Excellence in Research for Australia

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Objectives of ERA

• Establish an evaluation framework that gives government, industry, business and the wider community assurance of the excellence of research conducted in Australia’s institutions;

• Provide a national stocktake of discipline-level areas of research strength and areas where there is opportunity for development in Australia’s higher education institutions;

• Identify excellence across the full spectrum of research performance;

• Identify emerging research areas and opportunities for further development;

• Allow for comparison of Australia’s research nationally and internationally for all discipline areas.
General ERA Principles

1. Unit of Evaluation is the four-digit ANZSRC Field of Research code (ie. 157 possible Units of Evaluation); evaluation occurs at the two-digit level as well.

2. Evaluation by Research Evaluation Committees in discipline clusters; eight clusters in total.

3. There is a minimum level of output for a discipline to be considered ‘research active’ for evaluation in ERA.


5. Some peer review of outputs accessed through institutional repositories in some clusters.
# The ERA Clusters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster 1</th>
<th>Physical, Chemical &amp; Earth Sciences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 2</td>
<td>Humanities and Creative Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 3</td>
<td>Engineering and Environmental Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 4</td>
<td>Social, Behavioural and Economic Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 5</td>
<td>Mathematics, Information and Communication Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 6</td>
<td>Biological Sciences and Biotechnology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 7</td>
<td>Biomedical and Clinical Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 8</td>
<td>Public and Allied Health, and Health Sciences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ERA Unit of Evaluation

• The unit of evaluation is the 4-digit field of research code

• All research outputs must be submitted

• Journal articles are limited to the assigned FoRs

• Non-journal outputs may be assigned to up to 3 FoRs

• Institutions may tag research outputs with two institutional codes and two research theme codes
## ERA Process Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metrics Profile 1</th>
<th>Metrics Profile 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metrics Profile 3</td>
<td>Metrics Profile 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metrics Profile 5</td>
<td>Metrics Profile 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Peer Review** (if included)

Note - There are no weightings!

![Flowchart](chart.png)

- **Research Evaluation Committee**
- **Final report**
Viewing profiles - Trial Dashboard

Indicators for discipline
Consultation – 2008 -2010

• Metrics methodology – expert committees
• Discipline-specific indicators
• Ranked journals and conferences
• Esteem measures
• Advice from the Research Evaluation Committees and peer reviewers who participated in the trial
• Sector feedback
Addressing the issues from the Trial

- ‘Soft close’ for submission to allow time to correct errors in 2010
- Sneak peek – plans for an early Dashboard
- Portfolios – eg non-traditional outputs, with attached research statement
- Apportionment – outputs apportioned by institutions into FoR codes up to 100%
- Peer review – institutions able to nominate preferred FoR in which output is to be reviewed
- Research statements will remain at 250 words
## The 2010 Rating Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Unit of Evaluation profile is characterised by evidence of outstanding performance <strong>well above world standard</strong> presented by the suite of indicators used for evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Unit of Evaluation profile is characterised by evidence of performance <strong>above world standard</strong> presented by the suite of indicators used for evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Unit of Evaluation profile is characterised by evidence of average performance <strong>at world standard</strong> presented by the suite of indicators used for evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Unit of Evaluation profile is characterised by evidence of performance <strong>below world standard</strong> presented by the suite of indicators used for evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Unit of Evaluation profile is characterised by evidence of performance <strong>well below world standard</strong> presented by the suite of indicators used for evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Not assessed due to low volume. The number of research outputs does not meet the volume threshold standard for evaluation in ERA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reference periods

• Publications reference period
  – 1 January 2003 – 31 December 2008

• Non-publication reference period (income, applied, esteem)
  – 1 January 2006 – 31 December 2008

• Staff census date
  – 31 March 2009

• Citation reference period
  – 1 January 2003 - 1 March 2010
4. Ranked Outlets
Mythbusting - Ranked Outlets

• Only **one** of a number of unweighted indicators on the “Dashboard”
• Ranked Journals required for development of discipline-specific benchmarks for citation analysis
• Ranked conference essential for IT, Engineering & built Environment
• Note discipline-specific practices
Developing the ranked journal list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial development by Learned Academies and Peak bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public consultation (June-Aug 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Review of the public feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omitted journal public feedback (Aug-Nov 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final expert review of consolidated list (Dec 2009 – Jan 2010)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Web: arc.gov.au    |    Email: info@arc.gov.au
Parameters for inclusion in the lists

- academic/scholarly
- publishes original research
- peer reviewed or equivalent process
- active during the ERA reference period (2003-2008)
- has an ISSN
- able to withstand international scrutiny
Tier Descriptors

A*
Typically an A* journal would be one of the best in its field or subfield in which to publish and would typically cover the entire field/subfield. Virtually all papers they publish will be of a very high quality. These are journals where most of the work is important (it will really shape the field) and where researchers boast about getting accepted. Acceptance rates would typically be low and the editorial board would be dominated by field leaders, including many from top institutions.

A
The majority of papers in a Tier A journal will be of very high quality. Publishing in an A journal would enhance the author’s standing, showing they have real engagement with the global research community and that they have something to say about problems of some significance. Typical signs of an A journal are low acceptance rates and an editorial board which includes a reasonable fraction of well known researchers from top institutions.

B
Tier B covers journals with a solid, though not outstanding, reputation. Generally, in a Tier B journal, one would expect only a few papers of very high quality. They are often important outlets for the work of PhD students and early career researchers. Typical examples would be regional journals with high acceptance rates, and editorial boards that have few leading researchers from top international institutions.

C
Tier C includes quality, peer reviewed, journals that do not meet the criteria of the higher tiers.
The 2010 Ranked Outlet Lists

• The 2010 lists are fixed for this ERA evaluation

• ERA 2010 Ranked Journal List
  – 20,712 journals included
  – Over 88% agreement on ranks and FoR
  – 252 added and 145 removed (from 17 December list)

• ERA 2010 Ranked Conference List
  – 1,952 conferences included
  – 62 added and 98 removed (from 17 December list)
Maintaining ranked outlets

- The ARC will continue to accept feedback regarding new and ceased journals/conferences and will record this in the database.

- List will be updated and reviewed prior to any future ERA round.
ERA – What’s ahead?

• Submission Guidelines and Technical Specifications were released in December 2009
• The full list of ranked journals and conferences is out now
• ERA Submissions open 1 June 2010
• Full ERA process commencing in 2010 – all eight clusters evaluated simultaneously
• ARC has to:
  ➢ Work with institutions on repositories
  ➢ Set up eight committees and peer reviewers
  ➢ Do further system development (SEER)