

# Cylchlythyr | Circular

## Initial Decisions on the Research Excellence Framework 2021

**Date:** 01 September 2017  
**Reference:** W17/25HE  
**To:** Heads of higher education institutions in Wales  
**Response by:** 29 September 2017  
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This circular announces the publication of the funding bodies' initial decisions on arrangements for the 2021 Research Excellence Framework, and invites further views on a number of aspects which remain to be finalised.

It also announces the invitation of applications for the role of sub-panel Chairs.

If you require this document in an alternative accessible format, please email [info@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:info@hefcw.ac.uk).



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## **Introduction**

1. This circular announces the publication of the funding bodies' initial decisions on arrangements for the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF), and invites further views on a number of aspects which remain to be finalised. It also announces the invitation of applications for the role of sub-panel Chairs.

## **Consultation on Arrangements for the 2021 REF**

2. The four UK higher education funding bodies published a [consultation on arrangements for the 2021 REF](#) in December 2016. The consultation incorporated the principles identified in Lord Nicholas Stern's independent review of the REF, and also drew on the funding bodies' evaluations of the 2014 REF.
3. The funding bodies received 388 responses to the consultation. HEFCE undertook a single, UK-wide analysis of all the responses received. Additionally, HEFCE copied all responses from Wales to HEFCW, and we undertook our own review of those responses.

## **Initial Decisions**

4. Informed by the responses to the consultation, the funding bodies have taken decisions on a number of high-level aspects of the framework, including measures to support interdisciplinary research further, arrangements for assessing impact and environment at unit of assessment (UOA) level, decisions relating to institutional-level assessment, and information about UOA structure and recruitment of panels.
5. These decisions are set out in detail in the document [Initial decisions on the Research Excellence Framework 2021](#), published on the HEFCE website. A link to the document has also been published alongside this circular (under Secondary Documents).

## **Appointment of Sub-Panel Chairs**

6. The document also invites applications for the role of sub-panel Chairs (see paragraph 41 and Annex B). The deadline for applications is noon on Wednesday, 11 October 2017.

## **Issues on which further views are sought**

7. The funding bodies are undertaking further engagement activity in some areas before finalising the arrangements, including on: the submission of staff; output portability; and (for England only) the eligibility of institutions to

participate in the exercise. These issues are set out in further detail in an accompanying letter on [Initial decisions on REF 2021](#).

8. Institutions are invited to provide further feedback to enable the funding bodies to finalise arrangements in these areas. Some questions that institutions may wish to consider in providing their views are outlined in Annex A of the letter. Comments should be submitted by email to [researchpolicy@hefce.ac.uk](mailto:researchpolicy@hefce.ac.uk), copied to [linda.tiller@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:linda.tiller@hefcw.ac.uk), by 29 September 2017.
9. Following consideration of the responses, the funding bodies will publish decisions on the arrangements for the submission of staff and output portability in the autumn.
10. Links to the letter and to a Word version of the Annex have also been published alongside this Circular (under Secondary documents).

### **Responses and further information**

11. Comments on proposed arrangements in relation to the submission of staff and output portability should be submitted by email to [researchpolicy@hefce.ac.uk](mailto:researchpolicy@hefce.ac.uk), copied to [linda.tiller@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:linda.tiller@hefcw.ac.uk), by **29 September 2017**.
12. Applications for the role of sub-panel Chairs should be emailed to [admin@ref.ac.uk](mailto:admin@ref.ac.uk) by **12 noon on Wednesday 11 October 2017**.
13. For further information, contact Linda Tiller at HEFCW (tel 029 2085 9715; email [linda.tiller@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:linda.tiller@hefcw.ac.uk)) or Gina Reid, REF Team (tel 0117 931 7392; email [info@ref.ac.uk](mailto:info@ref.ac.uk)).