Absences of chair and declaration of interests

1. In the absence of the chair, a chair for a meeting of the main panel will be identified from one of the four sub-panel chairs on an ad hoc basis.

2. The RAE team will retain an up to date register of members’ interests and these will be noted by the main and sub-panels. Such interests are defined in Annex 4. As a matter of principle, individuals will withdraw from panel meetings when submissions from a higher education institution in which they have declared a current or recent major interest will be discussed. The formal note of discussion provided by the panel secretary and agreed with members present will be the only part of that discussion to which they will be party.

3. Declarations of minor interest will be noted by the main and sub-panels, and the role of the members in assessing submissions will be restricted according to the level of interest declared.

How the main panel will work with its sub-panels

4. Sub-panels are responsible for:
   a. Preparing draft statements of relevant criteria and working methods.
   b. Making recommendations to main panels on the quality profiles to be awarded for each submission.

5. Main panels are responsible for:
   a. Reviewing and endorsing the criteria and working methods to be used by the sub-panels.
   b. Deciding on the quality profile to be awarded to each submission, following recommendations from the sub-panels.
   c. Maintaining a good level of communication and joint working with the other main panels.
6. In view of the roles described above, Main Panel C will work with its sub-panels in the following ways:

a. The main panel will provide leadership and guidance to its related sub-panels on their approaches to the assessment process, including guiding them in establishing and endorsing their criteria for assessment and working methods.

b. Minutes of meetings of sub-panels will be circulated to all members of the main panel.

c. Minutes of sub-panels will carefully record items of agreement and dissent that will then be raised by the chairs of the sub-panels at main panel meetings.

d. The main panel will review and endorse all sub-panels’ criteria and working methods, and check for consistency commensurate with the disciplines they cover.

f. Sub-panels will advise the main panel on cross-referrals to other sub-panels of submissions or cited research outputs and on the need for additional specialist advice.

h. At the assessment stage sub-panel chairs may attend meetings of other sub-panels from time to time.

i. At their discretion, sub-panels may invite international and additional members of the main panel to attend their meetings.

k. The main panel will receive provisional quality profiles for all submissions from sub-panels and endorse them or make adjustments as appropriate.

1. The main panel will work with sub-panels to produce a final report on the state of the research in the disciplines covered by the sub-panels.

7. The secretariat provided consistency at the criteria setting stage, as the two panel secretaries attended every meeting of the main panel and its sub-panels.

**Range of indicators of excellence**

8. The range of indicators of excellence that are appropriate in the disciplines covered by sub-panels will include research outputs, research income, research students, research degrees awarded, research studentships, research environment, research structure and research strategy.

**Definition of research**

9. Research to be assessed must conform to the RAE definition of research, as stated in Annex 3.

**Definitions of quality levels**

10. The three components of the overall quality profile (research outputs, research environment and esteem indicators) will be assessed using the RAE definitions of quality levels. In addition, in the context of the disciplines covered by Main Panel C, the following interpretations of definitions of quality levels will apply:

- **4*** – research judged to be of a quality which is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour; regarded as a primary point of reference in its field, which has made or is likely to make an outstanding contribution to knowledge, theory, practice or policy

- **3*** – research judged to be of a quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour, which has made or is likely to make a highly significant contribution to knowledge, theory, practice or policy

- **2*** – research judged to be of an international standard of quality in terms of originality, significance and rigour, which has made or is likely to make a significant contribution to knowledge, theory, practice or policy
• 1* – research judged to be original, significant and rigorous, which has made or is likely to make a contribution to knowledge, theory, practice or policy

• Unclassified – work of a quality that does not meet the definition of one star, or which does not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of the RAE.

Research outputs

16. The normal expectation is that staff should submit four outputs for assessment. Four is also the maximum. In the event that fewer than four outputs are cited for individuals, departments should draw the relevant sub-panel’s attention in RA5b to any individual staff circumstances they deem relevant, including career and equal opportunities issues.

17. Co-authored work will not be treated any differently from single-authored work. It is expected that the author who cites co-authored work will have made a substantial contribution to it. Because it is the quality of outputs which is being assessed, no inference will be placed on the order of attribution of authors.

18. The fullest and most favourable impression of a department’s research will normally be gained when each output is only cited once. If an output is cited by two or more co-authors within a single submission, this must be identified in RA2 ‘Other relevant details’ – for each occurrence of the output – with a justification for the multiple citing in up to 50 words (eg, the scale of the output, or a clear and fundamental difference in the co-authors’ contributions to the work). If a sub-panel is not persuaded by the reason for citing the output more than once, all occurrences of the output but one may be accorded an Unclassified quality level.

19. Evidence that research outputs have already been reviewed or refereed by experts and judged to embody research of high quality may be used as one measure of quality. However the absence of such review will not, in itself, be taken to imply lower quality.

20. Indicators used to judge research outputs will include originality, significance and rigour, as demonstrated by the extent to which knowledge or theory in the field has been increased or practice or policy has been, or is likely to be, improved.

Research environment

21. Sub-panels will look at a range of indicators on a component by component and on a group basis, where relevant:

- volume of research students and research degrees awarded
- sources of funding of research studentships
- volume of research income
- sources of funding of research income
- research structure
- staffing policy
- research strategy.

22. Evidence that research studentships and income have been awarded on the basis of competition and/or by rigorous peer review will be more highly regarded.

23. A collective decision will be reached based on these components. In assessing all components, due regard will be given to the sustainability and vitality of the research environment in which they are based.

24. The panel is particularly concerned to acknowledge the relative stage of research capacity development within new groups or departments (established since 1 January 2001) and this will be taken into account when considering the metrics related to research students and research income under the research environment component of submissions, where appropriate.

Esteem indicators

25. Sub-panels will be looking at a range of indicators of esteem related to the research activity of submitted staff and/or groups, if appropriate, which may include (but are not limited to):

a. Keynote research papers or invited research-based addresses at major or international conferences.
b. Impact of research on government policy.
c. Impact of research on national or international practice development.
d. Honours or awards given to individuals in recognition of their research.
e. Chairing or positions on distinctive committees relevant to research.
f. Service on, or invitations to join, government, national or international bodies, or professional advisory bodies relevant to research.
g. Editorial activities (including, for example, membership of the editorial boards of journals).
h. Evidence of esteem with service or research users.
i. Evidence of research collaboration with centres outside the UK.

**Consistency of quality levels**

26. The main panel has guided sub-panels to provide examples of indicators of quality consistently in criteria statements. These have been discussed in the main panel and checked for consistency. Each sub-panel will weight the quality profiles as follows:

- research outputs: 70%
- research environment: 25%
- esteem indicators: 5%.

27. In addition to the RAE definitions of quality levels, the main panel will guide its sub-panels to adopt the same interpretations of the quality level descriptors.

28. At the assessment stage, sampling of outputs across UOAs may be used to check for consistency.

29. The main panel will expect that sources of funding of research income and studentships will be treated consistently across the sub-panels, while recognising that the extent to which some sources of funding are attainable may differ across the disciplines.

**Methods for ensuring consistency**

30. To ensure consistency in applying common criteria, there will be regular dialogue between the main panel and sub-panel chairs.

31. The main panel has adopted working methods with its sub-panels to ensure consistency (see paragraphs 4-7 above).

32. Before assessing submissions in detail a calibration exercise will be undertaken within and across the main panel’s sub-panels.

33. At the assessment stage of the exercise, the main panel will work with sub-panels to ensure consistent application of the overall quality standards, common assessment procedures and adherence to equal opportunities guidance. The main panel chair and international and additional members may attend sub-panel meetings as observers during the assessment stage, to ensure consistency.

**Elements of variation in the criteria statements**

34. The main panel has considered the criteria statements of all four sub-panels and agreed that they are comparable. Any element of variation has been discussed and agreed in the light of subject-specific considerations.

35. In particular, the main panel is aware of diverse working arrangements in different disciplines within its sub-panels and intends to take due account of this when considering the permitted number of outputs to be cited. Accordingly, it recognises the potential impact on research activity of clinical lecturers on formal training programmes on the census date and this is deemed to be a permitted variation in sub-panel criteria statements, where appropriate.

**Applied research and practice-based research**

36. The main panel will be looking for research of high quality that embodies originality, significance and rigour. Membership of the main and sub-panels includes a broad range of subject expertise and user representation to ensure that
applied research and practice-based research are assessed appropriately.

37. The main panel and its sub-panels will give full recognition to applied research and practice-based research included in submissions which is of direct relevance to the needs of Government, the NHS and social care, other parts of the public and voluntary sectors, and commerce or industry, as appropriate. Departments should ensure that such work is innovative and that it adheres to the RAE definition of research.

38. Applied research and practice-based research might include:

a. Research aimed at solving practical problems or with some practical application for the benefit of the public and/or patients and clients.

b. Translation of research findings to professional practice and policy to benefit patients, or to advance knowledge and technology.

c. Exploitation of research outcomes to benefit users and the public.

d. Development or adaptation of research to new or substantially improved techniques, devices, products, processes, materials or drugs.

e. Research that advances knowledge to meet the needs of users and beneficiaries, thereby contributing to the economic competitiveness of the UK, the effectiveness of public services and policy, and the quality of life.

Individual staff circumstances

39. In assessing submissions, all sub-panels will take account of individual staff circumstances that prevent researchers from submitting four outputs in the categories listed in paragraph 39 of the generic statement. Discipline-specific reasons such as those listed below will also be considered:

- the added risk of exposure to hazards in relation to certain medical conditions and for pregnant and nursing women
- engagement in activities that do not constitute research, e.g., completing field work or clinical duties.

40. Where fewer than four outputs are submitted against an individual, departments are required to provide relevant reasons in their submissions in RA5b. If the sub-panel accepts the reasons provided, the ‘missing’ output(s) will be disregarded and not considered further. If the sub-panel is not convinced by the reasons provided, the missing output(s) will be recorded as Unclassified in the quality profile.

41. In the context of national policy initiatives to increase research capacity and leadership, the main panel recognises the role of early career researchers, defined as those who first met the description of Category A staff for RAE2008 on or after 1 August 2003. Early career researchers may be submitted with fewer than four outputs and should be identified to sub-panels in RA5b.

42. Main Panel C will seek to ensure equality issues are incorporated and applied consistently across all sub-panels.

43. Departments are requested to describe in their submission how any policy, contractual or service factors, including those covered by equal opportunities legislation, might have affected the activity and performance of individuals or groups.

44. In relation to research outputs, information provided under ‘Individual staff circumstances’ in RA5b will only be taken into account when considering a permitted reduction in output volume, not on their quality.

Panel observers

45. The main panel welcomes observers from the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC), the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Medical Research Council (MRC). These observers will receive the full minutes and working papers for all main and sub-panel meetings. Observers will provide factual information on the operation of the dual support system for research, the types of programmes funded and other ad hoc information as appropriate.