

# Performance-Based Research Fund Sector Reference Group: Consultation paper #6 - Developing Evidence Portfolios – operational guidance for the Research Output component

## Sector feedback and in-principle decisions

### Purpose

The Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF) Sector Reference Group (SRG) sought feedback from the sector and other stakeholders on the proposed operational guidance for the Research Output component of Evidence Portfolios (EPs) submitted to the 2018 Quality Evaluation.

This document provides:

- a summary of the responses received;
- a summary of any concerns raised relating to the options and recommendations; and
- the Tertiary Education Commission's (TEC's) in-principle decisions on each aspect of the proposal.

### Introduction

The consultation paper *Operational guidance for the Research Output component* provided the sector and other key stakeholders with background information on the purpose of the Research Output component, as well as the issues arising from the 2012 Quality Evaluation, information on the decisions made by Cabinet in relation to changes to the Research Output component, the proposed operational framework for the submission of items of Research Output in the 2018 Quality Evaluation, and invited feedback on the proposals and any other matters not raised in the paper.

The paper excluded any discussion about changes to the data specifications required for the submission of EPs noting that a sub-group of the SRG will address issues through consultation on the technical requirements for data submission for the 2018 Quality Evaluation.

Feedback on this consultation paper was invited through the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) from 31 March to 8 May 2015. Consultation has now closed.

A total of 13 responses were received. These were from:

- Auckland University of Technology
- Auckland University of Technology (School of Art and Design)
- Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology
- Eastern Institute of Technology
- Massey University
- Otago Polytechnic
- Tertiary Education Union Te Hautū Kahurangi o Aotearoa
- University of Auckland
- University of Canterbury
- University of Otago
- University of Otago (Department of Music)
- University of Waikato
- Victoria University of Wellington

The Ministry of Education and Callaghan Innovation also provided feedback. Feedback has been anonymised.

### **Process information**

The SRG has considered the feedback from the sector and other stakeholders relating to each of the matters identified in the consultation paper and have indicated their preferred option, which has been recommended to the TEC.

The TEC has approved these recommendations in principle, on the understanding that the consultation process is on-going and other decisions or external factors may require these recommendations to be reconsidered as part of the development of the final guidelines.

### **Next steps**

The SRG will use the in-principle decisions as the basis of the draft guidelines for the 2018 Quality Evaluation. These guidelines will be provided to the sector and other stakeholders for consultation before they are finalised in June 2016. The purpose of the consultation on the draft guidelines is to ensure that the guidance is clear and unambiguous, not to re-consult on matters already consulted upon and agreed.

### **Organisation of summary**

Each of the 13 responses has been analysed. Feedback is summarised according to the following sections:

- A. The Definition of Research
- B. Eligibility of patents as Research Outputs
- C. Determining eligibility of research outputs
- D. Accepted Manuscript provision
- E. Research output types
- F. Quality assurance
- G. "Other Comments" field
- H. Presentation of Other Research Outputs
- I. Standardisation of information and evidence
- J. Any other matters

#### **A. The Definition of Research**

The SRG proposed a revision of the definition of research which encompassed research of a more applied, commercial or creative nature.

The proposed definition was:

*For the purposes of the PBRF, research comprises original, independent investigation undertaken in order to contribute to knowledge and understanding and, in the case of some disciplines, cultural innovation or aesthetic refinement. It includes work of direct relevance to the specific needs of national and international businesses and communities, iwi, government and society.*

*Research findings are normally publicly available and must be open to scrutiny and rigorous assessment by experts within the field and other stakeholders. Public availability may be achieved through various forms of appropriate dissemination including, but not limited to publication, manufacture, construction, confidential reports or public presentation.*

*In some disciplines, the investigation and its results may be embodied in the form of artistic works, performances and or designs that lead to new or substantially improved insights. Research can also include the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved, materials, products, communications or processes. Research may also contribute to the intellectual infrastructure of subjects and disciplines (e.g. dictionaries and scholarly editions).*

*Under this definition of research, activities that are part of routine standard practice or do not embody original research are excluded. This includes but is not limited to: routine testing; data-collection and analysis; preparation for teaching (where it does not embody original research); the legal and administrative aspects of commercialisation activities; and professional activities that do not meet the Definition of Research.*

Feedback was sought on whether the proposed changes to the Definition of Research were supported.

A review of the responses has been undertaken and summarised below.

<b>Do you support the proposed changes to the Definition of Research?</b>	<b>Response %</b>	<b>Response #</b>
Yes	72.7%	8
No	27.3%	3

There was general support for the proposed changes, with feedback noting that it did appear to address the concerns raised regarding the inclusion of applied, commercial or creative research and better align it with the new objectives of the PBRF.

Those who did not support the changes identified a high level of sector understanding of the current definition, the use of the definition by other agencies, and the potential for the panel-specific guidelines to address the needs of applied, commercial or creative research among the reasons for maintaining the current definition.

A number of the submissions suggested further amendments to the definition. The SRG has considered all the feedback provided and revised the proposed definition with the aim of it more closely aligning to the 2012 definition while better reflecting applied, commercial and creative research.

***In-principle decision***

The Definition of Research below will be included in the draft guidelines.

*For the purposes of the PBRF, research is original, independent\* investigation undertaken in order to contribute to knowledge and understanding and, in the case of some disciplines, cultural innovation or aesthetic refinement.*

*Research typically involves enquiry of an experimental or critical nature driven by hypothesis or intellectual positions capable of rigorous assessment by experts in a given discipline.*

*Research includes work of direct relevance to the specific needs of iwi, communities, government, industry and commerce. In some disciplines, research may be embodied in*

*the form of artistic works, performances and or designs that lead to new or substantially improved insights. Research may include contributions to the intellectual infrastructure of subjects and disciplines (e.g. dictionaries and scholarly\*\* editions); the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved, materials, devices, products, communications or processes; and the synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.*

*Research findings must be open to scrutiny or formal evaluation by experts within the field. This may be achieved through various forms of dissemination including, but not limited to, publication, manufacture, construction, public presentation or presentation of confidential reports.*

*Research does not include activities that are part of routine standardised practice or do not embody original research. This would exclude; routine testing, data-collection, preparation for teaching (where it does not embody original research), the legal and administrative aspects of commercialisation activities, and professional activities that do not meet this definition.*

*\* The term 'independent' does not exclude collaborative work.*

*\*\* The term 'scholarly' is defined as the creation, development and maintenance of the intellectual infrastructure of subjects and disciplines, in forms such as dictionaries, scholarly editions, catalogues and contributions to major research databases.*

The SRG also sought feedback on the recommendation that peer review panels specifically consider the definition of research and develop any specific advice in relation to their subject areas as part of the panel specific guidelines.

A review of the responses has been undertaken and summarised below.

<b>Do you agree that the peer review panels should specifically consider the definition of research and develop any specific advice in relation to their subject areas as part of the panel-specific guidelines?</b>	<b>Response %</b>	<b>Response #</b>
Yes	100.0%	9
No	0.0%	0

This recommendation was unanimously supported.

Feedback noted that this should be based on information in the previous panel-specific guidelines and must address relevant aspects of applied research.

The SRG also clarifies that this recommendation does not allow panels to develop their own definition of research, and is focussed on ensuring that panels address any discipline-specific aspects of research they would accept.

***In-principle decision***

Each peer review panel will consider how the definition of research relates to the subject area(s) covered by that panel and develop any specific advice for the subject area(s) as part of the panel-specific guidelines.

## B. Eligibility of patents as Research Outputs

In the 2012 Quality Evaluation, the eligibility of patents was questioned and there was inconsistent treatment across participating TEOs. The SRG reviewed this area giving consideration to direct international comparisons.

Two options were consulted on, these and the responses are set out below.

	Response %	Response #
<i>Option 1: Maintain the status quo and allow only granted patents as eligible research outputs.</i>	46.2%	6
<i>Option 2: Allow both granted patents (as Quality Assured research outputs) and patent applications (as non-Quality Assured research outputs) as eligible outputs for the 2018 Quality Evaluation, with a granted patent not being allowed for any subsequent Quality Evaluation exercises by the researcher if the application has been submitted.</i>	53.8%	7

While the responses were evenly split, a number of submissions highlighted issues relating to consistently applying and tracking patent applications and granted patents across successive Quality Evaluation rounds for both TEOs and the TEC. These submissions also noted that there could be an associated auditing workload as a result.

Other feedback indicated that “*an application for a patent is no more indicative of the uniqueness or value of the material than an application for publication in a journal is indicative of the uniqueness or quality of the research*”. This aligns with the Professional and Applied Research Expert Advisory Group’s view of patents which was that the granting of a patent does not constitute the successful application of a body of research, and that the value that is ascribed to a patent will depend on the inclusion of additional and specific evidence of the application of that intellectual property.

The SRG has considered all the feedback provided, particularly in the context of the policy intent of simplifying the PBRF Quality Evaluation to reduce transaction costs, in developing its recommendation to the TEC.

### ***In-principle decision***

Implement Option 1: Maintain the status quo and allow only granted patents as eligible research outputs. Granted patents will be considered Quality Assured (as defined by the PBRF).

## C. Determining eligibility of research outputs

With the increasing availability of publications online during the 2012 Quality Evaluation assessment period, concerns were raised by parts of the sector about the eligibility of some research outputs.

The SRG recommended maintaining the existing principle of research output eligibility, which is that the inclusion or exclusion of a research output relates to the date when the final version of that output was first available in the public domain but clarifying the wording of the guidance.

A review of the responses has been undertaken and summarised below.

Do you support maintaining the existing principle of research output eligibility (inclusion or exclusion of a research output concerns the date when the final version was first made available in the public domain)?	Response %	Response #
Yes	91.7%	11
No	8.3%	1

There was a high level of support for maintaining the existing principle with only one TEO supporting change.

The SRG has considered all feedback and has also noted the results of the TEC audit process in relation to research outputs excluded from the 2012 Quality Evaluation that were deemed to be produced outside the assessment period.

Based on this information, it appears that the existing principle of research output eligibility is clear and logical, well understood by the sector, and should be maintained.

***In-principle decision***

Retain the existing principle of research output eligibility i.e. the inclusion or exclusion of a research output concerns the date when the final version was first made available in the public domain.

The SRG also proposed a revised version of the guidance provided to the sector to assist with determining the eligibility of research outputs and sought feedback on whether changes were required to the guidance.

A review of the responses has been undertaken and summarised below.

Do you recommend any changes to the proposed guidance?	Response %	Response #
Yes	58.3%	7
No	41.7%	5

The most significant change requested was clarification of the terms 'final version' and 'first available'. These two terms are linked in the guidance "*A research output can be included in the Research Output component of an EP when the final version was first made available in the public domain*" and the SRG recognises the importance of clarity in this area.

The SRG has decided that it is appropriate to use the National Information Standards Organization (NISO) standards<sup>1</sup> to test eligibility of journal articles according to the date on which the first *Version of Record* was made publicly available by the publisher. These standards will also be applied for other published works wherever possible (books, edited volumes, conference proceedings, on-line peer reviewed commentary etc.) to determine the eligibility date for the first *Version of Record*.

<sup>1</sup> 'NISO RP-8-2008, Journal Article Versions (JAV): Recommendations of the NISO/ALPSP JAV Technical Working Group', <http://www.niso.org/publications/rp/RP-8-2008.pdf>

For these types of research outputs, the first *Version of Record* will be considered the ‘final version’ and the date that the first *Version of Record* appears in the public domain regardless of this being in print or online will be considered the date it is ‘first available’.

The SRG recognises that the NISO standards do not apply to other research output types, particularly in the creative and performing arts. However, the REF and the ERA both provide eligibility advice on non-traditional research output types. The proposed guidance has been included in [Appendix 1](#).

***In-principle decision***

The revised guidance to assist with determining the eligibility of research outputs set out in Appendix 1 will be included in the draft guidelines for the 2018 Quality Evaluation.

**D. Accepted Manuscript provision**

In the 2012 Quality Evaluation, Accepted Manuscripts (defined by [NISO standard RP-8-2008](#)) could be submitted as evidence only for the purpose of assessment by panels in order to address any concerns relating to potential breaches of copyright.

The SRG reviewed this provision and consulted on two options relating to the Accepted Manuscripts provision.

A review of the responses has been undertaken and summarised below.

	Response %	Response #
<i>Option 1: Maintain the Accepted Manuscript provision but clarify that the provision only relates to the submission of evidence for an eligible NRO, and that Accepted Manuscripts are not eligible NROs in their own right.</i>	75.0%	9
<i>Option 2: Remove the Accepted Manuscript provision to reduce ambiguity of the NRO requirements.</i>	25.0%	3

There is wide support for maintaining the provision and providing a greater level of clarification that an Accepted Manuscript can be provided as evidence of eligible NROs only.

Feedback included concerns relating to potential breaches of copyright as a result of the submission of evidence for NROs. A number of submissions recommended that the TEC seek a blanket copyright agreement with Copyright Licensing New Zealand that would cover both the panel members’ and the TEOs’ use of copyright material during the 2018 Quality Evaluation. The copyright agreements held by TEOs and the agreement the TEC will negotiate with Copyright Licensing New Zealand for panel members involved in the 2018 Quality Evaluation will provide appropriate protections against potential breach of copyright.

***In-principle decision***

Implement Option 1: Maintain the Accepted Manuscript provision but clarify that the provision only relates to the submission of evidence for an eligible NRO, and that Accepted Manuscripts are not eligible NROs in their own right.

**E. Research output types**

The SRG proposed aggregating the 31 research output types into 16 Research Output types and sought feedback on this proposal.

A review of the responses has been undertaken and summarised below.

	Response %	Response #
<i>Option 1: Consolidating the list of output types to 16 types as identified in Appendix 3 of the consultation paper.</i>	90.9%	10
<i>Option 2: Maintain the status quo.</i>	9.1%	1

There was strong support for this proposal, with a number of suggestions on how this could be further improved, which included further consolidation as well as a number of requests for descriptors for each of the types.

The SRG recognises the importance of the descriptors for each type and is committed to developing these once the types are finalised. This information will be provided in the draft guidelines.

#### ***In-principle decision***

Implement Option 1: Consolidating the list of output types.

The 15 Research Output types for the 2018 Quality Evaluation will be:

- Authored Book
- Chapter in Book
- Conference Contribution - Other
- Conference Contribution - Published
- Creative Work
- Discussion/Working Paper
- Edited Volume
- Intellectual Property
- Journal Article
- Oral Presentation
- Other Form of Assessable Output
- Report
- Scholarly Edition/Literary Translation
- Software
- Thesis – Masters/PhD

#### **F. Quality assurance**

Concerns were raised that the current operational guidance on Quality Assurance in the PBRF context does not provide sufficient clarity on the Quality Assurance standards expected by panels, and that it does not sufficiently reflect the processes that are undertaken for some non-standard research outputs within Māori and Pacific research and applied research.

The SRG recommended that panels include specific guidance on the Quality Assurance standard expected (that is consistent with the definition) and detail acceptable formal Quality Assurance processes for non-standard research outputs as part of the panel-specific guidelines and sought feedback on these proposals.

A review of the responses has been undertaken and summarised below.

<b>Do you support the recommendation that the peer review panels include specific guidance on the Quality Assurance standard expected (that is consistent with the definition) and detail acceptable formal Quality Assurance processes for non-standard research outputs as part of the panel-specific guidelines?</b>	<b>Response %</b>	<b>Response #</b>
Yes	100.0%	12
No	-	-

There was unanimous support for this proposal and no significant concerns were raised.

It was noted that it would be useful for panels to explain the standard of evidence that might be expected to support the claim of the item being quality assured.

***In-principle decision***

Peer review panels will include specific guidance on the Quality Assurance standard expected (that is consistent with the definition) and detail acceptable formal Quality Assurance processes for non-standard research outputs as part of the panel-specific guidelines.

The SRG also proposed to include additional examples of Quality Assurance processes for non-standard research outputs within the 2018 Guidelines and sought feedback on that proposal.

A review of the responses has been undertaken and summarised below.

<b>Do you agree that additional examples of Quality Assurance processes for non-standard research outputs be within the 2018 Guidelines?</b>	<b>Response %</b>	<b>Response #</b>
Yes	100.0%	10
No	-	-

There was unanimous support for the proposal and no concerns were raised.

The SRG also provided the opportunity for feedback to be provided on additional examples or changes to the proposed information on formal Quality Evaluation processes (set out below).

***Formal quality-assurance processes***

*Formal quality-assurance processes vary between different disciplinary areas. They may take the form of commonly understood processes such as peer reviewing for books, journals or conferences, but may also involve other written or oral forms of review. They include, but are not limited to:*

- *Peer-review or refereeing processes undertaken by journals and book publishers.*
- *Other review processes employed by editors, editorial committees or publishers.*
- *The refereeing of conference papers.*
- *A final report for commissioned research.*

- *The selection of conference papers/abstracts and the refereeing of conference papers.*
- *Review processes specific to Māori or Pacific research processes and/or methodologies.*
- *Review processes undertaken by major galleries, museums and broadcasters.*
- *Review processes employed by users of commissioned or funded research.*

A review of the responses has been undertaken and summarised below.

<b>Do you recommend any examples or changes to the proposed information on formal Quality Evaluation processes?</b>	<b>Response %</b>	<b>Response #</b>
Yes	66.7%	8
No	33.3%	4

Some feedback suggested additional examples or changes that could be incorporated, however due to the highly subject specific nature of these suggestions the SRG recommends that the panels address the questions and scenarios provided in the feedback in the panel-specific guidelines.

***In-principle decision***

Additional examples of Quality Assurance processes for non-standard research outputs will be included within the 2018 Guidelines (as set out below).

Peer review panels will be required to provide specific advice and examples of Quality Assurance within the panel-specific guidelines.

***Formal quality-assurance processes***

*Formal quality-assurance processes vary between different disciplinary areas and output types\*. They include, but are not limited to:*

- *Peer-review or refereeing processes undertaken by journals and book publishers.*
- *Other review processes employed by editors, editorial committees or publishers.*
- *The selection of conference papers/abstracts and the refereeing of conference papers.*
- *Review processes specific to Māori or Pacific research processes and/or methodologies.*
- *Review processes undertaken by major galleries, museums and broadcasters.*
- *Review processes employed by users of commissioned or funded research including commercial clients and public bodies.*

*\*Granted patents are considered to be quality assured research outputs.*

**G. “Other Comments” field**

For the 2012 Quality Evaluation, EPs contained a field for “Other Comments”. The SRG sought feedback on the proposal to rename this section “Platform of Research - Contextual Summary” and on the following descriptor for the section:

*The “Platform of Research - Contextual Summary” section allows staff members to provide information that will assist assessors to consider the research outputs and contributions*

presented in the EP in the wider context of the individual’s research over the assessment period.

A review of the responses has been undertaken and summarised below.

Do you support renaming the “Other Comments” section to “Platform of Research - Contextual Summary” and the proposed descriptor for the section of the EP?	Response %	Response #
Yes	100.0%	13
No	-	-

There was unanimous support for this proposal. No significant concerns were raised but two submissions suggested that additional guidance would be useful.

The SRG has considered this and will include additional guidance on completing this section in the guidelines. Panels may also address information for inclusion in this section in the panel-specific guidelines.

<p><b><i>In-principle decision</i></b></p> <p>Implement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the proposal to rename the “Other Comments” section to “Platform of Research - Contextual Summary”; and</li> <li>• the proposed descriptor for this new section of the EP; and</li> <li>• provide additional information on completing this section in the guidelines.</li> </ul>
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## H. Presentation of Other Research Outputs

### *Presenting OROs by type*

The 2012 Guidelines allowed all research outputs to be ordered in accordance with the staff member’s preference and this order was retained when the panel member viewed the EP. Some TEOs submitting EPs to the 2012 Quality Evaluation clustered the 30 Other Research Outputs (OROs) by type, while others did not.

The SRG consulted on two options.

A review of the responses has been undertaken and summarised below.

	Response %	Response #
<i>Option 1: Maintain the status quo.</i>	33.3%	4
<i>Option 2: Require OROs to be clustered by type but ordered in accordance with the staff member’s preference.</i>	66.7%	8

There was support for requiring OROs to be clustered by type but ordered in accordance with the staff member’s preference. This option was noted as a good compromise that will allow staff members some degree of control of the presentation of their Other Research Outputs, while enforcing some degree of consistency of presentation for the panellists.

It was noted that reduction in the number of OROs means that panellists in the 2018 Quality Evaluation will not have to navigate through a large number of entries. This means the issue of having a standard order is also reduced.

***In-principle decision***

Implement Option 2: Require OROs to be clustered by type. The ordering of ORO types and the ordering of the OROs within each type will be in accordance with the staff member's preference.

*ORO Description field*

The Description field for OROs was used in different ways by different TEOs. Although the TEC advised that this field should be used for bibliographic information only to support the assessment and audit processes, some TEOs allowed staff to provide additional information regarding the researcher's contribution, as well as reflecting on quality and relevance and impact. Feedback from some peer review panels was for a greater level of consistency in the presentation of this information.

The SRG proposed that only bibliographic information, including that relevant to creative research types (advised in the panel-specific guidelines), be allowed in the ORO Description field.

A review of the responses has been undertaken and summarised below.

<b>Do you agree that only bibliographic information, including that relevant to creative research types (advised in the panel-specific guidelines) be allowed in the ORO Description field?</b>	<b>Response %</b>	<b>Response #</b>
Yes	91.7%	11
No	8.3%	1

There was strong support for this proposal.

The SRG clarifies that for outputs of a creative nature, this will also include information that assists the panel to determine where an item was made available i.e. names of galleries/venues and locations, number of pieces exhibited, etc. The [2012 panel-specific guidelines for the Creative and Performing Arts](#) also provided specific advice on this (pp.9-12). This field cannot be used to provide information on the quality of the ORO, or its research or aesthetic significance. This type of information is not allowed for any ORO submission regardless of the type and panels in the 2018 Quality Evaluation will be instructed to disregard any information of this type in the ORO Description field.

***In-principle decision***

Only allow bibliographic information, including that relevant to creative research types (advised in the panel-specific guidelines) in the ORO Description field for the 2018 Quality Evaluation.

**I. Standardisation of information and evidence**

In the 2012 Quality Evaluation, peer review panels identified a number of issues relating specifically to the evidence submitted by TEOs, including:

- Web links that took the user to closed repositories or sites that required subscriptions.

- Web links that took the user to internal TEO repositories or documents that asked the user to request the physical output directly from the TEO, potentially allowing the TEO to identify the panel member assessing the EP.
- The submission of web links and electronic documents that were supporting documentation with no evidence of the actual research output.
- The submission of poor quality PDF documents, sound files and other forms of visual evidence.

The SRG made recommendations aimed at ensuring that staff members submitting EPs were not negatively impacted as a result of poor quality submissions.

A review of the responses has been undertaken and summarised below.

<b>Do you agree with the recommendations that:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>greater standardisation of information and evidence be introduced for the 2018 Quality Evaluation; and</b></li> <li>• <b>the rules regarding the information and evidence submitted in the Research Output are tightened to ensure that electronic links only go to the actual research, open sites (where applicable) and the files are of sufficient quality to be appropriately assessed.</b></li> </ul>	Response %	Response #
Yes	76.9%	10
No	-	-
Possibly	23.1%	3

There was strong support for this proposal.

The SRG can clarify that while electronic submission is recommended it will not be mandatory for the 2018 Quality Evaluation. The EP will be structured to ensure it is clear to the TEO and the panels whether the NROs have been submitted as a web link, an electronic document or need to be requested from the TEO as a hard copy. Based on the feedback from panels in the 2012 Quality Evaluation, the SRG believes that it is important that if a TEO chooses to use a web link, that this link goes to the actual research.

The SRG can also confirm that outputs would only be discounted if they were not eligible. However, as panels are not required to assess all NROs then it is possible that any poor quality documentation would not be used in the assessment process. The TEC would not request replacement copies of poor documentation from TEOs. Panels are able to request copies of documentation where a web link does not work, however this is at their discretion.

***In-principle decision***

Implement the recommendations through the work of the technical sub-group of the SRG.

**J. Any other matters**

The following point was raised as other matters:

*We request that specific and clear descriptions are given for each output type and these descriptions should include:*

- *Details of inclusions*
- *Details of exclusions*

- *Examples of both inclusions and exclusions*
- *A comprehensive outline of evidence requirements for each category*

This work is being undertaken and will be included in the main guidelines.

## Appendix 1 – Guidance on the eligibility of research outputs

### Policy

A research output can be included in the Research Output component of an EP (either as an NRO or as an 'other' research output) when the final version was first made available in the public domain (i.e. published, publicly disseminated, presented, performed or exhibited) during the assessment period (i.e. 1 January 2012 – 31 December 2017).

This means that research outputs can only be eligible in one Quality Evaluation assessment period. Research outputs first publicly available prior to 1 January 2012 or after 31 December 2017 cannot be included for the 2018 Quality Evaluation round.

### Eligibility for inclusion

The basic principle governing the inclusion or exclusion of a research output concerns the date when the final version was first made available in the public domain.

#### *Traditional research output types*

The National Information Standards Organization (NISO) standards<sup>2</sup> will be used to test eligibility of journal articles according to the date on which the first Version of Record was made publicly available by the publisher. These standards will also be applied for other published works wherever possible (books, edited volumes, conference proceedings, on-line peer reviewed commentary etc.) to determine the eligibility date for the first Version of Record.

For these types of research outputs, the first Version of Record will be considered the 'final version' and the date that the first Version of Record appears in the public domain regardless of this being in print or online will be considered the date it is 'first available'.

As a worked example based on these standards, a journal article where the final version was available online ('online first') on 30 January 2012 but had an imprint date of 30 March 2012, the eligibility date would be 30 January 2012.

This also means that if an output is 'pre-published' on or before 31 December 2011 but has an imprint date within the assessment period, it will not be eligible for submission as its will be considered to have been publicly available prior to the assessment period.

Any outputs that have imprint dates that fall outside the assessment period but the final version of the output was publicly available within the assessment period are eligible for submission.

As a worked example based on these standards, a journal article where the final version was available online ('online first') on 30 December 2017 and had an imprint date of 28 February 2018, the date of production would be considered to be 30 December 2017.

#### *Non-traditional research output types*

The SRG has developed the following principles to clarify the eligibility of non-traditional research outputs.

1. Where multiple disseminations of an output occur in different assessment periods then the output can only be counted in the period when it was first publicly disseminated.\*

Based on this second principle, an exhibition which opened locally for the first time on 8 October 2011 would not be eligible for inclusion in the 2018 Quality Evaluation, even if that same exhibition then opened internationally on 1 May 2017, as the date of first public

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<sup>2</sup> 'NISO RP-8-2008, Journal Article Versions (JAV): Recommendations of the NISO/ALPSP JAV Technical Working Group', <http://www.niso.org/publications/rp/RP-8-2008.pdf>

dissemination would be considered to be 8 October 2011 which lies in the previous assessment period.

2. Where an output has been publicly disseminated multiple times within the assessment period, the researcher may choose which dissemination of the output is included. It is expected that the most prestigious, rather than the first, dissemination will be listed.

The reason for this is that a creative output, for example, which is first presented in a local arena, may gain momentum and significance and end up at a major international point of dissemination with a resulting change in impact, status and quality.

As a worked example based on this principle, an exhibition which opened locally for the first time on 30 January 2012 would be eligible for inclusion in the 2018 Quality Evaluation and the date of first public dissemination would be considered to be 30 January 2012. However, if that same exhibition then opened internationally on 1 May 2017 then the staff member could submit the international exhibition as their Research Output, but the priority date would remain as 30 January 2012 based on the first public dissemination.

3. An output that introduces significant new research material or aesthetic refinement (during the assessment period) into an earlier version of the output will be considered as a separate research output.

This principle is consistent with other research outputs types such as subsequent editions of books that include significant new research material (i.e. reprints).

As a worked example based on this principle, an exhibition which opened for the first time on 1 October 2011 and ran until 30 January 2013 in multiple locations would only be eligible if there was significant new research material or aesthetic refinement of the work after 1 January 2012, as the date of first public dissemination would be considered to be 1 October 2011.

A brief description of the new research material or aesthetic refinement undertaken to the output would need to be provided in the Description field for such outputs.

\* Multiple exhibitions or performances, along with repeated reprints and new editions of a book etc. may be evidence of research-related peer esteem, extended reach or contribution outside academia, and can be included within the Research Contribution component.

For the avoidance of doubt, a confidential research output or a commissioned report for an external body must have been completed and first made available to those who commissioned the research within the assessment period.

Note that:

- Staff members can explain any variance in dates for an NRO in the Description field of that NRO. Please note that such an explanation is required only for NROs. It is not required for any of the 'other' research outputs.
- TEOs may be asked to provide evidence of the date of publication for audit purposes.
- Information in an output's digital object identifier should not be considered as evidence of the publication date.