

October 2002/46

Core funding/operations

**Request for data**

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Completed forms should be returned  
by Monday 16 December

This document asks higher education institutions to update data on research students, research assistants, research fellows and income from charities. These data will inform quality-related research (QR) funding for the academic year 2003-04. It also asks institutions to update data on fundable research students who are eligible to pay home and EC fees.

# Research Activity Survey 2002

## Research Activity Survey 2002

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To	Heads of HEFCE-funded higher education institutions Heads of universities in Northern Ireland
Of interest to those responsible for	Research funding, Finance, Data collection
Reference	2002/46
Publication date	October 2002
Enquiries to	Hannah Wood tel 0117 931 7395 e-mail <a href="mailto:ras@hefce.ac.uk">ras@hefce.ac.uk</a>

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### Executive summary

#### Purpose

1. This document asks higher education institutions (HEIs) to update information on their research activity.

#### Key points

2. The data will inform our distribution of research funds for the academic year 2003-04.
3. All HEIs that made submissions to the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) should complete this survey. Where a nil return applies, institutions should still submit a return on hard copy.

#### Action required

4. Survey data should be sent to us by **Monday 16 December 2002** as an e-mail attachment and hard copy. Workbooks will be made available to institutions in November 2002.

## **Background**

5. The 2002 Research Activity Survey asks institutions to update data on research students, research assistants, research fellows and income from charities. These data will inform quality-related research (QR) funding. Data on research-active staff will be taken from the submissions to the 2001 RAE.

6. The survey also asks institutions to update data from the 2001 survey on fundable research students who are eligible to pay home and EC fees. We need these data in order to distribute funds for the tuition and supervision of research students, which were transferred from the teaching model to the research model for 1998-99 onwards. This information is required following a recommendation from the Harris report on the review of postgraduate education. Our formal response to this report is outlined in HEFCE Circular 12/97.

## **Quality-related research funding**

7. This survey should be completed by HEIs that made submissions to the 2001 RAE. It asks for the following data by unit of assessment:

a. For students eligible to pay home and EC and overseas fees (including students domiciled in the Channel Islands and Isle of Man), we ask for the following data, shown separately according to the year of their programme and unit of assessment:

i. The headcount of students on research-based higher degrees for whom the year of programme of study falling on 1 December 2002 is full-time.

ii. The headcount and full-time equivalent (FTE) number of students on research-based higher degrees for whom the year of programme of study falling on 1 December 2002 is part-time.

b. For students eligible to pay home and EC fees (see Annex A, paragraph 19), we ask for the following data, shown separately according to the year of their programme and unit of assessment:

i. The headcount of students on research-based higher degrees for whom the year of programme of study falling on 1 December 2002 is full-time.

ii. The headcount and FTE of students on research-based higher degrees for whom the year of programme of study falling on 1 December 2002 is part-time.

c. The FTE number of research assistants and research fellows at the census date of 31 July 2002.

d. Income from research grants and contracts from UK-based charities during the financial year 2001-02.

8. This survey allows institutions to make separate returns for each multiple submission made to a unit of assessment in the 2001 RAE. If making separate returns for multiple submissions is not practical,

areas on the return can be made available to submit totals for the unit of assessment. To do so, the institution should contact us to obtain the password to unlock these rows for editing.

9. If a department was not submitted to the 2001 RAE, we would like its data to be returned to the applicable unit of assessment, or one that is closest in academic content. We will be using all the information, irrespective of rating or RAE submission status, to cross-check institutions' data against other data sources such as the Higher Education Students Early Statistics (HESES) survey.

10. In November an Excel workbook with spreadsheet versions of the tables in Annex D will be available for institutions to download. The following annexes should be used as a guide for completing the return:

- Annex A Notes on research students
- Annex B Notes on research assistants and fellows
- Annex C Notes on income from charities
- Annex D Samples of forms for completion
- Annex E Instructions for completing the workbook.

### **Outline timetable and process for the 2003-04 funding round**

11. Institutions are required to return their Research Activity Survey by 16 December 2002, both in hard copy and by e-mail to ras@hefce.ac.uk. We will confirm receipt of all e-mail submissions. Once we receive the data, we carry out a number of validation and credibility checks. During December we will write to institutions, enclosing a printout of their Research Activity data and comparison tables generated from them. Institutions will be asked to:

- verify that the data are an accurate record of what was submitted, or make corrections
- answer any questions we may have on the data.

12. By mid-January 2003, all institutions must have signed off their Research Activity data as being a correct submission. (Please note, this is not an opportunity for institutions to update their data.) The timetable for this is tight: if corrections to data are made, we then reissue the data for re-verification by institutions. We will expect responses to questions about data within six working days.

13. We will announce provisional allocations of recurrent grant for 2003-04 in March 2003.

### **Authorisation of the Research Activity Survey return**

14. We will require the vice-chancellor/principal or their most appropriate deputy to sign off our printout of the return on the institution's behalf. This person should be different from, and preferably senior to, the person preparing the return. The independent reviewer should broadly assess the return for reasonableness before signing off the return. This requires the reviewer to have an understanding of our data collection requirements, to ensure that the institution has systems capable of producing an accurate and complete return, and to ensure that the person preparing the return has compiled it competently.

## Responses

15. All responses should be sent to the address below, to arrive no later than **Monday 16 December 2002**. Returns by e-mail as well as a hard copy are required.

Research Activity Survey  
Analytical Services Group  
HEFCE  
Northavon House  
Coldharbour Lane  
BRISTOL  
BS16 1QD

The e-mail returns should be made to [ras@hefce.ac.uk](mailto:ras@hefce.ac.uk).

16. Further education colleges should not respond to this survey.

## Annex A

### Notes on research students

1. All students included in this survey should be postgraduate students registered at the reporting institution for a research-based higher degree. The students should be actively supervised by an academic member of staff employed by a higher education institution in England. Students who spend the whole of their programme of study outside the UK should not be included in this survey, except where they satisfy the criteria in paragraph 20c. The criteria for data in forms R1a and R1b are the same as in the 2001 Research Activity Survey (see paragraphs 2 to 6 below). This is also true of the criteria for data in forms R2a and R2b, which will be used to allocate funds for the tuition and supervision of postgraduate research students.

2. The data returned on forms R1a and R2a should be headcounts of students for whom the year of programme of study falling on 1 December 2002 is full-time. Data returned on forms R1b and R2b should be headcounts and FTEs of students for whom the year of programme of study falling on 1 December 2002 is part-time. FTE should normally be expressed to two decimal places.

3. In some cases a student may not study for a full year in their final year of programme of study (for example, the second year of programme of a 15-month MPhil programme). Here the student should be recorded as part-time in their final year, with an FTE reflecting the proportion of a full year for which they have studied. This should be recorded even if the student is not actively pursuing studies on 1 December in their final year.

4. The year of programme of study is used in the distribution of funds for research, and care needs to be taken when there is a change in a student's mode of study. Full-time students whose final year is to be recorded as part-time (see paragraph 3 above) should be returned in their final year under the appropriate year of programme in the part-time table. In assigning the year of programme, it is necessary to convert the full-time years already completed by the student into part-time years, following the guidance in paragraph 18.

#### Examples

5. A student started a full-time 15-month MPhil in September 2001. This student would have been returned to the 2001 Research Activity Survey as one headcount full-time student on 1 December 2001. The student should be returned to the 2002 survey (even though they will not be studying on 1 December 2002) as one headcount part-time student with 0.25 FTE under year of programme three, their first year of full-time study having been converted into two years of part-time study.

6. A student started a part-time PhD in September 2000, and completed two years with an FTE of 0.5. This student would have been returned to the 2000 and 2001 Research Activity Surveys as a part-time student on 1 December 2000 and 1 December 2001, respectively. If they then decide to continue the degree as a full-time student, the two part-time years of study would be converted to one full-time year. The student should therefore be returned to the 2002 survey as one headcount full-time student under year of programme two.

### **Definition of registration**

7. For this survey, registration is defined as a binding undertaking by a student to pay a fee for tuition, or supervision of research, for a programme of study. If in some circumstances all or part of the fee has been waived, the student will be regarded as registered. A student is assumed to register with the reporting institution annually on the anniversary of the initial registration. The simple acceptance of a place does not qualify a student to be counted in this survey.

8. Where a student has been registered at one institution and taught under a franchising arrangement at another institution, only the registering institution should return the student to this survey. A student can only be registered at one institution for any individual qualification. A student on a programme of study run jointly by more than one institution, and not the subject of a franchising arrangement, should be returned only by the institution which receives the fee.

### **Definition of year of programme of study**

9. A student's first year of programme of study starts when they first begin studying towards the qualification. Subsequent years of programme of study start on or near the anniversary of this date.

### **Definition of full-time equivalence**

10. For the purpose of this survey, a student's FTE refers to the amount of study undertaken in the year of programme of study compared to a full-time student with the same qualification aim studying for a full year. A student is said to be full-time if they are normally required to attend the institution, or elsewhere, for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks within the year of programme of study; and during that time are normally expected to undertake periods of study which amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week.

### **Research-based higher degrees**

11. In accord with normal practice in the English higher education sector, a higher degree by research should be one awarded primarily on the basis of a substantial thesis (or equivalent) submitted by the student and resulting from the student's original research. Regulations on the appointment of examiners for the degree should stipulate that the student's work is examined by at least two examiners, individually appointed for the student, one of whom is an external examiner. An exception may be allowed for departments which were highly rated in the 2001 RAE, where it may be that the two best-qualified examiners are both internal.

12. Students who have completed their research work and are writing up their thesis (or equivalent) should be excluded. Students are considered to be writing-up where they have completed their research work and will not undertake any significant additional research. Such students often still receive a small amount of supervision and they may still have access to other facilities at the institution, but they should still be treated as writing-up. Students registered for research qualifications awarded primarily on the basis of published works should also be excluded, unless they are undertaking a significant amount of research at the institution.

13. Some specialist doctoral degrees, such as the Doctor of Education (EdD) and the Doctor of Clinical Psychology (DClinPsychol), typically include significant taught components and supervised practice, as well as requiring the student to produce a dissertation or thesis. These degrees do not generally require the student to produce the same amount of original research as a PhD. Students registered for a specialist doctoral degree should only be included in this survey if the degree satisfies the criteria in paragraph 11.

14. Students employed by outside research organisations, and based outside the department for most of their study, can be included if they satisfy the criteria in paragraphs 1 to 13.

15. Research students should normally be returned to the unit of assessment in which their supervisor is returned. Students who are supervised across more than one unit of assessment should be returned split either according to the agreed division of supervision or in proportion to the number of supervisors. Figures can be returned to two decimal places.

16. Academic staff who are also registered for a research-based higher degree at the same institution can be returned to this survey as research students, provided that the sum of the individual's staff FTE and student FTE does not exceed 1 on the staff census date of 31 July 2002.

17. In distributing funds for research in 2003-04, we intend to use a weighted student number count as shown in Table 1. The year of programme is defined in the 2001-02 HESA Student Record Coding Manual (Field 72) and indicates the year of the programme that the student is currently studying.

**Table 1 Weights applied to student numbers**

Year of programme	01	02	03	04	05	06	07+
Weight applied to <b>headcount</b> of full-time students	0	1.75	1.75	0	0	0	0
Weight applied to <b>FTE</b> of part-time students	0	0	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	0

18. There may be cases where research students change their mode of study from full-time to part-time. For simplicity, in such cases, each year of full-time study should be treated as two years of part-time study in this survey. For example, a student who has completed three years of full-time study and is then taken on as a part-time student until the programme of study is completed, should be shown as a seventh year part-time student during their first year of part-time study, and as an eighth year student for the second year of part-time study, and so on.

19. To distribute the funds for the tuition and supervision of research students, we will be using home and EC fundable students. Students are classified as home and EC if they can be regarded as eligible students as defined by Schedule 1 of the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2002 (SI 2002 No. 195). The Education (Student Support) Regulations can be found on the HMSO web-site – [www.hmso.gov.uk](http://www.hmso.gov.uk) under 'Legislation', 'United Kingdom', then 'Statutory Instruments'. Home and EC students should be included on forms R2a and R2b if they are on programmes of recognised higher education that are open to any suitably qualified candidate. These students should also satisfy the criteria in paragraphs 1 to 18.

20. The following students should be excluded from forms R2a and R2b:
- a. Students whose places are funded from another EC public source, for example, UK Research Councils, the Department of Health, the NHS, or the Home Office (that is, where funding is provided in addition to the recommended fee levels, pro-rata for part-time students).
  - b. Students on programmes of study franchised to institutions wholly outside the UK, unless we have specifically sanctioned the programme as eligible.
  - c. Students spending most of their programme of study outside the UK, except where:
    - i. There is a clear academic reason for studying abroad rather than in the UK. Even where such a reason exists, we must specifically sanction the programme as eligible.
    - ii. The student is temporarily and unavoidably abroad and remains liable to UK tax on their earnings, or is a dependant of such a person. This includes members of HM Forces and their dependants.
  - d. EC students registered for a qualification awarded jointly by a UK and an EC institution may be returned to this survey, but only while they are studying in the UK and as long as their study in the UK is not being directly or indirectly funded from an EC public source (see paragraph 20a).
  - e. Students franchised to an institution that is not an HEI supported from public funds. Where institutions have franchise agreements with any other organisation and wish these students to be eligible for funding, they should contact us for approval.

## Annex B

### Notes on research assistants and fellows

#### Research assistants

1. Research assistants are individuals who are on the payroll of the institution and who hold a contract of employment with the institution. They are academic staff whose primary employment function is defined as 'Research only'. They should be employees of the reporting institution, and would usually be funded from research grants or contracts from Research Councils, charities or industry, but may also be funded from the institution's general funds. The research assistants reported to this survey should be in post on the census date of 31 July 2002. The criteria for research assistants are the same as in the 2000 Research Activity Survey. In 2001 data on research assistants was taken from RAE submissions rather than collected through the Research Activity Survey.
2. Senior research assistants who are named as principal investigator on a research grant or contract, or who function in that capacity, should be excluded from this return. This is because they come within the definition of principal researcher, and so would be counted as research active staff at an RAE census date.
3. Research fellows should not be counted as research assistants (see paragraph 9).
4. Teaching company associates should normally be excluded from this survey, except where they function as a research assistant and are based within a department of the reporting institution.
5. We want to maintain the distinction made in the 2001 RAE between post-doctoral research assistants and postgraduate research assistants. Clinical research assistants who are not on the pay scales specified below, for example those funded by the Medical Research Council, should be returned on form R3 according to whether they function as post-doctoral or postgraduate research assistants.
6. Research assistants graded 1A and above on the former University Authorities Panel (UAP) pay scales, or graded B and above in the former Polytechnics and Colleges Employers Forum (PCEF) pay scales, should be returned to this survey as post-doctoral research assistants.
7. Research assistants graded 1B on the former UAP pay scales, or graded A in the former PCEF pay scales, should be returned to this survey as postgraduate research assistants.
8. Institutions which have adopted locally determined pay scales should apply a mapping of these pay scales onto the UAP or PCEF pay scales, as appropriate, to distinguish post-doctoral research assistants from postgraduate research assistants. The former normally have a research-based higher degree. Postgraduate research assistants normally do not have a research-based degree and are more junior.

## Research fellows

9. For the purposes of this survey, research fellows are members of academic staff who hold specific awards on the basis of their own research record or research proposals. The research fellows reported to this survey should be in post on the census date of 31 July 2002.

10. The fellowship should be awarded to a named individual rather than to the research project on which the individual is employed. Fellowships are often for a fixed term, typically three or five years, and should be subject to periodic peer review, generally involving an input from outside the institution. Funding for these awards comes from a range of sources outside the institution, but can be channelled through it so that the individual remains an employee of the institution. Examples of such fellowships are Research Council Fellows (Senior, Advanced and Post-doctoral) and Royal Society Fellows and Professors.

11. Research fellows who receive funding directly from their sponsoring bodies, as is the case for NATO and UN fellowships, should not be returned in this survey. Visiting fellows should also be excluded.

12. For the purposes of this survey, institutions should update the total FTE of research fellows from the 2001 RAE. The value used for 2002-03 funding in each unit of assessment is included on form RA3 – figures entered by the institution should be an update of this total for each unit of assessment. The total FTE of a research active member of staff returned as a fellow should be multiplied by the percentage of their salary supported from specific funds to give the figure returned on this form.

### Example

13. A research active member of staff would have been returned to the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise as a research fellow with an FTE of 1. This fellow has 80 per cent of his or her salary supported from specific funds, therefore should be returned to the 2002 RAS as a research fellow with an FTE of 0.8 (80% x 1 FTE).

## Annex C

### Notes on income from charities

1. Institutions are asked to provide information about research income from charitable foundations and trusts based in the United Kingdom in the financial year 2001-02 (1 August 2001 to 31 July 2002). The income should be in respect of research<sup>1</sup> carried out at the institution and for which directly related expenditure has been incurred.
2. The parts of grants awarded from the Joint Infrastructure Fund (JIF) or the Science Research Investment Fund (SRIF) that are provided from the Wellcome Trust or other charity funds should be **excluded**.
3. For those institutions not in receipt of grants awarded from the JIF or SRIF, the figures here should tally with those in the institution's annual financial statements and the 2001-02 HESA Finance Statistics Return (FSR). For all other institutions the discrepancy between the figures should be entirely due to JIF and SRIF. Table 4 of the HESA return requests institutions to provide the external research income by cost centre. However, for the purposes of calculating the QR grant this information is required by unit of assessment. For further guidance please consult the HESA Finance Record Coding Manual.
4. Where a grant or contract is held across more than one unit of assessment, its value should be divided in proportion to the number of grant or contract holders. If research projects are funded from a number of sources, their income should be allocated between respective headings.

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<sup>1</sup> We use the Frascati definition of research (Second chapter of the OECD 1993 Frascati manual, ISBN 9264142029), which can be summarised as original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding. It excludes routine testing and analysis and the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research.

**Annex D**

**Samples of forms for completion**

(SEE SEPARATE EXCEL FILE)

## Annex E

### Instructions for completing the workbook

1. In November an Excel workbook with spreadsheet versions of the tables in Annex D will be available for institutions to download. In November, vice-chancellors, principals and RAS contacts will be issued with the password and web address details to access the workbook through a secure web-site. In case of difficulty, please contact Hannah Wood on 0117 931 7395.
2. The workbook will be in Excel97 format and will be named RAS\_\_\_\_.xls, where the suffix identifies the institution. Please do not attempt to rename or reformat the file as our computer systems for loading institutions' returns depend on the file-naming convention and file formats.
3. All labels and table formats have been protected using Excel's cell protection facilities. Do not attempt to change the contents of protected cells or the structure of tables by adding or deleting any rows or columns. Only cells where data are required should be altered.
4. The workbook will contain the following six worksheets:
  - R1a\_\_\_\_ All full-time research students by year of programme
  - R1b\_\_\_\_ All part-time research students by year of programme
  - R2a\_\_\_\_ Fundable home and EC fee-paying full-time students by year of programme
  - R2b\_\_\_\_ Fundable home and EC fee-paying part-time students by year of programme
  - R3\_\_\_\_ Research assistants and research fellows
  - R4\_\_\_\_ Income from charities on account of research grants and contracts (financial year 2001-02).
5. Below is an example of how the worksheets are laid out in the workbook. Each table is contained in a separate worksheet, which is accessed by clicking on the tab at the bottom of the screen. The name of the worksheet is displayed on the tab.

1 **HEFCE Research Activity Survey 2002**

2 **Form R1a: All full-time research students by year of programme**

3 Please insert figures to two decimal places.

4

5

6

7 **Institution:** .....

8 **Code:** .....

9

			Headcount of full-time postgraduate research students			
UoA	Multiple submission	Unit of assessment	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4+
01	Z	Clinical Laboratory Sciences				
02	Z	Community-based Clinical Subjects				
03	Z	Hospital-based Clinical Subjects				
04	Z	Clinical Dentistry				
05	Z	Pre-Clinical Studies				
06	Z	Anatomy				
07	Z	Physiology				
08	Z	Pharmacology				
09	Z	Pharmacy				
10	Z	Nursing				
11	Z	Other Studies and Professions Allied to Medicine				
12	Z	Biochemistry - Discontinued in RAE2001				
13	Z	Psychology				
14	Z	Biological Sciences				
15	Z	Agriculture				
16	Z	Food Science and Technology				
17	Z	Veterinary Science				
18	Z	Chemistry				
19	Z	Physics				
20	Z	Earth Sciences				

Click on these tabs to open the worksheet that contains the table you want to fill in.

6. When the worksheets have been completed, the file should be saved. You should make a back-up copy of the completed tables before returning the completed survey to the HEFCE. All worksheets in the workbook should be returned even if they contain no data.

7. If you do not use Excel version 97 please make sure that the computer package into which the file has been opened does not save the file using a different file extension by default. All worksheets returned should have the same name and format as those originally supplied.

8. Completed returns should be sent to us as an e-mail attachment to ras@hefce.ac.uk by Monday 16 December 2002. We will confirm receipt of e-mail submissions. One set of printed tables should be sent to the HEFCE by the same date at the address given in paragraph 15 of the main text.

## List of abbreviations

EC	European Community
FTE	Full-time equivalent
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher education institution
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
QR	Quality-related research
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
UoA	Unit of assessment