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Research Impact

OPEN FORUM EVENTS

University of Kent

Reflections on REF 2021

Framework for Excellence

Oct 4th, Manchester

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Chair CASRAI INFORMATION HARMONY

Immediate Past Chair arma

Overview

- Kent
- REF2021
- Outputs
- Impact
- Worries

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- 20,000 students
- 4,000 staff
  - ~750 REF2021 eligible staff
- £253m turnover
- £18m research income
- Canterbury, Medway, Tonbridge, Brussels
  - Paris, Athens, Rome
- 17th for Research Intensity, 16th for Teaching Quality [gold]
- Honoured with Queen's Anniversary Prizes twice in the past ten years
- THE World Ranking 351-400; and 93rd under 50 (hmmm)

REF2021

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- Impact… up 5%
- Case Studies
  - Up from 16% → 25% … an increase of 56¼%
- Impact Template (was 5%) …
  - now in Environment Template
- Outputs… down 5%
  - 65% → 60% is a drop of $8^1/_3$%
- Relative differential ICS:Outputs = + 69.3%

Output Quality

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- **Significance, Originality, Rigour**
- This is an academic judgement

- But…
- Lots of citations suggests signification
- Place of “publication” suggests rigour (lower bound)

- Some output types allow you to explain…
- In fact all apart from: confidential reports, journal articles, patents, research reports, and working papers

Output Quality – Panel A

- scientific rigour and excellence, with regard to design, method, execution and analysis
- significant addition to knowledge and to the conceptual framework of the field
- potential and actual significance of the research
- the scale, challenge and logistical difficulty posed by the research
- the logical coherence of argument
- contribution to theory-building
- significance of work to advance knowledge, skills, understanding and scholarship in theory, practice, education, management and/or policy
- applicability and significance to the relevant service users and research users
- potential applicability for policy in, for example health, healthcare, public health, animal health or welfare.

Output Quality – Panel B

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- agenda-setting
- research that is leading or at the forefront of the research area
- great novelty in developing new thinking, new techniques or novel results
- major influence on a research theme or field
- developing new paradigms or fundamental new concepts for research
- major changes in policy or practice
- major influence on processes, production and management
- major influence on user engagement.

***

- makes important contributions to the field at an international standard
- contributes important knowledge, ideas and techniques which are likely to have a lasting influence, but are not necessarily leading to fundamental new concepts
- significant changes to policies or practices
- significant influence on processes, production and management
- significant influence on user engagement.

Output Quality – Panel C

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- outstandingly novel in developing concepts, paradigms, techniques or outcomes
- a primary or essential point of reference
- a formative influence on the intellectual agenda
- application of exceptionally rigorous research design and techniques of investigation and analysis
- generation of an exceptionally significant data set or research resource..

***

- novel in developing concepts, paradigms, techniques or outcomes
- an important point of reference
- contributing very important knowledge, ideas and techniques which are likely to have a lasting influence on the intellectual agenda
- application of robust and appropriate research design and techniques of investigation and analysis
- generation of a substantial data set or research resource.

Output Quality – Panel D

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****

- a primary or essential point of reference
- of profound influence
- instrumental in developing new thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences
- a major expansion of the range and the depth of research and its application
- outstandingly novel, innovative and/or creative..

***

- an important point of reference
- of considerable influence
- a catalyst for, or important contribution to, new thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences
- a significant expansion of the range and the depth of research and its application
- significantly novel or innovative or creative.

Output Quality

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- Excellent outputs are the result of:
  - Excellent research
  - “Written” well
  - “Published” wisely

- There is little time left to create new outputs

- How do we make the best of what we have?

Output Citations

- Only for 1-6, 7,8,9,11, and 16

- Will only “inform” significance
- Metric Tide → Forum for Responsible Metrics

- But still… 1000 citations looks better than 2…

- Open Access [immediate]
- Social Media [tweets → downloads → citations]
- A penumbra of activities: blogs, data, wikipedia, …

Output Citations – some "stats"

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- Journal articles
  - Many studies show an OA advantage (some don't)
  - https://sparceurope.org/what-we-do/open-access/sparc-europe-open-access-resources/open-access-citation-advantage-service-oaca/
  - ScienceMetrix (WoS 42%, UK 44%, 99% ArtsHums)
  - http://www.science-metrix.com/sites/default/files/science-metrix/publications/science-metrix_open_access_availability_scientific_publications_report.pdf
- More pronounced for OA hybrid articles… "money talks"
  - 60% citation advantage
  - https://www.springernature.com/gp/open-research/about/oa-effect-hybrid
  - Eg 38% → 62% [63% increase]
  - https://libguides.asu.edu/openaccess
  - Availability of underlying data
- Also for books…
- OA → 50% more citations
  - https://media.springernature.com/full/springer-cms/rest/v1/content/15193852/data/v4

Output – Additional Information

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- 300 words… use them!
  - Check the PCWM
  - - research process
  - - research insights
  - - the dissemination (how and when)

Outputs – multiplying

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- Main Panel D: “portfolio” items
  - Cluster a group of items together
    - Eg Performance, programme, article, report
  - Or eg Edited works (journal special edition)

- Double weighting
  - There is no penalty
  - Submit a reserve, just in case

Output Selection

- Assume all staff
  - 1..5 per staff member
  - Comparing between staff …adds
    - Complexity
    - Burden
    - Anxiety about EDI
  - Joint authorship, adds more options
    - (and could even add outputs)

Outputs

- #REF2014
  - 4 outputs per person
  - Reductions (without penalty) for
    - ISCs eg PT, ECR, “babies”
    - CSCs eg protracted illness affecting work
  - Total 191,150 outputs

- #REF2021
  - ~190k outputs wanted/planned for

  - 2.5 per FTE (less reductions)

Outputs - possibilities

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- #REF2014
  - 52,061 staff selected
  - 190,150/52,061 → ~3.67 per FTE

- #REF2021
  - “All” staff…
- Kent
  - #2014 ~590 FTE, 2,060 outputs → ~ 3.5 per FTE
  - #2021 ~750 FTE → ~2.8 per FTE
    - So fewer (max 1,875) needed @ 2.5 FTE
    - Less (with ICSs etc) maybe 1,640

Outputs – grade "inflation"

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- For units that submitted all staff last time…
  - Using Kent 2014 figures
- 590 FTE, 2060 outputs [343 pa]
- 590 FTE @2.5 → 1,475
- 590 FTE @2.18 → 1,290 [same ISCs as last time]
- 7 years instead of 6 [184 pa]
- So (per year) 53% #Outputs needed…
- So (choosing well) a >=53% 4* submission → 100% 4*
  - There were 15 of these last time
  - And 1,418 with >=53% (4*+3*) [3 with 100%]

  - And better use of double weighting helps too!

Outputs - selection

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- #REF2014
  - Up to 4 per person
  - ➔ select best 4 per person

over half supported setting a minimum requirement of one output per person. Over one-third were in favour of no minimum at all. REF2017_02

- #REF2021
  - 0…? If not → need for ISC, or change of contract?
  - 1..5 per person
    - Why a maximum?
    - How many last time had 4x4*?
    - How many will have > 5x4*?
  - ➔ select best 5 per person
    - … and try to cross rank

Overall, just under 50 per cent of respondents supported a maximum of six outputs per person. Fewer than 5 per cent expressed explicit disagreement with a maximum of six; however, a large number of respondents were in favour of an alternative maximum of four or five, or implied they would be flexible on this issue. REF2017_02

Outputs – REF2014 example

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A	1	4	3	2	2	3	1	4		
B	3	2	4	1	-	-	-	-		
C	2	1	4	1	4	-	-	-		
D	1	2	3	3	2	1	3	1		
E	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-		
F	1	2	3	-	-	-	-	-		
G	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	-		
H	3	1	3	-	-	-	-	-		

										GPA
A	4	4	3	3	2	2	1	1		3.50
B	4	3	2	1	-	-	-	-		2.50
C	4	4	2	1	1	-	-	-		2.75
D	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	1		2.75
E	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-		1.25
F	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-		1.5
G	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	-		2
H	3	3	1	-	-	-	-	-		1.75
										2.88

8 staff with between 2 and 8 outputs

Rank & grade each person's outputs

Use a GPA threshold to select staff

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Outputs – REF2021 scenario

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A	1	4	3	2	2	3	1	4
B	3	2	4	1	-	-	-	-
C	2	1	4	1	4	-	-	-
D	1	2	3	3	2	1	3	1
E	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
F	1	2	3	-	-	-	-	-
G	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	-
H	3	1	3	-	-	-	-	-

A	*4	*4	*3	*3	2	2	1	1		
B	*4	*3	2	1	-	-	-	-		
C	*4	*4	2	1	1	-	-	-		
D	*3	*3	*3	2	2	1	1	1		
E	*3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-		
F	*3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-		
G	*2	2	2	2	2	-	-	-		
H	*3	*3	1	-	-	-	-	-		
									2.5 => 20	3.00
		*	*	*	*					

8 staff with between 2 and 8 outputs

Simpler?

Rank & grade each person's outputs

But now ***rank against the whole Dept***

Select the best n outputs

Which 2* output(s) do you select?

Outputs – Issues

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"In particular, it was felt that the changes around staff submission, along with the decoupling and portability of outputs, would require actions that were incompatible with Lord Stern's aims to reduce burden and maintain continuity." REF2017_02

- Added Burden!
- Being selective…?
  - Selection best from across a department
  - Complications of co-authorship, re 1..5 selection
- Being inclusive…?
  - ~same # for all staff?
  - Better for environment?

Where there is no formal account of the rationale for the number of outputs by each staff member selected for submission, there may be additional stigma for staff associated with fewer outputs and potential perceptions relating to the quality of research they produce. REF2017_02

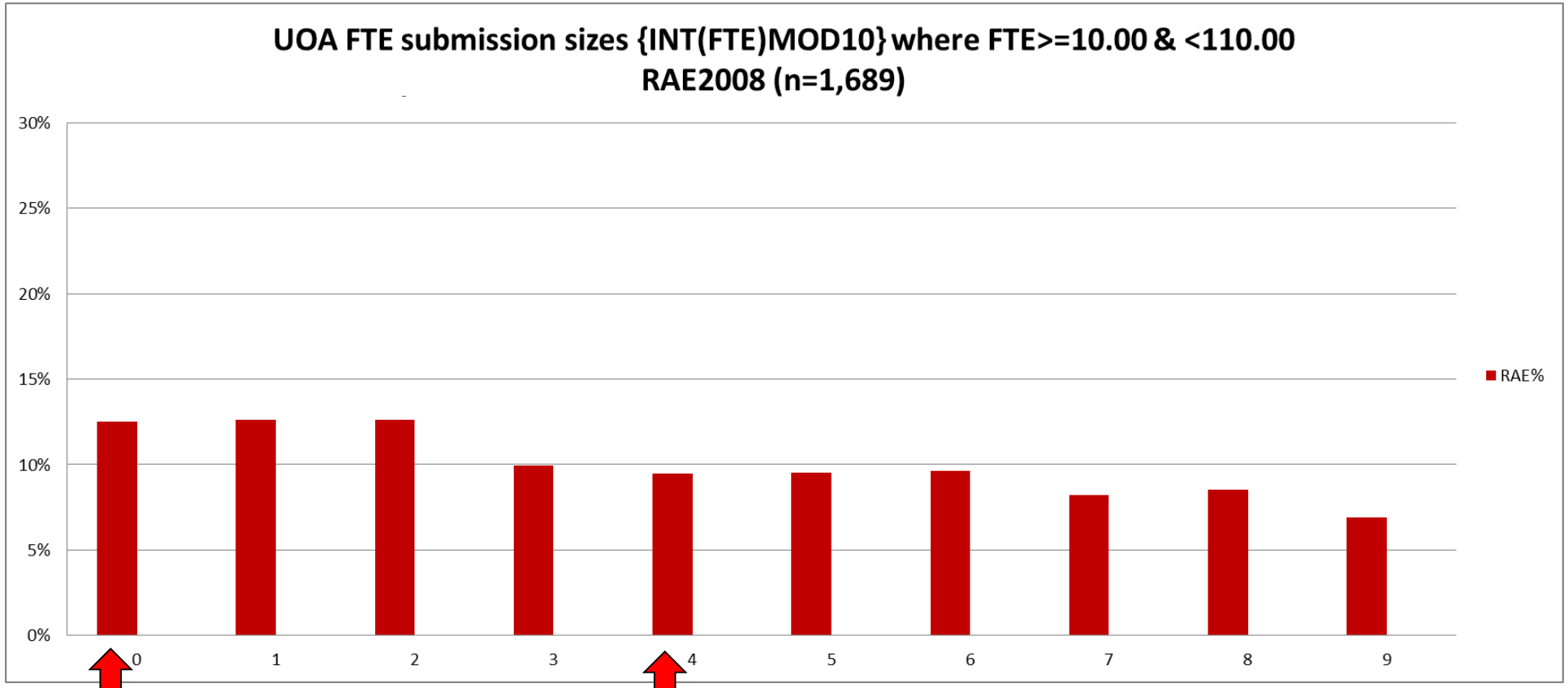
Outputs – REF2017_02

- Respondents commented on the burden associated with the proposal to decouple staff from outputs, as it was perceived to be **more difficult to select outputs than select staff**. **The majority of responses indicated that the proposals would increase or at least maintain the administrative burden on HEIs.** This was thought to be a result of the transfer of work from selecting staff to what was felt the **more difficult task of selecting outputs,** and would be **further increased** by the introduction of a minimum and maximum number of outputs **as opposed to 'true decoupling'** of staff from outputs.

Worries

- Remembering
- ICSs are now worth 69% more compared to outputs than in REF2014
- So what…?
- Lots of variables… but
  - #REF2014 ICS=4.37 outputs (av. English funded)
  - #REF2021 ICS~7.4 outputs (~same #s of each)
- So what…?

Impact Case Study Threshold



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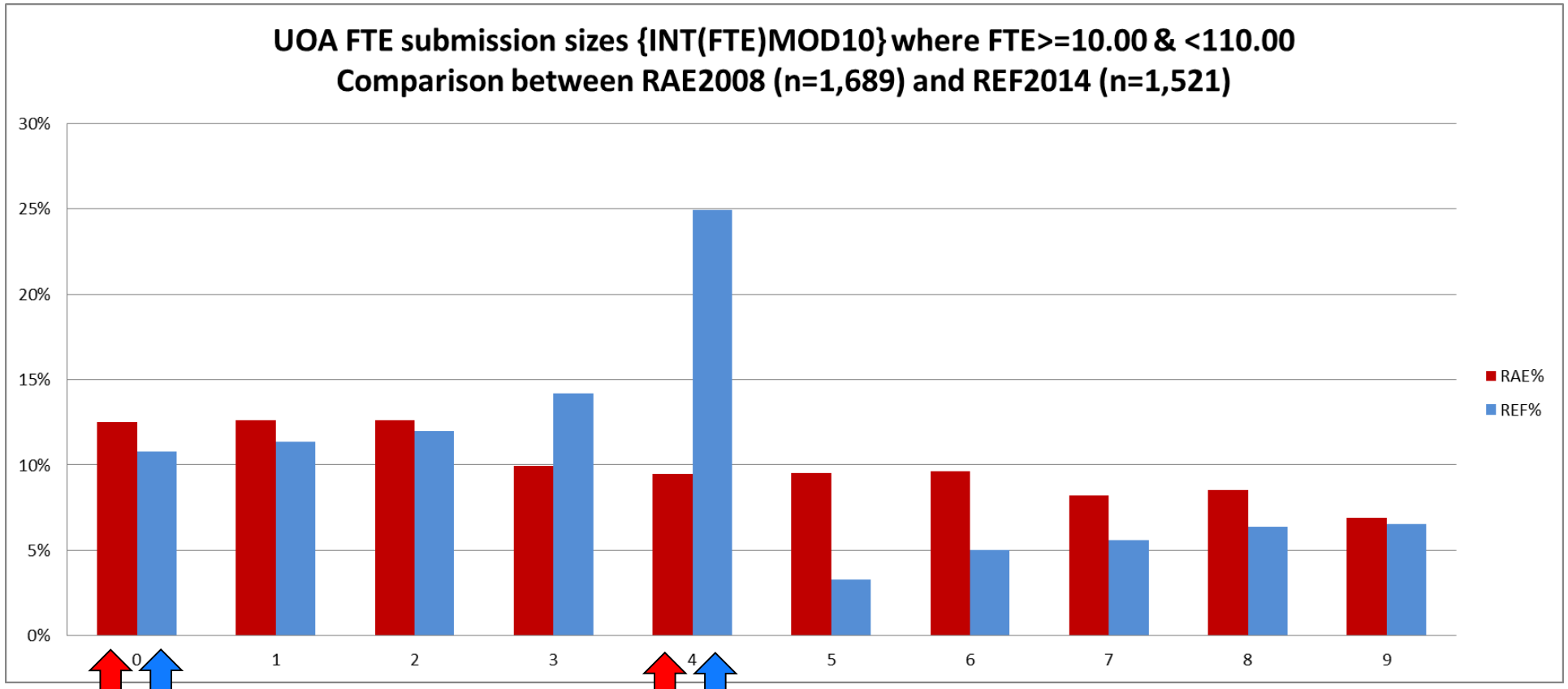
14.00-14.99,
24.00-24.99,
34.00-34.99,
44.00-44.99,
…

Impact Case Study Threshold



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34.00-34.99,
44.00-44.99,
…

Worried?

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- The driver for this behaviour is now 69% bigger
- #REF2021 staff eligibility (selection) rules … in CoP
  - but...
- #REF2014 non-selection – a stigma
- #REF2021 non-selection – a contract change?

  T&R → T only

  somewhat more than a stigma!?

Some respondents specifically mentioned equalities implications, suggesting that contract changes might differentially apply to staff with protected characteristics. REF2017_02

Over a third of respondents suggested that the proposal might result in changes to contractual status, with some staff being moved to Teaching-only contracts. REF2017_02

Summary

- Outputs are still – by far – the biggest element
- O,S,R remains the same
- More flexibility to choose → [much] more work
- More 4* and 3* in profiles → comparability is gone

- Will there be sufficient discrimination at the top?

- *And don't get me started on #ICSs…*

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