



REF Sub-panel 23: Meeting 2

30 January 2014

Grand Connaught Rooms, London

Minutes

Present:

Sara Arber
Chetan Bhatt
Ben Bowling
Eamonn Carrabine
Nickie Charles
Graham Crow
Mary Daly (deputy chair)
Sara Delamont
Tia DeNora
Barbara Doig
Deborah McClean (adviser)
Linda McKie
Nikolas Rose
Mike Savage
John Scott (chair)
William Solesbury
John Solomos
Liz Stanley
John Thompson
Sylvia Walby
Sandra Walklate
Alan Warde
Gillian Weale (secretary)
Nira Yuval-Davies

Apologies:

There were no apologies.

1. Introduction and competence to do business

- 1.1. The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Ben Bowling, a member shared with SP20: Law, and SP22: Social Work and Social Policy, to ensure consistency in the assessment of outputs submitted to all three panels in the field of criminology. The user members had not received papers for the meeting and it was agreed that the secretary would ensure that the email lists included all members of the sub-panel.
- 1.2. The chair reminded members of the confidential nature of the sub-panel's business which should not be discussed outside the membership.
- 1.3. In the light of the attendance, the sub-panel confirmed its competence to do business.

2. Conflicts of interest

- 2.1. The sub-panel reviewed the register of their declared major conflicts of interest. One member raised an additional major conflict which would be updated via the PMW. All members were reminded to keep their major conflicts of interest up to date through the PMW,
- 2.2. The sub-panel discussed some types of minor conflict, including cases where a co-author of an output was a colleague of a panel member, and cases where a submitted member of staff was the former PhD student of a panel member. Members were encouraged to report any possible minor conflicts of interest via webmail to the chair, who would decide how to handle each case, with a copy to the secretary for the record.

3. Audit

- 3.1. The panel's attention was drawn to paper SP23.2.2 which outlined the procedures for audit. Audit queries could be raised by sub-panel members throughout the assessment phase in relation to outputs, where, for example, there was concern about the contribution made on a co-authored output.
- 3.2. Panel members were reminded of the guidance for dealing with potential overlap, which could be found in paragraphs 40-41 of Section C2 in the 'panel criteria' document.
- 3.3. The arrangements for auditing impact case studies were different, in that sub-panel members would be asked to identify case studies which were candidates for audit. To this end, the chair requested that sub-panel members scan their impact allocation, once this was available, with a view to sending details of case studies requiring audit to the secretary, by the next meeting on 12 March. To help, the secretary would circulate further guidance on what was expected in impact case studies, for example that the underpinning research should be of

minimum 2* quality. Panel members would be looking for sufficient evidence of this within the case study itself, and would not be required to follow up and read the references to the underpinning research.

4. Output calibration

- 4.1. The chair introduced the calibration exercise, referring to paragraphs 68-71 of 'Panel Criteria' and the extract of the minutes of the Main Panel C meeting on 23 January which had been circulated as paper SP23.2.5. The discussions in Main Panel C had been very useful and the chair advised members to refer back to the points raised in these minutes in the course of their assessment.
- 4.2. Eight outputs had been selected for the calibration exercise from submissions to UoA23, but only seven were discussed, as it had been found that the eighth output had been submitted with an incorrect pdf, and was therefore subject to an audit query. Outputs had been identified to avoid major conflicts of interest, and with a view to sampling a reasonably representative range of what had been submitted. In addition, one output had been selected from submissions to UoA22: Social Work and Social Policy. A separate exercise had been undertaken by the chairs of SP20, SP22 and SP23, drawing on readings of a selection of outputs in the field of criminology submitted to all three of these UoAs.
- 4.3. Sub-panel academic members had read all these outputs in advance of the meeting and scored them on a U-4 scale. The scores returned were presented in the meeting, and showed considerable variation. The chair invited members to discuss each of the outputs in turn, focussing on the reasons for coming to a particular grade, in relation to the criteria.
- 4.4. It was important that this sub-panel came to its own view of outputs in the field of criminology, in recognition of the fact that some institutions had chosen to submit staff and outputs to UoA23, rather than UoA20 or UoA22. The criminology calibration exercise had shown much lower levels of variation in scoring between members of different sub-panels, and throughout the course of the assessment, Main Panel C would be monitoring the sub-panels' work for consistency.
- 4.5. By extension, and in accordance with paragraph 4.7 of the Main Panel C minutes, an output should be judged in terms of whether or not it made sense to the audience it was intended for. The unit of assessment descriptor for Sociology was wide, and sub-panel members should bear this in mind when thinking about possible cross-referrals to other sub-panels, which should only be made when there was no competence to assess an output within the sub-panel. Experience of the Main Panel C calibration exercise was that it was possible to come to an appropriate assessment of an output even when this output was not squarely within the assessor's field.
- 4.6. In discussion of the calibration outputs, the following general points emerged:

- 4.6.1. Outputs on the borderline between star ratings often demonstrated strengths in one or two of the three criteria but were less strong on the third. The sub-panel discussed several examples where this was the case and agreed that it was important to be alert to the effects of combining the three equally-weighted criteria.
- 4.6.2. Sub-panel members needed to assess the outputs as they stood, and should not be exploring publications by the same author which had not been submitted to REF2014.
- 4.6.3. The question of whether or not the author achieved the aims set out at the start of the output could affect the level of rigour reached. However, the small size of datasets and writing from personal experience should not necessarily lead to a judgement that the output lacked rigour.
- 4.6.4. In cases where the questions raised or conclusions reached in an output had been superseded by events within the REF2014 assessment period, the output should be judged on the basis of its significance at the time of its writing.
- 4.6.5. In the case of potential candidates for cross-referral, sub-panel members were advised to discuss these with their co-reader, and then with the chair. Where no other member of the sub-panel was competent to assess the output, it would be cross-referred.
- 4.6.6. The journal in which an output had been published was irrelevant to the assessment of its quality, which should be on the basis solely of the published criteria.
- 4.6.7. Although half-scores were available for use, it was recommended that assessors use whole number scores when assessing outputs. Half-scores were mostly to be used when assessing impact.
- 4.7. The chair explained that Main Panel C would be able to see the scoring of outputs in real time during the assessment phase, in order to take an overview of sub-panels' progress and review calibration if necessary.

5. Output allocation arrangements

- 5.1. The chair had completed the output allocation and unlocked personal spreadsheets for sub-panel members and output assessors. However, the recent declaration of a further major conflict of interest would necessitate a certain amount of re-distribution. Sub-panel members would be informed when this had taken place so that they could generate fresh versions of their personal spreadsheets.
- 5.2. Each output had been allocated for assessment by two panellists. It was recommended that each panellist score independently initially, and then discuss cases, by phone or webmail, where the scores had diverged. A report showing

scoring differences could be run by the secretary at any time. It was agreed to circulate a list of phone and Skype numbers to allow panellists to contact each other for these bilateral discussions.

- 5.3. There would be some discussion of how to assess cases made for double-weighting at the next Main Panel C meeting on 6 March, so further guidance in the light of this would be issued at the sub-panel's next meeting.
- 5.4. Several sub-panel members reported severe delays in receiving hard copies of outputs from the warehouse, and it was agreed that the secretary would raise this as a matter of serious concern with the REF team.

6. IT systems briefing

- 6.1. The adviser gave a short briefing on how to use the REF IT systems. Members could request further help from her or the secretary or from the REF admin team.

7. Project plan and future meetings

- 7.1 The sub-panel reviewed the project plan which outlined what work would be done at each meeting, and the preparation required between meetings. The chair highlighted that the impact calibration and assessment was taking place in the early stages of the assessment, at the March and May meetings. He also drew attention to the output reading targets.
- 7.2. Environment calibration and allocation would take place in May rather than July.
- 7.3. It was likely that the timing of the discussion of overview reports would extend into October so that the results of the assessment of environment could be fully taken into account. Members were reminded that those acting as institutional lead on particular submissions would be leading on the drafting of the overview reports. It was agreed that clarification was required of the kinds of notes which could be kept by panel members during the progress of the assessment, and the adviser undertook to speak to the REF team on this point.
- 7.4 The next meeting would take place on 12 March 2014 at CCT-Venues Barbican, London.

8. Any other business

- 8.1. There being no other business, the chair thanked members for their attendance and contribution, and closed the meeting.



REF Sub-panel 23: Meeting 3

12 March 2014

CCT Venues Barbican, London

Minutes

Present:

Sara Arber
Eamonn Carrabine
Helen Chambers
Nickie Charles
Graham Crow
Mary Daly (deputy chair)
Sara Delamont
Tia DeNora
Anna Dickenson (REF team)
Barbara Doig
Janet Finch (Main Panel chair)
Omar Khan
Deborah McClean (adviser)
Linda McKie
Ceridwen Roberts
Mike Savage
John Scott (chair)
William Solesbury
John Solomos
Liz Stanley
John Thompson
Sylvia Walby
David Walker
Sandra Walklate
Alan Warde
Gillian Weale (secretary)
Teresa Williams
Nira Yuval-Davies

Apologies:

Chetan Bhatt

1. Introduction and competence to do business

- 1.1. The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the impact assessors, attending for the first time. He also introduced members of Main Panel C, and a member of the REF team, attending as observers.
- 1.2. In the light of the attendance, the panel confirmed that it was competent to do business.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

- 2.1 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 January 2014 were confirmed as a correct record.

3. Register of interests

- 3.1. The panel reviewed the register of their declared major conflicts of interest and confirmed they were correct. The chair reminded members that updates to major conflicts of interest should be made via the panel members' website (PMW). Minor conflicts should be notified by webmail to the sub-panel chair and copied to the secretary for the record.

4. Impact calibration

- 4.1. The chair introduced the calibration exercise, the purpose of which was to discuss how the criteria of 'reach' and 'significance' could be applied across the star ratings to both case studies and impact templates. In preparation for the meeting, the chair had asked sub-panel members and impact assessors to read and score eight impact case studies and two impact templates, using a nine-point scale from 0-4. In a few cases, members or assessors had conflicts of interest with the case studies and templates selected for calibration, but were invited to remain for the discussion of those items, although they did not participate in the discussion.
- 4.2. The chair drew the panel's attention to the five threshold criteria which should be applied when reviewing case studies. If any of these criteria were not met, the case study would be awarded a 'U'. There was the option to audit against the threshold criteria if there was insufficient information in the case study to determine whether the threshold criteria had been met, but on the whole the case study was intended to be self-contained, and should be assessed on the basis of how far the claim made about impact had been supported by evidence within the document. Therefore the quality of the underlying research and the sources of corroborating statements should only be followed up by an audit query where there was a risk of the case study being awarded a 'U'. If it was not possible to tell from the information in the case study whether or not the underlying research had taken place at the submitting institution, an audit query should be raised. It was

emphasised that, in the case of impact, it was the submitting institution's contribution to the research which led to the impact which was being assessed, rather than the research of a particular member of staff. Audit queries should be raised through the secretariat only.

- 4.3. The collated calibration scores were tabled by the secretariat and the sub-panel discussed the case studies and impact templates. The following general points emerged:
 - 4.3.1. In judging whether the quality of the underlying research was of predominantly 2* level, sub-panel members were not routinely required to read the outputs listed in the case study. It was therefore acceptable for journal rankings, and knowledge of publishing standards, peer review processes and funders' requirements to act as a proxy for quality, when looking at impact case studies only. This was a different approach to that being followed in the judgement of output quality, where these factors were not being taken into account.
 - 4.3.2. It was important to judge each case study on the basis of what was being claimed in the document. It would be possible for a case study demonstrating impact in a closely defined area, or to a small target group to score highly, if this was well-evidenced.
 - 4.3.3. It was possible for an institution to claim its research had impact at one stage removed (indirect impact), as long as its place in the chain could be clearly demonstrated as a sine qua non for the impact in question.
 - 4.3.4. Impact on public debate, or the shaping of public policy could be claimed, even if the policy did not change or the option supported by the research was not taken up by policy-makers.
 - 4.3.5. Judgement of the impact templates should extend beyond the quality of the drafting to the substance of what was taking place in each submission.
- 4.4. The chair reported on the calibration exercise by MPC, which had met on 6 March 2014. The Main Panel had discussed a selection of case studies and impact templates from across the sub-panels in its remit, some in plenary session, and some in breakout groups. Minutes of this discussion, which included general points on both the case studies and impact templates would be circulated to the sub-panel for reference.
- 4.5. The chair had allocated impact case studies and templates and these allocations were now available via panel members' personal spreadsheets. Both case studies and impact templates would be read by academic members of the panel and impact assessors, although it was expected that the academic members would take the lead in the assessment of the impact templates, and in the judgement of the quality of the underlying research in the case studies.

5. Impact audit

- 5.1 Confirming the discussion under item 4.2 above, the chair drew attention to the guidance in SP23.3.3 concerning the audit of impact case studies. Several members had identified candidates for audit in advance of the meeting and the sub-panel confirmed which of these they would like to go forward for audit. Any further cases should be raised with the secretary as soon as possible, so that the results were available in time for the meeting on 12 and 13 May.

6. Double-weighting

- 6.1 There was provision outlined in Section C2, paragraphs 50-56 of 'Panel criteria and working methods' to submit a request to double-weight outputs of 'extended scale and scope'. Any such requests had to be accompanied by a 100-word statement to justify the request. The sub-panel had received 31 requests for double-weighting and would need to decide whether or not to accept them, this decision being separate from the judgement of the quality of the output.
- 6.2 Main Panel D guidance on double-weighted outputs was projected. Although it was useful to be aware of this guidance, the sub-panel agreed that decisions on double-weighting would be taken in accordance with Main Panel C guidance in Section C2, paragraph 50 of 'Panel criteria and working methods'.
- 6.3 It was agreed that, in advance of the next meeting, allocated readers of outputs where double-weighting had been requested would look at the claim for double-weighting and bring a recommendation to the full sub-panel for a final decision in May.

7. Future meetings

- 7.1. Between this meeting and the next meeting to discuss impact on 12 and 13 May, panel members and impact assessors were asked to read all the impact material, with a view to confirming impact sub-profiles and completing the assessment of impact in May. In order to keep to this schedule, members and assessors were encouraged to hold bilateral discussions in advance of the next meeting, and arrive at agreed scores where possible.
- 7.2. In relation to the assessment of outputs, the sub-panel was reminded that the aim was for agreed scores for 50% of outputs to be available for discussion at the next outputs meeting on 14 and 15 May. In addition it was agreed that members with allocations of outputs in three particular submissions would read everything from those submissions, so that some draft profiles on 100% outputs scored could be considered. So that the sub-panel executive could review the data and analyse it in advance of this meeting, sub-panel members were requested to upload their scores by 7 May. Further discussion of double-weighted items would also take place at the May meeting.

7.3. The chair would shortly be circulating a sample of documents to read for Environment calibration, discussion of which would also take place at the May meeting.

7.4. The next meeting was scheduled for 12 & 13 May 2014 (impact assessment) and 14 & 15 May 2014 (output assessment) at Selsdon Park Hotel, South Croydon.

8. Any other business

8.1. There being no other business, the chair thanked members for their contribution and closed the meeting.



REF Sub-panel 23: Meeting 4 Part 1

12 and 13 May 2014

Selsdon Park Hotel, South Croydon

Minutes

Present:

Sara Arber
Eamonn Carrabine
Helen Chambers
Nickie Charles
Graham Crow
Mary Daly (deputy chair)
Sara Delamont
Tia DeNora
Barbara Doig
Deborah McClean (adviser)
Linda McKie
Ceridwen Roberts
Mike Savage
John Scott (chair)
William Solesbury
John Solomos
Liz Stanley
John Thompson
Sylvia Walby
David Walker
Sandra Walklate
Alan Warde
Gillian Weale (secretary)
Teresa Williams (main panel member)
Nira Yuval-Davies

Apologies:

Omar Khan

1. Introduction and competence to do business

- 1.1. The chair welcomed members to the meeting.
- 1.2. In the light of the attendance, the panel confirmed that it was competent to do business.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

- 2.1 The panel confirmed that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 March 2014 were an accurate record of the discussion.

3. Register of interests

- 3.1. The panel reviewed the register of their declared major conflicts of interest and were reminded that updates should be made via the panel members' website. Any further minor conflicts should be raised via REF webmail to the chair and secretary. The chair drew the sub-panel's attention to a new major conflict of interest of his own, as a result of which he would not be taking part in any discussions of the University of Exeter submission.

4. Impact assessment

- 4.1. The chair introduced the impact assessment. In advance of the meeting, each impact template and impact case study for each submission had been read by one academic member of the sub-panel and one impact assessor or user member. Pairs of readers had discussed their readings before the meeting and submitted an agreed score to the meeting. Draft impact sub-profiles for each submission, based on agreed panellists' scores, were presented. The aim of the meeting was to arrive at panel agreed scores for each impact template and case study, and thereby confirm the sub-profiles for impact, as well as collect comments on which to draw when drafting feedback reports to submitting institutions. The chair reminded members how the impact sub-profiles were calculated, and their relative weighting in the overall sub-profile.
- 4.2. The sub-panel discussed the draft impact sub-profile and the individual impact template and case studies for each submission. Panel agreed scores were confirmed for every item, except two case studies which were awaiting the result of an audit query. The sub-panel would be notified of the outcome of this via REF webmail.
- 4.3. Members of the sub-panel absented themselves from discussions of impact templates and case studies from institutions with which they had conflicts of interest.

- 4.4. Having completed its discussion, the sub-panel then reviewed the impact sub-profile based on panel agreed scores. Comments relating to individual submissions would be collected together to form the basis for the impact section of the feedback report to each submitting institution.
- 4.5. The chair introduced a more general reflective discussion on the impact assessment by inviting the impact assessors and user members to comment. It was agreed that one of the user members would lead on the capturing of the assessors' reflections in writing. Overall, members and assessors had found the impact assessment interesting and enjoyable. It had been largely straightforward to agree scores between reading pairs, and all discussions had been positive and collegial. Should the exercise be repeated in future, there were improvements which could be made to its operational aspects, and the definition of 'impact' might be usefully reviewed. There was also the need for the discipline of Sociology to reflect further on the impact agenda, and for submitting institutions to learn from the exercise. More detailed reflections would be prepared for the sub-panel's section of the Main Panel C overview report which would be published at the end of the REF assessment phase.

5. Audit

- 5.1 A report was tabled showing audits raised against impact case studies, and their outcomes. It was noted that some audits, which had been raised very close to the meeting, remained outstanding.

6. Future meetings

- 6.1. There were no further meetings scheduled at which impact was to be discussed.

7. Any other business

- 7.1. The chair reminded members and assessors of the strict confidentiality of all discussions which had taken place.
- 7.2. There being no other business, the chair thanked members and assessors most warmly for their contribution and closed the meeting.



REF Sub-panel 23: Meeting 4 Part 2

14 May 2014

Selsdon Park Hotel, South Croydon

Minutes

Present:

Sara Arber
Eamonn Carrabine
Nickie Charles
Graham Crow
Mary Daly (deputy chair)
Sara Delamont
Tia DeNora
Barbara Doig
Deborah McClean (adviser)
Linda McKie
Nikolas Rose
Mike Savage
John Scott (chair)
William Solesbury
John Solomos
Liz Stanley
John Thompson
Sylvia Walby
Sandra Walklate
Alan Warde
Gillian Weale (secretary)
Nira Yuval-Davies

Apologies:

None.

1. Introduction and competence to do business

- 1.1. The chair welcomed members to the meeting and thanked them for their preparation for it.

- 1.2. In the light of the attendance, the panel confirmed that it was competent to do business.

2. Register of interests

- 2.1. The panel reviewed the register of their declared major conflicts of interest and were reminded that updates should be made via the panel members' website. Any further minor conflicts should be raised via REF webmail to the chair and secretary.

3. Outputs assessment

- 3.1. Each output had been allocated to two members of the sub-panel to read. In advance of this meeting, members had been asked to read a minimum of 50% outputs, and to agree scores with their reading partners. Draft output sub-profiles were projected for a sub-set of submitting institutions where sufficient data was available, based on panellists' agreed scores. It was agreed that these should be confirmed as panel agreed scores. Panellists' scoring patterns were briefly reviewed. Duplicate outputs would be reviewed in July to ensure consistent scoring.
- 3.2. Submissions' emerging output sub-profiles were discussed, bearing in mind that some had had lower proportions of outputs read than others at this stage. In response to general issues raised in the discussion, the sub-panel was reminded of the guidance in 'Panel criteria and working methods' on co-authored outputs, and on the qualifying FTE for staff eligibility. It would be desirable to feed back to the REF team on these issues at the end of the assessment phase.
- 3.3. At this stage, the overall shape and character of submissions to the sub-panel was beginning to emerge. For instance, certain sub-disciplines had greater or lesser representation than had been expected amongst the outputs submitted. Comments of this nature were collected and would form the basis for the sub-panel's section of the Main Panel C overview report which would be published at the end of the assessment phase.
- 3.4. It was agreed that the chair would discuss elements of submissions relating to Criminology with the chairs of sub-panels 22 and 20 to ensure a consistent approach was being applied. Criminology outputs and impact case studies within SP23 had been flagged as such in the 'comments' field of panellists' personal spreadsheets to aid cross-panel monitoring of the assessment of this sub-discipline.
- 3.5. Members of the sub-panel absented themselves from discussions of outputs from institutions with which they had conflicts of interest.

4. Double-weighting

- 4.1 The sub-panel reviewed recommendations from readers on outputs where cases for double-weighting had been made. It was confirmed that it would be possible for a request for double-weighting to be accepted, but for that output to receive a low score. However, the two decisions were taken separately, with the case for double-weighting considered first. The decision whether or not to accept the case was based on the 100-word statement included in the submission, and a review of the output itself. The sub-panel agreed to confirm decisions on all double-weighting requests at its meeting in July.

5. Future meetings

- 5.1. The next meeting would be held on 8 and 9 July 2014 at Felbridge Hotel and Spa, East Grinstead.
- 5.2. In advance of the next meeting, members were asked to aim to read the remainder of their output allocation, so that draft output sub-profiles based on at least 75% of panellist scores could be reviewed.
- 5.3. Calibration of the environment element would also take place at the July meeting and further information about this exercise would be circulated by the secretary shortly.

6. Any other business

- 6.1. There being no other business, the chair thanked members for their contribution and closed the meeting.



REF Sub-panel 23: Meeting 5

8 and 9 July 2014

Felbridge Hotel and Spa, East Grinstead

Minutes

Present:

Sara Arber
Chetan Bhatt
Ben Bowling
Eamonn Carrabine
Nickie Charles
Graham Crow
Mary Daly (deputy chair)
Sara Delamont
Tia DeNora
Barbara Doig
Janet Finch (main panel chair)
Deborah McClean (adviser)
Linda McKie
Nikolas Rose
Mike Savage
John Scott (chair)
John Solomos
Liz Stanley
John Thompson
Sylvia Walby
Alan Warde
Gillian Weale (secretary)
Nira Yuval-Davies

Apologies:

William Solesbury
Sandra Walklate

1. Introduction and competence to do business

- 1.1. The chair welcomed members to the meeting and introduced Janet Finch, chair of Main Panel C, who would be attending for the first part of the meeting on the morning of 8 July.
- 1.2. In the light of the attendance, the panel confirmed that it was competent to do business.
- 1.3. The deputy chair of the sub-panel and the chair of Main Panel C updated the sub-panel on discussions held at the previous meeting of the Main Panel on 19 June. Very good progress was being made across sub-panels within MPC, greatly helped by individual panel members keeping up with the timetable for reviewing submissions. The MPC had reviewed emerging impact sub-profiles at sub-panel level and agreed to undertake an audit of the impact assessment to ensure consistency of judgement across UOAs within the Main Panel, although it was clear that all sub-panels had followed a robust and proper process in making their assessments. It was very important that assessment decisions could be defended on the basis of the criteria, and the evidence within the case studies and templates.
- 1.4. The sub-panel considered its impact profile in the light of discussions at Main Panel C and agreed to carry out a moderation exercise of its impact assessment. The chair would select a 10% sample of case studies and templates and allocate them to a third (academic) reader. The results of the moderation exercise would be discussed at the sub-panel's next meeting.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

- 2.1. The panel confirmed that the minutes of the previous meeting (Parts 1 and 2) held on 12, 13 and 14 May 2014 were an accurate record of discussions.
- 2.2. The sub-panel received a report on the two impact case studies which were outstanding from the previous meeting. The two reviewers had considered the case studies in the light of the results of audit queries raised, and had consulted a third (user) reader. The sub-panel approved the recommended score for each case study.

3. Conflicts of interest

- 3.1. The panel reviewed the register of their declared major conflicts of interest and confirmed they were correct.

4. Outputs assessment

- 4.1. The sub-panel reviewed the emerging output sub-profiles, based on 95% outputs scored to date, and in the light of the overall Main Panel C position. It also considered data showing scoring patterns according to panel member. Issues concerning different scoring patterns between panel members, and the overall profile for Sociology compared with other sub-panels in MPC were discussed at length. These included: the potential selectivity of institutions when preparing submissions to the REF, the relative proportions of certain types of output within submissions, the process of arriving at panel-agreed scores, the amount of work in particular sub-disciplines within Sociology, and the application of the assessment criteria of originality, significance and rigour.
- 4.2. In the light of the issues raised, it was agreed that a review exercise of output assessment would be carried out between this meeting and the next. Panel members were requested to revisit all scores given, and make any adjustments by 15 August, with particular focus on outputs on the borderline between starred levels. The chair and deputy chair would review the changes and then select a sample of outputs to be read by a third reader, if necessary. The results of this exercise would be discussed at the sub-panel's next meeting.
- 4.3. The emerging output profile for each submission was discussed in turn. Members of the sub-panel absented themselves from discussions of institutions with which they had conflicts of interest.
- 4.4. Ben Bowling, joint assessor in SP20 (Law), SP22 (Social Work and Social Policy) and SP23 (Sociology) attended for a discussion of outputs in the sub-discipline of Criminology. Main Panel C had reviewed the assessment of outputs in this sub-discipline at its meeting on 19 June, and concluded that outputs were being scored consistently irrespective of which UOA they had been submitted to. Most Criminology outputs submitted to SP23 were truly sociological in nature and did not need to be cross-referred to other sub-panels.

5. Individual staff circumstances

- 5.1. The secretariat gave a report on the review of individual staff circumstances and explained in more detail those cases with clearly defined circumstances where it was considered that the criteria for a reduction in outputs had not been met. One case was still subject to the outcome of an audit. The sub-panel approved the recommendations, subject to the outcome of the outstanding audit query.

6. Environment calibration

- 6.1. The chair introduced the calibration exercise by outlining the calibration of environment which had taken place at the Main Panel meeting on 24 April. Each sub-panel chair had read environment templates from a number of subject areas

represented on the Main Panel. Each template had been introduced in discussion by the chair of the relevant sub-panel and one other Main Panel member. Members had scored the calibration sample before and after hearing the discussion, but no overall score had been settled on for any of the templates in the sample.

- 6.2. The chair reminded sub-panel members of the criteria for the assessment of environment, including that the Panel criteria and working methods for submissions to sub-panels within MPC allowed for an overall view to be formed of the environment sub-profile ('Panel criteria' Part 2C paragraph 117), having taken account of the narrative and quantitative information within each submission.
- 6.3. In advance of the meeting, a sample of four environment submissions from unconflicted institutions had been read and scored by each panel member. These scores were displayed by the secretariat, and each submission in the sample discussed. During discussion the following general points emerged:
 - 6.3.1. Equal weight should be given to the information contained in the narrative and that contained in the quantitative data, as institutions had been encouraged by the 'Guidance on submissions' to present both current activity and future plans.
 - 6.3.2. Templates should be read on their own terms with a view to seeing how they addressed relevant issues like equality and diversity and PGR training in their own way, rather than looking only for key words or particular examples like Athena SWAN, Doctoral Training Centres and so on. Similarly, 'contribution to the discipline' could be achieved through a great variety of different routes.
 - 6.3.3. It would be important to recognise the diversity of units submitting to SP23, and look for a credible relationship between the number of staff submitted (FTE) and the kinds of activities described in the template.
 - 6.3.4. A coherent environment statement would show strong links between the strategy described in section b. and the other sections of the document.
- 6.4. The chair had allocated each environment submission to two members of the sub-panel to assess, one of these being the institutional assessor who had also read the impact template and the outputs for that submission. It was agreed that in addition to the two nominated readers, every member of the sub-panel would read and score every environment submission for which they did not have a conflict of interest, in preparation for the full assessment at the next meeting.

7. Feedback reports

- 7.1. The chair would be drafting an overview report from the sub-panel which would provide overall feedback on the state of research within UoA23. This would form part of the Main Panel's overview report. He invited comments from all sub-panel members on matters such as research within different sub-disciplines, the proportions of different types of output, the use of double-weighting requests, approaches to the impact part of submissions, selectivity/inclusion of staff, and overall strengths and weaknesses which sub-panel members may have observed

during their assessment. Any comments on the assessment processes would also be welcome.

- 7.2. In addition, feedback reports to each submitting institution were required, and the institutional assessor would be responsible for drafting these, with help from the guidance document circulated with papers for this meeting. Drafts of feedback on outputs and impact would be considered at the next meeting, subject to the results of the moderation exercises being carried out to the same timetable.

8. Audit

- 8.1. The secretariat tabled an update on the audit queries raised so far in relation to staff and outputs, including the results of the data comparison audit undertaken in May by the REF audit team. Further audit queries could continue to be raised, including on environment submissions.

9. Future meetings

- 9.1. The next meeting is to be held on 23 and 24 September at Radisson Blu, 12 Holloway Circus, Queensway, Birmingham B1 1BT.
- 9.2. The secretary would shortly be circulating further information on the work required of panel members between this meeting and the next, as well as a list of dates when panel members would be unavailable over the summer holiday period.

10. Any other business

- 10.1. There being no other business, the chair thanks members for their contribution and closed the meeting.



Sub-panel 23: Meeting 6
23 & 24 September 2014
Radisson Blu Hotel, Birmingham

Minutes

Present:

Sara Arber
Chetan Bhatt
Eamonn Carrabine
Nickie Charles
Hazel Crabb-Wyke (REF team) – Day 1
Graham Crow
Mary Daly (deputy chair)
Sara Delamont
Tia DeNora
Barbara Doig
Janet Finch (main panel chair) – Day 1
Deborah McClean (adviser)
Linda McKie
Nikolas Rose
Mike Savage
John Scott (chair)
William Solesbury
John Solomos
Liz Stanley
John Thompson
Sylvia Walby
Sandra Walklate – Day 1
Alan Warde
Gillian Weale (secretary)
Nira Yuval-Davies

Apologies:

None.

1. Introduction and competence to do business

- 1.1. The chair welcomed members to the meeting, including Janet Finch, chair of Main Panel C, attending on the first day.
- 1.2. In the light of the attendance, the panel confirmed that it was competent to do business.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

- 2.1 The panel confirmed that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 and 9 July were a correct record of discussions, subject to two amendments:
 - 2.1.1 Amend Minute 4.2, third sentence to read 'The chair and deputy chair would review the changes and then select a sample of outputs to be read by a third reader, if necessary'.
 - 2.1.2 Amend Minute 6.4, second sentence to read 'It was agreed that in addition to the two nominated readers, every member of the sub-panel would read and score every environment submission for which they did not have a conflict of interest...'

3. Register of interests

- 3.1. The panel reviewed the register of their declared major conflicts of interest and confirmed they were correct.

4. Impact assessment

- 4.1. The chair reported on the outcomes of the impact moderation exercise carried out after the previous meeting, which had considered the sub-panel's impact results in the context of the assessment of impact across sub-panels in MPC. A 10% sample of case studies had been read and the agreed score moderated by a third (academic) reader, with some consultation with user members of the sub-panel as necessary. Two minor adjustments were recommended as a result of this exercise, which would affect the submissions concerned but not the overall position for the sub-panel.
- 4.2. The sub-panel discussed the report prepared by Mrs Doig, which had gathered feedback and reflection from the user and impact assessors on the assessment of impact within SP23. The report reflected the views of all impact assessors who responded for the request for feedback in May 2014, at the time the impact assessment had taken place. Mrs Doig drew attention to key points in the report, as follows:
 - 4.2.1. Despite reservations leading up to the REF assessment phase, it had been possible to assess impact, and indeed to find examples at the 4* level.

- 4.2.2. There were some improvements which might be made to the process, and it would be helpful to think for future exercises about the role of audit and the levels of evidence required to corroborate impact claims, as well as the timeframes governing the assessment of impact in this exercise.
- 4.2.3. All impact assessors had had to accommodate considerable workloads to do justice to their role, and this raised questions over the ability of users to be involved in future exercises. One solution would be to recruit more impact assessors, although in the case of Sociology, the pool from which they could be drawn was fairly limited. It would also be worth reviewing the systems used for the assessment of impact, as some impact assessors had found these daunting.
- 4.3. The chair thanked Mrs Doig for compiling a very interesting and useful report, from which elements would be incorporated into the overall feedback report from the sub-panel. In particular it would be important to encourage the development of impact in a range of innovative ways, rather than only those ways which might be perceived as easier to write up within the constraints of the case study format.

5. Output assessment

- 5.1. The chair reported on the outcomes of the exercise to moderate output scores, which was undertaken over the summer. Panellists had been asked to review scores given to outputs they had been allocated to read, and recommend any changes to these, in the light of discussion at the previous meeting about the variations in scoring patterns between panellists. As a result of this review, changes were recommended to 6% of outputs. The chair and deputy chair had considered these recommendations in the context of panellists' scoring patterns and concluded that no third reading was necessary, as scoring of outputs was being done consistently.
- 5.2. To further understand the possible effects of marker variation on the draft output sub-profiles, the chair presented data showing the scores by panellist when marking as the institutional assessor, and then when marking according to subject specialism. It was not possible on the basis of this data to identify any significant patterns in marker variation and the chair stated that he was confident that the criteria had been consistently applied in the assessment of outputs. The chair of Main Panel C confirmed that there had also been consistency of process across sub-panels within MPC, and that there had been no expectation of consistency of outcome.

6. Environment assessment

- 6.1 The sub-panel undertook the assessment of environment submissions. In advance of the meeting, all panel members had read and scored all environment statements, and the scores were displayed as the basis for discussion. The two allocated readers for each environment submission introduced their recommended scores and the reasons for them, and the panel agreed the final

scores after plenary discussion. Some scores were revisited at the end, before the sub-panel considered and confirmed the resulting sub-profiles for environment, institution by institution.

- 6.2 Panel members absented themselves from the discussion of environment submissions from institutions with which they had a major conflict of interest.

7. Overall profiles and feedback reports

- 7.1 The sub-panel reviewed the overall profiles and the constituent sub-profiles for each submission. The panel signed off the sub-profiles as reflecting the fair application of the REF criteria and noted the overall profiles produced from their weighted combination. Panellists highlighted the magnifying consequences of strong and weaker impact profiles that resulted in a distribution of institutions that did not perfectly reflect the relative strengths apparent in the output profiles. It was noted that a more refined view of unit strengths and weaknesses could be obtained from direct inspection of the sub-profiles.
- 7.2 The sub-panel had a general discussion of principles governing the drafting of feedback reports. It was particularly important to ensure that the feedback comments were consistent with the sub-profiles and illuminated any particular features of the submission reflected in the scores. Panellists were reminded that the feedback on individual submissions was confidential to the heads of institutions, but that the sub-panel's overall feedback report would be made public. The qualitative vocabulary used should be that of the assessment criteria, and be couched in terms of the collective judgement of the sub-panel. Feedback to smaller submissions or institutions submitting for the first time could be encouraging, but should avoid appearing to give advice. Revised drafts of feedback would be considered alongside the sub-profiles at the sub-panel's final meeting.
- 7.3 Panellists were also encouraged to send any comments for feedback in the overall report to the chair. It was agreed that there should be general comments on: double-weighted outputs, the number and quality of monographs/books in submissions, the kinds of impact submitted, and the effect of impact on the overall profiles.
- 7.4 The chair reminded members of the confidential nature of the sub panel's deliberations, which should not be discussed outside the panel membership.

8. Future meetings

- 8.1 The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 7 October at CCT Venues-Smithfield, Two East Poultry Avenue, Smithfield, EC1A 9PT.



Sub-panel 23: Meeting 7
7 October 2014
CCT Venues-Smithfield, London

Minutes

Present:

Sara Arber
Chetan Bhatt
Eamonn Carrabine
Nickie Charles
Graham Crow
Mary Daly (deputy chair)
Sara Delamont
Tia DeNora
Barbara Doig
Janet Finch (main panel chair)
Deborah McClean (adviser)
Linda McKie
Nikolas Rose
Mike Savage
John Scott (chair)
William Solesbury
John Solomos
Liz Stanley
John Thompson
Sylvia Walby
Sandra Walklate
Alan Warde
Gillian Weale (secretary)
Nira Yuval-Davies

Apologies:

None.

1. Introduction and competence to do business

- 1.1. The chair welcomed members to the meeting, including Janet Finch, chair of Main Panel C.

- 1.2. In the light of the attendance, the panel confirmed that it was competent to do business.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

- 2.1 The panel confirmed that the draft minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 and 24 September were a correct record of the discussion, subject to some small amendments.

3. Register of interests

- 3.1. The panel reviewed the register of their declared major conflicts of interest and confirmed they were correct.

4. Confidentiality

- 4.1. The sub-panel was reminded of the confidentiality arrangements surrounding its deliberations, as the exercise entered its closing phases. The results would be published on 18 December, before which they should not be discussed outside the sub-panel membership. After the results were published, members of the sub-panel would be able to respond to queries in general terms on the processes followed and the other aspects of the exercise which were in the public domain. All press enquiries should be referred to the REF team. The secretariat presented a timetable for the publication of the results and other material, and agreed to circulate this to members, along with further details on the return or disposal of confidential assessment materials.

5. Overall profiles

- 5.1. The chair reported on discussions at the meeting of Main Panel C on 1 October on the subject of the effect of the weighting of the impact sub-profile on the overall profile. This effect was to be expected but the Main Panel acknowledged that it was particularly apparent in the overall profile for SP23. However, the overall profile for SP23 was comparable with those for other sub-panels within the Main Panel, and especially similar to that of SP22: Social Work and Social Policy.

6. Impact assessment

- 6.1 In the light of discussions at the previous meeting about the effect of the impact sub-profile on the overall profile, the chair and deputy chair had undertaken a further moderation exercise of three impact submissions to further scrutinise the scores awarded and the potential for the effects of marker variation. Across this sample, ten different academic panel members and all six impact assessors had been involved in assessing the material. High and low marks had been awarded

by different pairs of readers, demonstrating that all readers were using the full range of marks in making their assessments.

- 6.2 In addition to this further moderation, the chair had asked all members of the sub-panel to read two impact case studies in order for the scores to be confirmed in a plenary discussion. Having discussed both case studies, the sub-panel were content to confirm the score originally awarded, and for similar reasons in both cases.
- 6.3 Members of the panel who had a major conflict of interest in either submission left the room for discussion of both.
- 6.4 The sub-panel expressed its thanks to the chair and deputy chair for undertaking the detailed analysis of impact scores, and allowing a further plenary moderation exercise.

7. Environment assessment

- 7.1 The chair reported on discussions of emerging environment sub-profiles at the Main Panel C meeting on 1 October. Sub-panels had been invited to revisit their scoring of submissions with a large proportion of 4*. Accordingly, the chair had asked all members to re-read two environment submissions in this category. Following discussion, it was agreed to adjust the score in one case.
- 7.2 Members of the sub-panel left the room during discussion of submissions with which they had a major conflict of interest.

8. Feedback and overview reports

- 8.1 Quality profiles and draft feedback reports were considered for each submission, beginning with plenary discussion of those for whom no panel member had a conflict of interest. Various principles of drafting were agreed, to ensure consistency of tone and vocabulary in each feedback report. Panel members were requested to produce final drafts to the secretary by 22 October. These would be copy-edited by the secretariat before being confirmed by the chair as an accurate record of the sub-panel's judgement.
- 8.2 The sub-panel confirmed recommended output, impact and environment sub-profiles and an overall quality profile for each of the following submissions to the UOA, based in each case on its full and final assessment of the complete submission, made in accordance with the published criteria and working methods:

University of Aberdeen
University of Abertay Dundee
Birkbeck College
University of Bristol

Brunel University
University of Cambridge
Cardiff University
City University, London
University of East London
University of Edinburgh
University of Essex
University of Exeter
Goldsmiths' College
King's College London
Lancaster University
University of Leicester
London School of Economics and Political Science
University of Manchester
Manchester Metropolitan University
University of Newcastle upon Tyne
Open University
University of Oxford
Queen's University Belfast
Roehampton University
University of Surrey
University of Sussex
University of Warwick
University of Winchester
University of York

The sub-panel resolved to recommend the quality profiles for each of the submissions listed above, as set out in the panel spreadsheet, to the main panel for agreement.

- 8.3 The sub-panel also discussed a draft of its overall report, and were invited to send further comments for inclusion to the chair by 22 October. Points reflecting on aspects of the process could also be passed to the chair for him to report at the two feedback sessions being conducted by HEFCE following the end of the exercise. It would be helpful to document these in some way so that they could inform any future exercise of this kind.

9. Any other business

- 9.1. Warm thanks were expressed to all members, the chair, deputy chair and the secretariat for their hard work and contribution across the period of the assessment.