Tertiary Education Commission
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua

**Consultation 3
In Principle decisions and
summary of feedback – Redesign
of Evidence Portfolios**

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Purpose

1. This paper communicates the Tertiary Education Commission's (TEC) In Principle decisions on Evidence Portfolio (EP) design for PBRF Quality Evaluation 2025.

2. The paper also provides a summary of feedback on the options for EP redesign as set out in in consultation paper 3 – *Redesign of Evidence Portfolios*.

Background

3. Following Cabinet's decisions in 2021, the PBRF Sector Reference Group (SRG) has been convened by the TEC to advise on operational design changes to the PBRF Quality Evaluation 2025. The SRG delivers this function through a process of agreeing information and options for identified grouped issues, gathering sector feedback on those options through a series of consultations, considering consultation responses, and making recommendations to the TEC.

4. The TEC makes In Principle decisions based on SRG recommendations. These decisions are made on the understanding that the consultation process is ongoing and that other decisions or external factors may require the recommendations to be reconsidered as part of the process of developing the new guidelines for Quality Evaluation 2025.

5. The SRG has considered sector feedback and has made recommendations to the TEC on a number of changes to EP design. These are aimed at delivering on Cabinet's instructions to redesign the EP by:
    › Replacing the Nominated Research Output with an Example of Research Excellence (ERE) which complements the new PBRF Definition of Research and enables more holistic presentation of research excellence, including collaboration, engagement and impact
    › Replacing the Other Research Output with an Other Example of Research Excellence (OERE) which complements the new Definition of Research and the ERE design
    › Reviewing and redesigning the Research Contributions (RC) component to complement the changes to the ERE component.

6. The TEC has made In Principle decisions on changes across these elements of the EP on the basis of the SRG's recommendations.

Next steps

7. The SRG will use the In Principle decisions as the basis for developing the draft guidelines. These guidelines will be provided to the sector and other stakeholders for

consultation before they are finalised and published in June 2023. Notwithstanding paragraph four above, the purpose of the consultation on the draft guidelines is to ensure that the guidance is consistent, clear and unambiguous, not to re-litigate issues already consulted on.

8. The In Principle decisions reported in this paper, along with the In Principle decisions on research definitions, will inform the subsequent issues to be considered by the SRG going forward.

Sector consultation process

9. The SRG consultation paper 3 – *Redesign of Evidence Portfolios* provided background information and analysis and set out options for changing a number of elements of the EP:
   › What an Example of Research Excellence (ERE) should comprise
   › What an Other Example of Research Excellence (OERE) should comprise and the maximum number of OEREs in an EP
   › The approach to the number of EREs in an EP
   › Renaming the RC component
   › What an RC should comprise and the minimum and maximum number of RCs in an EP.

10. Feedback on this consultation paper was invited through an online survey from 4 March – 18 April 2022.

11. A total of 29 submissions to the public consultation were received. These included submissions from:
   › Auckland University of Technology
   › College of Creative Arts, Massey University
   › College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Massey University
   › College of Sciences, Massey University
   › Earth Science Group, Massey University
   › Faculty of Law, University of Canterbury
   › Lincoln University
   › Massey University
   › Media Design School
   › Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, a Centre of Research Excellence
   › Otago Polytechnic
   › School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Victoria University of Wellington
   › Te Pūkenga
   › Tertiary Education Union
   › University of Auckland
   › University of Canterbury
   › University of Otago
   › University of Waikato
   › Victoria University of Wellington

› 10 individuals

Summary of sector response and In Principle decisions

12. The TEC and the SRG would like to thank respondents for their thoughtful and detailed feedback and suggestions.

13. Set out below is an issue-by-issue summary of feedback received, including any key concerns or issues raised, followed by the In Principle decision which has been made in relation to each issue.

14. In reaching these In Principle decisions, the TEC has evaluated the SRG's recommendations against the following criteria to ascertain whether they:

› Deliver Cabinet's instructions

› Address the concerns and aspirations identified in the *Report of the PBRF Review Panel* and the *Report of the Moderation and Peer Review Panels*

› Deliver fair and equitable outcomes for all participating TEOs and their staff

› Uphold the unique nature of research produced in Aotearoa New Zealand and reflect what is distinctive about our national research environment

› Are consistent with the PBRF Guiding Principles, including the three new Principles of partnership, equity, and inclusiveness

› Are able to be implemented and audited (legally and practically).

What comprises an Example of Research Excellence

15. The SRG consulted on three options, with two sub-options:

› Option 1: an ERE must contain a single research output which is submitted for assessment along with a brief contextual narrative;

› Option 2.a and 2.b.: an ERE must contain a single core research output which is submitted for assessment along with a brief contextual narrative. In addition, EITHER up to four supplementary activities can be listed (option 2.a) OR up to four supplementary research outputs OR activities can be listed (option 2.b);

› Option 3: ERE and OERE sections are combined into a single ERE component. An ERE must contain a single core research output which is submitted for assessment along with a brief contextual narrative. In addition, EITHER up to five supplementary activities can be listed (option 3.a) OR up to five supplementary research outputs OR activities can be listed (option 3.b).

Overall approach: Respondents preferred a version of Option 2

16. Option 2 emerged as the clear preference across multiple groups, albeit with several caveats which are discussed below.

Table 1: ERE sector preferences

	Option 1 preferred	Option 2a or 2b preferred	Option 3a or 3b preferred	Another option preferred
All respondents (29)	17.2% (5)	41.4% (11)	20.7% (6)	20.7% (6)
Institutional/ organisational respondents (19)	10.5% (2)	47.4% (9)	15.8% (3)	26.3% (5)
Responses from PBRF-eligible TEOs (10)	0%	60% (6)	10% (1)	30% (3)

17.   Option 1 was preferred by Otago Polytechnic and the Earth Sciences Group at Massey University. The latter provided no rationale for this preference but Otago Polytechnic preferred Option 1 on the grounds that it does not increase administrative burden, and that it would not disadvantage new and emerging researchers who were less likely to have supplementary outputs and/or activities.

18.   Option 3 variants were preferred by Massey University College of Creative Arts, Lincoln University, and the TEU. The College of Creative Arts suggested that Option 3 best reflected practice-based research, which was often collaborative in nature, and the TEU similarly suggested that Option 3 allowed for the broadest range of research to be recognised. Lincoln University suggested that Option 3 was less burdensome on staff than Option 2, whilst still allowing for a more capacious ERE. However, a significant number of respondents noted that Option 3 would disadvantage staff who had research activities and other outputs which could not be related to a core research output within an ERE.

19.   Of the responses supporting another option, two, from the University of Waikato and Massey University College of Sciences, noted that EP design needs vary according to disciplinary norms, and recommended the SRG consider devolving EP design decisions to panels. The University of Otago and Massey University did not recommend specific alternatives but noted the difficulty in arriving at an option which did not increase administrative and staff burden whilst also being sufficiently capacious to encompass all disciplines. Massey University's institutional submission, along with Massey University College of Sciences' and College of Humanities and Social Sciences' submissions, also considered that decisions could not be reached in the absence of detailed information on issues such as changes to eligible activity and output types and EP component weightings.

Design details: Respondents supported the inclusion of research activities and outputs in the ERE

20.   Of the 26 respondents who answered this question, there was strong support for including both research activities and outputs as supplementary items (i.e. Option 2.b and Option 3.b.), with 21 submissions in support. Among the 18

institutional/organisational responses to the question, 13 supported including both, two supported the inclusion of research activities only, and three supported another option.

21. The Media Design School and the Massey University Earth Sciences Group supported the inclusion of research activities only. Neither provided rationales.

22. Of the responses supporting another option, Massey University's College of Sciences and College of Humanities and Social Sciences both suggested that the distinction was between a research output and research activity was not sufficiently clear to take a view. Auckland University of Technology (AUT) noted that allowing both outputs and activities carried the risk of diminishing sector focus on activities, which would be counter to the intent of a more capacious research definition. AUT recommended that if both were allowed, the guidance should be clear that a breadth of activity is expected within the ERE.

Detailed design: Respondents want to reduce burdens while ensuring maximum flexibility

23. There is clear overall support for Option 2.b. (an ERE comprises a single core research output, up to four supplementary research outputs and/or activities, and a brief narrative). Respondents considered that it allowed staff flexibility to assemble EPs that reflected a more capacious understanding of research and research excellence, and a number of respondents noted that this would be particularly advantageous to those working in Māori, Pacific, practice-based, community, and creative research areas. However, respondents also identified a number of areas of concern or where further clarification was sought.

24. A clear theme across the submissions was the need to avoid unnecessary administrative and staff effort. This was true regardless of the option supported, and was noted by nearly all of the eligible TEOs with the exception of Te Pūkenga and the University of Canterbury. Perceived additional work flowing from Options 2 and 3 included:
    › Increased work by Research Offices which will need to verify eligibility of activities (which was considered likely to be more difficult than verifying the eligibility of outputs) and collect appropriate evidence for ERE inclusion, as well as the increased maximum number of items that can be included in the EP under Option 2 (potentially up to 32 individual items across the ERE and OERE sections).
    › Increased work by Research Offices and staff to meet additional narrative requirements (although some respondents, including Te Pūkenga, Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga and Massey University College of Creative Arts, welcomed the opportunity to include more narrative as enabling researchers to 'tell their story' in a holistic way). One individual response noted that support for staff to craft narratives was not distributed equitably across or within institutions.

    Victoria University of Wellington proposed that reducing the maximum number of supplementary items in an ERE to three could address some of the increased workload concerns whilst retaining the flexibility which Option 2.b provides.

25. Concerns about the increased maximum number of items were also related to equity. Massey University and University of Otago noted that staff members aim to

'fill up' the EP with the maximum allowable number of items, and that the increased number of items possible under Options 2 and 3 could reinforce the perception that that volume was correlated with higher scores. Victoria University of Wellington, Lincoln University, and University of Otago noted that early career researchers, who are less likely to have a substantial portfolio of research activities to draw on, could be particularly disadvantaged. Massey University suggested that that this could be addressed by introducing guidance specifying that EREs will be assessed against the same criteria regardless of the number of supplementary items, including if no supplementary items are included.

26.   A number of respondents sought further clarification as to the distinctions between research outputs and activities, between activities that were eligible for the ERE component and the Research Contributions component, and further detail on eligible metadata, evidence of peer review, and other evidence would be required for supplementary items, particularly for new and non-standard types. Lincoln University, University of Waikato, the University of Otago, Victoria University of Wellington, Te Pūkenga, and the University of Auckland noted that the inclusion of research activities in the ERE would necessitate further panel training and sought clarification as to how EREs were assessed and scored.

27.   The University of Auckland sought clarification as to whether the definitions of activity, output, and impact would align with those used in MBIE's 'Results Chain Framework', which research funders and institutions have been encouraged to embed in their policies and funding guidance and assessment criteria.[1] The University of Auckland, along with the University of Otago, also noted that the relationship between research and impact can be non-linear and can also take time to be realised, and on that basis sought clarification as to whether impact outcomes realised within the assessment period but based on research outputs published outside the assessment period could be eligible as supplementary items within the ERE.

In Principle decision

Based on the recommendation of the SRG, the TEC has decided in principle that:

An Example of Research Excellence (ERE) must include:
  › a single core research output
  › a brief contextualizing narrative

In addition, an ERE may include up to three supplementary items which:

  › may be either research activities OR additional research outputs, and
  › must relate to the core research output.

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[1] Ministry of Business, Innovation and Enterprise, The Impact of Research position paper, New Zealand Government, Wellington, 2019, p. 2.

> The Guidelines will clarify that:
> › EREs are assessed according to the same assessment criteria regardless of the number of supplementary items they contain, if any; and
> › Research activities demonstrating impact must have occurred within the assessment period to be eligible, but the underpinning research output does not have to been published within the assessment period (as in Quality Evaluation 2018). Impacts which were first claimed in a previous Quality Evaluation are not eligible for submission in Quality Evaluation 2025.

Approach to the minimum number of EREs in an EP

28. The SRG consulted on two options: Option 1 retains the 2018 settings of a minimum of one and a maximum of four EREs, with the additional provision that EPs claiming Extraordinary Circumstances must have fewer than four EREs. Option 2 would require all EPs to contain four EREs, unless one or more of four proposed exceptions apply.

Overall approach: Respondents preferred on balance to retain the minimum of one/maximum of four setting

29. Option 1 was preferred across all responses as a whole.

Table 2: Number of EREs in EP sector preferences

	Option 1 preferred	Option 2 preferred	No preference
All respondents (29)	55.6% (14)	44.4% (12)	(6.9%) 2
Institutional/ organisational respondents (19)	58.8% (10)	41.2% (7)	(10.5%) 2
Responses from PBRF-eligible TEOs (10)	50% (5)	40% (4)	10% (1)

30. Institutional/organisational responses preferring Option 1 in general suggested that this option gave submitting staff more flexibility. AUT noted that in some newer disciplines and in the creative arts there may be intrinsic reasons why fewer outputs is the norm, and suggested that requiring four EREs sent a message that the exercise was about quantity rather than quality. The University of Waikato and Te Pūkenga both noted that requiring four EREs could disadvantage staff whose research most naturally clustered into two or three EREs, who would then 'decouple' research outputs and/or activities that should be shown together to demonstrate maximum impact, in order to achieve four EREs. Waikato also suggested that Option 2 would place too much weight on the Extraordinary Circumstances settings.

31. Institutional/organisational responses preferring Option 2 noted that requiring all EPs to include four EREs set clear expectations for submitting staff: this point was made by the University of Auckland and the University of Canterbury. Massey University did not express any preference but also noted that it would set clear expectations for

panels and avoid inconsistency in assessment. Massey University's College of Creative Arts noted that Option 1 did not resolve whether having fewer than four EREs would impact on assessment or not, and also noted that this could be applied inconsistently across panels. Te Pūkenga, while ultimately supporting Option 1, noted that Option 2 would clarify that extraordinary circumstances applied to research quantity, as opposed to quality, and would resolve ambiguity about the minimum quantity of outputs.

Overall approach: Despite the support for Option 1, there is also support for better formalising the treatment of some individual circumstances affecting research quantity

32. Feedback indicated support for the proposal to reduce the number of EREs required by NERs, staff employed part-time, and staff with extraordinary circumstances, including from some submissions that indicated overall support for Option 1.

33. There was mixed feedback on the proposal to double-weight EREs based on large outputs. Both University of Canterbury submissions supported it, as did Otago Polytechnic (despite supporting Option 1 overall). Lincoln University expressed concern at how this provision would be implemented, particularly in terms of what would happen if a staff member submitted a double-weighted ERE that was then considered by the panel to not merit double-weighting. University of Canterbury Faculty of Law also noted the need for further guidance.

34. Victoria University of Wellington, University of Canterbury, and University of Canterbury Faculty of Law all disagreed with the proposal under Option 1 that EPs claiming extraordinary circumstances would have to contain fewer than four EREs, on the grounds that the EP may be impacted through fewer items in the OERE section or the Research Contributions section. Victoria University of Wellington also suggested that OEREs should be able to be included even where fewer than four EREs were submitted.

35. Collectively, these comments indicate that there is not a shared understanding across the sector of whether having fewer than four NROs was, or should have been, taken into consideration by panels in assessing EPs that did not claim Extraordinary Circumstances. They also indicate that there are likewise diverging views as to how Extraordinary Circumstances were or should have been taken into consideration by panels in relation to research quantity.

36. Feedback in relation to what comprises an ERE indicates that staff and TEOs treat the current maximum of four in practice as a goal to be reached, and seek to 'fill up' the EP rather than focus on selecting the best examples of research excellence. Comments about staff being 'disadvantaged' by reductions that would require fewer EREs to be submitted likewise indicates a perception that panels do take quantity into account.

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In Principle decision

Based on the recommendation of the SRG, the TEC has decided in principle that an EP must contain three EREs, unless one of the following exceptions applies:

    a. New and Emerging Researcher

    b. Extraordinary Circumstances (noting that the SRG is currently consulting on a change of name)

    c. Part-time employment

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What comprises an Other Example of Research Excellence?

37.   The SRG consulted on a single proposal, that both research outputs and research activities should be eligible as OEREs.

Overall approach: respondents strongly agreed that both research outputs and research activities should be eligible

Table 3: What comprises an OERE sector preferences

	Proposal supported	Proposal not supported
All respondents (29)	79.3% (23)	20.7% (6)
Institutional/ organisational respondents (19)	84.2% (16)	15.8% (3)
Responses from PBRF-eligible TEOs (10)	100% (10)	0%

38.   Among respondents that did not support the proposal, Otago Polytechnic raised concerns that it would be difficult to apply quality assurance processes to research activities, and that including research activities in the ERE and OERE would be confusing to assess and challenging for staff to group in ways that lead to fair assessment outcomes. These concerns were framed in relation to Otago Polytechnic's preference for the ERE to comprise a research output and narrative only. An individual respondent made a related observation that allowing research activities to be included in the OERE and ERE made for a 'murkier' distinction between the ERE and Research Contribution components, which would increase the burden on submitting staff.

39.   Massey University College of Sciences did not support the proposal on the grounds that research outputs were well understood within the international science community.

40.   Respondents supporting the proposal generally noted that allowing both activities and outputs reflected the aim to broaden the definition of research, provided

maximum flexibility, and mirrored ERE Option 2.b. (ERE contains a core research output, narrative, and up to four supplementary items which can be outputs or activities). AUT additionally suggested that to support the aim of broadening the definition of research and research excellence, the guidance could be clear that a diversity of outputs and activities is encouraged.

41. Massey University and University of Auckland, while supportive, noted that definitions and evidence requirements for outputs, activities, and impact were required to fully understand how all the sections of the EP would work together in practice.

> **In Principle decision**
>
> Based on the recommendation of the SRG, the TEC has decided in principle that both research outputs and research activities will be eligible as OEREs.

How many OEREs should an EP include

42. The SRG consulted on three options:
    › Option 1: Up to 12 OEREs can be submitted, along with a narrative which staff may use to contextualise and link together the OEREs listed
    › Option 2: Up to 8 OEREs can be submitted, along with a narrative which staff may use to contextualise and link together the OEREs listed
    › Option 3: the ERE and OERE sections are combined, with no standalone OEREs submitted.

43. The consultation paper noted that if the decision was to retain the minimum of one/maximum of four ERE approach, OEREs could only be submitted where the EP contains the maximum number of EREs, as in 2018. If the decision was to require all EPs to contain four EREs except where one of the four eligible circumstances applied, then all EPs, including those with eligible circumstances, would be able to include OEREs, because a fixed number of EREs would be required.

Overall approach: Respondents generally preferred to reduce the maximum number of OEREs

44. Overall there was a preference for the lower maximum of eight OEREs.

Table 3: Number of OERE sector preferences

	Option 1 preferred	Option 2 preferred	Option 3 preferred	Another option preferred
All respondents (29)	27.6% (8)	37.9% (11)	20.7% (6)	13.8% (4)
Institutional/ organisational respondents (19)	21.1% (4)	42.1% (8)	15.8% (3)	26.3% (4)
Responses from PBRF-eligible TEOs (10)	10% (1)	50% (5)	10% (1)	30% (3)

45.   Responses supporting Option 1 did not provide any commentary on that specific issue.

46.   Responses supporting Option 2 generally noted that if the ERE could include both research outputs and activities as supplementary items, then a reduction in the maximum number of OEREs would be appropriate.

47.   Responses supporting another option generally did not specify an alternative, although Waikato suggested that the number of OEREs could vary across panels, in line with their suggestion that all EP requirements could be panel-specific.

48.   AUT suggested that if the decision was to retain the minimum of one/maximum of four ERE approach then EPs with fewer than four EREs should still be able to include OEREs. Victoria University of Wellington also made this point.

> **In Principle decision**
>
> Based on the recommendation of the SRG, the TEC has decided in principle that an EP can list up to eight OEREs, alongside a narrative which staff may use to contextualise each OERE listed.

Renaming the Research Contribution component

49.   The SRG consulted on a single proposal, to change the name of the Research Contribution component to 'Contributions to the Research Environment'

Overall approach: Respondents supported renaming the Research Contributions component

50.   There was a high level of support for the proposal.

Table 5: Renaming the RC component sector preferences

	Proposal supported	Proposal not supported	No preference
All respondents (29)	79.3% (23)	17.2% (5)	3.44% (1)
Institutional/ organisational respondents (19)	68.4% (13)	26.3% (5)	5.3% (1)
Responses from PBRF-eligible TEOs (10)	80% (8)	20% (2)	0

51.   Among submissions that were not supportive, University of Canterbury Faculty of Law expressed concern that the proposed name change, along with the proposed reduction in eligible activity types within the component (discussed below), would result in too narrow a focus on research environment at the expense of peer esteem factors.

52. University of Otago noted that the proposed name change was identical to that used in Quality Evaluations prior to 2018, and that it was unclear how to avoid this being interpreted as a return to those older settings. Otago expressed the same concerns as Canterbury Faculty of Law that peer esteem factors and contribution outside academia would not have a clear place within the EP.

53. AUT supported the proposal but suggested that the title could be amended to Contributions of your Research to the Environment. This was intended to ensure the component captured contributions such as public advocacy for science, contributions to teaching and learning environments, or sharing of expertise that fall outside contributions to the research environment but should nonetheless be encouraged.

> **In Principle decision**
>
> Based on the recommendation of the SRG, the TEC has decided in principle that the Research Contributions component will be renamed Contributions to the Research Environment.

Reducing and revising the eligible Research Contribution types

54. The SRG consulted on a single proposal, to reduce the existing 12 types of eligible Research Contribution to the following six types, some of which would be re-named:
    › Contribution to Research Discipline, Culture, and Environment (previously Contribution to Research Discipline and Environment)
    › Facilitating, Networking and Collaboration
    › Researcher Development, Capability-Building, and Mentoring (previously Researcher Development)
    › Reviewing, Refereeing, Judging, Evaluating and Examining
    › Student Development and Support (previously Student Factors)
    › Peer esteem and research recognition not included in ERE section.

    The rationale for reducing the eligible types within the Research Contribution is that the other types will instead be eligible for inclusion within the ERE and OERE section.

Overall approach: respondents supported reducing the eligible Research Contribution types

55. There was a high level of support for the proposal.

Table 6: Eligible Research Contribution types sector preferences

	Proposal supported	Proposal not supported
All respondents (29)	72.4% (21)	27.6% (8)
Institutional/ organisational respondents (19)	68.4% (13)	31.6% (6)

Responses from PBRF-eligible TEOs (10)	80% (8)	20% (2)

56. The University of Otago and University of Canterbury Faculty of Law both expressed concerns that peer esteem factors could not be adequately reflected in the proposed types. Otago additionally raised concerns that a focus on mentoring and leadership would disadvantage early career researchers.

57. Victoria University acknowledged that research activities which were not eligible as Research Contributions could be included in the ERE/OERE sections, but expressed concern that such activities may not have the same weight in the ERE component as they might have had in the Research Contributions section, and noted that the component weightings required reconsideration.

Detailed design: there was support for better reflecting Māori and Pacific research contributions

58. Victoria University of Wellington and Otago Polytechnic suggested that to support the broadened definition of research, Research Contribution types should be included that reflect Māori and Pacific modes of contribution. Victoria University and the University of Auckland noted this should also be reflected in the language used to describe the types. Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga proposed that 'wānanga' be included as an eligible activity.

59. AUT supported the proposal but sought further clarification and consultation in relation to the distinction between research activities that would be eligible for inclusion in the ERE/OERE, and research contribution types, so as to avoid duplication.

In Principle decision

Based on the recommendation of the SRG, the TEC has decided in principle that items submitted within the Contributions to the Research Environment component must belong to one of the following six types:

> › Contribution to Research Discipline, Culture, and Environment (previously Contribution to Research Discipline and Environment)
> › Facilitating, Networking and Collaboration
> › Researcher Development, Capability-Building, and Mentoring (previously Researcher Development)
> › Reviewing, Refereeing, Judging, Evaluating and Examining
> › Student Development and Support (previously Student Factors)
> › Peer esteem and research recognition not included in ERE section.

For clarity, the following types which were previously eligible as Research Contributions will be eligible as research activities within the ERE and OERE sections:

- › Invitations to Present Research or Similar
- › Outreach and Engagement
- › Recognition of Research Outputs
- › Research Funding and Support
- › Research Prizes, Fellowships, Awards and Appointments
- › Uptake and Impact.

Following the recommendation of the SRG, the TEC has further decided in principle that the type descriptors will be reviewed and revised ahead of consultation on the draft Guidelines to better reflect Māori and Pacific research modes, to clarify the distinctions between types, and to ensure that peer esteem factors have a clear place within the EP.

What should the Research Contribution component comprise

60. The SRG consulted on three options:
    - › The RC component comprises a minimum of one and up to 15 items. As in 2018, sufficient metadata must be submitted to enable audit, but the items themselves are not submitted for assessment.
    - › The RC component comprises a minimum of one and up to 15 items, and additionally includes a brief narrative section enabling staff to link the items together and to contextualise and describe their RC activity as a whole. As in 2018, sufficient metadata must be submitted to enable audit, but the items themselves are not submitted for assessment.
    - › The RC component comprises a minimum of one and up to ten items, and additionally includes a brief narrative section enabling staff to link the items together and to contextualise and describe their RC activity as a whole. As in 2018, sufficient metadata must be submitted to enable audit, but the items themselves are not submitted for assessment.

Overall approach: there was general support for reducing the maximum number of Research Contribution items

61. Across all respondents, there was general support for reducing the maximum number of items.

Table 7: sector preferences on maximum number of research contributions

	Option 1 preferred	Option 2 preferred	Option 3 preferred	Another option preferred
All respondents (29)	17.2% (5)	17.2% (5)	51.7% (15)	13.8% (4)
Institutional/ organisational respondents (19)	15.8% (3)	15.8% (3)	47.4% (9)	26.3% (4)

Responses from PBRF-eligible TEOs (10)	0%	20% (2)	60% (6)	20% (2)

62. University of Otago supports either Options 2 or 3, while Victoria University of Wellington proposes that the maximum be reduced to eight, with no additional narrative.

Detailed design: respondents were divided as to whether a narrative should be required

63. Although the majority of respondents support Option 3, Lincoln University, University of Waikato, and Victoria University did not support the inclusion of a narrative. Some responses supporting Option 1 also noted that an overarching narrative would add to the administrative workload.

64. The University of Otago queried whether the overarching narrative would apply alongside or instead of the individual descriptions of each Research Contribution that were required in 2018.

65. Conversely, the University of Canterbury and AUT suggested that an overarching narrative enabled researchers to contextualise their research contributions and provide a more nuanced picture of activity.

In Principle decision

Based on the recommendation of the SRG, the TEC has decided in principle that the Contributions to the Research environment component must contain a minimum of one and a maximum of ten items. Each item must be categorised within one of the six eligible types, and must comprise a brief description containing sufficient detail to enable audit.