

**Research Quality Review**

**2008-2014**

**Guidelines**

**April 2014 *(Revised November 2014)***

**Contents**

[Executive Summary 3](#_Toc404861385)

[Objectives of the Exercise 3](#_Toc404861386)

[Principles governing the use of the RQR outcomes in resource allocation 3](#_Toc404861387)

[Review Structure 4](#_Toc404861388)

[Criteria for Assessment 4](#_Toc404861389)

[Guidelines 8](#_Toc404861390)

[Introduction 8](#_Toc404861391)

[Definitions 8](#_Toc404861392)

[Content of Submissions 10](#_Toc404861393)

[Categories of Staff 13](#_Toc404861394)

[Unit of Assessment Description 14](#_Toc404861395)

[Assessment Process 14](#_Toc404861396)

[Research Excellence 15](#_Toc404861397)

[Proportions of work to be examined in detail 17](#_Toc404861398)

[Staffing Issues 17](#_Toc404861399)

[Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality 19](#_Toc404861400)

[Appendix A: Panels 20](#_Toc404861401)

[Appendix B: Quality Assessment Levels and Definitions 27](#_Toc404861402)

# Executive Summary

Following the Research Quality Review (RQR) exercise carried out in 2008/09, the University agreed to conduct a follow-up review in 2014/15.

The first RQR was commended by the Irish Universities Institutional Review process, carried out by Quality and Qualifications Ireland which commends, “the design and implementation of the Research Quality Review as an instance of good practice worthy of wider emulation and the conduct of the RQR which was a remarkable exercise that has acted as a significant stimulus to UCC’s work as a research institution…”

The exercise also made the allocation of the research element of the Resource Allocation Model (RAM) clearer than it had been previously.

The process has been jointly managed and implemented by the Academic Council Research & Innovation Committee and the Quality Promotion Committee, overseen by a joint Steering Committee with external membership. This has led to focused expertise from both the academic and the quality review perspectives being applied to the process, metrics and structures under which the research review will be conducted. External expertise was sought at the start of the exercise to ensure comparability with best practice internationally.

This document outlines the timescale for the review, units of assessment, the nature of information to be sought and the criteria to be used for assessment.

## Objectives of the Exercise

* To provide an independent assessment of the quality and level of research activity at UCC at Department/School/Research Institute level, benchmarked on a disciplinary basis.
* To provide a means of international comparability across research units.
* To provide an overview of the status of research on a broad disciplinary-based level across the University.
* To provide information at a sufficient level of granularity to facilitate the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation (OVPRI) in its assessment of all research units and in its planning for the future levels of support needed.
* To inform strategic planning in UCC.

## Principles governing the use of the RQR outcomes in resource allocation

* The outcomes of the RQR should be used transparently in resource allocation. This includes but is not limited to the RAM.
* Strategic resource allocation with the objective of improving and enhancing research performance and in partnership between the Colleges and the OVPRI will be at the core of the implementation of the exercise.
* All areas should be allocated resource through the RAM, albeit at lower levels for lower performance. The precise allocation will be approved by University Management Team (Operations).
* The College should consider using the same set of principles regarding resource allocation to the Schools.

## Review Structure

1. Fifteen Peer Review Panels will be appointed, based on disciplinary clusters. Peer review teams may vary in size according to the size and complexity of the cluster of academic units and disciplines within the cluster.
2. Peer Review Panels will receive material in advance. The majority of reviewers will work remotely. Chairs will visit the University twice: before the exercise for briefing and to ensure consistency of approach and, together with the disciplinary vice chairs, after the remote review of submissions has taken place.
3. Site visits to include:

First site visit

* Information and briefing meetings between Panel Chairs and members of the Steering Committee.
* Briefings with Colleges and RICUs on prevailing research and graduate education conditions.

Second site visit (by Chairs and Disciplinary Vice Chairs)

* Presentation from academic units on research activity.
* Meetings with staff, researchers and postgraduate research students.
* Meetings with relevant Officers of the University.
* Visit to facilities of units.
* Consideration of the reports of the remote reviewers.
* Agreement on results.
* Drafting of report according to guidelines and criteria for assessment.

## Criteria for Assessment

Research performance will be evaluated, relative to international disciplinary norms, under the following headings:

1. Selected published output
2. Total published output
3. Peer esteem
4. Research related activities
5. Postgraduate research environment
6. Research income

**Action Required**

*By individual staff:*

* Maintenance of full IRIS profile (on-going for the review period).
* Selection of five leading research outputs for this period (by 31 January 2015).

*By Heads of Units and RICUs:*

* Coordination and compilation of research submission (by 31 December 2014).

*By College contact:*

* Point of contact with the RQR Steering Committee (on-going for the review period).
* Co-ordination of research submissions at College level is recommended (by 31 December 2014).
* Production of a briefing statement for the first site visit by Chairs.

Further specific information may be found at: <http://www.ucc.ie/en/qpu/rqr-1415/>

**Timeline for Exercise**

**2014**

**2015**

# Guidelines

## Introduction

The following pages provide guidelines for the quality review of research activity to be conducted in UCC in 2014-15. They are intended to be of help both to the academic units and RICUs preparing submissions and to describe the criteria and working methods for all review panels.

## Definitions

For the purposes of the review the following definitions apply:

1. **Assessment Period:** the period from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2014. The research described in submissions from academic units and research centres/institutes, including data about research funding and the textual commentary, must relate to this period.
2. **Census Date:** the date determining the affiliation of academic and research staff to a particular academic unit/research centre/institute. All staff should be submitted by the academic unit/research centre/institute that employs them on this date, regardless of previous or forthcoming changes in their employment status. Note that staff can be associated with an academic unit and a RICU, but will only submit and be reviewed once and the outputs incorporated into the academic unit and the RICU. A staff census will be undertaken during the present academic year on 31 May 2014 to enable planning. An update to the census will be undertaken on 31 October 2014, to account for all staff hired after May 2014 and who will be in post at the time of the review, to provide the final list for the review.
3. **Publication Period:** the period during which research outputs must be placed in the public domain (or in the case of confidential outputs, lodged with the sponsor) if they are to qualify for inclusion in the assessment. The publication period runs from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2014.
4. **Research:** this definition was approved at the Academic Council meeting of 7 March 2008 and remains unchanged:

‘Research’ for the purpose of the review is to be understood as original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship\*; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction. It excludes routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes such as for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques. It also excludes the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research.

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

1. **Consultancy:** income and research outputs arising from consultancy contracts should normally be excluded, since consultancy is usually concerned with applying existing knowledge. However, they may be included if the work undertaken or published as a result meets the definition of research, irrespective of the nature of the contract or invoicing arrangement.
2. **Pedagogical Research:** is included in the scope of the RQR and includes research which enhances the theoretical and/or conceptual understanding of:
* teaching and learning processes in higher education
* teacher and learner experiences in higher education
* the environment or contexts in which teaching and learning in higher education take place
* teaching and learning outcomes in higher education
* the relationships between these processes, outcomes and contexts
1. **Applied and Practice-Based Research:** is included in the scope of the RQR andinvolves a process of systematic investigation within a specific context in order to solve an identified problem in that context. It aims to create new or improved systems (of thought or production), products, processes, materials, devices, or services which have an impact on society through enhanced wealth-creation and quality of life.

Some characteristics of applied research and practice-based research are that:

1. They are informed by an intellectual infrastructure of scholarly research in the field.
2. They apply and/or transfer enhanced knowledge, methods, tools and resources from pure research and developmental research.
3. They contribute to scholarship in the field through systematic dissemination of the results.
4. The outcomes may be specific to the situation in which the research has been applied, although the methods/tools evolved are often transferable.
5. **Creative Research:** encompasses creative work and its outcomes in a range of subject areas, including creative writing, music, drama, dance, theatre, performance, live art, and film. This research may lead to published materials in a variety of forms in any of these subject areas. Such research is also diverse in the range of artistic practices on which it may draw and may extend to any cultural, geographical and historical context. It may include production or performance of creative material which itself results from a process of original creative enquiry. This work may also be collaborative in nature.
6. **Research Submission:** this is the totality of what will be submitted to review panels and incorporates contextual information (the **research description** for each unit which sets out the extent and boundaries of the research carried out in that area), the research statement (see below) and the information required by the six Research Activity Indicators (see below).
7. **Research Statement:** the research statement will provide contextual information and an overview of the research activity in each unit of assessment during the review period in addition to a critical assessment of progress made since the last RQR, including a response to any recommendations made. A template and further information on submission will be provided. It will be a maximum of 5,000 words (see below for further detail).
8. **Research Activity Indicators (RAIs):** there are six research activity indicators. The information provided under each of the six headings, together with the research statement and the research description, constitutes the research submission.
9. **Unit of Assessment:** these are the units reviewed by each panel as defined in Appendix A. It includes each of the academic units and each of the associated Research Institutes, Centres or Units. NB: Not all of the associated Research Institutes, Centres or Units will be reviewed separately.

## Content of Submissions

Each research submission will contain the following:

* A research statement (see above: research statement).
* A research description (see above: research submission) *already provided.*
* Information provided in the six RAIs (see below).

Each unit will be assessed in terms of six Research Activity Indicators (RAI) and in terms of international and disciplinary norms. These are defined in more detail in Appendix B:

1. Selected published output
2. Total published output for period 2008-14
3. Peer esteem
4. Research-related activities
5. Postgraduate research education
6. Research income.

RAIs 1-3 focus on individual researchers.

RAIs 4-6 largely focus on panels and the units of assessment that comprise them.

A template for the submission will follow.

**Action Required**

*By individual staff:*

* Maintenance of full IRIS profile
* Selection of five leading research outputs for this period

*By Heads of Units and RICUs:*

* Coordination and compilation of research submission (see above).

*By College contact:*

* Point of contact with the RQR Steering Committee.
* Co-ordination of research submissions at College level is recommended.
* Production of a briefing statement for the first site visit by Chairs.

**RAI 1**

**Selected Published Output (25%)**

Category A researchers (see pg. 13) must supply five selected research outputs. Category B researchers (see pg. 13) are encouraged to do so. The five outputs should be work published during the period of review 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2014 and should be presented as follows:

Name of author(s)

Title of work

Publication details

Submission should be electronic wherever possible.

Each of the five outputs should be prefaced with an explanation of up to one hundred words as to its significance and why it was chosen. A template will be supplied. For multi-author works, clarification of the role in the research and publication would be helpful.

**RAI 2**

**Total Published Output for period 2008-14 (15%)**

Category A and B researchers will be assessed in terms of their total output during the period as represented on the Institutional Research Information System IRIS (see also Categories of Staff below).

Although IRIS contains the full career profile of researchers, the period of review for the purposes of this RAI is 1 January 2008 – 31 December 2014.

**RAI 3**

**Peer Esteem (15%)**

This RAI assesses the overall scholarly standing of Category A and Category B researchers, based on information presented in their IRIS profiles. Evidence of peer esteem includes:

* Career publication output
* Fellowships
* Honours
* Invited Plenary Presentations at significant disciplinary conferences
* Service on appointment panels at other institutions
* External examining
* Translation of works into other language
* Refereeing/editing of journals

This category also covers significant research activity which occurred before the review period began (e.g. widely cited publication, international prizes awarded, etc.). The rating given to an individual should reflect the level of the individual’s achievements across his or her research career as a whole. Again, no action is required other than full update of IRIS profile.

**RAI 4**

**Research-Related Activities (15%)**

RAI 4 allows for information about the research context to be provided in narrative form in addition to individual IRIS profiles. Units are asked to present activity within and beyond the Unit by individual or groups of researchers in the Unit. This includes, for example:

* seminar series
* research-focused public engagement exercises
* specialist training provision
* collaboration (inter and intra-institutional)
* research mentoring
* outreach activities
* support for scholarly institutions
* evidence of research-led teaching at all levels
* external engagement including enterprise collaboration
* trans-disciplinary interaction where appropriate.

**RAI 5**

**Post-Graduate Research Education (15%)**

Central information on postgraduate research will be provided and will reflect:

* Numbers of postgraduate students
* Completion times and rates and the process used within the unit to ensure that these are satisfactory
* Numbers of funded postgraduates
* Review processes
* Supervision arrangements
* Facilities
* Uptake on postgraduate training opportunities

Units will also provide contextual information and comment under each of these headings.

**RAI 6**

**Research Income (15%)**

Central information will be provided on research income. This information concerns the collective research-related income of the Unit within the context of the national research landscape relevant to researchers in the appropriate disciplines. This will also be informed by the contextual information provided in the Research Statement.

1. The research income data considered will be provided to the Unit from central sources and will reflect income from research related consultancy, studentships and more traditional sources of research income.
2. In the case of collaborative grants involving several institutions, only the income awarded to UCC should be considered, but the role as co-ordinator etc., might be reflected in RAI 4.
3. Where researchers are assessed within an academic unit and a RICU, research income will be listed and indicated as such under both.

## Categories of Staff

There are three categories of research staff included in the RQR:

1. **Category A** researchers are permanent and fixed term academic staff from Schools, Departments and disciplines specified in the respective College rules who were in place on the census date (31/10/14). In addition, full-time principal investigators within RICUs are included in this category.

All Category A staff must be entered for the RQR and the required data for these individuals should be available through their updated IRIS profile.

1. **Category B** Researchers are individuals who are not Category A staff at the census date but whose research is identified as having contributed to the research output and activities of the UCC Unit under review and for whom updated IRIS profiles are available. They may comprise, for example:
* Emeritus Professors;
* Individuals who were Category A researchers during some but not all of the review period and who have now left the University;

Staff who are employed by UCC within the following staff categories:

* Post-doctoral researcher
* Senior post-doctoral fellows on an independent research grant
* Research fellows
* Senior research fellows
* Clinical research staff
* Research professors

Category B researchers may but are not required to submit five publications and the narrative in RAIs 3 and 4 should explain the nature of their contribution to a dynamic research environment.

1. **Category C** researchers are individuals who do not have a current IRIS profile but who were employed by UCC during part or all of the review period. They include any Category A or B researchers who have left the University. Category C research is included in a dedicated section of the template (entitled “category C research”) as a way of recording the key outputs of such staff (such as, prominent publications and research grants).

*Category B and C researchers who work as part of a team and whose research output is shared with a Category A researcher are not required to return independently. However, Category B and C researchers who have independent research outputs should be encouraged to participate.*

## Unit of Assessment Description

For each of the panels there is a description of the units of assessment. The description indicates the main areas covered by the units of assessment and is not intended to give an exhaustive account of the sub-disciplinary coverage. Units have been allocated to a particular panel based on these descriptions. Unit Descriptions are provided in Appendix A.

## Assessment Process

1. This is an **expert peer review exercise**. Panel members will exercise their knowledge, judgement and expertise to reach a collective view on the quality profile of research described in each submission, that is, the proportion of work in each submission that is judged to reach each of five quality levels *(see below).* The definition of each level relies on a conception of quality (of leading international standard) which is the absolute standard of quality in each unit of assessment. Each submission will be assessed against absolute standards and will not be ranked against other submissions.
2. External experts nominated by the academic units will be asked to suggest who, from among their list of panel nominations, might be suitable for the role of Chair. The final decision and approval of chairs will be made by the Steering Committee.
3. Up to five disciplinary vice chairs will be appointed, with the assistance of the Chair, for each panel. They will be responsible for the co-ordination of the electronic evaluation of each disciplinary unit by the remote reviewers. They will attend the site visit post-evaluation.
4. Chairs and disciplinary vice chairs will be responsible for ensuring consistency across and within panels and the application of international standards in the exercise.
5. Panel reviewers will initially evaluate RAIs 1-3 and elements of RAI 4 at an individual level. They will subsequently review overall performance of the academic unit or RICU drawing on the input of each researcher, recognising that researchers may appear in more than one.
6. **First Site Visit.** Panel chairs will visit UCC for one day for briefing purposes and to ensure that the panels work consistently as far as possible.
7. **Second Site Visit**. Following the remote review of the submissions, the chairs and disciplinary vice-chairs of the panels will visit UCC to conduct site visits. They will meet with staff and officers of the Unit and University and will visit the research and other facilities of each unit under review in order to form an assessment of the research environment. At the second site visit, the chairs and disciplinary vice chairs will consider the reports from the remote reviewers in order to initiate discussion on each individual submission. A preliminary profile of the quality of outputs will be considered. A profile of the quality of research outputs and peer esteem will be compiled, along with decisions made as to scores for the research related activities, postgraduate training, the research funding and research environment, taking on board the deliberations of the panel at large.
8. An overall research evaluation (ORE) will be awarded by the Panel to each unit. This will be achieved through a process of consideration of all scores in the 6 RAIs along with consideration by the Panel of the Research Statement and other contextual information. The results for the 6 RAIs will also be produced for each unit, providing anonymous percentiles for RAIs 1, 2 and 3, along with results for the unit in RAIs 4, 5 and 6. The panel will finally confirm that, in its expert judgement, the overall recommended score is an accurate and appropriate reflection of the research activity in each submission, and that its assessment has taken account of all components of the submission**.** Further guidance will be provided to Chairs of panels at the first site visit.
9. **Descriptive and evaluative statements.** Panels will provide a descriptive statement of their view of the overall quality of research activity for each academic unit. Panels are also asked, within this statement, to comment on the totality of research activity and performance in the context of the research environment in which the unit is working and to make recommendations for improvement.

## Research Excellence

Panels recognise the diverse range of disciplines represented by the units of assessment assigned to them. Set out below are the broad parameters for the assessment of the quality of research for each of the six Research Activity Indicators within which individual panels may exercise a degree of variation. The quality levels refer to quality standards of scholarship that are the norm within the international academic community.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Level 5** | Quality that is of leading international standard.The research work or activity will be **excellent**, displaying a very high level of originality, significance to the discipline and rigour; it will be innovative and potentially agenda-setting in research and/or policy fields |
| **Level 4** | Quality that is of **very good** standard in terms of originality, significance and rigour comparable with such work internationally. The research work or activity has had or is likely to have a significant impact on research and/or policy agendas |
| **Level 3** | Quality that demonstrates significance to the discipline and rigour to a **good** standard. The research work has had or is likely to have a recognised impact on research and/or policy agendas  |
| **Level 2** | Quality that demonstrates significance to the discipline and rigour to a **fair** standard.The research work or activity has only had or is likely to have a marginal impact upon existing paradigms and agendas within the discipline. |
| **Level 1** | Quality that falls below the adequate standard of recognised work within the discipline.The research work or activity is **poor** and has had no impact nor is it likely to have an impact upon existing paradigms and agendas within the discipline.  |

Because of the differences which exist between the six RAIs, appropriate criteria will be employed in each one:

RAI 1 will be evaluated against the criteria of originality, significance and rigour.

RAI 2 and 3 will be evaluated against the criteria of extent, diversity and quality.

RAI 4 and 5 will be evaluated against the criteria of international disciplinary norms.

RAI 6 will be evaluated against the criteria of funding levels for the specific unit and cognate disciplines available to researchers in Ireland.

**Research Outputs**

1. Publishedresearch is deliberately defined broadly: any form of publicly available, assessable output embodying research as defined for the review may be submitted, as may confidential outputs that are not publicly available. Panels expect to receive outputs in forms appropriate to disciplinary norms. Irrespective of the form and type of output, panels will seek, above all, to consider the intrinsic research quality of items submitted. Outputs must satisfy the definition of research in the relevant discipline, and be available in a form suitable for assessment.
2. Published research could include: papers in refereed journals; authored books; chapters in books; monographs; edited books; refereed conference papers; software; electronic and web-based publications; published maps; primary data reports, conference proceedings, technical reports, reviews, exhibitions, software, CD-ROM, other research-based contributions to debates on major scientific and policy issues and web resources. In addition to printed academic work, research outputs may include, but are not limited to: new materials, devices, instrumentation, new processes, images, products and buildings; intellectual property, whether in patents or other forms; performances, exhibits or events; work published in non-print media. In some cases, panels may ask for brief supplementary material describing the research content and significance of certain works, particularly where research outputs do not exist in a conventional form. The panel will work with the presumption that all forms of output are capable of achieving the highest standards of excellence.
3. In the case of confidential outputs, units of assessment must have the prior permission of the person(s) or organisation(s) to whom the work is confidential for the output to be made available for assessment.
4. The criteria for judging the quality of research outputs are intended to be sufficiently broad to enable the panels to recognise high quality research outcomes in all forms of research – whether fundamental, strategic, applied, practice-based or interdisciplinary.
5. So that panels can take full account of research that is of relevance to non-academic users, including industry and public bodies, the research quality review has made provision for confidential research outputs that are not publicly available to be submitted for assessment. These could include commercially sensitive research reports for companies, and reports for government departments or agencies which are not in the public domain. Where a confidential output is listed in a submission, the unit of assessment will be responsible for securing permission from the sponsor, and making the output available on request for panels to examine.
6. To ensure the appropriate assessment of interdisciplinary research, panels will have access to mechanisms for cross-referring parts of submissions. A unit may request that parts of one panel’s submissions are cross-referred to other relevant panel(s). The review team will consider all such requests but will not be bound by them. Cross-referral of parts of submission will take place at the level of the Chairs.
7. It is recognised that co-authorship is a legitimate element of high quality research and accordingly such outputs can be attributed in full to each of the co-authors. In relation to the five submitted pieces of research, the individual submitting a co-authored piece of work should indicate the extent of their contribution to that piece of work.

## Proportions of work to be examined in detail

1. Remote disciplinary reviewers will be given sufficient time to read and assess material relating to RAI 1. RAIs 2-6 will be assessed primarily in terms of information provided on IRIS and in line with disciplinary norms.
2. For research outputs produced in languages other than English, the panel may require that a 300 word abstract in English be provided, describing the content and nature of the work. (This does not necessarily apply to panel L which incorporates the School of Irish Learning). Panels will use this abstract to identify appropriate specialist advisers to whom the work may be referred, if the panel so decides. The abstracts themselves will not form the basis for assessment. This requirement is waived for outputs submitted in any of the units of assessment where the output is produced in any of the languages in the remit of that panel.

**Census of Staff**

All Units of assessment will be asked to provide complete information for a Census of all staff involved in the RQR. This Census will take place by 31 May 2014.

Units and Panels will receive a list of all academic and research staff. This is information from HR and should cover both category A and category B staff. The Heads of Units will be asked to confirm that the staff information for their unit of assessment is complete and correct. Equivalent information will be provided for the Tyndall Institute. Heads of units will be asked to provide this information by 31 May 2014.

## Staffing Issues

1. If the circumstances of individual staff have significantly adversely affected their contribution to the submission, units for assessment will be invited to describe these confidentially. Units need not describe circumstances (for example, a disability) that have had no adverse effect on an individual’s capacity to undertake research, as reflected by their contribution to the submission.
2. Panels will consider the following individual circumstances to the extent that they are stated to have had a material impact on the individual’s ability to produce the expected volume of research outputs in the assessment period (in these circumstances such staff may be described as 75%, 50% or 25%):
	1. Family and domestic matters, including:
		1. Absence on maternity, paternity, parental or adoption leave and arrangements on return to work following these periods of leave.
		2. Part-time working or other flexible working arrangements.
		3. Time spent acting as a carer or other domestic commitments.
	2. Disability, ill-health and injury, including:
3. Any disability including both permanent disabilities and any temporary disability with a duration of twelve months or more.
4. Absence from work on the advice of a registered medical practitioner.
	1. Engagement on long-term projects of significant scale and scope, which may include time seconded to other academic units or public service.
	2. Status as an early career researcher. These are individuals of any age who first entered the academic profession on or after 1 January 2008.
	3. Prolonged absences (absences for more than six months consecutively in the assessment period) which were agreed by the individual with the institution but which do not fall into one of the categories above. They include:
		1. Secondment to non-academic positions outside the higher education sector.
		2. Career breaks for purposes unconnected with research, teaching or other academic duties.
	4. Other absences which the institution is legally obliged to permit, such as absence arising out of involvement as a representative of the workforce.
	5. Any other personal circumstances which are considered to have had a significant impact on an individual’s ability to produce the expected volume of research outputs in the assessment period.
5. Other circumstances which an individual or academic unit wishes to raise comparable with these examples will be considered, as long as an explanation is provided as to the way in which they are said to have impacted on the individual’s ability to produce the expected volume of research outputs.
6. Panels will review the information provided regarding individual circumstances. They will determine whether those circumstances can reasonably be considered to have affected the individual’s ability to produce the expected volume of research outputs.
7. While guidance is given below on the information to be provided by the unit in respect of individual circumstances, it is for the panel to decide the relevance of the information to the quality rating to be given to the overall submission made by the unit.
8. All information submitted will be kept confidential by the panel members, who are subject to confidentiality undertakings in respect of all information contained in submissions. It will be used only for the purposes of assessing the submission in which it is contained, will not be published at any time and will be destroyed on completion of the review.
9. It is the responsibility of the unit to ensure that the information is submitted in compliance with the Data Protection Act (Amendment) 2003 and all other legal obligations.
10. Panels will use the information supplied confidentially in assessing submissions. Panels will not take account of circumstances that may be known to them, but which are not referenced in submissions.

## Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

1. Panel chairs and members will be asked to make declarations of interest. When invited to be a member of a panel, those so invited will be asked to declare if they have any potential conflict of interest before agreeing to be a chair, disciplinary vice chair or remote reviewer. If requested the Steering Committee will decide if the conflict is such as to make it inappropriate for the person to be a member of the panel. In the case of minor interests, such as co-investigation or co-authorship of a single paper, members will declare this and will not take lead or sole responsibility for assessing the published output linked to that research.
2. All panel members and specialist advisers are bound by a duty of confidentiality governing information contained in the submissions and panel discussions. Details of this and the guidance to panels on conflicts of interest may be found at <http://www.ucc.ie/en/qpu/rqr-1415/>

#

# Appendix A: Panels

*NB: All Research Centres/Institutes will be reviewed as part of their host academic unit except those marked with an asterisk which will be reviewed separately.*

**Panel A**

*Academic Schools/Departments*

School of Medicine, incorporating:

* Department of Medicine (inc Radiology)
* Department of Surgery (inc Anaesthesia)
* Department of Pathology (inc Med Microbiology)
* Department of Psychiatry
* Medical Education Unit

*Research Centres/Institutes*

* Alimentary Pharmabiotic Centre (APC)\*
* Centre for Research in Vascular Biology (CRVB)
* Cork Cancer Research Centre (CCRC)\*
* European Centre for Clinical Trials in Rare Diseases (ECCTRD)
* Tel for Health Research Group

**Panel B**

*Academic Schools/Departments*

School of Medicine, incorporating:

* Centre for Gerontology & Rehabilitation
* Department of Epidemiology & Public Health
* Department of General Practice
* Department of Paediatrics & Child Health
* Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology

*Research Centres/Institutes*

* National Perinatal Epidemiology Centre (NPEC)
* HRB Centre for Health & Diet Research (HRB-CHDR)
* Centre for Maternal Death Enquiries, Ireland (MDE Ireland)
* Neonatal Brain Research Group (NBRG)
* Irish Centre for Fetal and Neonatal Translational Research (INFANT)\*

**Panel C**

*Academic Schools/Departments*

School of Clinical Therapies, incorporating:

* Department of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy
* Department of Speech & Hearing Sciences

University Dental School & Hospital

School of Nursing & Midwifery

School of Pharmacy

*Research Centres/Institutes*

* Oral Health Services Research Centre (OHSRC)\*

**Panel D**

*Academic Schools/Departments*

School of Medicine, incorporating:

* Department of Anatomy & Neuroscience
* Department of Pharmacology & Therapeutics
* Department of Physiology

School of Food & Nutritional Sciences

Department of Microbiology

Department of Biochemistry

*Research Centres/Institutes*

* Biomerit Research Centre
* Cork Neuroscience Group (CNG)
* Biosciences Imaging Centre

**Panel E**

*Academic Schools/Departments*

* Department of Chemistry
* School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences (BEES), incorporating:
* Geology
* Plant Science
* Zoology & Ecology
* Environmental Science

*Research Centres/Institutes*

* Environmental Research Institute (ERI)\*
* Centre for Research into Atmospheric Chemistry (CRAC)
* Analytical & Biological Chemistry Research Facility (ABCRF)\*
* Irish Maritime and Energy Resource Cluster (IMERC) (with CIT and the Irish Naval Service)
* Aquaculture & Fisheries Development Centre (AFDC) (ERI Centre)
* Beaufort Laboratory incorporating: (ERI Centre)
* Coastal and Marine Resources Centre (CMRC)

**Panel F**

*Academic Schools/Departments*

* School of Computer Science & Information Technology
* School of Mathematical Sciences, incorporating:
* Mathematics
* Applied Mathematics
* Statistics

*Research Centres/Institutes*

* INSIGHT @ UCC
* Cork Constraint Computation Centre (4C)
* Boole Centre for Research in Informatics (BCRI)
* Centre for Efficiency-Oriented Languages (CEOL)
* Centre for Unified Computing (CUC)
* Edgeworth Centre for Financial Mathematics (Edgeworth)

**Panel G**

*Academic Schools/Departments*

* School of Engineering, incorporating:
* Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering
* Department of Electrical & Electronic Engineering
* Department of Process & Chemical Engineering
* Department of Physics

*Research Centres/Institutes*

* Tyndall National Institute\*
* Cleaner Production Promotion Unit (CPPU) (to be reviewed within Engineering)
* Collaborative Centre for Applied Nanotechnology (CCAN) (Tyndall led, with CRANN-TCD)
* International Energy Research Centre (IERC) (Tyndall led)
* Microelectronics Competence Centre Ireland (MCCI) (Tyndall-led with UL)
* Photonic Integration From Atoms to Systems (PiFAS) (Tyndall-led SRC)
* Irish Photonic Integration Research Centre (i-PIC)
* Centre for Hydrology, Micrometeorology and Climate Change (ERI Centre)
* Informatics Research Unit for Sustainable Engineering (IRUSE)/Information and Communication Technology for Sustainable and Buildings Operation (ITOBO)
* Beaufort Laboratory incorporating (ERI Centre):
* Hydraulics & Maritime Research Centre (HMRC)
* Marine Renewable Energy Ireland (MaREI)
* Sustainable Energy Research Group

**Panel H**

*Academic Schools/Departments*

* School of Geography & Archaeology: the Human Environment, incorporating:
* Department of Geography
* Department of Archaeology
* Cork Centre for Architectural Education

**Panel I**

*Academic Schools/Departments*

* Department of Accounting Finance & Information Systems (BIS)
* Department of Accounting Finance & Information Systems (AF)
* Department of Food Business & Development
* Department of Management & Marketing
* School of Economics
* Centre for Policy Studies

*Research Centres/Institutes*

* Financial Services Governance Risk and Compliance Technology Centre (GRCTC)
* Centre for Co-operative Studies (CCS)
* Centre for Investment Research (CIR)
* Centre for Sustainable Livelihoods (CSC)
* Financial Services Innovation Centre (FSIC)
* Health Information Systems Research Centre (HISRC)

**Panel J**

*Academic Schools/Departments*

* Department of Government
* Faculty & Department of Law
* School of Sociology & Philosophy, incorporating:
* Department of Sociology
* Department of Philosophy
* Study of Religions
* School of Applied Social Studies

*Research Centres/Institutes*

* Institute for Social Science in the 21st Century (ISS21)\*
* Centre for Criminal Justice and Human Rights (CCJHR)
* Irish Institute of Japanese Studies

**Panel K**

*Academic Schools/Departments*

* School of Applied Psychology
* School of Education

**Panel L**

*Academic Schools/Departments*

* School of Irish Learning, incorporating:
* Department of Modern Irish
* Department of Early & Medieval Irish
* Béaloideas/Folklore & Ethnology

*Research Centres/Institutes*

* Cork Folklore Project
* Irish Place Names and Title Names (LOCUS)

**Panel M**

*Academic Schools/Departments*

* School of Languages, Literatures and Culture, incorporating:
* Department of French
* Department of German
* Department of Hispanic Studies
* Department of Italian
* Chinese Studies

*Research Centres/Institutes*

* Irish Institute of Korean Studies
* Irish Institute of Chinese Studies
* Centre for Mexican Studies
* Centre for Galician Studies

**Panel N**

*Academic Schools/Departments*

* School of History, incorporating:
* Department of History
* History of Art
* Department of Classics
* School of English

*Research Centres/Institutes*

* Centre for Neo-Latin Studies
* Electronic Corpus of Irish Literature & History (CELT)

**Panel O**

*Academic Schools/Departments*

* School of Music & Theatre, incorporating:
* Department of Music
* Drama & Theatre Studies

*Research Centres/Institutes*

* **Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Performance Practices (CIR)**

# Appendix B: Quality Assessment Levels and Definitions

**Research Activity Indicators (RAI)**

**5 Levels of Research Activity**

* Level 5 quality is research that is **EXCELLENT** by international disciplinary norms
* Level 4 quality is research that is **VERY GOOD** by international disciplinary norms
* Level 3 quality is research that is **GOOD** by international disciplinary norms
* Level 2 quality is research that is **FAIR** by international disciplinary norms
* Level 1 quality is research that **POOR** by international disciplinary norms

Guidance on how the 5 levels correspond to the 6 Research Activity Indicators will be included in the overarching *Guidelines* which will be developed before the evaluation period begins.

1. **Selected Published Output**

Panels will be required to rate each of the five selected research outputs for each Category A and B researcher. Each publication will be rated by two Reviewers. The overall quality profile will be finalised by the panel.

Quality Level Criteria:

* **5:** Selected publication is EXCELLENT in terms of originality, significance and rigour by current international disciplinary norms
* **4:** Selected publication is VERY GOOD in terms of originality, significance and rigour by current international disciplinary norms
* **3:** Selected publication is GOOD in terms of originality, significance and rigour by current international disciplinary norms
* **2:** Selected publication is FAIR in terms of originality, significance and rigour by current international disciplinary norms
* **1:** Selected publication is POOR in terms of originality, significance and rigour by current international disciplinary norms

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Quality Level**  |
|  | **5**  | **4**  | **3**  | **2**  | **1**  |
| **% of published output of Unit**  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. **Total Published Output**

Two Panel members will be required to allocate an individual Category A or Category B researcher’s total research output in the period, identified on IRIS/CORA to one of five quality categories.

Quality Level Criteria:

* **5:** Total publication output is EXCELLENT in terms of extent, diversity and quality by current international disciplinary norms
* **4:** Total publication output is VERY GOOD in terms of extent, diversity and quality by current international disciplinary norms
* **3:** Total publication output is GOOD in terms of extent, diversity and quality by current international disciplinary norms
* **2:** Total publication output is FAIR in terms of extent, diversity and quality by current international disciplinary norms
* **1:** Total publication output is POOR in terms of extent, diversity and quality by current international disciplinary norms

The overall quality profile will be finalised by the panel.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Quality Level**  |
|  | **5**  | **4**  | **3**  | **2**  | **1**  |
| **% of researchers in Unit**  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. **Peer Esteem**

The purpose of this metric is to capture the overall scholarly standing of Category A and Category B researchers within the Unit, based on information presented in their IRIS profile. Evidence of peer esteem, **across the career as a whole,** includes publication output, Fellowships, Honours, Invited Plenary Presentations at significant disciplinary conferences, service on appointment panels at other institutions, external examining, translation of works, refereeing/editing of journals etc., as well as significant research activity which occurred before the review period began (e.g. widely cited publications, international prizes awarded, etc.). The rating given to an individual should reflect the level of the individual’s achievements across his or her research career as a whole.

Two reviewers will assess each individual researcher using one of the following ratings:

* **5:** Across their career to date, individual is EXCELLENT in terms of peer esteem by current international disciplinary norms.
* **4:** Across their career to date, individual is VERY GOOD in terms of peer esteem by current international disciplinary norms.
* **3:** Across their career to date, individual is GOOD in terms of peer esteem by current international disciplinary norms.
* **2:** Across their career to date, individual is FAIR in terms of peer esteem by current international disciplinary norms.
* **1:** Across their career to date, individual is POOR in terms of peer esteem by current international disciplinary norms.

The panel will determine the quality profile for each individual researcher. The overall quality profile will be finalised by the panel.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Quality Level**  |
|  | **5**  | **4**  | **3**  | **2**  | **1**  |
| **% of researchers in Unit** |  |  |  |  |  |

1. **Research-Related Activities**

For the purposes of the RQREE ‘research-related activity’ is intended to capture activity within and beyond the Unit by individual or groups of researchers in the Unit. This includes seminar series, research-focused public engagement exercises, specialist training provision, collaboration, research mentoring, outreach activities, support for scholarly institutions, evidence of research-led teaching at all levels, etc. The evidence for this will be collated from individual’s IRIS profiles, and the contextual information supplied by the Unit.

Each member of the Panel is asked to give a single quality level for the collective research-related activities of the Unit based on their professional judgement referenced to the following quality level descriptors:

* **5:** Total research related activity is EXCELLENT in terms of extent, diversity and quality by current international disciplinary norms
* **4:** Total research related activity is VERY GOOD in terms of extent, diversity and quality by current international disciplinary norms
* **3:** Total research related activity is GOOD in terms of extent, diversity and quality by current international disciplinary norms
* **2:** Total research related activity is FAIR in terms of extent, diversity and quality by current international disciplinary norms
* **1:** Total research related activity POOR in terms of extent, diversity and quality by current international disciplinary norms

The modal (most frequently occurring) rating across reviewers will be taken as the research-related activity score. [The higher rating will be preferred where the distribution of ratings is multimodal.]

1. **Post-Graduate Research Education**

Panel members are asked to each give a single quality level for the collective activities related to postgraduate training. This rating should reflect the professional judgement of the peer reviewers concerning the quality level descriptors provided, taking into account the number of students studying for research degrees, culture of support (i.e. arrangements for supervision), and research training environment and opportunities available for research students within the Unit under review. The evidence considered will include a statement on postgraduate research submitted by the Unit, information from published Unit Web-pages, numerical data from university offices regarding completion rates, completion times, etc. and process used by the unit to ensure that these are satisfactory.

Each member of the Panel is asked to give a single quality level for the collective research-related activities of the Unit based on their professional judgement referenced to the following quality level descriptors, which should summarise the overall culture and standard of postgraduate research education present:

* **5:** Postgraduate research education is EXCELLENT by current international disciplinary norms
* **4:** Postgraduate research education is VERY GOOD by current international disciplinary norms
* **3:** Postgraduate research education is GOOD by current international disciplinary norms
* **2:** Postgraduate research education is FAIR by current international disciplinary norms
* **1:** Postgraduate research education is POOR by current international disciplinary norms

The modal (most frequently occurring) rating across reviewers will be taken as the research-related activity score. [The higher rating will be preferred where the distribution of ratings is multimodal.]

1. **Research Income**

Each member of the Panel is asked to give a single quality level for the collective research-related income of the Unit based on their professional judgement of the research area, taking into account the Research Landscape relevant to researchers in Ireland as described in the briefing documents provided. The research income data considered should be provided to the Unit from central sources and should reflect income from research related consultancy, studentships, as well as more traditional sources of research income. [In the case of collaborative grants involving several institutions, only the income awarded to UCC should be considered, but the role as co-ordinator etc., might be reflected in Research Related Activity].

* **5:** Total research income is EXCELLENT given the research funding levels for this and cognate disciplines available to researchers in Ireland.
* **4:** Total research income is VERY GOOD the research funding levels for this and cognate disciplines available to researchers in Ireland.
* **3:** Total research income is GOOD giventhe research funding levels for this and cognate disciplines available to researchers in Ireland**.**
* **2:** Total research income is FAIR given the research funding levels for this and cognate disciplines available to researchers in Ireland**.**
* **1:** Total research income is POOR giventhe research funding levels for this and cognate disciplines available to researchers in Ireland**.**

The modal (most frequently occurring) rating across reviewers will be taken as the research-related activity score. [The higher rating will be preferred where the distribution of ratings is multimodal.]