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Circular

Research Activity Survey 2009/10

Date: 11 November 2009
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To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales

Response by: 11 January 2010
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This Circular requires institutions to provide information for use in the calculation of funds for research 2010/11.

This document is available online, in large print, Braille, on CD and on audio CD and cassette. Should you or someone you know require this in an alternative format, please contact us on (029) 2068 2280 or email info@hefcw.ac.uk.

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Introduction

- 1 This Circular requests higher education institutions (HEIs) to provide information for use in the calculation of funds for research for 2010/11.

Survey data

- 2 Information is requested on:
 - the full-time equivalent (FTE) numbers of research assistants;
 - the FTE numbers of research fellows;
 - the numbers of full-time research students;
 - the numbers and FTE numbers of part-time research students;
 - external income from UK based charities.
- 3 Quality Research (QR) allocations will be calculated using information returned in this survey and in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE).
- 4 The FTE number of research active academic staff and the quality profiles from the 2008 RAE are used in the QR allocations. Research active academic staff are Category A staff (excluding research fellows) returned on form RA0/1 of the 2008 RAE.
- 5 The funding associated with the minor volume measures will be calculated on the basis of a two year rolling average of the figures reported. Data for 2008/09 collected in this survey will be averaged with the most recent data available in the 2008 RAE.

Changes for 2009/10

- 6 A Research Activity Survey was not conducted in 2008 as data from the 2008 RAE was used to calculate the 2009/10 QR allocations. The changes which have been made to this survey compared with the last survey conducted in 2007 are:
 - reference to the 2008 RAE
 - units of assessment (UoA) are those used in the 2008 RAE
 - guidance provided in the annexes has been updated to reflect guidance provided in the 2008 RAE

Contents

- 7 A series of annexes is included with this document to assist institutions in the completion of this survey. These annexes are:

Annex A: Notes of Guidance
Annex B: Research Assistants

- Annex C: Research Fellows
- Annex D: Research Students
- Annex E: External Research Income from UK Based Charities
- Annex F: Workbook Notes
- Annex G: Printed Tables for Completion

Return of data

- 8 The completed workbook should be returned by e-mail to hestats@hefcw.ac.uk no later than **11 January 2010**.
- 9 It is important that returns are made on time if funding allocations for 2010/11 are to be determined by spring 2010. **HEFCW reserves the right to enter its own estimates of research data for institutions which fail to return the survey on time.**
- 10 When data are returned, they go through a validation and credibility checking process. Once any subsequent queries have been resolved, data are sent out to institutions for verification. The process will follow the timetable outlined below.

11 January 2010	RAS return deadline
18 January 2010	RAS verifications sent to institutions
1 February 2010	RAS verifications return deadline
- 11 In the event of a deadline being missed by more than three working days, a letter will be faxed to the head of the institution concerned reminding them that HEFCW reserves the right to enter its own estimates of research data for institutions which fail to return the survey on time and indicating that HEFCW intends to do this if immediate action is not taken. Failure to return the data or verification report within two working days will result in a letter from the Chief Executive of HEFCW to the head of the institution stating the figures that will be used in place of the institution's own data.
- 12 Each subsequent deadline should be met regardless of any delay in meeting the preceding deadline.
- 13 Any queries about the return should be directed to Liz Heal (telephone 029 2068 2231, e-mail hestats@hefcw.ac.uk).

Annex A

Notes of guidance

- 1 Printed versions of the tables to be completed are shown in Annex G. Each institution will be e-mailed the tables in an Excel 2003 workbook. There are two tables for completion included in the workbook, R1 and R2. R1 collects data on research assistants, research fellows and research students; R2 collects external research income from UK based charities for the financial year 2008-09. The definitions to be applied correspond to those used in the 2008 RAE, described in Circular RAE 03/2005, which can be found on the RAE web-site, www.rae.ac.uk/pubs.
- 2 The data requested in tables R1 and R2 will be used in the allocation of QR funding. The data are to be entered at UoA level for departments/units with 3 or more Category A FTE of classified work (1* and above) i.e.

[(Category A staff - research fellows) * (100 - % research activity unclassified) / 100] >= 3

Research assistants

- 3 Information on the FTE numbers of research assistants should be returned in column 1 of Table R1. The data should be consistent with those supplied on form RA0 of the 2008 RAE, updated to reflect the position as at 31 March 2009, and returned to no more than two decimal places. See Annex B.

Research fellows

- 4 Information on the FTE numbers of research fellows should be returned in column 2 of Table R1. The information should be consistent with that supplied on form RA1 of the 2008 RAE, updated to reflect the position as at 31 March 2009, and be returned to no more than two decimal places. See Annex C.

Research students

- 5 Information on the numbers of full-time and part-time research students should be returned in column 3 of Table R1, to no more than two decimal places. The number of students for each mode in total should sum to a whole number. Information on FTE numbers of part-time research students should be returned in column 4 of Table R1, to no more than two decimal places. The data should be consistent with those shown on form RA3a of the 2008 RAE, updated to reflect the position as at 1 December 2008. See Annex D.

External research income from UK based charities

- 6 Income from UK based charities for 2008-09 consistent with the amount shown in the HESA finance record Table 5b should be provided in Table R2. See Annex E.

Further guidance

- 7 More comprehensive definitions of the data requested by this survey are provided in the annexes which follow. Institutions should also refer to the Circular RAE 03/2005 and the HESA finance record coding manual for further clarification.

Annex B

Research assistants

- 1 HEFCW uses the FTE number of research assistants as a component of the volume element in the funding of research. All research assistants included in this survey should be associated with at least one member of academic staff (Category A, or C) who is actively involved in research.
- 2 Research assistants are employed by the institution to carry out another individual's research programme rather than as independent researchers in their own right. Their primary employment function is research. They are often employed on short term contracts funded by research grants or contracts from research councils, charities or industry.
- 3 Where a research assistant is registered for a higher degree they can be returned as a research student or as a research assistant or fractionally as both, with a maximum FTE across both roles of 1.0.

Annex C

Research fellows

- 1 HEFCW uses the FTE of research fellows as a component of the volume element in the funding of research. Research fellows hold specific awards on the basis of their own research record or research proposals. Fellowships are often for a fixed term, typically three or five years. Funding for these awards comes from a range of sources outside the institution, but can be channelled through it so that the individual remains an employee of the institution. Examples of such fellowships are Research Council Fellows (senior, advanced and postdoctoral) and Royal Society Research Fellows and Professors.
- 2 Staff on an HEI-funded or awarded fellowship, even with external referees involved in the selection process, may not be included. Research fellows who receive all of their salary funding directly from their sponsoring bodies may not be returned in this survey. Visiting fellows are also to be excluded. University of Wales Research Fellows should be included.

Annex D

Research students

- 1 HEFCW uses the FTE of research students as a component of the volume element in the funding of research. All research students included in this survey should be associated with at least one member of academic staff who is actively involved in research. Home, EC, Island and overseas students should all be included.
- 2 Research students should be returned by the institution where they are registered. Postgraduate research students are normally supervised and registered for a research based higher degree.
- 3 A research-based higher degree is one awarded primarily on the basis of a substantial thesis or equivalent submitted by the student and resulting from the student's original research.
- 4 Students who have completed the work of the course but have yet to complete the requirements for the award, for example, students writing up a thesis, should be excluded.
- 5 A student whose registration is suspended at 1 December 2008 should not be included.
- 6 If the student does not study for a full year in their final year of programme of study, the student should be returned as a part-time student in their final year, with an FTE reflecting the proportion of a full year of study. They should be returned even if the student is not active on 1 December in the final year of programme.
- 7 Where a research assistant is registered for a higher degree they can be returned as a research student or as a research assistant or fractionally as both, with a maximum FTE across both roles of 1.0. See also paragraph 3 of Annex B.
- 8 Students registered for research qualifications awarded primarily on the basis of published works should be excluded, unless they undertake research at the institution.
- 9 Students employed by outside research organisations and based outside the department for the majority of their study should normally be excluded. However, students engaged on forms of work-based learning such as Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP, formerly the Teaching Company Scheme, TCS), who are registered for a research-based higher degree may be included where they are based within the department for the majority of their study.

Annex E

External research income from UK based charities

- 1 The actual research income from external grants or contracts from UK based charities received in 2008-09 for the period 1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009 should be reported. For this purpose the HESA definition of research income will apply, that is, all income in respect of externally sponsored research carried out by the institution (or its subsidiary organisation) and for which directly related expenditure has been incurred (including recovery of indirect costs).
- 2 Research grants and contract income from all charitable foundations, charitable trusts etc, based in the UK and registered with the Charities Commission, or from exempt charities, should be shown.
- 3 Grants or contracts for which income is included in this return should be associated with at least one member of staff who is research active (in this context, whether a member of staff is research active is irrespective of their treatment in the 2008 RAE). Subject to this, all income in respect of research carried out at the institution and for which directly related expenditure has been incurred should be returned. Income should be stated at full value including any recovery for indirect costs whether retained by the institution or department, or at the disposal of an individual within a department. Amounts in respect of costs for existing staff or facilities within research grants or contracts may be included.
- 4 Income which has been administered through the institution's own accounts should be included. Income administered through the account of a subsidiary company wherever that income was consolidated in the institution's finance return made to the Council should also be included. Income not handled in either of these ways - including income received directly by individuals working in the department, gifts of equipment, and funding for building work not paid as part of the grant or contract for a specified research project should be excluded.
- 5 Where a grant or contract is held, or the work conducted, across more than one UoA it should be divided between UoAs reflecting the manner in which the income has been used.
- 6 Where a project is being undertaken by a number of institutions and one institution acts as 'lead institution', only income received by the institution making the return, and relating to the work actually being undertaken by it, should be included. The lead institution should therefore not include any portion of income passed on to co-operating institutions.
- 7 Researchers will on occasion move between institutions during the progress of a grant or contract. If the original institution continues to receive income from the grant or contract then this should be accounted to that institution alone. If the old grant or contract is cancelled and a new one is issued to the new

institution, then the income from each should be included by the appropriate institution.

- 8 If an individual moves institution but continues to work on a grant or contract held jointly with other members of staff at the original institution, the income may be included only by the institution which received it. The ruling on grants or contracts held by researchers at more than one institution applies only to awards that are specifically allocated at the start to individuals at more than one institution, not in the case of individuals who move institution after the award is announced.

Annex F

Workbook notes

- 1 An Excel 2003 workbook containing the tables to complete for the 2009/10 Research Activity Survey will be e-mailed to RAS contacts at individual HEIs. The workbook is individually prepared for each institution.
- 2 The workbook will contain three worksheets, Table R1, Table R2 and a comparison table (see paragraph 9 below). The workbook will be named ____RAS.xls, where the prefix is the institution's four character HESA code.
- 3 Each table is contained in a separate worksheet within the workbook and worksheets are named after the relevant table.
- 4 If the workbook is corrupt or unreadable please contact Liz Heal (029 2068 2231) for assistance.
- 5 It is advisable to make a backup copy of the blank workbook before attempting to edit any of the tables.
- 6 Institutions must not attempt to change the structure of the workbook by adding or deleting worksheets, rows or columns, or by overwriting or deleting any formulae. Worksheets contain information critical to loading of the data and it is essential that the structure of the workbook is not changed in any way.
- 7 Each workbook should be saved in Excel on completion using the same filename and extension as that originally supplied. Names of the individual worksheets must not be changed. If the workbook is not saved in Excel 2003, institutions should ensure that the software has not used a different file extension by default.
- 8 The worksheets containing Tables R1 and R2 each contain a number of validation checks. These are described in more detail in paragraphs 11 to 16. Institutions should ensure their data pass all validation checks before the workbook is returned.
- 9 There is an additional worksheet contained in the workbook which shows a comparison between the data returned on the 2008 RAE, and those returned on Tables R1 and R2. The worksheet does not need to be completed and is intended to be used for information and checking purposes only.
- 10 The completed workbooks should be returned by e-mail to hestats@hefcw.ac.uk. Receipt of e-mail submissions will be confirmed.

Validation checks

- 11 A number of validation checks have been built into the Excel workbook and these are listed below. If any validation check is failed, the validation cell above the appropriate table will read 'Validation: Failure, please check figures'. If all validation checks on the particular table are passed, a message reading

'Validation: All checks passed' will appear in the validation cell.

- 12 In Tables R1 and R2, if a UoA not submitted to the 2008 RAE or a UoA with less than 3 Category A FTE of classified work (1* and above) in the 2008 RAE has data returned against it, a validation failure will occur. A list of the UoAs failing validation can be found in the validation table to the side of Table R1 or Table R2 as appropriate.
- 13 In Tables R1 and R2, if data are entered to more than 2 decimal places, a validation failure will occur. The figure(s) entered to more than two decimal places will be highlighted in red and a message will appear at the top of the appropriate table.
- 14 In Table R1, if a UoA has data returned against it in column 3b, number of part-time research students, but column 4, FTE of part-time research students, has not been completed, or vice versa, a validation failure will occur. A list of the UoAs failing validation can be found in the validation table to the side of Table R1.
- 15 In Table R1, if the FTE of part-time students returned in column 4 is greater than the number of part-time students returned in column 3b, for each UoA, a validation failure will occur. A list of the UoAs failing validation can be found in the validation table to the side of Table R1.
- 16 In Table R1, if the total number of research students in column 3, for each mode of study, is not a whole number, then the figure will be highlighted in red and a message will appear at the top of the table.

Annex G

Printed tables for completion by HEIs funded by HEFCW