and productivity
- **Breaking link between individual staff members and unit submissions:**
 - HESA data on staff primarily employed to undertake research (no REF census)
 - “Substantive connection” and “substantive link”
 - Exploring the removal of minimum and maximum outputs per staff member
- **Impact Case studies:**
 - Reducing the minimum institutional submission to one
 - Revising threshold levels and weighing of the impact statement

What's happening now?

- **“Policy Roadmap” and community engagement:**
 - Live approach to policy development
 - Co-creation for PCE indicators and open approach to intelligence from the pilot
 - Open Access consultation is now live
 - HESA data and related policy decisions
 - Engagement and Impact, Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding
- **PCE indicators project and pilot set up**
 - Technopolis et al workshops to co-develop indicators to launch imminently
 - Ability for HEIs to apply to pilot open now; panel application process to follow
 - Pilot Units of Assessment for Main Panel B are Earth Systems and Env Sciences (UoA7) and Computer Science and Informatics (UoA 11)
- **Advisory and Panel Recruitment**
 - Approach being refreshed
 - Hope to launch in May
 - We need advice and assessment expertise from beyond the academy