Absences of chair and declaration of interests

1. Panel members will not take responsibility for assessing any part of a submission from an institution in which they have declared a major interest, and they will leave the room when the submission is discussed.

2. Members will declare any minor interests in advance, and the chair may decide that they should not take lead or sole responsibility for assessing the submission, or should leave the room.

3. A deputy chair has been appointed and will be responsible for chairing the meeting when the chair is absent. If both the chair and deputy chair are required to leave the room for discussion of a particular submission, a temporary chair will be appointed.

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. Within Main Panel F, the main and sub-panels will work collaboratively. Sub-panel criteria and recommendations on quality profiles will be developed through a process of iterative dialogue. The sub-panels will provide sufficient information to the main panel to allow it to take decisions on the award of quality profiles.
7. The chair will review all agendas, papers and minutes of sub-panel meetings, and will raise any areas of concern with the relevant sub-panel chair, and also promote areas of best practice to other sub-panel chairs.

Consistency of quality levels

8. All sub-panels will consider research income and research student data as contributing to the profile for the research environment. All sub-panels will adopt a consistent weighting of the components of the final quality profile, as follows:

- research outputs – 70%
- research environment – 20%
- esteem indicators – 10%.

9. These figures represent a consensus between the four sub-panels.

10. Prominence has been given to research outputs over research environment and esteem indicators to reflect the panel’s view that the quality of output is more responsive to change in the department; more evenly distributed with respect to age; more capable of objective assessment; and reflects the community's expressed confidence in discipline-based peer review.

Methods for ensuring consistency

11. At an early stage in the assessment process there will be an initial assessment of a small number of submissions so that sub-panels can quickly embed themselves in working practices and develop a common approach and common interpretation of quality levels. The main panel chair will attend all these meetings.

12. The main panel chair will attend at least one meeting of each sub-panel, and the panel secretary and assistant secretary will encourage the consistent application of common criteria and raise any concerns with the main panel chair immediately.

Elements of variation in the criteria statements

13. Sub-panel 23 expects to examine in detail at least 25% of the research outputs in each submission. The other sub-panels expect to examine in detail at least 50% of the research outputs in each submission. Sub-panel 23 expects a significantly higher volume of submissions, and the proportion of outputs to be examined in detail has been set with the intention of equalising workloads across all sub-panels.

14. The variation in sub-panels’ working methods and treatment of the repeated listing of the same co-authored outputs in a department’s submission reflect the different research and publication practices in the different disciplines.

Range of indicators of excellence

Research outputs

15. In assessing excellence, the sub-panels will look for originality, innovation, significance, depth, rigour, influence on the discipline and wider fields, and relevance to users. The panels will not use a rigid or formulaic method of assessing research quality. They will not use a formal ranked list of outlets, nor impact factors, nor will they use citation indices in a formulaic way.

Research environment

16. In assessing excellence, the panels will consider the following (where relevant):

a. The overall vitality of the research environment, as exemplified by, for example:
   - the leadership of research
   - an active seminar programme and flow of visiting researchers
   - international and industrial collaboration
   - contribution to the public awareness and understanding of science
   - the hosting of conferences, workshops and summer schools
   - the availability of general research support funds
   - the impact of the research, including academic impact and, if appropriate, impact upon wealth creation and the quality of life
• the range and nature of knowledge transfer activities (including spin-outs, licences, consultancy, regional development activities)
• administrative research support available.

b. Research students, research studentships and research degrees awarded.

c. Research income.

d. Research groups – membership, activities and achievements.

e. The nature and quality of research infrastructure (including library and computing facilities, and facilities for research students).

f. The management, training and supervision of research students.

g. The department’s staffing policy, including:
• the extent to which researchers are nurtured at all stages of their career
• the contribution of early career researchers
• arrangements for integrating newly recruited staff and staff in Category C into the department
• arrangements for research leave
• numbers of research staff
• how any change of staff has been managed and how it has affected the strength, coherence and research culture of the department.

h. Sustainability and a viable strategy for the future.

i. Arrangements for supporting collaborative and interdisciplinary research.

j. Relationship with research users.

k. The added value of the environment immediately outside the department.

17. The relative importance each sub-panel will place on the above aspects of the research environment will vary; departments should refer to the guidance provided in the criteria and working methods for each sub-panel.

18. The panels do not expect departments to provide information on the detailed organisation and management structure of the department.

19. Departments should ensure that they provide clear evidence for the claims that they make about their research environment.

Esteem indicators

20. In assessing excellence, the sub-panels will consider indicators of peer esteem and national and international recognition that relate to the staff submitted and were gained in the assessment period. The sub-panels will expect to see a range of esteem indicators, distributed across the department’s staff, appropriate to the size and staffing profile of the department.

21. These may include the following:
• awards, prizes, honours and named lectures
• keynote and plenary addresses at conferences
• significant professional service
• editorial roles
• membership of national and international strategic advisory bodies
• personal research awards and election to fellowships
• conference organisation.

22. Esteem indicators that relate to the whole department or research area may also be provided where appropriate.

23. In assessing the quality of esteem indicators the panels will take into account the career stage of the individual.

Applied and interdisciplinary research

24. Applied research is research that makes a substantive contribution to another domain, based on the knowledge, methods and research of the core discipline. The outputs of applied research include software, patents and/or licences, experimental instrumentation and devices, other artefacts, and publications in any discipline or professional journal. Characteristics of excellence in applied research include original methodology, innovative application, impact in the applied field,
uptake in the applied field, feedback to the core discipline, and evidence of synergy between the applied field and the core discipline. The sub-panel recognises that there can be outstanding innovation and originality in solving practical problems, including applied research which is relevant to the needs of commerce, industry and public bodies.

25. The main panel recognises that, in addition to applied research defined above, there is practice-based research in computer science and informatics. A definition of this is provided in paragraph 25 of the criteria and working methods of Sub-panel 23.

26. Interdisciplinary research is research that brings together methods and perspectives from a number of disciplines. This may involve working with experts from other disciplinary backgrounds, the use of methods and techniques drawn from a number of disciplines, or the development of new interdisciplinary approaches. The outputs of interdisciplinary research include publications, software, patents and/or licences, experimental instrumentation and devices, and other artefacts. Excellence in interdisciplinary research is characterised by originality of the contribution, the rigour of the interdisciplinary approach and techniques used, and the significance of the work to the constituent disciplines involved.

27. The sub-panels welcome the submission of interdisciplinary research. Early in the assessment phase the sub-panels will identify outputs on which they require specialist advice or cross-referral. The advice of external advisers will be used to inform the sub-panels’ assessment. Where cross-referrals are within the sub-panels of the main panel they will be requested from and facilitated by the main panel. Other cross-referrals will be requested from and facilitated by the RAE team.

Individual staff circumstances

28. In assessing submissions, all sub-panels will take account of individual staff circumstances disclosed by departments in relation to the categories listed in paragraph 39 of the generic statement.

29. Departments should use RA5b to provide information on individual staff circumstances and their impact on the individual’s research, with reference to the principles outlined in each sub-panel’s criteria and working methods.

30. Early career researchers are individuals of any age who first entered the academic profession on employment terms that qualified them for submission to the RAE 2008 as Category A staff on or after 1 August 2003. The sub-panel encourages departments to submit early career researchers, even if their volume of output is limited. The sub-panel expects to see a clear statement on how such staff contribute to and are supported by the research environment. Early career researchers may submit up to four outputs.

31. Where individuals who are new to academic research but who have an established research portfolio from an earlier career as post-doctoral researchers or in industry or overseas are included, the sub-panel would normally expect four outputs to be submitted.

Panel observers

32. Panel observers will sit on the main panel. Their role in the assessment process will be a passive one; they will not offer opinion on the quality of research activity submitted. Their role will be to provide any information that the panels may request (e.g., on the competitiveness or operation of particular research grant and fellowship competitions) to allow the panels to verify assertions made in submissions.

Discipline-specific matters

33. The sub-panels do not expect to refer to the research strategies outlined in RAE2001 submissions. They acknowledge that circumstances change over time, and will seek to recognise excellence in research whether or not it was part of the department’s strategy in 2001.

34. The sub-panels encourage departments to submit staff in multi-discipline departments to the most appropriate UOA for their research. The sub-panels recognise the concerns of departments in presenting the research environment where only a small number of staff are research-active in a particular UOA. In assessing the research environment the sub-panels will take account of the environment in the wider department, and encourage departments to provide this information.