Performance-Based Research Fund Sector Reference Group review:

Process of Evaluating Evidence Portfolios

Contents

Disclaimer:

This consultation paper has been prepared independently for the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) by the Sector Reference Group, an external group, as part of the review of the Performance-Based Research Fund. Although the TEC is facilitating this process, the consultation paper represents the independent views and suggestions of the Sector Reference Group, and does not necessarily represent the views of the TEC.

Performance-Based Research Fund Sector Reference Group Consultation Paper: Process of Evaluating Evidence Portfolios

1. Purpose

This paper has been prepared as part of the consultation process for the 2012 Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) assessment.

This paper:

- considers issues raised by 2006 panels, moderator reports and other recommendations concerning the process of evaluating Evidence Portfolios (EPs)
- considers recommendations and sector responses to earlier Sector Reference Group (SRG) consultation papers
- presents some options for redesign to address these issues, and
- invites feedback from the tertiary sector and other interested parties on these options.

2. Aims and principles of the PBRF

In carrying out its role, the SRG will be guided by the aims and principles of the PBRF. The PBRF is designed to:

- increase the average quality of research
- ensure that research continues to support degree and postgraduate teaching
- ensure that funding is available for postgraduate students and new researchers
- improve the quality of public information on research output
- prevent undue concentration of funding that would undermine research support for all degrees or prevent access to the system by new researchers, and
- underpin the existing research strengths in the tertiary education sector.

The PBRF is governed by the following principles:

- *Comprehensiveness:* the PBRF should appropriately measure the quality of the full range of original investigative activity that occurs within the sector, regardless of its type, form, or place of output.
- *Respect for academic traditions:* the PBRF should operate in a manner that is consistent with academic freedom and institutional autonomy.
- *Consistency:* evaluations of quality made through the PBRF should be consistent, across the different subject areas and in the calibration of quality ratings against international standards of excellence.
- *Continuity:* changes to the PBRF process should only be made where they can bring demonstrable improvements that outweigh the cost of implementing them.

- *Differentiation:* the PBRF should allow stakeholders and the government to differentiate between providers and their units on the basis of their relative quality.
- *Credibility:* the methodology, format and processes employed in the PBRF must be credible to those being assessed.
- *Efficiency:* administrative and compliance costs should be kept to the minimum consistent with a robust and credible process.
- *Transparency:* decisions and decision-making processes must be explained openly, except where there is a need to preserve confidentiality and privacy.
- *Complementarity:* the PBRF should be integrated with new and existing policies and quality assurance systems for degrees and degree providers.
- *Cultural inclusiveness:* the PBRF should reflect the bicultural nature of New Zealand and the special role and status of the Treaty of Waitangi, and should appropriately reflect and include the full diversity of New Zealand's population.

3. Principles of redesign

The PBRF redesign work, ahead of the 2012 Quality Evaluation, will be based on a number of principles and considerations:

- Upholding the aims and principles of the PBRF (outlined above).
- Learning from the first two Quality Evaluations in order to make improvements to the design of the PBRF and the implementation of the 2012 Quality Evaluation.
- Drawing on relevant experience and expertise across the tertiary education sector.
- Exposing proposed changes to rigorous sector and expert scrutiny.
- Achieving as much sector agreement as possible about how the next Quality Evaluation should be conducted.
- Avoiding costly or time-consuming changes unless there are good reasons for believing they will bring significant improvements.

4. Preview of issues

Appendix B of the initial Sector Reference Group consultation paper contains, under the heading 'Process of evaluating EPs', a list of 14 topics for review. In this Consultation paper these review topics have been rationalised and ordered into five broad categories based on key phases of the process by which EPs are assessed in the Quality Evaluation (although some of these topics could arguably have been placed into more than one of these phases). The structure of this paper is as follows:

Quality Evaluation phase:	Review topics:
Tertiary Education Organisations (TEOs) submit EPs	• Dual assessment (self-assessment by TEOs) • Design of EPs • "Impact factors"
EP data checked and assigned to panels	• Selection of panel chairs and members • Number of panel members and number of panels • Auditing of information in EPs
Pre-meeting assessment by panel members	• Training of panel members • Distribution of information to support the assessment process • Assessment timetable
Panels meet to assign Quality Categories	• Nature of the evaluation criteria • Application of the evaluation criteria • Cross-referral of EPs • Management of conflicts of interest
Moderation of assessment results	• Moderation process • Complaints

5. TEOs submit EPs

5.1 Dual assessment (self-assessment by TEOs)

The original quality evaluation process as designed by the PBRF Working Group in 2002 was a two-step process. The first step was an internal review of eligible staff by TEOs, resulting in the TEO assigning a provisional quality category. The second step was the confirmation or reclassification of this provisional quality category by external peer review panels. The expectation was that, as TEOs became more familiar with the PBRF, greater weight would be attached to the TEO's provisional assignment and external peer review panels would "play more of an audit role, rather than directly assessing research outputs".[1]

However, the internal review by TEOs (the first step) was not a part of the 2006 round, for a number of reasons, chiefly:

- the high compliance costs to TEOs of undertaking the internal review
- the ability of panels to draw on the 2003 PBRF Quality Evaluation results
- the possibility that the two distinct processes will return differing results, and
- the need to conduct a comprehensive audit of the internal review step in order to ensure consistency across TEOs, which would likely involve a considerable amount of duplication of the panel process already used in the external peer review. [2]

Instead of an internal review in 2006 there was the requirement, associated with 2006 being a partial round, for TEOs to assess which EPs "will fulfil the requirements for a funded Quality Category" and forward only those EPs to the TEC.[3] EPs judged by TEOs to be R or R(NE) were not to be advanced. This required TEOs to make judgements about the quality of EPs submitted by their staff. As 2012 will be a full round, this residual form of dual assessment need not be present, and one option would be to remove it (see below).

In 2006 TEOs were responsible for establishing PBRF-eligible staff and determining who among this group were 'new and emerging' researchers, but these procedures did not require the assessment of quality of output.

The previous rounds have seen a lessening of the requirement on TEOs to assess the quality of EPs submitted by their own staff (although some TEOs chose to conduct their own self-assessment).

[1] Investing in Excellence: ***The Report of the Performance-Based Research Fund Working Group***, December 2002, pp.14-15
[2] WEB Research, ***Phase 1 Evaluation of the implementation of the PBRF and the conduct of the 2003 Quality Evaluation***, July 2004, p. 123. Tertiary Education Commission, Performance-Based Research Fund 2006 Quality Evaluation: Report of the Sector Reference Group, November 2004, p. 11. Boston, Jonathan, The Future of the Performance-Based Research Fund: Issues and Options, May 2004, p. 6.
[3] Tertiary Education Commission , ***Performance-Based Research Fund Guidelines 2006***, July 2005, pp. 28, 39.

Dual assessment options

The following table summarises four options in this area (options A-D).

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
A. Return to the Dual assessment model as detailed by the PBRF Working Group in Investing in Excellence (2002)	• Provides preliminary feedback to staff • Encourages engagement of TEOs • External assessment can provide confirmation of internal assessment	• Costly for TEOs • An auditing and moderation mechanism would be required to ensure consistency across TEOs in these internal assessments • TEOs do not have access to cross-TEO EPs for comparison
B. As in 2006 (but without it being a partial round), require TEOs to determine 'new and emerging' researchers then decide which EPs to submit, and not advance those judged by TEOs as clearly R or R(NE) **(SRG recommended option)**	• Less pressure on review panels than Option C • Provides continuity with what was done in 2006 and 2003, assisting in planning and managing compliance costs	• Costly for TEOs (although less so than option A) • Possibility of EPs that panels may have judged higher than R or R(NE) not being advanced by TEOs
C. Require TEOs to do no more than establish PBRF-eligible staff and 'new and emerging' researchers, submitting all EPs for assessment	• Less costly option for TEOs than Options A or B • Each EP is only assessed once	• Increased pressure on review panels as they will be assessing all EPs, even those likely to be judged R or R(NE) • The Quality Evaluation may take longer as many more EPs will need to be administered • Increased cost for the TEC in administering more EPs
D. Soon after the 2012 staff census, a set of randomly selected EPs to be submitted. This selection will be accomplished by determining a stratified random sample from all eligible PBRF academics at C or above. TEOs can choose not to submit EPs they judge as R or R(NE). (Details such as the percentage of EPs submitted and the strata will need to be decided on if this option is preferred.)	• Far less compliance costs for academics • Less prospect of misuse of individuals' information • More time for panels to consider submitted EPs	• Less accuracy • Potential for gaming • Will not reduce work for TEOs • Individuals selected may face pressure

SRG Request

The SRG invites comment from the sector on each of the above options.

5.2 Design of EPs

In the 2006 Quality Assessment EPs consisted of three components; the Research Output (RO) component, the Peer Esteem (PE) component, and the Contribution to the Research Environment (CRE) component. Up to four Research Outputs were selected by the researcher to become Nominated Research Outputs (NROs). Up to 30 other Research Outputs (down from 50 in 2003) could be included in an EP. Individual researchers were responsible for completing the three components of their EP themselves, although their TEO may assist in managing this. EPs were submitted by TEOs to the TEC.[4]

Adams noted that some researchers found completing an EP to be a burden, in particular new and emerging researchers, and "staff from smaller TEOs and staff from disciplines newly required to develop a research base".[5] This suggests, in part, that difficulties in completing an EP may be due not to the design of EPs but to the degree of familiarity researchers had with cataloguing and summarising their research activity, particularly the PE and CRE components.

The Subject panels in the 2006 Quality Evaluation made a number of recommendations for modifications to the design of EPs and for clarifications to the 2012 Guidelines.[6] Many of these suggested changes seem to be with the purpose of enhancing the clarity and ease of use of the current assessment process rather than fundamentally changing it.

Evidence Portfolio design options

The following table summarises eight options in this area (options E-L).

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
E. Add another component to EPs to allow appropriate assessment of researchers in transition either into or out of industry or professions	• Such researchers would benefit from additional recognition	• Difficulties with getting eligibility of "in transition" correct and fair • Unclear how this would deal with individuals permanently employed by both a TEO and an industry/ profession • May conflict with 'new and emerging' researcher provisions
F. Every EP should retain opportunity for commentary about the NROs - each panel to make specific recommendations on what needs to be included in these commentaries (suggestions on the max length of these commentaries is welcomed)	• Panel would be better informed when making assessments • Allows researchers to highlight aspects of the quality and impact of their NROs	• Additional information burden on those preparing EPs • Panels need to provide recommendations on what to include in commentaries

[4] Tertiary Education Commission, *Performance-Based Research Fund Guidelines 2006*, July 2005.
[5] Adams, Jonathan, *Strategic Review of the Performance-Based Research Fund: The Assessment Process, June 2008*, p. 64.
[6] Tertiary Education Commission, *Performance-Based Research Fund 2012 Quality Evaluation: Consultation Paper 1, March 2008*, pp. 17-22.

G. An abstract of a conference contribution may not be submitted as an NRO (TEOs submit the full text rather than abstract of any conference paper cited as an NRO)	• Enables a more thorough evaluation	• Increased responsibility for TEOs
H. TEOs are responsible for ensuring that all Uniform Resource Locator (URL) addresses to NROs are specific and functional	• Assists with accessibility of material	• Increased responsibility for TEOs
I. NROs to be listed in order of the researcher's perception of their quality	• Assists panel in understanding relative quality of articles	• Additional information burden on those preparing EPs • Additional requirement on software to ensure it retains this order
J. Increase the number of NROs that may be selected by a researcher	• Panel would be better informed when making assessments	• Increased workload for those preparing EPs, for panels, and for the TEC • Increased cost for the TEC
K. Decrease the number of ROs from 30 to 20	• Greater emphasis on quality rather than quantity of outputs • Decreased information burden on those preparing EPs	• Panels would have less information on which to base an assessment of "platform of research"
L. Leave the design of EPs unchanged **(SRG recommended option)**	• The process of completing EPs will be familiar to those who have participated before	• Ignores the above recommendations of the 2006 Subject panels • Does not address any problems that arose in 2006 due to design of EPs

SRG Request

The SRG invites comment from the sector on each of the above options.

5.3 "Impact factors"

A further design issue is the consideration of whether specific information on journal or individual academic "impact factors" (eg. h-index for scientific research) should be included as a part of EPs.

"Impact factors" options

The following table summarises three options in this area (options M-O).

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
M. No panels are to use "impact factors"	• Decreased information burden on those preparing EPs	• Panels would be deprived of a source of information
N. All panels are to use "impact factors" according to an agreed procedure	• Procedure may need to be that the influence of these factors on EP assessment would be explicitly the same across all panels	• Increased information burden on those preparing EPs • An inflexible approach as these factors may not be appropriate for all panels • The word limit in EPs may need to be increased to accommodate this • There may be difficulties determining which citations are most relevant
O. The Panel Specific Guidelines for each panel will indicate whether EPs submitted to that panel could include "impact factors" in the commentary on each NRO. **(SRG recommended option)**	• These factors may be appropriate for some panels but not for others.	• Increased information burden on those preparing EPs for some panels • The word allocation in EPs may need to be increased to accommodate this • There may be difficulties determining which citations are most relevant

It is critical to note that, no matter which of the above options are preferred, the individual researcher makes the decision as to whether or not to include "impact factors" in their own EP. If "impact factors" are included as part of an EP, this is only part of the information that can be used by a panel to judge the quality of an NRO, and these factors will not by themselves be sufficient to allow the quality of an NRO to be judged.

SRG Request

The SRG invites comment from the sector on each of the above options.

6. Checking of EPs and assignment to panels

6.1 Selection of moderators, panel chairs and members

For the 2006 Quality Evaluation the Chief Moderator was appointed by the TEC Board of Commissioners following consultation with the previous Chief Moderator. Then, after following the process described below, panel chairs and the other Moderators were appointed by the TEC Board of Commissioners. The panel chairs then made recommendations on panel members and other appointments such as specialist advisors to the PBRF Steering Group (the internal TEC group that oversees the PBRF).

In considering who should be appointed to replace the 2003 panel chairs for the 2006 Quality Assessment, the following considerations were taken into account:

- The desirability of drawing upon existing New Zealand-based panel members wherever possible.
- The need to appoint people of high academic standing and leadership/managerial competence, especially those with previous experience in chairing assessment panels.
- The desirability of avoiding the appointment of people who would face numerous conflicts of interest.
- The desirability of appointing people in different subject areas to the previous chairs, if feasible.
- The desirability of ensuring an appropriate balance across panels in terms of institutional affiliation, gender and ethnicity.

The process for selecting panel chairs in 2006 was as follows:

- Discussions were held with the previous Moderator and the incoming Chief Moderator regarding suitable candidates.
- Where possible and prudent, outgoing chairs and other panel members were consulted.
- Where appropriate, outside experts were consulted.
- Former TEC staff/consultants who had served as panel secretaries were consulted.
- Those who seemed most appropriate in the light of the available evidence were approached first, and if they declined, their advice was sought on who should be approached[7].

A possible chair and panel selection timetable for 2012 that followed the timeframes of the 2006 assessment would run as follows:

Event	Date
Nominations for panel members open	Thursday, 27 January 2011
Panel Chairs appointed by the TEC Board of Commissioners	Monday, 7 February 2011
Nominations for panel members close	Wednesday, 2 March 2011

Please note the above table gives indicative dates only for the purpose of eliciting comment. The actual dates for these events have not yet been decided.

[7] Tertiary Education Commission, May 2005 ***Memo to PBRF Steering Group***, unpublished.

For the 2006 quality assessment over 150 nominations for panel membership were received. Panel members from 2003 were asked if they were available for reappointment in 2006 and where there were gaps in expertise, the TEC approached suitable individuals.

Each panel chair was asked to:

- assess the nominees against the assessment criteria, with regard to the panel composition to identify their preferred candidates for panel membership
- identify their preferred candidate(s) for the role of deputy chair
- identify those individuals who would be suitable for appointment but could be recommended and/or suitable for appointment as specialist advisors
- identify those individuals who would not be suitable for appointment, and
- indicate whether any additional candidates, either for the panel or as specialist advisors, were required.

Assessment criteria

Each panel member was to:

- have significant and broad research experience
- have sufficient knowledge and expertise across one or more of the disciplines that the panel is responsible for
- have the confidence of their peers
- have substantial experience in a peer review or research evaluation role
- have previous successful committee/panel experience
- have sufficient time to devote to the activities of the panel
- have knowledge of the special role of the Treaty of Waitangi.

In addition, Chairs were also to consider the following 12 points in making their assessments:

- the desirability of average representation per panel from overseas of around 25 percent,
- the need to avoid, if possible, selecting individuals who will face numerous conflicts of interest
- the need for at least two panel members in each reported subject area
- the need for an appropriate balance, where relevant, of applied/practice-based researchers and other researchers
- the need to consider the best panel for potential members who are undertaking research that covers two or more discipline fields
- the need to consider which of those not selected would be suitable to serve as specialist advisors
- the need to identify a Deputy Chair (preferably someone in a different TEO and disciplinary or sub-disciplinary area to that of the chair)
- the need to have regard to the gaps and other issues identified in panel reports

- the need to have regard to any gaps resulting from the non-availability of some of those who served in the previous Quality Evaluation
- the opportunity to slightly increase or decrease the size of panels to ensure best possible coverage and range of expertise
- the desirability of considering a few younger high-fliers who might be available to serve in subsequent rounds
- any additional panel-specific issues identified as part of the Panel Composition Analysis [8].

Each Chair passed their advice to a selection group chaired by the Principal Moderator and made up of the other two Moderators and members of the Sector Reference Group who had not themselves been nominated.

The selection group then made its recommendations for panel membership and passed these on to the PBRF Steering Group. This Group then ratified panel membership and other appointments.

Panel selection options

The following table summarises two options in this area (options P & Q).

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
P. Keep the panel selection process the same as it was in 2006	• This process has already worked once • The panel selection guidelines and criteria are clear and comprehensive	• The 2006 process relied to some extent on utilising people from the previous round; in 2012 it may be more difficult to do this (six years will have passed rather than three) • Appointing Panel Chairs and members early in 2011 makes them unable to participate in TEO PBRF activities (due to conflict of interest concerns) for almost two years
Q. Develop revised methodology for selection of panel chairs and panels that involves recommendations from independent experts	• Such a process would be more impartial and transparent • Panel composition could ensure a stronger emphasis on ability to assess applied and practice-based research	• Depending on who the independent experts are, this process may not capture necessary expertise • This would add another layer of complexity to the selection of panel chairs and panels • Increased time and cost

SRG Request

The SRG invites comment from the sector on each of the above options, and if Option Q is preferred, welcomes advice on a new methodology.

[8] Tertiary Education Commission, *Performance-Based Research Fund 2006 Quality Evaluation: PBRF Selection Process for Panel Members*, March 2005.

6.2 Number of panel members and number of panels

Both the 2003 and the 2006 Quality Evaluations had twelve peer review panels. The two tables below give, for each of the Quality Evaluations, the membership numbers of each panel (including Chairs and Deputy Chairs), the number of EPs assessed by each panel, and the average number of EPs per panel member. (Each panel decided for itself the proportion of NROs that it would sample during assessment).

2003 Panel	Number of members	Number of EPs assessed	Ave. EP/ Member
Māori Knowledge and Development	7	79	11
Health	14	346	25
Engineering Technology and Architecture	14	420	30
Physical Sciences	13	413	32
Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Studies	19	629	33
Mathematical and Information Sciences and Technology	14	457	33
Humanities and Law	20	708	35
Biological Sciences	18	664	37
Business and Economics	16	671	42
Creative and Performing Arts	7	311	44
Medicine and Public Health	13	585	45
Education	10	493	49

2006 Panel **(Note: 2006 was a partial round)**	Number of members	Number of EPs assessed	Ave. EP/ Member
Māori Knowledge and Development	8	89	11
Engineering Technology and Architecture	16	307	19
Physical Sciences	12	240	20
Health	15	348	23
Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Studies	20	469	23
Humanities and Law	21	512	24
Mathematical and Information Sciences and Technology	14	342	24
Biological Sciences	15	434	29
Medicine and Public Health	13	434	33
Business and Economics	17	585	34
Education	11	419	38
Creative and Performing Arts	7	353	50

In 2003 the overall average number of EPs per panel member was 35, in 2006 the number was 27.

The current SRG has the view that the optimum number of EPs per panel member seems to be 20-40 EPs per member. According to this view, in 2006 the Creative and Performing Arts Panel, and in 2003 the Business and Economics, the Creative and Performing Arts, the Medicine and Public Health, and the Education Panels may have benefited from additional members.

Panel member options

The following table summarises two options in this area (Options R & S).

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
R. Keep the number of panel members about the same as in 2006	• Consistency and continuity with 2006 round	• Panels of this size may not always have the necessary expertise
S. Increase the number of panel members for some panels, aiming for an average of 20-40 EPs per panel member (based on estimated EP numbers for 2012)	• Each panel would have greater coverage of its subject area	• Increased cost to the TEC • Greater potential for variability in assessment

SRG Request

The SRG invites comment from the sector on each of the above options.

Number of panels

The SRG seeks advice from the sector on whether the number of peer review panels should be increased and if so, what new panels should be added. Currently consideration is being given to the addition of the following two panels:

- Professional and Applied Research panel
- Pacific Knowledge and Development panel.

SRG Request

The SRG invites comment from the sector on the possible addition of the above two peer review panels and also any arguments for the possible addition of any other peer review panels.

6.3 Auditing of information in EPs

For the 2006 Quality Assessment an audit was conducted of Research Outputs provided by TEOs and also eligibility of staff. The TEC contracted KPMG to develop the PBRF audit methodology. This was released to the sector for consultation in December 2005. The audit consisted of five phases. These were:

- Phase 1: Process assurance
- Phase 2: Data evaluation
- Phase 3: Preliminary assessment
- Phase 4: Follow-up audit site visits
- Phase 5: Final assessment.

A detailed explanation of each of the five phases of the audit is given in Appendix D of *Evaluating Research Excellence: The 2006 Assessment.*[9]

SRG Recommendation

The SRG invites comment from the sector on the following recommendations:

- *The SRG recommends that Research Outputs not be audited until at least two weeks after the end date for submission of Research Outputs to the TEC.*
- *The SRG recommends that more time be allowed to complete the audit process prior to panel assessment.*

[9] This publication can be downloaded at: http://www.tec.govt.nz/upload/downloads/pbrf-full-report-2006.pdf

7. Pre-meeting assessment by panel members

7.1 Training of panel members

For the 2006 Quality Evaluation panel members attended a one-day workshop and received a Training Guide and Deskfile[10] to refer to while performing their duties. Training for the 2012 Quality Evaluation will be modified in response to any changes resulting from the redesign of the 2012 Quality Evaluation. Since 2006 there has been an increased availability of technology such as Webinars and WebEx that could be used to increase training opportunities while restraining costs.

Training for panel members for the 2012 Quality Evaluation will include:

- more detailed instruction about the assessment of special circumstances
- more detailed instruction about conflicts of interest, in particular which conflicts of interest must be declared
- more attention to the complete training of overseas panel members
- more detailed instruction on the assessment of applied and practice-based research.

7.2 Distribution of information to support the assessment process

Following the 2006 Quality Evaluation there was concern about the relative lack of electronic access to necessary material, particularly NROs. Panel members also indicated a more general need to improve distribution of appropriate information prior to panel meetings.[11]

Options for the TEC providing support to panel members in electronically accessing NROs are given in the SRG Consultation paper: Managing NROs.[12]

7.3. Indicative assessment timetable

An assessment timetable for 2012 following the timeframes of the 2006 assessment would run as follows:

Event	Date
PBRF Census date	Thursday, 14 June 2012
EPs submitted by TEOs to the TEC	Friday, 20 July 2012
EPs and supporting documents sent to Panel Members	Monday, 27 August 2012
Recommended deadline for requests for additional specialist advice, cross referrals and requests for NROs	Friday, 21 September 2012
Final date for additional specialist advice to be returned to TEC	Thursday, 18 October 2012
Pre-meeting assessment of EPs ends and preliminary scores provided to the TEC by panel members	Friday, 2 November 2012
Panels meet to assess EPs and assign Final Quality Categories (three days per meeting)	From Monday, 26 November 2012 to Friday, 7 December 2012

Please note the above table gives **indicative dates only** for the purpose of eliciting comment. The actual dates for these events have not yet been decided.

SRG Request

The SRG invites comment from the sector on the above indicative assessment timetable.

[10] "Deskfile" refers to the information provided to panel members to assist them in evaluating EPs. This term has been chosen to distinguish this information from the various types of Guidelines associated with the PBRF.
[11] Tertiary Education Commission, *Performance-Based Research Fund 2012 Quality Evaluation: Consultation Paper 1*, March 2008, pp. 26-27.
[12] This consultation paper was available for sector comment between 2 July 2009 and 14 August 2009. A copy can be downloaded at: http://www.tec.govt.nz/upload/downloads/PBRF-managing-nro.pdf

8. Panels meet to assign Quality Categories

8.1 Nature of the evaluation criteria

Descriptors and tie-points

For the 2006 Quality Evaluation, panel members assessed the three components (Research Output, Peer Esteem, and Contribution to the Research Environment) of each EP they examined. Each of the three components was scored on a scale of 0-7 according to the descriptors and tie-points for that component.

The general descriptors and tie-points for each component (as given in Guidelines 2006, pp. 165-168) are given below.

NOTE: DURING THE COURSE OF THE 2006 EVALUATION THE DESCRIPTORS AND TIE-POINTS BECAME EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO THE SUBJECT PANELS AND WERE REFERRED TO VERY FREQUENTLY.

EVEN IF YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE TEXT BELOW, PLEASE GIVE IT CAREFUL CONSIDERATION WHILE THINKING ABOUT WHETHER AND HOW IT COULD BE IMPROVED.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Component</th><th>Research Output (RO)</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Descriptor</td><td>This component is concerned with the production of quality research outputs. As part of the evidence in this component, staff members will present up to four NROs (ie their best research outputs). All NROs presented in the EP must be peer-reviewable (ie they can be reviewed by the panel or assessor if required). Research outputs are any form of assessable output embodying the findings of research and generated out of research activities, and include:
• printed academic work
• published and unpublished work
• work published in non-print media
• other forms of outputs such as patents, materials, products, performances, and exhibits.

All outputs submitted in the RO component must meet the PBRF Definition of Research. They therefore exclude activities related to professional practice, scientific and technical information services and artistic work that do not embody the results of investigation.

The EP may include research primarily concerned with methodological, theoretical and analytic issues (basic or strategic research), and/or applied research primarily directed to and impacting on practices, technologies or policies.

The absence of peer review will not of itself be taken to imply low quality.

Evidence of research outputs having been reviewed through peers is one measure of quality. However, other quality-assurance processes, including referees and commissioning processes (but not limited to these examples) shall also be given regard.

There is potential for overlap between the RO and PE components. Assessors need to ensure that they adequately differentiate between pre-publication/production review as it relates to the quality-assurance process for the RO component and post-publication/production review that may be presented as part of the PE component.

Most of the assessment time should be spent on the RO component.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Scores</td><td>7</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>6</td><td>The EP would be expected to demonstrate leadership and accomplishment in research exemplified by a platform of world-class research that includes highly original work which ranks with the best of its kind.

In doing so, the EP would likely be characterised by, for example, outputs that represent intellectual or creative advances, or contributions to the formation of new paradigms, or generation of novel conceptual or theoretical analysis and/or theories or important new findings with wider implications. In doing so it could indicate research that is exemplary in its field and/or at the leading edge and/or highly innovative. It would be expected to demonstrate intellectual rigour, imaginative insight or methodological skill or to form a primary point of reference to be disseminated widely. A significant proportion of research outputs should be presented through the most appropriate and best channels. The research outputs would be likely to result in substantial impact or uptake. Such impacts could also include: product development, uptake and dissemination; or significant changes in professional, policy, organisational, artistic, or research practices.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>5</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>4</td><td>The EP demonstrates a platform of significant research output that has generated substantial new ideas, interpretations or critical findings and that makes a valuable contribution to existing paradigms and practices. The research outputs generate new information or ideas and are well researched and technically sound. The EP typically includes research outputs that are presented in reputable channels considered as being at least at a middle level of excellence. The research is likely to contribute to further research activities and to have demonstrable impacts reflected in developments that may include: product development, uptake and dissemination; or changes in professional, organisational, policy, artistic, or research practices.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>3</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>2</td><td>The EP demonstrates a platform of research activity (or developing research activity) and output that is based on a sound/justifiable methodology, and that makes a contribution to research within the discipline and/or to applied knowledge. This could be demonstrated by the production of research outputs that have been subject to quality-assurance processes.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>Minimal evidence of research outputs. The research outputs are assessed as having limited or no significance/impact, as contributing little or no additional understanding or insight in the discipline/field, and/or as lacking in the appropriate application of theory and/or methods.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>0</td><td>No evidence of research outputs.</td></tr>
</table>

Component		Peer Esteem (PE)
Descriptor		This component is concerned with recognition of the staff member's research by peers. Indicators of peer esteem include: • Research-related fellowships, prizes, awards, invitations to share research knowledge at academic and end-user conferences and events. • The ability to attract graduate students or to sponsor students into higher-level research qualifications, positions or opportunities because of the staff member's research reputation. • Research-related citations and favourable review. In considering the former, it must be noted that the quantum of citations may be a poor proxy for esteem. Some research work may be cited frequently because it is considered to be an example of poor research. Consequently emphasis should be placed on evidence of positive review and citation. • Participation in editorial boards.
Scores	7	
	6	The EP would be expected to demonstrate that the staff member has attracted world-class recognition through their research. This could be reflected by some or all of the following: the receipt of prestigious prizes, or fellowships of leading learned societies/academies or prestigious institutions, or special status with professional or academic societies, or editorship, membership of editorial panels or refereeing of top-ranked journals, or awards for research as well as invited attendance, or examination of PhDs and presentation at prestigious academic and industry conferences/events. An ability to attract overseas/top research students and scholars as well as to mentor their own students into postdoctoral and other fellowships, scholarships and positions in centres of research excellence could be demonstrated in the EP. A consistent record of favourable citations of research should combine with strong evidence of positive research reviews, contribution to knowledge in the discipline (including overseas where relevant), and movement into creative practice.
	5	
	4	The EP shows that the staff member, through their research, is recognised within New Zealand or elsewhere and is esteemed beyond their own institution. The EP demonstrates peer esteem by providing evidence of some or all of the following: the receipt of prizes, membership of a professional society or similar with restricted or elected membership or honours or special status with professional or academic societies, editorship or membership(s) of editorial panels of reputable journals within New Zealand or elsewhere, research fellowships of esteemed institutions, reviewing of journal submissions and book proposals, PhD examination or invitations for keynote addresses for conferences/events that are at a middle level of excellence. A consistent record of research citation and positive reviews of specific research outputs and/or overall contribution to research knowledge in a discipline or substantive area of knowledge or practice can be expected. The EP could demonstrate graduate students moving into research scholarships or postdoctoral fellowships or junior lectureships in departments with good research ratings.
	3	
	2	The EP demonstrates a developing recognition among peers of the staff member's research contribution and developing rigour in the application of research techniques. This may be evidenced through attracting awards and invitations to present research to informed audiences, within and possibly beyond the applicant's immediate institution, as well as positive reviews and citations, or being asked to referee research outputs. Where the staff member has an involvement primarily in commissioned research outputs, reference to letters of commendation or other evidence of esteem by commissioning agents could be expected.
	1	Minimal evidence of peer esteem generated through research activities.
	0	No evidence of peer esteem generated through research activities.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Component</th><th>Contribution to the Research Environment (CRE)</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Descriptor</td><td>This is concerned with the contribution to the development of research students, to new and emerging researchers and to a vital, high-quality research environment.

This component has a number of aspects, including:

• Research and disciplinary leadership – including membership of research teams, and contributions to disciplinary development and debate and public understanding of the discipline.
• Contribution through students and emerging researchers – supporting and mentoring students to achieve postgraduate qualifications and to develop as researchers.
• Contribution to institutional vitality – supporting the development of research both within and across institutions (eg hosting visiting researchers). Attracting research funding may be an important contribution to institutional vitality, but the amount of research income in itself will not be taken into account.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Scores</td><td>7</td><td rowspan="2">The EP would be expected to demonstrate a contribution to New Zealand and/or international research environments (for example, through extensive research networks and/or collaborations) in addition to a strong contribution to the research environment in their organisation(s). The EP may show a history of attracting renowned scholars to the TEO and/or New Zealand. Evidence of research and disciplinary leadership may include some or all of the following: membership(s) of renowned collaborative research teams; membership(s) of research selection panels in New Zealand and elsewhere; research leadership at the highest levels (eg leading/participating in major research consortia including researchers outside of New Zealand); organising and hosting world-class conferences; the development of research infrastructure, or significant contributions to research-focused conferences or attracting funding. The EP is likely to show a strong and consistent history of successful supervision of students, particularly at PhD level, and could provide evidence of supporting research students to access and produce research outputs that are quality-assured (possibly in combination with academic staff). The EP could demonstrate contributions to developing new research capacity that go beyond student supervision, including among Māori researchers and Pacific researchers. Other contributions to debate in the discipline, both in New Zealand and beyond, and/or public understanding of developments in or implications for the discipline may be expected.</td></tr>
<tr><td>6</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td rowspan="2">The EP demonstrates research and disciplinary leadership within the broader discipline in addition to contributing to the individual's own TEO research environment. Research and disciplinary leadership may include some or all of the following: collaborative research across disciplinary boundaries or across organisations and/or membership(s) of research selection panels or leading research consortia within New Zealand; and/or show evidence of attracting researchers and scholars to the TEO, and/or research funding; and/or organising and hosting conferences. The EP could show supervision of research activities of students and supporting them to produce research outputs, possibly in conjunction with academic staff. The EP could show a contribution to developing new researchers, including Māori researchers and Pacific researchers, or generating research opportunities (by attracting external funding as a research programme or project leader). Other contributions to debate in the discipline and/or public understanding of developments/implications in the discipline may be expected.</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4"></td><td>3</td><td rowspan="2">The EP is likely to show contributions to the research environment primarily within the TEO or locality. Research and disciplinary leadership is likely to be reflected in participating in committees of organisational bodies or discipline-related bodies dealing with research matters. The EP could show contributions within the TEO, such as hosting of visiting researchers, organisation/hosting of conferences/seminars, and/or assisting in attracting research money, or as a named researcher in externally funded research programmes or projects. Other contributions to the discipline may be demonstrated such as successful supervision of masters and PhD students, including Māori students and Pacific students.</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>Minimal evidence of contribution to research environment.</td></tr>
<tr><td>0</td><td>No evidence of contribution to research environment.</td></tr>
</table>

In addition to these, individual panels could, if necessary and as part of their Panel Specific Guidelines, provide descriptors and tie-points appropriate to their discipline.

SRG Request

The Sector Reference Group invites both general comment on the descriptors and tie-points as well as detailed comment on any recommended alterations to wording.

Quality categories

Each researcher was assigned a quality category by panels following the process described below in section 8.2.

The Descriptors for the quality categories were as follows:

- Quality Category "A": For an EP to be assigned an "A" it would normally be expected that the staff member has, during the assessment period in question, produced research outputs of a world-class standard, established a high level of peer recognition and esteem within the relevant subject area of their research, and made a significant contribution to the New Zealand and/or international research environments.
- Quality Category "B": For an EP to be assigned a "B" it would normally be expected that the staff member has, during the assessment period in question, produced research outputs of a high quality, acquired recognition by peers for their research at least at a national level, and made a contribution to the research environment beyond their institution and/or a significant contribution within their institution.
- Quality Category "C": For an EP to be assigned a "C" it would normally be expected that the staff member has, during the assessment period in question, produced a reasonable quantity of quality-assured research outputs, acquired some peer recognition for their research, and made a contribution to the research environment within their institution. This Quality Category is available for the EPs of all PBRF-eligible staff members except new and emerging researchers.
- Quality Category "C(NE)": For an EP to be assigned a "C(NE)" a new or emerging researcher would normally be expected, during the assessment period in question, to have produced a reasonable platform of research, as evidenced by having: either a) completed their doctorate or equivalent qualification and produced at least two quality-assured research outputs or b) produced research outputs equivalent to a doctorate and at least two quality-assured research outputs. This Quality Category is available for the EPs of new and emerging researchers only.
- Quality Category "R": An EP will be assigned an "R" when it does not demonstrate the quality standard required for a "C" Quality Category or higher. This Quality Category is available for the EPs of all PBRF-eligible staff members except new and emerging researchers.
- Quality Category "R(NE)": an EP will be assigned an "R(NE)" when it does not demonstrate the quality standard required for a "C(NE)" Quality Category or higher. This Quality Category is available for the EPs of new and emerging researchers only.[13]

[13] Tertiary Education Commission, *Performance-Based Research Fund Guidelines 2006*, Wellington, 2005, pp. 149-150.

(Please note that options concerning new and emerging researchers have been advanced in the Sector Reference Group consultation paper: New and Emerging Researchers[14].)

SRG Request

The Sector Reference Group invites both general comment on the Quality Categories as well as detailed comment on any recommended alterations to wording.

8.2 Application of the evaluation criteria

In the 2006 Quality Assessment, the panel determined a Final Quality Category for each EP by pursuing a process with the following steps:

Prior to Panel meeting

- Preparatory scores for each of the three components.
  - NROs are sought (if requested), read, and each of the two Panel members assign scores for RO, PE & CRE, firstly without taking into account special circumstances and secondly taking into account special circumstances. (This information was analysed and fed back to the moderation panel to enable greater consistency in the application of special circumstances.)
- Cross-referral or Specialist advisor scores for each of the three components (where appropriate).
  - See section 8.3 below.
- Preliminary scores for each of the three components.
  - Based on a calibration of the preparatory and cross-referral scores, taking into account special circumstances.
- Indicative Quality Categories based on the preceding sets of scores.
  - Derived by the TEC's decision support system.

At the Panel meeting

- Calibrated panel scores for each of the three components based on the calibration of the preceding sets of scores.
  - Determined by discussion and agreement at full panel meetings.
- Holistic Quality Categories based on a holistic judgement of each EP, leading to Final Quality Category.
  - Formed by the panel taking all relevant factors into consideration, including:
    - + Revisiting special circumstances to adjudge application to the scores and QCs
    - + Provide reasons for any major changes from 2006 (where available)

SRG Request

From those who favour change to the evaluation procedure the Sector Reference Group invites both overall comments and detailed suggestions about possible alterations to the evaluation procedure.

[14] This consultation paper was available for sector comment between 14 November 2008 and 30 January 2009. A copy can be downloaded at: http://www.tec.govt.nz/upload/downloads/pbrf-new-and-emrging-researchers.pdf

8.3. Cross-referral of EPs

In the 2006 Quality Assessment, if the panel to which an EP was assigned was not in a position to fully assess the EP, the EP could be cross-referred to another panel. This happened at the request of either the chair or a member of the panel to which the EP was originally assigned. An individual researcher was also able to request that another panel participated in the assessment of their EP, but the final decision on such requests was made by the panel chair.[15] If an appropriate panel for cross-referral could not be found the panel chair was able to decide that a specialist advisor should be sought. Only the chair of the panel responsible for the EP was able to decide whether a specialist adviser was necessary.[16] In the 2006 Quality Evaluation 22 percent of all submitted EPs were cross-referred.[17]

In 2003 and 2006, all EPs that were referred by the Moderator and/or panel chair to a different panel than that recommended by the TEO should automatically have been cross-referred to the panel recommended by the TEO.

Cross-referral information was also used by the Moderation Panel to ensure consistency across panels.

Cross-referral options

The following table summarises five options in this area (options T - X).

OptioN	Advantages	Disadvantages
T. Retain the cross-referral process as it occurred in 2006	• This procedure would be familiar to panel members	• There may be possible improvements that have been missed
U. Remove the ability of individual researchers to request that their EP be cross-referred (Note that in any case the panel chair makes the decision whether or not to refer an EP either to another panel or a specialist advisor.)	• Would simplify the evaluation process • Would be clear that decisions on cross-referral are made by the panel chair	• May lead to dissatisfaction if an individual believes their EP should be cross-referred
V. Require the consent of individual researchers for their EP to be cross-referred	• May lead to increased satisfaction with the evaluation process	• Will certainly make the evaluation process more lengthy and complex • The original panel may not have the expertise to evaluate the EP, but the researcher may refuse consent for cross-referral • Would increase administrative burden
W. Cross-referral panels to provide the rationale for their grades as well as their scores to the original panel	• Will allow the original panel to understand why if grades differ	• May make the evaluation process more lengthy and complex
X. Remove the cross-referral process entirely	• Will simplify the evaluation process considerably	• Risks dealing inappropriately with some EPs

[15] Tertiary Education Commission, ***Performance-Based Research Fund Guidelines 2006***, Wellington, 2005, p. 154.
[16] Tertiary Education Commission, ***Performance-Based Research Fund Guidelines 2006***, Wellington, 2005, p. 155.
[17] Tertiary Education Commission, ***Evaluating Research Excellence: The 2006 Assessment***, Wellington, 2007, p. 286.

SRG Request

The SRG invites comment from the sector on each of the above options.

8.4. Management of conflicts of interest

For the 2006 Quality Assessment, any panel member, panel chair, specialist advisor or TEC staff member was required to declare any possible conflict of interest they might have had. All potential conflicts of interest were recorded in an Interests Register that was updated at the start of every panel meeting. EPs were allocated by secretariat staff and approved by panel chairs in a manner that minimised any potential conflict of interest. Panel members were also given the opportunity to request that EPs be reassigned if they identified a conflict of interest.

Panel members would be required to leave the room when their own EP was discussed; or they had a personal relationship with the individual whose EP was to be discussed; or there could be personal financial benefit from participating in the discussion. Panel members would be permitted to remain in the room, but required to remain silent, for the discussion of any EPs that involved any other identified conflict of interest. In such cases the panel member with the conflict of interest would be permitted to contribute factual information to the discussion if requested by the panel chair. Panel members were also given the option of leaving the room for the discussion of any EP where they had identified any conflict of interest. Where the panel chair had a conflict of interest with respect to an EP under discussion, the deputy panel chair took over the role of chair for the duration of the discussion.

Conflict of interest options

The following table summarises two options in this area (options Y & Z).

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
Y. EPs have tick-box that researchers can use to indicate whether they believe they have a potential conflict of interest with a panellist	• Will provide more information on potential conflicts of interest	• Increased information burden on those preparing EPs
Z. Independent observers can access a register of those who have used the tick-box above, to check that due process has been followed	• Increased transparency for TEOs	• A process for selection of independent observers will need to be developed • Researchers may not want such observers to have access to this information • Increased cost for the TEC

SRG Request

The SRG invites comment from the sector on each of the above options.

9. Moderation of assessment results

9.1. Moderation process

For the 2006 Quality Evaluation the Moderation Panel consisted of three Moderators and the 12 panel chairs.

The moderation process was designed to promote systematic reflection on the issues of consistency, standards and cross-panel calibration by:

- creating an environment in which the judgements of the peer review panels generated consistency on a cross-panel basis, while at the same time not reducing the panel judgements to a mechanistic application of the assessment criteria
- providing an opportunity for independent review of the standards and processes being applied by panels
- ensuring the consistent application of the special circumstances provisions and the consistent assessment of new and emerging researchers
- establishing mechanisms and processes by which material differences or apparent inconsistencies in standards and processes can be addressed by panels
- attending all panel meetings to ensure consistency of process and to provide appropriate advice
- advising the TEC Board of Commissioners on any issues regarding consistency of standards across panels.

The Moderation Panel also acted as a support mechanism for panel chairs.[18]

SRG Request

The Sector Reference Group invites comments from those who favour change to the moderation process.

9.2. Complaints

There was allowance made for complaints concerning Quality Categories awarded during the 2006 Quality Evaluation, within the following administrative restrictions:

- Although individual researchers could initiate complaints, only TEOs could advance complaints.
- Complaints had to be lodged with the TEC in writing within 15 working days of the TEO having been notified of the Quality Evaluation results.
- A separate complaint was required for each EP.
- Each separate complaint carried a fee of $200 (refundable if complaint upheld).

[18] Tertiary Education Commission, *Performance-Based Research Fund Guidelines 2006*, Wellington, 2005, p. 173.

In addition, there was a restriction on the scope of complaints. Complaints could only be made about possible administrative or procedural errors. Complaints concerning the judgements made by a panel, for instance, were not investigated.[19]

SRG Request

The Sector Reference Group invites comments from those who favour change to the complaints process.

[19] Tertiary Education Commission, *Performance-Based Research Fund Guidelines 2006*, Wellington, 2005, pp. 213-214.

10. Summary of Sector Reference Group requests

The SRG requests comment on the following:

- Options A-D – Dual assessment (self-assessment by TEOs), section 5.1
- Options E-L – Design of EPs, section 5.2
- Options M-O – "Impact factors", section 5.3
- Options P & Q – Selection of panel chairs and members, section 6.1
- Options R & S – Number of panel members and number of panels, section 6.2
- The possible addition of peer review panels, section 6.2
- The two intended recommendations on Auditing of information in EPs, section 6.3
- The indicative assessment timetable, section 7.3
- The descriptors and tie-points, section 8.1
- The Quality Categories, section 8.1
- The evaluation procedure, section 8.2
- Options T-X – Cross-referral of EPs, section 8.3
- Options Y & Z – Management of conflicts of interest, section 8.4
- The moderation process, section 9.1
- The complaints process, section 9.2

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Performance-Based Research Fund

Feedback template for
Process of Evaluating Evidence Portfolios consultation paper

Feedback from:	
Contact details:	

1 Purpose

The purpose of this template is to provide a mechanism for collecting feedback on the matters raised as part of the PBRF Sector Reference Group Process of Evaluating Evidence Portfolios Consultation paper.

The objective is to gain comment from the sector in a way that will speed the collation and review of such feedback.

Respondents are encouraged to answer the questions in this template, but should not feel limited from also providing comments in addition to those requested in the template.

Timeframe for feedback

Completed templates and any other comments should be emailed to **PBRF.2012Redesign@tec.govt.n.z** or can be posted to Dr Damien Cole, Tertiary Education Commission, P O Box 27048, Wellington 6141.

Feedback would be appreciated as soon as possible, but no later than 5pm, Friday, 6 November 2009.

2. Questions - Process of Evaluating Evidence Portfolios (EPs)

Many of the sections of the Process of Evaluating EPs consultation paper contain options. Summaries of the options presented in each section are given below. You may comment on some or all of the sections.

Section 5.1: Dual assessment options

Options presented:

Option A) **Return to the dual assessment model.**

Option B) **TEOs determine 'new and emerging' researchers then decide which EPs to submit, and not advance those judged by TEOs as clearly R or R(NE).**

Option C) **TEOs do no more than establish PBRF-eligible staff and 'new and emerging' researchers, submitting all EPs for assessment**

Option D) **Soon after the 2012 staff census, a set of randomly selected EPs to be submitted.**

Please state your preferred option below.

If you would like to make any additional comments please do so below:

Section 5.2: Design of EPs.

Options presented:

Option E)	Add another component to EPs to allow appropriate assessment of researchers in transition either into or out of industry or professions.
Option F)	Every EP should retain opportunity for commentary about the NROs.
Option G)	An abstract of a conference contribution may not be submitted as an NRO.
Option H)	TEOs are responsible for ensuring that all Uniform Resource Locator (URL) addresses to NROs are specific and functional.
Option I)	NROs to be listed in order of the researcher's perception of their quality.
Option J)	Increase the number of NROs that may be selected by a researcher.
Option K)	Decrease the number of ROs from 30 to 20.
Option L)	Leave the design of EPs unchanged. (SRG recommended option)

Please state your preferred option below.

If you would like to make any additional comments please do so below:

Section 5.3: "Impact factors"

Options presented:

Option M)	**No panels are to use "impact factors".**
Option N)	**All panels are to use "impact factors" according to an agreed procedure.**
Option O)	**The Panel Specific Guidelines for each panel will indicate whether EPs submitted to that panel could include "impact factors" in the commentary on each NRO. (SRG recommended option)**

Please state your preferred option below.

If you would like to make any additional comments please do so below:

Section 6.1: Panel selection options

Options presented:

Option P) Keep the panel selection process the same as it was in 2006.

Option Q) Develop revised methodology for selection of panel chairs and panels that involves recommendations from independent experts.

Please state your preferred option below.

If you would like to make any additional comments please do so below:

Section 6.2: Panel member options

Options presented:

Option R)	**Keep the number of panel members about the same as in 2006.**
Option S)	**Increase the number of panel members for some panels, aiming for an average of 20-40 EPs per panel member.**

Please state your preferred option below.

If you would like to make any additional comments please do so below:

Section 6.2: Number of panels

If you would like to comment on the possible addition of peer review panels please do so below.

Section 6.3: Auditing of information in EPs

If you would like to comment on the Sector Reference Group recommendations on auditing please do so below.

Section 7.3: Indicative assessment timetable

If you would like to comment on the indicative assessment timetable please do so below.

Section 8.1: Descriptors and tie-points

If you would like to comment on the descriptors and tie-points please do so below.

Section 8.1: Quality Categories

If you would like to comment on the Quality Categories please do so below.

Section 8.2: Evaluation procedure

If you would like to comment on the evaluation procedure please do so below.

Section 8.3: Cross-referral of EPs.

Options presented:

Option T) Retain the cross-referral process as it occurred in 2006.

Option U) Remove the ability of individual researchers to request that their EP be cross-referred.

Option V) Require the consent of individual researchers for their EP to be cross-referred.

Option W) Cross-referral panels to provide the rationale for their grades as well as their scores to the original panel.

Option X) Remove the cross-referral process entirely.

Please state your preferred option below.

If you would like to make any additional comments please do so below:

Section 8.4: Management of conflicts of interest

Options presented:

Option Y) EPs have tick-box that researchers can use to indicate whether they believe they have a potential conflict of interest with a panellist.

Option Z) Independent observers can access a register of those who have used the tick-box above, to check that due process has been followed.

Please state your preferred option below.

If you would like to make any additional comments please do so below:

Section 9.1: Moderation process

If you would like to comment on the moderation process please do so below.

Section 9.2 Complaints process

If you would like to comment on the complaints process please do so below.

Additional comments

If you would like to make any additional comments please do so below.