

Research Quality Framework

a university perspective

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Purpose of the RQF

- To measure research **quality & impact**
- Will be used to determine research funding to universities
Institutional Grants Scheme, &
Research Training Scheme
- Possible use for ARC & NHMRC assessment

History of the RQF

- Initiated by Minister Nelson, March 2005
- Mimics schemes in many other countries
UK, New Zealand
not USA
- Minister Bishop *received* but did **not** accept
the recommendations of an
Expert Advisory Group

Timing of the RQF

- Initially
 - Pilot in 2006
 - 2001 – 2006 data
 - measured in 2007 for 2008 funds
- 1st job of the Development Advisory Group (DAG) is to consider timing issues

Will the RQF go away?

- Many in the sector hope so
- Minister Bishop has consistently affirmed the intent of the RQF
- There is a good chance that a cost effective model focused on metrics will be adopted



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2006 Budget

“The funding announced in this Budget [\$3.0M] will allow further development of the model and the next phase of the process.

The recently appointed RQF DAG will advise the Government on how the RQF model, if adopted by the Government, could be most effectively implemented.”

Minister Bishop, 9 May 2006



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Nearly all universities have now developed
a RQF strategy



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How have the universities responded?

- Initially thought it would mean more \$s
 - As yet there is no money on the table (aside from \$3M)
- *New Generation Universities* group are collaborating to prepare for the RQF
- Discipline groups are getting together to assist in defining relevant metrics for fields

Purpose of the NGU RQF Assessment Exercise

- Familiarisation with RQF criteria and procedures
- Familiarisation with peer review of research quality
- Demonstration of measurement of research impact
- Indicate to staff their likely score under the RQF
- Provide sector moderated data that will enable the University to plan its approach to the RQF in the future

Outcomes

- Each researcher will receive a score between 1 and 5
best four outputs, list of all outputs
- Research groups will receive an aggregated score
Assessment of individuals plus group portfolio
- Formation of groups may occur at the university level
- Groups will know the number of staff at each level

Quality & Impact

Many things that we do not yet know

however

- Must be based on evidence **not** assertion
- Acceptable inputs will vary across disciplines
- Inputs may be reviewed, in full, by panel members



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Quality

- Full details of paper, book or other publication or work.
- The work must be able to be reviewed by an expert in Australia or elsewhere.
- Co-authored works can be identified, but must be accompanied by a brief statement describing the researcher's contribution.
- The work must have been published in the years 2000 to 2005.
- It can predate the researcher joining VU
- The description should include an explanation (no more than 100 words) of the output's significance to justify the assessment score

Quality - Assessment

5

Pioneering (outstanding performance) – groundbreaking, highly innovative research that is world-renowned. No more than 5% of research outputs across a discipline or field of research or across a large institution can be expected to warrant this assessment.

4

International standard (very strong performance) – research considered truly internationally competitive and making a major contribution to the advancement of knowledge. No more than 15% of research outputs across a discipline or field of research or across a large institution can be expected to warrant either this assessment or the higher (‘5’) assessment.



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Quality - Assessment

3

Exceeding national standard (strong performance) – research of high standard and making a solid incremental contribution to knowledge, but not at the leading edge. No more than 30% of research outputs across a discipline or field of research or across a large institution can be expected to warrant this assessment or the higher ('5' or '4') assessments.

2

Average national standard (moderate performance) – research of average / moderate standard but not at the level of significantly advancing knowledge in the field. Around half of all research outputs across a discipline or field of research or across a large institution can be expected to warrant this assessment.

Quality - Assessment

1

Below national standard (below-average performance) – research of low standard; no contribution to understanding or insight demonstrated. It suggests questionable application of theory or methodologies, or at least does not substantiate use of its theory / methodologies.

Impact

- Altered policy or practice in a particular field
- Produced a social, economic, industrial or environmental change
- May be local, national or international

Where it has come from collaborative or interdisciplinary research it should identify each party's contribution to the impact

Maximum 100 words

Impact – Possible Examples

- Changes in legislation, amendments to regulatory arrangements,
- Wide take-up of a product, service or process
- Changes in ways of thinking derived from the research
- Significant impact of take-up of the research findings
- Revenue increases, cost savings, changed ‘view of the world’, technological change or new products

Impact - Assessment

High

Fundamentally altered policy or practice in a particular field, or produced a major, identifiable social, economic, industrial or environmental change, locally or internationally. The researcher is widely renowned in industry or the community for this impact.

Moderate

Significantly altered policy or practice in a limited field, or produced an identifiable social, economic, industrial or environmental change. Recognised in industry or the community for these impacts.

Impact - Assessment

Limited

Little or no identifiable change in policy or practice, and little or no identifiable social, economic or environmental change.

Issues - poaching

In the UK the Research Assessment Exercise resulted in significant poaching of researcher between universities

Issues – few quantitative measures in some disciplines

ISI Web of knowledge most commonly used
Considered good for science & engineering
Impact factor of journal,
Number of citations

What to use in humanities?

What to use in creative performance?

Do conferences count

Deans of Computer Science

Issues – measurement of impact

“It will also recognise research that provides significant broader impact to Australia, whether economic, social, environmental or cultural.

The RQF will be the first research assessment exercise carried out internationally that considers research impact”

Minister Bishop, 9 May 2006

What next?

- **Significant activity around the measurement of quality for individual researchers**
- Much debate and exploration of measures of research impact
- Caution about traveling too fast & risking much pain for little gain

I believe you are in a good position to significantly help the universities through this process.