



Tertiary Education Commission  
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua

# **Performance-Based Research Fund**

Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social  
Sciences panel-specific guidelines 2012

Quality Evaluation

## Introduction

The Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) 2012 Panels have developed guidelines to assist staff members with the processes of developing and submitting Evidence Portfolios (EPs). These guidelines provide advice on specific areas that relate to the subject areas of Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Sciences and do not replace or supersede the requirements for EPs that are set out in the *PBRF Quality Evaluation Guidelines 2012*.

The Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Sciences panel-specific guidelines must be read in conjunction with the *PBRF Quality Evaluation Guidelines 2012*. In areas where the panel-specific guidelines do not provide additional information, this is because the advice provided in the *PBRF Quality Evaluation Guidelines 2012* applies.

The panel will be primarily interested in assessing the quality of the NROs and the staff member's contribution to them, and can also take into account the quality of the outlets through which the research has been published.

Please note that peer review panels assess EPs without reference to Quality Categories gained by staff members from their participation in the 2003 and/or 2006 Quality Evaluations.

# Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Sciences panel-specific guidelines

## **Description of panel coverage**

The Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Sciences Panel will assess EPs in the subject areas described below. The descriptions should be considered a guide – they are not intended to be exhaustive.

### **Anthropology**

Archaeology, biological anthropology, ethnomusicology, socio-cultural anthropology.

### **Communications, journalism and media studies**

Communications, journalism, media studies including online/digital media, internet studies, audiovisual studies, film, and screen studies.

### **Geography**

This subject area includes human geography.

### **Political studies**

This subject area includes political science, international relations, and public policy studies.

### **Psychology**

Psychology (social, cognitive, and behavioural science disciplines and methodologies) including behavioural neuroscience, biological psychology, clinical psychology, cognitive neuroscience, cognitive psychology, community psychology, developmental psychology, health psychology, and social psychology.

### **Sociology**

This subject area includes sociology, social policy, criminology, demography and population studies, human welfare studies.

### **Other Cultural/Social Sciences**

Other Cultural/Social Sciences includes area and interdisciplinary studies, e.g. Māori studies, Pacific studies, Asian studies, European studies, cultural studies, social work, gender studies, women's studies, men's studies, gay studies, family studies, sports studies, cultural heritage, museum ethnography, tourism studies, development studies, leisure studies.

The key criterion for the allocation of an EP to the Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Sciences Panel is that it primarily includes research within a social science discipline or using social science methodology.

The Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Sciences Panel expects to interact with almost all other panels,

and it may consider EPs in other subject areas or disciplines where the research uses a social science methodology. For example, the panel may consider EPs in such areas as planning, transport, environmental studies, area studies, and labour studies if they are primarily concerned with research outputs generated out of social science paradigms.

### **Cross-Referrals**

The Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Sciences Panel will cross-refer EPs to other relevant panels or will seek input from specialist advisers where it is appropriate to supplement the range of expertise of panel members.

The Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Sciences Panel expects that most of its cross-referrals will be between the following panels: Humanities and Law, Health, Business and Economics, Education, Medicine and Public Health, Biological Sciences, Māori Knowledge and Development, and Creative and Performing Arts.

The panel expects that, in general, counselling research would be assessed by the Education Panel, and creative outputs in film and screen by the Creative and Performing Arts panel. For those EPs that contain research outputs in the theory and history of film making and film or screen outputs, it is anticipated that there will be close liaison between the Chair of the Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Sciences Panel and the Chair of the panel that will undertake the assessment. Areas within psychology where close liaison between panel Chairs may be needed include industrial psychology (Business and Economics Panel), health psychology (Health Panel), and biological psychology including neuroscience (Biological Sciences Panel). Specific areas of social policy where research might be cross-referred to other panels include criminology (Humanities and Law Panel) and labour studies (Business and Economics Panel).

The membership of peer review panels is designed to enable panels to assess the quality of research in most areas, including those which have a professional or applied outcome. It is recognised, however, that a small number of staff members will have research outputs that require expert advice from outside the scope of the panel membership and/or that may need to be considered by one of the two Expert Advisory Groups.

### **Expectations for standard of evidence to be supplied**

Staff members are expected to nominate quality-assured research outputs for the majority of disciplines covered by the Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Sciences Panel. Quality assurance will include peer review for journals (including, where appropriate, on-line and e-journals), referee reports for

books and conference papers, and other equivalent quality-assurance processes. If a non-standard quality-assurance process has been used (e.g. in relation to practice-based research outputs or creative research outputs such as a film, video, or exhibition), staff members are expected to explain precisely how quality has been assured in the "Description" field.

Where appropriate, staff members may choose to indicate citation counts or impact factors of the journals in which outputs are published – this can be either in relation to specific Nominated Research Outputs (NROs) or over all outputs within the assessment period. Panel members may choose to investigate these indices where details about them are not supplied. The Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Sciences Panel will bear in mind that citation counts accumulate over time (so that counts will be less for recent articles than for earlier ones), and that impact factors differ markedly within different disciplines and sub-disciplines.

The Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Sciences Panel will use the same standard of evidence to assess all types of research output. That is, it will consider the extent to which the research:

- is recognised as being of high quality,
- is original, representing an intellectual advance or a significant contribution to knowledge,
- exhibits intellectual and methodological rigour and coherence,
- demonstrates intellectual and/or disciplinary impact, and/or
- demonstrates impact in the wider community, e.g. through influencing the direction of policy or practice.

The scope of these judgements may overlap. The list does not imply any particular rank order, although overall research quality will be the critical factor.

The panel will be primarily interested in assessing the quality of the NROs and the staff member's contribution to them, and can also take into account the quality of the outlets through which the research has been published. Staff members completing EPs may wish to indicate in some way the relative ranking a journal may have in any given field/discipline.

### **Elaboration of the definition of Research**

Where a NRO results from professional practice or consultancy, exhibitions or media production, the staff member should clearly indicate its research character and content in the "Description" field.

Routine professional practice does not fall into the PBRF Definition of Research. However, it is recognised

that analysis derived in the course of professional practice may contribute to or constitute research outputs (e.g. an influential and original opinion or submission).

Research-based commentary on pedagogy, as well as research-based curricula and products, may fall within the Definition of Research.

(For the PBRF Definition of Research, see general Guidelines, Chapter 1, Section D: What Counts as Research?).

### **Types of research output**

Research outputs generated by staff members in Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Sciences are diverse. The most common types of output are likely to be journal articles, books, and book chapters.

Research outputs may, however, also include:

- Other types of research output such as electronic and web-based publications, film and video, and non-print research outputs.
- Bibliographies
- Catalogues
- Exhibitions
- Critical commentaries
- Multimedia presentations
- Reviews, including book reviews that meet the PBRF Definition of Research (see above) and do not fall within its exclusion definitions – but note that book reviews are not articles and should not be presented as such
- Review articles
- Dictionaries and encyclopaedia articles that meet the PBRF Definition of Research
- Textbooks or loose leaves that meet the PBRF Definition of Research, e.g. it must include a research component.

NROs that are non-print-based need to be made available to the panel (if requested) in an alternative form that provides adequate documentation for an assessment to be made.

If a book published on the occasion of an exhibition is a major stand-alone publication in its own right with a shelf-life longer than the exhibition, the book may be considered a separate output and be submitted as an authored (or edited) book. If this is the case, the researcher should indicate at the end of the exhibition entry that: 'This exhibition was complemented by [book title]'. At the end of the authored book/edited volume entry, a phrase such as: 'This book was published on the occasion of [exhibition title]' should

be included.

The following types of research outputs should not be presented as NROs when they appear in substantially the same form as the original:

- Foreign language versions of work originally published in English.
- English language versions of work originally published in a foreign language.
- Second or later editions of a work.

TEOs should note that all research outputs included in EPs must be consistent with the PBRF Definition of Research, as set out in the general Guidelines, and must be accompanied by evidence as to quality.

### **Additional advice from expert advisory groups**

EPs can be referred to an expert advisory group (EAG) by either a TEO or by the Chair of a peer review panel.

Where an EP has been referred to an EAG and has **at least one** Nominated Research Output (NRO) that meets the criteria set out by that EAG, additional advice can be sought. A score and opinion on the EP will be provided back to the peer review panel the EP is assigned to.

The criteria that will determine whether or not the EAGs will accept EPs for consideration will be published on the TEC website.

### **Indications of the minimum quantity of research output expected to be produced during the assessment period**

The Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Sciences Panel understands that there may be some variation in the number of research outputs in any given period across disciplines and sub-disciplines

### **Special circumstances**

The general Guidelines apply (see Chapter 2, Section F: Dealing with Special Circumstances).

### **Definitions of Quality Categories**

The general Guidelines apply (see Chapter 3, Section A: What do the Quality Categories Mean? and Chapter 3, Section C: Assessing and Scoring the Three Components of an EP).

### **Treatment of non-standard, non-quality-assured and jointly produced research outputs**

#### **Non-standard research outputs**

Non-standard research outputs will be assessed using the same criteria as standard research outputs.

#### **Non-quality-assured research outputs**

Non-quality-assured research outputs are eligible for inclusion in EPs and will be assessed by the same criteria as quality-assured research outputs (see general Guidelines Chapter 2, Section C: Quality-Assured and Non-Quality-Assured Research Outputs).

#### **Jointly produced research outputs**

The Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Sciences

Panel is aware that it is common for original research papers to have more than one author; and that different research groups have varying understandings about authorship and order of authorship, that the staff member may wish to identify.

Where there are multiple authors, staff members must ensure that their contribution to the research output is clearly defined in the "My Contribution" section. In cases where co-authors include the same NRO in their EPs, staff members are encouraged to confer about the details of their contributions, to ensure that there is no conflict in the information provided.

Staff members should indicate the following sorts of information:

- If they are the supervisor (or PI) of the research or not, and whether they are included as author mainly as head of group or because of material contribution
- What is the balance of contribution between conceptual, research design, data gathering, data testing and analysis, interpretation of results, and level of contribution (e.g. major/moderate/minor) to writing.
- What is the place of this piece of research in the staff member's portfolio of recent research, e.g. one of several published papers by the author in this area.

In papers with more authors than the 2048 characters allow, academic staff should state their position in the author list e.g. 5th in 36 authors.

### **Proportions of Nominated Research Outputs (NROs) to be examined<sup>1</sup>**

It is intended that the Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Sciences Panel will examine at least 50% of all NROs in the EPs submitted to it.

### **Use of specialist advisers**

Specialist advisers will be used:

- to assist in assessing NROs wholly or partially in a language that is inaccessible to panel members
- to seek input from specialist advisers where it is appropriate to supplement the range of expertise of panel members, or to manage conflicts of interest.

### **Elaboration of the descriptor and tie-points for the Research Output (RO) component**

#### **The RO component descriptor**

The general Guidelines apply (see general Guidelines, Chapter 3, Section C: Scoring the RO Component and

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<sup>1</sup> "Examined" is defined as either reading an NRO in full, substantially or sufficiently to make an informed assessment, or (for NROs which by their nature cannot be read) an equivalent level of scrutiny.



Scoring an EP: Allocating Points for Research Outputs).

*Tie-point 6*

Research outputs that deal with topics or themes of primarily local, regional or national focus or interest can be of world-class standard if they exhibit the characteristics stated in the generic guidelines. Such works will be of the highest quality in their theoretical approach and sophistication, in their evidence or material base and use of that evidence or material, in argument, originality and presentation or creativity.

*Tie-point 4*

The general Guidelines apply (see Chapter 3, Section C: Scoring an EP: Allocating Points for Research Outputs).

*Tie-point 2*

It would be exceptional to reach this level without quality-assured research outputs.

**Elaboration of the descriptor and tie-points for the Peer Esteem (PE) component**

**The PE component descriptor**

The general Guidelines apply (see Chapter 3, Section C: Scoring an EP: Allocating Points for Peer Esteem).

*Tie points*

The general Guidelines apply (see Chapter 3, Section C: Scoring an EP: Allocating Points for Peer Esteem).

**Elaboration of the descriptor and tie-points for the Contribution to the Research Environment (CRE) component**

**The CRE component descriptor**

The Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Sciences Panel recognises that a number of activities contribute to the research environment in Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Sciences, including: academic writing and commentaries on existing works and research; book reviews; reading manuscripts; membership of editorial boards; refereeing and reviewing; external examining of theses; leadership in conference planning; hosting department colloquia; research-related collegial activities.

In addition to the mentoring of students referred to in the general Guidelines (see Chapter 3, Section C: Scoring an EP: Allocating Points for Contribution to the Research Environment) the panel recognises that contribution to the research environment involves the support of honours and honours-equivalent students.

*Tie-points*

The general Guidelines apply (see Chapter 3, Section C: Scoring an EP: Allocating Points for Contribution to the Research Environment).