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Circular

## Recording of Eligibility for Selection for the RAE in HESA Staff Returns

**Date:** 17 September 2008  
**Reference:** W08/30HE  
**To:** Heads of higher education institutions in Wales  
**Response by:** No response required  
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This Circular clarifies the definition of Category A staff in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise.

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## Introduction

1. This Circular clarifies the definition of Category A staff in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE2008). The other UK higher education funding bodies are writing to their institutions in similar terms.

## Category A Staff

2. The 2007/08 Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) staff record collects details of staff eligibility for inclusion in RAE2008. These data, though not required for the assessment of the quality of research, are required by us, and the other UK higher education (HE) funding bodies, in order to assess the operation of the RAE. In particular we have a duty to assess all our policies in relation to their impact on promoting equality of opportunity. Details of these requirements are given in paragraphs 23 and 35 to 38 of the RAE guidance on submissions (RAE 03/2005). The outcomes of an analysis, undertaken by HEFCE, of submission patterns to the 2001 RAE can be found in the Circular *Selection of staff for inclusion in RAE2001*, HEFCE 2006/32, on the HEFCE website ([www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk)).
3. HESA has received a number of queries regarding interpretation of the RAE2008 guidance on Category A staff. However, the definition of Category A staff is owned by the HE funding bodies as sponsors of the RAE rather than HESA. The definitive specification of Category A staff is contained under the title of 'Staff summary data definitions and notes' in paragraph 68 and again in paragraph 76 of the RAE guidance on submissions, and is reproduced at Annex A below. This guidance has not been revised since publication in June 2005.
4. It is clear from paragraph 76 that the definition of Category A staff eligible for submission includes **all** academic staff on the payroll with research and/or teaching as their primary function. Paragraph 77 then indicates some further categories of staff who are eligible for inclusion in Category A.
5. Accordingly, we would expect nearly all academic staff within an institution to meet the definition of Category A and this includes staff who may not have undertaken any significant research during the assessment period; such staff should be coded 2 in the RESACT field on the 2007/08 HESA return, and subsequent HESA returns.
6. We have asked HESA to query any 2007/08 return that includes a significant number of academic staff reported as ineligible for inclusion as Category A. Should HESA refer any returns to us due to concerns about non-compliance we would undertake checking, based on paragraphs 76 to 90 of the RAE guidance on submission, to ensure that these data are returned consistently by all institutions in order to support the equal opportunities monitoring which the HE funding bodies plan to conduct. It

would not be in the best interests of either individual HE institutions, or the sector as a whole, if this monitoring could not be undertaken effectively.

### **Further Information**

- 7 For further information, contact Hannah Falvey, Senior Manager for Statistics and Funding (tel 029 2068 2240; email [hannah.falvey@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:hannah.falvey@hefcw.ac.uk)).

**Extract from RAE 03/2005**

**Research active staff data definitions**

76. The definitions of staff categories A to D are:
- a. **Category A:** academic staff in post and on the payroll of the submitting institution on the census date. Eligible Category A academic staff must be employed under a contract of employment with the HEI on the census date. Their contract must list research and/or teaching as their primary function.
  - b. **Category B:** academic staff who held a contract with the institution after 1 January 2001 and who left the institution (or transferred into a department returned to a different UOA) after that date and before the census date, and who otherwise would have been eligible for inclusion as Category A.
  - c. **Category C:** independent investigators active in research who do not meet the definition for Category A staff but whose research on the census date is clearly and demonstrably focussed in the department that returns them.
  - d. **Category D:** independent investigators who met the definition for Category C staff during the period 1 January 2001 to 31 October 2007 but not on the census date.

**Notes on returning research active staff**

Category A and B staff

77. If they satisfy the criteria in paragraph 76a then the following are eligible as Category A staff:
- a. Staff who hold institutional/NHS joint appointments (that is, staff on 'A+B' contracts). They should be returned as Category A with an FTE less than 1.0, reflecting their contract of employment with the institution.
  - b. Eligible research assistants (see paragraph 79).
  - c. Eligible research fellows (see paragraph 80).
  - d. Pensioned staff who continue in salaried employment contracted to carry out academic duties.
  - e. Academic staff who are on unpaid leave of absence or secondment on the census date and are contracted to return to normal duties up to two years (inclusive) from the start of their period of absence, provided that any staff recruited specifically to cover their duties are not also listed as Category A.
  - f. Staff absent from their 'home' institution on the terms described in subparagraph 75m, but working as contracted academic staff at another UK higher education institution on the census date. These staff may be returned by either or both institutions. In such a case the individual and both institutions concerned should agree how the return is to be made.

Their total FTE may not exceed their contracted FTE with their main employer.

78. Category A staff who are employed by an HEI and based in a discrete department or unit outside the UK are eligible staff if the HEI demonstrates in RA5a a clear and current connection on the census date with research undertaken by the submitting department based in the UK. Staff whose connection cannot be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the RAE manager, as advised by the relevant panel, will be discounted from the assessment and removed from the RAE database.

#### *Research assistants*

79. Research assistants are not eligible to be listed as research active staff unless, exceptionally, they fulfil the criteria in this paragraph. Research assistants eligible to be listed as research active staff must be named as principal investigator on a research grant or significant piece of research work **and** satisfy the definition for Category A academic staff in paragraph 76a. Research assistants must not be listed as Category A or B research staff purely on the basis that they have one or more research outputs to their name. Research assistants listed as Category A research staff may not also be included in the FTE count of research assistants in RA0 and RA1.

#### *Research fellows*

80. Research active academic staff should be listed as research fellows only if they hold a specific fellowship award on the basis of their own research record or research proposals. The fellowship award must be to a named individual in recognition of independent research they have undertaken or proposed, must include a significant element of external funding and must follow a process of expert review (including competitive review) involving an input from outside the institution. Such fellowships include Research Council fellows (senior, advanced or postdoctoral) and Royal Society research fellows and professors.
81. Staff on an HEI-funded or awarded fellowship, even with external referees involved in the selection process, may not be listed as a research fellow for RAE purposes.
82. Research fellows who receive all of their salary funding directly from their sponsoring bodies may not be returned as Category A or B staff, unless so sponsored while on unpaid leave (see sub-paragraph 75m). However they are eligible for inclusion as Category C or D.

#### *Casual and hourly paid staff*

83. Casual staff, individuals employed under consultancy contracts and individuals paid in response to a claim or invoice submitted by them as

payment for fees or services, without a contract of employment are ineligible as Category A staff. Individuals who receive payment automatically through the HEI's normal payroll, net of tax and national insurance contributions, and who enjoy similar employment rights to other employees (for example, annual leave, sick pay and pension entitlements) qualify as having a salaried contract, regardless of whether payment is calculated on an hourly basis.

84. Teaching assistants such as foreign language assistants/lectors who are not employed as academic staff cannot be included as research active members of staff.

*Other notes on Category A and B staff*

85. Other than individuals on secondment on the terms described in paragraphs 75m and 77f, an individual may only be returned as research active Category A by more than one HEI if she or he has a contract with and receives a salary from more than one HEI. In such cases, the following additional conditions apply:
  - a. The two HEIs must ensure that the FTE value of the individual sums to no more than the lower of 1.0 or the individual's total contracted FTE duties. If any individual is returned in submissions with a contracted FTE that sums to more than 1.0, the RAE team will rectify this through verification and will apportion the FTE to each HEI pro-rata to the individual's contracted FTE at each HEI.
  - b. The number of research assistants and the number of research students supervised by the individual returned by each institution should relate to each single institution, not to both.
  - c. The same research works need not be cited in both submissions.
  - d. Only grants/contracts held by the individual that are administered through the submitting HEI may be returned by that HEI.
86. No individual may be returned as active on 31 October 2007 in more than one UOA, except as described in paragraph 85 or, in exceptional circumstances, where an individual's research has undergone a significant shift in subject focus within the period 1 January 2001 to 31 October 2007. Such individuals may be returned as Category A in one UOA at 31 October 2007 with a start date later than 1 January 2001 and as Category B, up to that date, in another UOA at either the same or a different institution. Where an individual holds a joint appointment across two or more departments within the same institution, HEIs must decide on one UOA in which to return the individual. They should note the joint appointment in all relevant submissions to other UOAs, using form RA5a.
87. Staff employed directly by the Federal University of Wales may be returned in the university's submissions as Category A or B, or in those of its constituent institutions as Category C or D. However, the same

member of staff may not be returned as Category A by both the Federal University and any of its constituent institutions.

88. The following are eligible as Category B staff:
- a. Staff who died in post before the census date.
  - b. Staff who left the HEI before the census date.
  - c. Staff who transferred to a different department in the same HEI before the census date.