

Impact and REF2014

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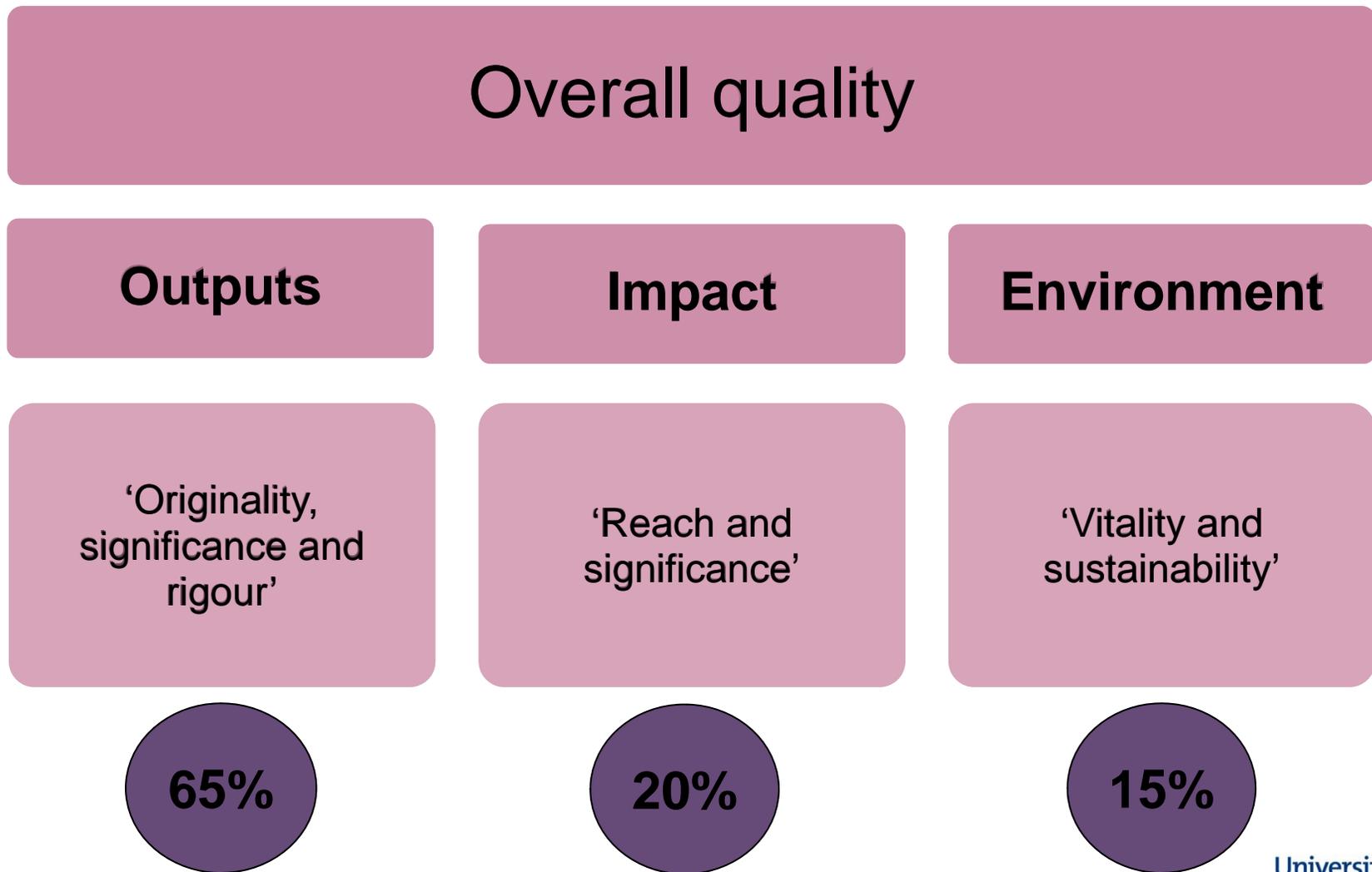
REF2014
Research Excellence Framework

University of
Kent

What is the Research Excellence Framework?

- REF2014 is the UK-wide framework for assessing research in all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in all disciplines
- Latest in the series of similar exercises, since 1984
- Its purpose is to:
 - Drive research funding allocations (~£2 billion per year across the UK)
 - Provide accountability for public funding of research and demonstrate its benefits
 - Provide benchmarks and reputational yardsticks
- A process of expert review, to assess the quality and impact of research

The assessment framework



Submissions

- Each University decides which UOAs to submit in, and decides which staff, outputs and impacts to include
- Each submission must include standard information:

| Outputs | Impact | Environment |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Up to 4 outputs per member of staff | Impact case studies; An impact strategy | Narrative description; Data about research income and PGR awards |

- The Kent submission (23 Units of Assessment, 627 staff, 80 impact case studies and 1842 pages of text) + 154 other Universities!

The assessment process

- Submissions were finalised by HEIs on 29th November 2013
- Assessment phase starts in December 2013, continues through 2014
- 36 Units of Assessment, each with an expert sub-panel that will assess submissions, working under the guidance of a main panel
- Procedures governed by the 'Panel criteria and working methods' published in early 2012 (www.ref.ac.uk/pubs)

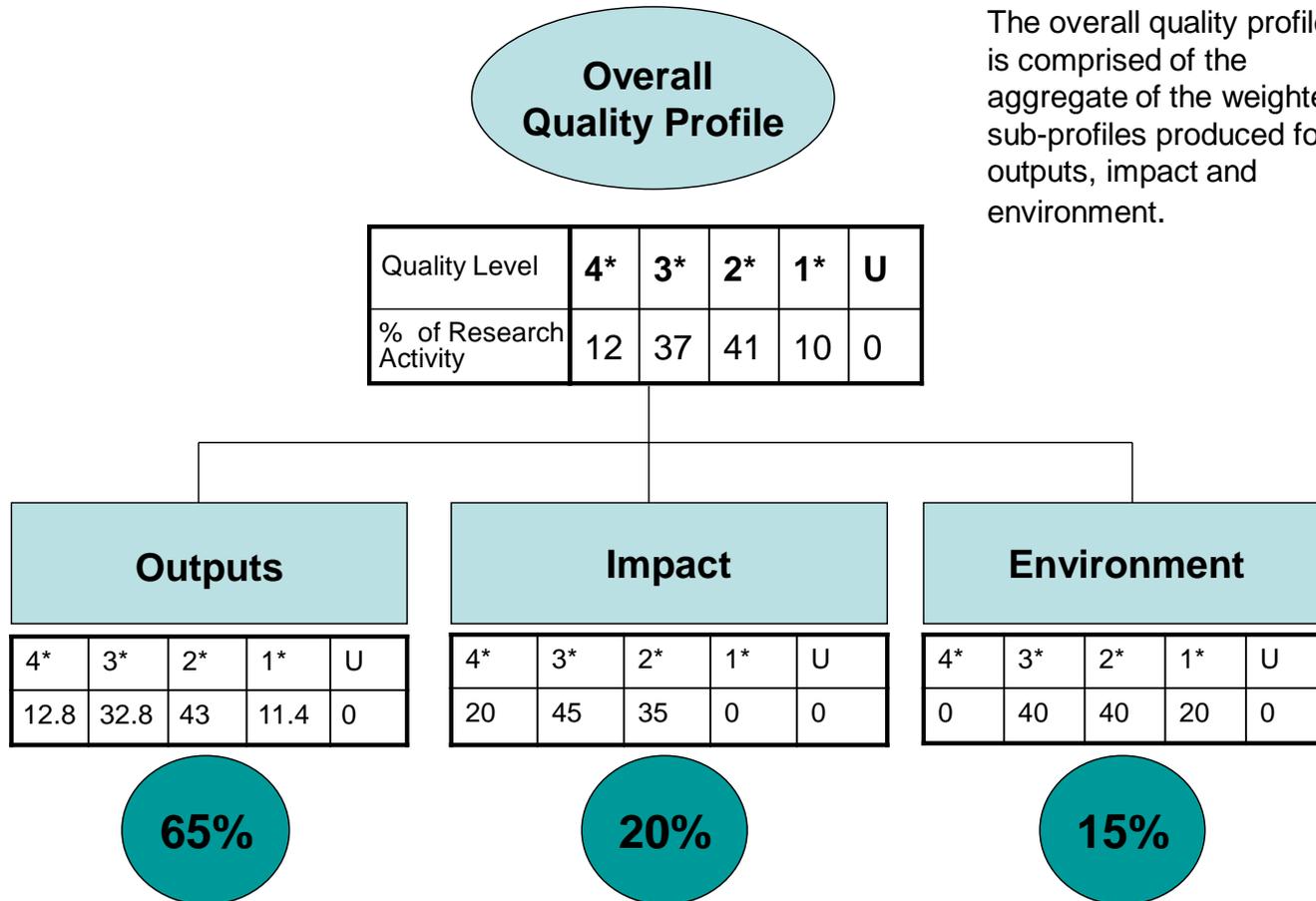
REF outcomes

- The primary outcome of the REF is an 'overall quality profile' to be awarded to each submission
 - To be published in Dec 2014
 - Will drive funding allocations from 2015-16

Further publications during 2015:

- The output, impact and environment sub-profile for each submission
- An overview report by each main panel, including observations by each of their sub-panels
- Concise feedback on submissions, to the heads of HEIs
- Submissions will be published (except for confidential parts)

Outcomes - the quality profile



The overall quality profile is comprised of the aggregate of the weighted sub-profiles produced for outputs, impact and environment.

What is impact?

- An effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia
- Impact includes an effect, change or benefit to:
 - The activity, attitude, awareness, behaviour, capacity, opportunity, performance, policy, practice, process or understanding
 - Of an audience, beneficiary, community, constituency, organisation or individuals
 - In any geographic location whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally
- It excludes impacts on research or the advancement of academic knowledge within HE; and impacts on teaching or other activities within the submitting HEI

Examples of impacts

Impacts can be manifest in a wide variety of ways, may take many forms and occur in a wide range of spheres

| Impacts on: | Examples: |
|---|---|
| Creativity, culture and society | Enhancements to heritage preservation, conservation and presentation Shaping or informing public attitudes and values |
| Economy, commerce or organisations | Improved products, processes or workplace practices Enhanced corporate social responsibility policies |
| Environment | Changes in public awareness or behaviour Business operations have been changed to achieve environmental objectives |
| Health and welfare | Development of policy or practice with regard to health services or social care provision |
| Practitioners and professional services | Influence on professional standards, guidelines or training Practitioner debate has been stimulated by research findings |
| Public policy, law and services | Legislative change or effect on legal practice Influence on policy (by government, NGO or private organisation) Impact on democratic participation or access to justice |

What did we submit?

For each UOA, we had to supply:

An impact template

Setting out the UOA's general approach to enabling impact from its research

Contributes **20%** to the impact sub-profile

Case studies

- Specific examples of impacts that were underpinned by the research in the UOA
- Contributes **80%** to the impact sub-profile

Impact case studies

- Minimum of 2 in each submission
- Impacts must have taken place during Jan 2008 - Jul 2013; underpinned by research carried out since 1993
- Each case study is limited to 4 pages
- The template asks:
 - What was the underpinning research?
 - How did the research make a 'material and distinct' contribution to the impact?
 - What was the nature and extent of the impact?
- Case studies should include evidence of the impact and references to key research outputs and independent sources of corroboration.

Impact template

- One template per submission – minimum 3 pages
- Describing the unit's approach to enabling impact from its research:
- How did the unit support and enable impact from its research during 2008-2013?
- What strategy and plans does it have for the future?
- How do the submitted case studies relate to all this?
- To be assessed in terms of the extent to which the unit's approach is conducive to achieving impact

Types of evidence

- Evidence of the nature and extent of the impact should be provided and may include, for example:
 - Citation in a public discussion, consultation or judgement
 - Public debate in the media
 - Visitor or audience numbers
 - Measures of improved inclusion, welfare or equality
 - Documented evidence of influence on guidelines, legislation, regulation, policy or standards,
 - Quantitative data relating, for example, to organisational performance

What judgments need to be made?

| Eligibility checks | Judging the impact |
|--|--|
| <p>The underpinning research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Was produced by the submitting unit, since Jan 1993<li>• Meets the quality threshold<li>• Made a contribution to the impact <p>The impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Took place between Jan 2008 and July 2013<li>• Is beyond impact on research; and extends beyond the submitting HEI | <p>The ‘reach and significance’ of the impact to be graded on a scale</p> |

Examples:

- **UOA 11, Computer Science and Informatics**
Greenfoot: Transforming the way programming is taught
- **UOA 21, Politics and International Studies**
Rendition and Torture Practices: Informing understandings of lawyers, legislators, NGOs, and journalists
- **UOA 30, History**
Cold War at Porton Down: Medical Ethics and the Legal Dimension of Britain's Biological and Chemical Warfare Programme, 1945-1989