

## Section B4: Assessment criteria: environment

### Environment template

91. The environment template (REF5) is at Annex C. Sub-panels request the following information in sections a-e of REF5:

- a. **Overview:** This will provide context for the sub-panel in assessing the submission, and will not be assessed.
  - Submitting units should describe how research is structured across the unit, including, where appropriate, what research groups or sub-units are covered by the submission. Given that there is no expectation that the environment element of submissions will relate to a single coherent organisational unit, groups may be organisational units such as departments or schools and/or research groups.
  - HEIs presenting staff in research groups should allocate staff to research groups in the staff details form (REF1a) of the submission. HEIs should note that staff may be allocated to more than one research group.
- b. **Research strategy:** Submitting units are invited to provide evidence of the achievement of strategic aims for research during the assessment period, as well as details of future strategic aims and goals for research; how these relate to the structure described above; and how they will be taken forward. This should include (but is not limited to):
  - vision, including strategic plans
  - an evaluation of the submitting unit's current position with reference to the research position described in RAE 2008.
- c. **People:**
  - i. **Staffing strategy and staff development:** Submitting units are invited to describe staffing strategy and staff development within the unit, including but not limited to:
    - evidence of how the staffing strategy relates to the unit's research strategy and physical infrastructure
    - evidence about career development support at all stages in research careers, including for research assistants, early career researchers and established academic staff
  - ii. **Research students:** Submitting units are invited to provide evidence of the quality of training and supervision of postgraduate research students, including but not limited to:
    - information on PGR recruitment such as approaches to recruitment, and any discipline-specific issues
    - information on training and support mechanisms
    - information on progress monitoring.
- d. **Income, infrastructure and facilities:** Submitting units are invited to provide evidence including (but not limited to):
  - information on provision and operation of specialist infrastructure and facilities
  - evidence of investments (both current and planned) in infrastructure and facilities
  - information on the research funding portfolio, including future plans
  - information on consultancies and professional services.
- e. **Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base:** Submitting units are invited to provide evidence and information relating to contributions to the wider research base, including work with other researchers outside the submitted unit, whether locally, nationally or internationally, and indicators of wider influence or contributions to the discipline or research base. This may include (but is not limited to):
  - information on support for and exemplars of research collaborations, including national
    - evidence about the implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers
    - information on staff with personal research fellowships won in an open competition such as Royal Society University Research Fellowships
    - information on international staff appointments (incoming and outgoing), international recruitment and visiting scholars
    - evidence of how the submitting unit supports equalities and diversity.

or international research collaborations, with academic, industry and other bodies

- information on support for and exemplars of interdisciplinary research
- information on how research collaborations with research users, including industry users, have informed research activities and strategy
- exemplars of leadership in the academic community such as national or international advisory board membership; leadership roles in industry, commerce, Research Councils, learned societies or professional bodies; conference programme chairs; invited keynote lectures; election to membership or fellowship of learned societies; journal editorships; and fellowships, awards and prizes.

92. Requirements for additional quantitative data to be included in REF5 are described below (paragraphs 96 and 97).

### Environment data

93. 'Guidance on submissions' (Part 3, Section 4) sets out quantitative data relating to the research environment to be included in submissions (REF4a/b/c). Sub-panels will use the data in the context of the information provided in the environment template (REF5), to inform their assessment. Data on research doctoral degrees awarded (REF4a) will be used to inform the sub-panels' assessment in relation to 'research students' (section c.ii). Data on research income (REF4b/c) will be used to inform the sub-panels' assessment in relation to 'income, infrastructure and facilities' (section d).

94. Sub-panels within Main Panel B do not require quantitative data provided by institutions in REF4a/b/c to be reported by research group.

95. Some sub-panels have identified additional quantitative indicators that are particularly relevant to the assessment of the vitality and sustainability of the research environment in their disciplines. These sub-panels therefore request the following additional data items to be provided as part of the narrative submitted within the environment template (REF5), under the section headings stated below.

96. **People: research students.** In chemistry, higher proportions of funder investment are committed to postgraduate doctoral training than in other physical sciences, and there is wide acknowledgment of the doctoral degree as the professional qualification in the discipline. Doctoral research student numbers are

therefore an especially strong indicator of research vitality in chemistry submissions. Sub-panel 8 therefore wishes to receive information on doctoral research student populations to supplement the data on doctoral degrees awarded, to provide a fuller picture of the development of the postgraduate research profile throughout the assessment period. For **Sub-panel 8 only**, the total FTE postgraduate research students enrolled on doctoral programmes, broken down into the academic years of the assessment period (from 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2013), should be provided. Only students registered and conducting their research programme should be included (not, for example, students who are writing up their thesis outside the normal registration period, or visiting from other institutions). This information should be included in tabular format as part of the 'People: research students' section of the REF5 template.

97. **Income, infrastructure and facilities.** For **Sub-panel 9 only**, data should be provided on usage within the assessment period (1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013) of major national and international facilities not supported by the Research Councils, which was awarded to an investigator in the submitted unit after competitive review by a panel of internationally recognised experts. The information should be provided for each facility in terms of the time awarded together with the total cost, if the latter is available.

### Environment criteria

98. The sub-panels will assess the environment according to the generic criteria and level definitions in 'guidance on submissions', Annex A, Table A4. The criteria will be understood as follows:

- **Vitality** will be understood as the extent to which a unit provides an encouraging environment for research, has an effective strategy, is engaged with the national and international research and user communities, and is able to attract excellent postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers.
- **Sustainability** will be assessed by considering leadership, vision for the future and investment in people and infrastructure and, where appropriate for the subject area, the extent to which activity is supported by a portfolio of research funding.

99. In assessing the environment element of submissions, panels will apply the criteria in terms of both the research environment within the submitting unit, and its participation in and contribution to its subject discipline and academic community.

100. In considering each section of the environment template, sub-panels will take account of data reported in the template, as well as the data submitted in REF4a/b/c, as stated at paragraph 93. Sub-panels will attach the following weighting to the assessment of the components within the environment template, in forming the environment sub-profile:

a.	Overview	For information only
b.	Strategy	20%
c.	People (staffing strategy and staff development; and research students)	30%
d.	Income, infrastructure and facilities	30%
e.	Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base	20%