Absences of chair and declaration of interests

1. A deputy chair will be appointed to stand in during short-term absences of the main panel chair. The deputy chair will have the same powers as the chair for the period they are acting as chair.

2. Main panel members will withdraw from meetings when submissions are discussed from the HEIs in which they declare a major interest, as described in Annex 4.

3. Main panel members will declare minor interests. Where appropriate members who declare a minor interest will not take a major role in assessing the institution or piece of evidence concerned.

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 keeping with the roles described above, Main Panel D will establish the framework within which sub-panels will operate in the following ways:
   a. The main panel will act as a source of advice on procedural matters, liaise with the RAE team and share good practice between sub-panels to ensure common approaches as far as possible.
   b. The main panel will keep sub-panels informed on new issues arising within other sub-panels and main panel areas.
7. Within the framework set by the main panel, the sub-panel chairs will be responsible for running sub-panels.
8. The minutes of sub-panel meetings will be circulated to main panel members.
9. Sub-panel chairs will give (oral) reports to main panel meetings of key issues from their sub-panels.

Assessment phase
10. The main panel will not be involved in the detailed assessment of any submission.
11. The main panel will meet at least four times during the assessment phase. The main panel will meet early in the assessment phase to ensure that the sub-panels are applying common criteria and quality profiles consistently, and before formal recommendations from sub-panels are finalised.

Elements of variation in the criteria statements
12. The main panel expects little variation between sub-panels’ criteria, but recognises that some variation may be required to take account of, for example, practice-based work in veterinary science.
13. The main panel will also consider criteria statements of other relevant main and sub-panels and how far variation from their criteria is justified.

Methods for ensuring consistency
14. The main panel will meet periodically during the assessment period to review a range of submissions and their provisional quality profiles.
15. The main panel will approve and oversee the calibration of assessments. A sample of submissions that have been provisionally assessed at the top, middle and bottom of the profile will be reviewed by at least one other sub-panel.
16. The main panel will take advice from international members and other additional experts as necessary, particularly to validate decisions on 4* quality.

Consistency of quality levels
17. Each sub-panel will use the same weightings in forming the overall quality profile.
18. The weightings in the quality profile will be:
   - outputs 75%
   - environment 20%
   - esteem 5%.
19. The outputs profile will be based on an assessment of up to four outputs per member of staff submitted; four is also the normal expectation.
20. The environment profile will be based on an assessment of four equally weighted elements: students, studentships and externally-funded fellowships; research income; research infrastructure and facilities; research strategy, structure and staffing policy.
21. The esteem profile will be based on an assessment of up to four indicators of esteem per member of staff submitted.
22. In all cases the evidence will be considered in light of the nature of research undertaken.
23. At an early stage in the assessment phase the main panel will review a subset of submissions from each sub-panel to assist sub-panels in applying quality levels consistently.

Range of indicators of excellence
24. There may be some area-specific indicators reflecting the range of research activity in areas covered by the main panel.
25. The main panel expects that only a minority of work submitted will be within defined disciplines. Measures of excellence should refer to the range of activity in the field. Sub-panels’ criteria should avoid discipline-specific terminology as far as possible in their working methods.
26. The main panel welcomes interdisciplinary work.
27. In assessing work as being 4* the panels will expect to see evidence of the following characteristics: research that is at the forefront of a research area and so contributes to setting the research agenda; that introduces important new thinking or techniques; for applied work, that has major impact on policy or practice or on the development of innovative new products.

28. In assessing work as being 3* the panels will expect to see evidence of the following characteristics: contributions that add important knowledge, ideas or techniques and are likely to have a lasting impact, but which do not develop major new concepts; for applied work, work that provokes substantial changes in policies and practice.

29. In assessing work as being 2* the panels will expect to see evidence of the following characteristics: work that adds useful knowledge to the field, and is likely to have incremental and short term influence; this might include new knowledge or calculations using established techniques or approaches conforming with existing ideas; for applied work, has appreciable influence on policy or practice.

30. In assessing work as being 1* the panels will expect to see evidence of the following characteristics: sound science that has not previously been reported in the same form, but that is likely to have little influence on other research or on policy or practice.

31. Evidence will be considered under three headings: outputs, environment and esteem.

**Outputs**

32. Up to four outputs per person returned may be submitted; four is also the normal expectation.

33. All forms of assessable research output will be welcome, reflecting the range of activity (curiosity-driven, applied, practice-based) undertaken.

34. Sub-panels will assess each output submitted. They will read each output to the level of detail required to arrive at a judgement of its quality.

35. Assessment will be based on the originality, significance and rigour of the items submitted.

36. Sub-panels will not make assumptions about quality based on output type or place of publication.

37. Departments will be invited to use the ‘Other relevant details’ field in RA2 to:
   - indicate an individual’s discrete and substantial contribution to a multi-author output
   - illustrate how outputs other than scientific papers embody original research.

38. There is an overall limit on the ‘Other relevant details’ field in RA2 of 50 words per output.

**Environment**

39. The components of the environment quality profile will be:
   - research students, research studentships and externally-funded research fellowships
   - research income
   - research infrastructure and facilities
   - research structure, staffing policy and research strategy.

40. Each component will carry the same weight in the environment quality profile.

41. The sub-panels will consider indicators of national, international and peer esteem conferred on an individual during the assessment period by a body other than their home institution.

42. Up to four individual indicators of esteem per member of staff submitted will be considered.

43. Examples include (in alphabetical order): an advisory position for government or other bodies; conference organisation; consultancy; editorship of a national or international journal; election to the fellowship of a prestigious research organisation; an industrial appointment; an invitation to give a plenary or symposium talk at a national or international conference; membership of a national or international
research committee such as the sub-panels or boards of Research Councils or charities; the receipt of a medal, honour, or award, including a competitive research fellowship; the receipt of a national or international award recognising research excellence; a visiting professorship.

Applied research and practice-based research

44. The main panel expects some of the research submitted to its UOAs to be applied and practice-based. Full recognition will be given to applied research and practice-based research included in submissions which is directly relevant to the needs of the public and voluntary sectors, commerce and industry. Departments should ensure that such work is innovative and that it adheres to the RAE definition of research. Equal weight will be given to such research in the main and sub-panels’ assessment of its scientific excellence.

Individual staff circumstances

45. The main panel strongly encourages departments to submit the work of all their excellent researchers, regardless of their individual circumstances, and welcomes the opportunity available to departments to use the confidential arrangements of RA5b to outline mitigating circumstances of individual cases. The sub-panels encourage departments to include in their submissions those staff whose quantity of output may have been affected by absences from research, including circumstances addressed by equality and diversity legislation. RA5b must be completed for each individual staff member (either Category A or C) who is submitting fewer than four outputs, to describe the mitigating factors which explain the impact of such circumstances on their work. This will enable the sub-panels to take full account of such mitigating circumstances.

46. The sub-panels will expect and accept fewer outputs as a response to the individual staff circumstances described in paragraph 39 of the generic statement, and to the following discipline-specific circumstances:

a. Where health and safety restrictions were imposed on pregnant and nursing women, which may have prevented them from undertaking some types of research during the assessment period (eg, certain laboratory-based or imaging research).

b. Where there were limitations on undertaking fieldwork or access to research resources due to particular circumstances, eg, foot and mouth disease.

47. The contribution to the quality profile of the outputs and activities of individuals who cite such circumstances will be adjusted to reflect the period of absence and the time taken to re-establish research activity.

48. If adequate justification is not provided in RA5b missing outputs will be Unclassified.

Panel observers

49. Research Council observers will be asked to give factual information on Research Council funding, to corroborate departments’ statements in RA5.