

This statement should be read alongside the statement for Main Panel J and the generic statement.

Absences of chair and declaration of interests

1. In cases of planned or unforeseen absence of the chair, the sub-panel has elected a deputy chair who will act on the chair's behalf. Where consensus cannot be reached, decisions will be deferred until the deputy chair has an opportunity to consult with the chair. The deputy chair may also represent the chair in cases of planned absence when reporting to the main panel.
2. Members will declare in advance any conflicts of interest. Members will not participate in any aspect of the assessment of a submission from an institution in which they have declared a major interest, and will withdraw from the meeting whenever it is discussed. In the case of an interest declared by the chair, the deputy chair will lead discussion for that item. Should the chair and deputy chair declare an interest in the same institution, the sub-panel will elect a member to lead discussion for the item.
3. The chair will decide whether members should participate in assessing submissions from institutions in which they declare a minor interest. In the case of the chair, the deputy chair will make this decision. Should the chair and deputy chair declare a minor interest in the same institution, the sub-panel will elect a member to make the decision.

UOA descriptor

4. The UOA covers all forms of social work and social policy and administration, including governmental, voluntary and community, and private for profit and not for profit. Research in this area covers:
 - a. Theory, methodology, ethics and values and pedagogy as they apply to social work, social care, social policy, criminology and criminal justice policy, and substantive issues in these areas of study.
 - b. Comparative research and research into international institutions, policy and practice.
 - c. Relevant links with other disciplines – most importantly demography, development studies, economics, education, health studies,

history, law, politics, psychology and sociology – and with other stakeholders, professionals, service users and carers.

- d. Policy-making processes, practice, governance and management, service design, delivery and use, and inter-professional relationships.

UOA boundaries

5. Social work and social policy and administration are closely related to a range of other disciplines, both within the social sciences and more broadly. The sub-panel has identified the following topics which may overlap with other UOAs but which would come within the sub-panel's remit where the primary focus is on the social policy or social work dimension:

- criminology, socio-legal issues, criminal justice (potential overlap with UOA 38 Law and UOA 41 Sociology)
- education (potential overlap with UOA 45 Education)
- gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality and ageing (potential overlap with UOA 41 Sociology)
- health policy and related issues (potential overlap with UOA 6 Epidemiology and Public Health, UOA 7 Health Services Research, UOA 8 Primary Care and Other Community Based Clinical Subjects, and UOA 12 Allied Health Professions and Studies)
- housing (potential overlap with UOA 31 Town and Country Planning)
- psychology (potential overlap with UOA 44 Psychology)
- public policy and public administration, citizenship, governance (potential overlap with UOA 39 Politics and International Studies and UOA 43 Development Studies)
- social gerontology (potential overlap with UOA 11 Nursing and Midwifery, UOA 12 Allied Health Professions and Studies, UOA 15 Pre-clinical and Human Biological Sciences, and UOA 41 Sociology).

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6. Social work and social policy and administration are essentially multidisciplinary subjects; the sub-panel has been constituted with a broad spread of relevant expertise to ensure informed assessment of all submissions. However, where appropriate the sub-panel will refer the submission (or parts thereof) to specialist advisers or other sub-panel(s) for advice, identifying the particular aspects of research activity on which views are sought.

Research staff

7. The outputs of staff in Categories A and C will be assessed according to the same criteria. In the case of Category C staff, departments should use RA5c to demonstrate the sustained commitment of individuals to the research activity of the department. Examples of such commitment might include: co-authorship with Category A staff, co-directorship of externally funded research grants, supervision of research students, or participation in graduate training programmes. The contribution of any Category C staff for whom a sustained commitment has not been demonstrated will be discounted from all components of the submission. The inclusion of insufficiently integrated staff of any category in a submission may have an adverse effect on the quality profile for the research environment.

8. Early career researchers will be treated according to the expectations that are appropriate to someone at that stage in his or her career, and in the light of the department's research culture and research support arrangements as described in RA5. The sub-panel will be looking in particular at arrangements for supporting and developing the research of early career researchers. It is the expectation of the sub-panel that early career researchers appointed between 1 August 2003 and 31 July 2005 will submit a minimum of two outputs; those appointed after 1 August 2005 will be expected to submit a minimum of one output. Where fewer than four outputs are submitted, an appropriate adjustment will be made to ensure that departments are not disadvantaged by their inclusion of early career researchers.

9. The sub-panel will not normally take any special account of the situation of newly recruited staff who are not early career researchers.

Research outputs

10. All forms of research output will be treated equally – the sub-panel will not rank nor regard any particular *form* of output as of greater or lesser quality than another *per se*. The sub-panel expects to receive a range of research outputs, including articles in refereed journals, professional and practitioner journals and published conference proceedings, books, chapters in edited books, edited books, research reports, and training materials which embody the results of original research undertaken by the authors. It may also receive some research output in non-print media, such as video and electronic media and software. Textbooks, teaching materials (including those for training for practice) and subject-related pedagogy will be considered as indicators of quality insofar as they embody research and scholarship according to the RAE definition.

11. The sub-panel expects to examine in detail virtually all the outputs submitted. Outputs will be assessed on their own merits in the context of the submitted work of the department as a whole. Departments are encouraged to submit the highest quality outputs published within the assessment period. The sub-panel will consider whether any adjustment to the overall quality profile should be made to reflect the presence within the submission of items of exceptional scale and scope.

12. Full recognition will be given to work which is of direct relevance to the needs of, and where applicable the engagement of, the public and voluntary sectors, commerce, industry, service users and carer communities at international, national, regional and local levels. Where appropriate, attention will be paid to issues of equality and diversity.

13. The sub-panel values interdisciplinary research and welcomes submissions that embrace this approach. In considering the submissions, all members will look specifically at issues of interdisciplinarity. Additionally, the members responsible for leading the sub-panel's discussion of individual submissions will consider and advise the sub-panel on the contribution, if any, which interdisciplinarity has made to the quality of research outputs, especially where

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interdisciplinarity is identified in RA5 as a distinctive feature of the submission. The sub-panel may, if appropriate, seek additional expert advice to aid it in the assessment process, from other panels or specialist advisers.

14. The sub-panel regards the submission of four outputs for each researcher as the normal expectation for this period, unless it considers that special circumstances justify submission of fewer than four outputs for an individual researcher or issues of equality of opportunity apply (see paragraphs 8-9 and 33-35). RA5b must be completed for all researchers who cite fewer than four outputs. Where fewer than four outputs per researcher are submitted, the sub-panel will consider each case on its merits in the context of information provided by the department in the narrative parts of the submission. Special circumstances may include staff working on a long-term project that has led, or might eventually lead, to outcomes of high quality. Where such circumstances explain the submission of fewer than four outputs per researcher, or are judged to provide partial dispensation, a proportional adjustment will be applied to the submission when calculating the quality profile.

15. The sub-panel recognises that many outputs will be jointly authored and will assess their quality by the standards that apply to all outputs. It expects that a member of staff who returns jointly authored work will have made a substantial contribution to it. The sub-panel also accepts that a jointly authored output may be listed by more than one individual in a department's submission. In such cases it will be assessed at the same quality level. Where it appears that the number of jointly authored works in the submission indicates a lower than normal overall volume of research activity, a proportional adjustment may be applied to the submission in constructing the quality profile. Departments are invited to use the 'Other relevant details' field in RA2 (100 word maximum) to provide information on the proportional contribution of individual researchers to jointly authored works. They may also use the field to explain the audiences to whom the output was directed or intended.

16. The sub-panel will in all cases consider the extent to which an output has contributed to the advancement of any of the following:

- knowledge and the discipline
- theory
- methodology
- policy debate
- practice
- discipline-specific pedagogy.

17. The sub-panel will grade outputs against the following quality levels:

- a. **4*** – **quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour.** This standard will be achieved by a research output that is, or is likely to become, a primary reference point of the field or sub-field.
- b. **3*** – **quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which nonetheless falls short of the highest standards of excellence.** This standard will be achieved by a research output that is, or is likely to become, a major reference point that substantially advances knowledge and understanding of the field or sub-field.
- c. **2*** – **quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.** This standard will be achieved by a research output that is, or is likely to become, a reference point that advances knowledge and understanding of the field or sub-field.
- d. **1*** – **quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.** This standard will be achieved by a research output that makes, or is likely to make, a contribution to knowledge or understanding of the field or sub-field.
- e. **Unclassified** – **quality that falls below the standard of nationally recognised work or which does not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of this assessment.**

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18. The sub-panel will ensure that it does not apply criteria in a way that the 4* quality level is only attainable by certain types of research or certain types and sizes of department.

Research environment

Research students and research studentships

19. The sub-panel will regard the number of research students, studentships and research degrees awarded as indicators of the vitality of the research environment. In cases where current performance is low, departments may provide an explanatory statement in RA5a.

20. In general, no distinction will be made between the various sources of funding for graduate students. The sub-panel will consider evidence of success in ESRC recognition exercises and similar processes as indicators of the quality of the research environment.

21. In view of the variety of research degree programmes undertaken within the UOA, the sub-panel will use separate analyses of doctoral degrees and research masters degrees awarded per staff FTE and headcount in assessing the range and trajectory of postgraduate activity.

Research income

22. External research income will be used as an indicator of the quality of the research environment. In general, the pattern of grants, in terms of the range of topics and size of the various grants, will be accorded greater weight than the total value. Departments are asked to provide a commentary on the pattern of funding in RA5a.

23. In general, the sub-panel will regard all competitively awarded external research funding as an indicator of quality and will not distinguish between different sources.

Research structure

24. The sub-panel invites departments to provide information in RA5a on the following aspects of their research structure:

a. Where appropriate, research groups and

teams, their activities, how they operate and what their main achievements are.

- b. Other UOAs to which related work has been submitted.
 - c. Any difficulties of fit between departmental structure and the UOA framework.
 - d. Mechanisms and practices for promoting research, and sustaining and developing an active and vital research culture.
 - e. The nature and quality of the research infrastructure, including significant equipment and facilities for research students.
 - f. Arrangements for supporting interdisciplinary or collaborative research and practice.
 - g. Relationships with research users, including collaboration with the public, private and voluntary sectors, where appropriate the involvement of service users and carers in research, and the account taken of government policy initiatives and objectives, whether critical or supportive.
25. Statements should be evidence-based.

Staffing policy

26. The sub-panel will invite departments to provide information in RA5a on the following aspects of their staffing policy:

- a. Arrangements for developing and supporting staff in their research, including those from traditionally under-represented groups, with information on how these arrangements fit with their non-research duties.
- b. Arrangements for developing the research of colleagues new to research and for integrating them into a wider, supportive research culture.
- c. Details of the contribution made by staff in Categories B, C, and D to the strength, coherence and research culture of the department at the census date and how, in the case of Categories B and D, their departure has affected this.

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d. Arrangements for ensuring the sustainability of research.

27. Statements should be evidence-based.

Research strategy

28. The sub-panel invites departments to provide information in RA5a on the following aspects of their research strategy:

- a. A statement about the main objectives and activities in research during the next five years, including any ongoing research work that is not yet producing visible outcomes.
- b. Where relevant, an evaluation of activity in relation to the research plans put forward in the 2001 exercise. The sub-panel notes that in many cases a change in response to circumstances will have been a more appropriate strategy than consistency with the plans envisaged in 2001. Where relevant, this evaluation should include an account of the use that has been made of special research capacity-building funds (such as those made available to social work from the HEFCE Research Capability Fund).

29. Statements should be evidence-based.

Esteem indicators

30. Departments should list indicators of peer esteem and national and international recognition which relate to the staff submitted. The sub-panel recognises that the level and range of esteem indicators likely to be displayed will vary according to the different career stages of the staff submitted. These may include (but are not limited to):

- journal editorships
- keynote addresses or prestigious public lectures given, and organisation of conferences or symposia
- membership of Research Councils or similar bodies
- evidence of esteem from different kinds of user communities
- advisers on policy, practice or pedagogic issues to Government, Parliament, voluntary

bodies, other national, international, regional or local agencies or other contributions to public service

- awards or prizes
- international recognition, eg, international research collaborations, or visiting research posts in overseas institutions
- significant contributions to professional and academic associations.

31. Where appropriate, statements should be evidence-based.

Applied research and practice-based research

32. There are substantial levels of applied research and practice-based research activity in the UOAs within Main Panel J. This may include action research and participatory research. The sub-panel will assess the outputs of this research, which may include confidential reports. The sub-panel fully recognises this type of research and will consider the quality of the research against the same indicators of excellence as other forms of research, ie, in relation to its originality, significance and rigour. The sub-panel invites departments to draw attention to the impact of the research, eg, on the policy-making or user communities, in the 'Other relevant details' field in RA2.

Individual staff circumstances

33. Departments should note any special individual staff circumstances which have significantly affected their contribution to the submission. In assessing submissions, the sub-panel will, as a minimum, take account of the circumstances described in paragraph 39 of the generic statement where the quantity of outputs in the submission can be said to have been affected.

34. Departments are invited to use RA5b to detail any such circumstances that have negatively affected the contribution of an individual to the submission. Departments are invited to comment upon the timing, duration and impact of special circumstances in relation to an individual researcher's activity. In the case of part-time staff,

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departments are also asked to indicate the proportion of an individual researcher's FTE across the assessment period.

35. Where the cited circumstances explain the submission of fewer than four outputs per researcher, or where they are judged to provide partial dispensation, a proportional volume adjustment will be applied to the submission when calculating the quality profile for outputs. Departments should refer to paragraphs 23-24 and 26-28 of the main panel criteria statement for more detail.

Working methods

36. The sub-panels of Main Panel J have sought to achieve a consistent approach to working methods and criteria where appropriate, unless the context of the discipline requires additional or alternative approaches. Departments should read this statement alongside the generic and main panel statements.

37. The assessment will be one of peer review based on professional judgement. Assessment will be decided collectively by the sub-panel and reflect its judgement of the quality of the submission as a whole.

38. In line with other sub-panels within Main Panel J, the weighting accorded each element of assessment will be as follows: outputs 75%, environment 20%, and esteem 5%.

39. The quality profile for outputs will be calculated as follows:

- a. Where there are four outputs per researcher, these will be assessed and assigned quality levels. These quality levels will then be carried forward to the overall departmental profile.
- b. If an individual researcher has produced fewer than four outputs, an evaluation will be made of the reason for this on the basis of information within the department's submission.
- c. If there is a valid reason for the submission of fewer than four outputs, only the quality

level(s) attached to the submitted output(s) will be carried forward into the overall departmental profile.

- d. If there is no valid reason for the submission of fewer than four outputs, the 'missing' outputs will be graded as Unclassified.
- e. After taking into account any reductions in volume of outputs due to individual staff circumstances as described above, and assessing the quality of all the submitted outputs, the sub-panel will consider whether any additional adjustment to the quality profile should be made to reflect the submission of items of exceptional scale and scope.
- f. The percentage of outputs falling into each quality level can then be calculated to form the overall departmental profile.

40. In respect of research environment and esteem, the sub-panel will reach a holistic judgement of the quality of the research environment and the esteem as portrayed in a department's submission. The sub-panel will initially assign 100% of the profile allocated to each element to one of the quality levels (4*, 3*, 2*, 1* or Unclassified). Where there are clear differences in the quality of aspects of the research environment or esteem (eg, between studentships and research culture, or for different research groups or departments within the submission), the sub-panel may decide to allocate a profile across two or more quality levels.

41. The sub-panel does not envisage using quantitative approaches to assess the evidence presented, other than those mentioned above in relation to research students, studentships and income.

42. To begin the process of assessment, all sub-panel members will read each submission as a whole. The sub-panel will then undertake the detailed assessment of research outputs, with each output being assessed by two or more members. The sub-panel will proceed to assess research environment and esteem. The quality of environment will be assessed by the extent to

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which it supports and is capable of supporting research activity as defined in the quality levels. The quality of esteem will be assessed by the extent to which indicators of esteem reflect research activity as defined in the quality levels. Again, at least two members of the sub-panel will assess each of these elements of the submission. Items that require the views of other sub-panels or specialist advisers will be identified, noting information in RA5a where departments have identified research of an interdisciplinary nature. Outputs in languages other than English, where a translation is not provided, shall if necessary be referred to specialist advisers.

43. The sub-panel will form its judgement through deliberation and consensus. Where differences remain, decisions will be reached by a simple majority vote of the sub-panel, the chair (or deputy chair where appropriate) having a casting vote. The pattern of quality profiles will be reviewed to ensure consistency, and quality profiles will not be confirmed (for recommendation to the main panel) until the sub-panel's final meeting.

44. Where work developed or undertaken jointly by departments in two or more institutions is submitted for assessment as a coherent whole in the form of a joint submission, the institutions involved should provide a brief description in RA5a of the nature and extent of the collaboration leading to the joint submission. Joint submissions will be assessed in the same way as submissions from single institutions.

