

#224

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Page 1: Personal Details

Q1

Your name

Sophie Holloway

Q2

Your organisation (leave blank if not applicable)

The Australian National University

Q3

Are you making this submission on behalf of your organisation?

Yes, I am making this submission on behalf of my organisation**Q4**

Email address

Sophie.Holloway@anu.edu.au

Q5

What best describes your interest in making a submission?

I work at an Australian university**Q6**

Submissions may be made public unless you request otherwise.

Respondent skipped this question**Q7**

What form of submission do you wish to make?

Provide my responses through the online survey

Page 2: Upload Response

Q8	Respondent skipped this question
Please upload your submission.	

Page 3: ERA and/or EI choice

Q9	I want to answer questions on both ERA and EI
Please indicate whether you wish to answer questions on ERA and/or EI.	

Page 4: ERA Policy /1

Q10

To what extent is ERA meeting its objectives to:

Continue to develop and maintain an evaluation framework that gives government, industry, business and the wider community assurance of the excellence of research conducted in Australian higher education institutions.

Comment:

Provide a national stocktake of discipline level areas of research strength and areas where there is opportunity for development in Australian higher education institutions.

Comment:

Identify excellence across the full spectrum of research performance.

Comment:

Identify emerging research areas and opportunities for further development.

Comment:

Allow for comparisons of research in Australia, nationally and internationally, for all discipline areas.

Comment:

A small amount

The ARC needs to re-examine the principals of what the function of ERA is. If it's purpose is to focus on excellence the ARC should look to the UK model. If it's purpose is to measure productivity with a passing nod to excellence then it is fine. ERA is currently an audit exercise and measures average performance rather than excellence. It is also unclear that that results are used by industry, business and the wider community. University rankings exercises are more often used to judge excellence by those outside the university sector.

A moderate amount

ERA does provide a disciplinary level stocktake, but by the process of averaging at the broad level of 2 and 4-digit, does not identify opportunities for development, particularly in the peer review disciplines. The approach is one of audit rather than supporting universities to develop.

A small amount

The ERA ratings focus on the average performance of a FoR in an institution. Depending on the size of the submission, pockets of excellence that reflect how the research is being done, can be hidden by the FoR and averaging method. A model similar to the UK REF where universities submit their best work would better identify excellent research.

Not at all

Like interdisciplinary research, emerging research areas are hidden by the method. Emerging research areas appear to be judged within the paradigms of a discipline, rather than being assessed for the unique contribution they make to the stock of knowledge. It is vital ARC properly brief the ERA Evaluation Committees to identify and value emerging research areas and make this briefing available to the sector well before the evaluation exercise.

A small amount

Research does not occur at a 2 or 4-digit level. Any comparison made would be very broad in nature.

Q11

The ERA objectives are appropriate for meeting the future needs of its stakeholders.

Disagree,

If you disagreed with the above statement, please explain your answer.:

Allowing universities to submit only their most excellent work and providing funding based on the outcomes would better support an evaluation of excellence. Universities are a key stakeholder in ERA and perhaps changing the focus from one of audit and compliance to one of recognising and rewarding excellence would drive better outcomes for the sector.

Page 5: ERA Policy /2

Q12

What impact has ERA had on:

the Australian university research sector as a whole

ERA has encouraged gaming, the purchasing of research teams built at other universities and a cynical hiring approach around the staff census date. It has increased the competition between universities.

individual universities

ERA has driven improved research publication data management practices. It has also increased the strategic reporting capacity of universities. It consumes a large amount of academic time to prepare the submission but does not lead to any increase in income to support research.

researchers

ERA has provided a disincentive to researchers publishing with HDRs and investing in the next generation of researchers. To ensure compliance with the exercise, researchers have had additional administrative burden placed on them (for example ensuring the correct apportionment to a field of Research) when they would be better placed undertaking the core functions of the university, that is, research and education. Lower than expected ratings lead to a sense of shame.

Other?

ERA has seen the rise of positions and vendors to service the ERA exercise.

Q13

How do you, or your organisation use ERA outcomes?

ERA outcomes have been used to compare broad performance with benchmark groups.

Q14

ERA outcomes are valuable to you or your organisation.

Neither agree nor disagree,

Do you have any suggestions for enhancing ERA's value to you/your organisation?:

If the focus was more strongly placed on rewarding excellence rather than auditing and averages the ERA outcomes would be more beneficial.

Q15

How else could ERA outcomes be used?

If the method were improved, ERA outcomes could be used to allocate government funding.

Page 6: ERA Methodology /1

Q16

The current methodology meets the objectives of ERA.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

It identifies the average performance rather than excellent research.

Q17

What are the strengths and/or weaknesses of the overall ERA methodology?

Strengths

The peer review element is a strength, though more feedback is needed

Weaknesses

The reference to a poorly understood world standard, particularly in the peer review disciplines. Does not recognise interdisciplinary or emerging research. It is open to gaming.

Q18

Does the discipline-specific approach for evaluating research quality (citation analysis or peer review for specific disciplines) continue to enable robust and comparable evaluation across all disciplines?

No. This approach does not suit emerging or interdisciplinary research areas. While the world standard is understood in citation disciplines, it is not in peer review disciplines. Results cannot truly be compared across disciplines.

Q19

The citation analysis methodology for evaluating the quality of research is appropriate.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

The citation methodology rewards the production of systematic reviews that summarise primary work or contribute data to burden of disease studies. While these types of outputs collect citations at a very high rate, they do not necessarily reflect high quality academic work. This effect is particularly profound in small institutions, where poor performing papers can be moved to units that do not meet the low volume threshold, further lifting the average. An example of this is the number of small institutions, not known for their medical research, achieving a rating of 5 in a short space of time. The results do not feel valid to researchers looking at the results, undermining the trust in the whole exercise. The method also encourages the recruitment of prolific researchers rather than those who might perform well in both research and teaching. Excellent work focusing on solving issues that are critical to Australia such as environmental management is less likely to receive as many citations as subjects with world-wide relevance. All these issues could be resolved by replacing citation analysis with peer review.

Q20

What are the strengths and/or weaknesses of the citation analysis methodology?

Strengths

In general, the transparency around the methodology for citation analysis is valuable, in most cases the outcome is not a surprise.

Weaknesses

Further to earlier comments, the use of the world average as a benchmark is a weakness. It is a low benchmark. A more nuanced approach is needed, particularly if the rating scales are changed. The Australian benchmark is higher and might be considered as an alternative.

Q21

Can the citation analysis methodology be modified to improve the evaluation process while still adhering to the ERA Indicator Principles?

Yes,

If you answered 'Yes', please describe how the methodology could be improved.:

Including a measure of the contribution of authors to ensure that cases of hyper-authorship are moderated. This could be achieved by apportioning based on the number of authors in cases where there are over 50 authors.

Q22

The peer review methodology for evaluating the quality of research is appropriate.

Agree,

Please explain your answer.:

Peer review is appropriate, but the results are difficult to understand in a way that can inform efforts to improve performance.

Q23

What are the strengths and/or weaknesses of the peer review methodology?

Weaknesses

The comparison to a world standard that cannot be understood by those outside of the evaluation is problematic. The instruction to the evaluation committee and peer reviewers to arrive at the world standard should be made public well before the evaluation. It is unknown whether the judgement of quality is being made based on the publishing outlets, or whether other metrics are being used, even if it is outside of the stated methodology. Further, if comparing to a world standard, there needs to be a high proportion of international scholars. ARC also needs to give universities feedback on the range of performance found by peer reviewers and RECs to allow performance to improve as it has done in the STEM disciplines.

Q24

Can the peer review methodology be modified to improve the evaluation process while still adhering to the ERA Indicator Principles?

Yes,

If you answer 'Yes', please describe how the peer review methodology could be improved.:

As indicated above, it needs to be made clear how the world average is identified. The process needs greater transparency and feedback to universities.

Page 7: ERA Methodology /2

Q25

The volume and activity indicators are still relevant to ERA.

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Volume and activity indicators can be used to make judgements around productivity rather than excellence.

Q26

The publishing profile indicator is still relevant to ERA.

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

While a useful summary of publishing efforts, it can be used as a shortcut to determining quality of an output via the quality of the outlet which does not support the ERA method.

Q27

The research income indicators are still relevant to ERA.

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

While they are a useful indicator of research activity, they should not be used to raise ratings of research quality determined by publication performance. While Category 1 income has peer review deeply entrenched in the awards, the other income types do not, thus using them as measures of research excellence is inappropriate.

Q28

The applied measures are still relevant to ERA.

Patents

Comment:

Neither agree nor disagree

While interesting contextual information, they do not address research quality and could be moved to the Engagement and Impact exercise.

Research commercialisation income

Comment:

Neither agree nor disagree

While interesting contextual information, they do not address research quality and could be moved to the Engagement and Impact exercise.

Registered designs

Comment:

Neither agree nor disagree

While interesting contextual information, they do not address research quality and could be moved to the Engagement and Impact exercise.

Plant breeder's rights

Comment:

Neither agree nor disagree

While interesting contextual information, they do not address research quality and could be moved to the Engagement and Impact exercise.

NHMRC endorsed guidelines

Comment:

Neither agree nor disagree

While interesting contextual information, they do not address research quality and could be moved to the Engagement and Impact exercise.

Page 8: ERA Methodology /3

Q29

The five-band ERA rating scale is suitable for assessing research excellence.

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

The five bands are still appropriate however comparing to the world average over inflates excellence.

Q30

Noting that 90% of units of evaluation assessed in ERA 2018 are now at or above world standard, does the rating scale need to be modified to identify research excellence?

Yes,

If you answered 'Yes', please explain how the rating scale can be modified to identify research excellence.:

Being below the world standard only needs to be a single category. We propose the average becomes 2, and an additional rating is put between 4 and 5, enabling more differentiation at the top end of quality.

Q31

The ERA low volume threshold is appropriate.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

The ERA low volume threshold should vary depending on the disciplinary publishing practices and should be increased to reflect growth. The use of the LVT encourages head hunting prolific researchers prior to census date. The low volume threshold can also create a submission where meeting the low volume threshold is a product of size of the institution rather than a deliberate research effort. For example in ERA2018, ANU needed to submit in Education at the 4-digits, even though we have no education faculty. The papers were predominantly around teaching in specific areas where the university is strong. Having these papers judged against education research paradigms can only lead to poor outcomes for the University. Universities should be able to opt out of assessments where meeting the LVT is a by-product of the FoR codes and other behaviours and not a result of University research focus.

Q32

Are there ways in which the low volume threshold could be modified to improve the evaluation process?

As stated in above, yes, change based on discipline, to reflect growth rates and allow an opt out where it can be demonstrated that it is not an area of research focus.

Q33

What is the more appropriate method for universities to claim research outputs—staff census date or by-line?

Census date,

Please explain your answer.:

Staff census date is more appropriate, as long as there was at minimum a 12 month affiliation prior to the census date to act as a disincentive for strategic recruitment. Consistency across time is also important.

Q34

What are the limitations of a census date approach?

The census date approach encourages short term appointments around census date.

Q35

Would a by-line approach address these limitations?

No,

Please explain your answer.:

While it may address the limitations it is not a suitable alternative as people can use by-line without authority and reflects the past state. The by-line approach does not reflect changes in university strategy or if staff have been moved on due to a change in focus

Q36

What are the limitations of a by-line approach?

As above

Q37

ERA adequately captures and evaluates interdisciplinary research.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Interdisciplinary research is assessed against disciplinary paradigms, emerging research, often interdisciplinary in nature suffers the same fate.

Q38

If you disagreed with the previous statement, how could interdisciplinary research best be accommodated?

The instruction given to Committees on the assessment of interdisciplinary research needs to be made public well before the submission so universities are aware of the criteria being used. Considerable effort needs to be made to ensure there are interdisciplinary REC members who can sit across the nexus between the disciplines in question.

Page 9: ERA Methodology /4

Q39

My institution would meet ERA low volume threshold in Indigenous studies at:

Two-digit

Comment:

Yes

Assuming there is a LVT of 50 and there is still only 1 2-digit indigenous code – 45.

Four-digit

Comment:

No response

This is unknown. The publications have not yet been recoded to reflect the new frame. Our research management system doesn't support the new codes or the capture of an indigenous research indicator so this change brings a sizeable administrative burden.

Q40

In ERA, the best approach for evaluating Indigenous Studies is (choose one):

Other (please describe).:

Research outputs should be tagged with the new indigenous codes but also be recognised in their previous field.

Q41

What would be the advantages and/or disadvantages of your preferred approach for evaluating Indigenous studies in ERA?

Advantages

Using the new Indigenous research codes will act to remove publications from long established disciplines such as anthropology and archaeology, potentially diminishing areas of research strength. This may have an effect beyond ERA, such as in the university rankings. By allowing publications to be submitted in full to the new Indigenous research codes and also as previously coded enables the new codes to be tested and to augment the evaluation but does not dilute existing research strengths.

Page 10: ERA Process /1

Q42

ERA should move to an annual collection of data from universities.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

An annual data collection would see excessive administrative burden for little gain, which is out of alignment with the ARCs objectives. The academic workforce is a highly mobile one and if reporting annually but evaluating at 5 year intervals, staff will change making a proportion of the reporting unnecessary. It also further decreases the currency of the evaluation and the clarity of what the evaluation is actually measuring. It further entrenches the notion that ERA is a compliance and audit exercise rather than an exercise that is useful to universities.

Q43

What would be the advantages and/or disadvantages of an annual data collection.

Advantages

As above

Disadvantages

As above

Q44

In future ERA rounds, should the volume of outputs submitted for each unit of evaluation be published?

Yes,

Please explain your answer.:

It would enable the testing of whether volume is a proxy for quality.

Q45

In future ERA rounds, research outputs should be published with their assignment to specific disciplines following completion of the round.

Agree,

Please explain your answer.:

It would enable the testing of whether volume is a proxy for quality.

Q46

What would be the advantages and/or disadvantages of publishing research outputs with their assignment to specific disciplines?

Advantages

Releasing the data makes the assessment open and transparent and acts as a disincentive for bad behaviour. Universities know that while things might slip through the evaluation, they will be discovered by other universities. ARC should ensure FoRs that do not reach the low volume threshold are also published with their FoRs which would make the methodology more equitable. Another advantage might be that universities might understand what a 5 in a peer review discipline actually looks like so they can improve the publishing strategy.

Disadvantages

Universities should be able to categorise outputs as best reflects the way the discipline operates at that institution. Differences between university submissions could lead to claims of gaming that may undermine the trust in the exercise.

Q47

What other data do you think the ARC should publish following an ERA round? (Note - in ERA 2018 metadata included: Research output title, Research output type, reference year, outlet, publisher, ISBN, ERA round, and Institution)

All data used in the evaluation should be public.

Q48

Considering that EI is a new assessment, to what extent is EI meeting its objectives to:

encourage greater collaboration between universities and research end-users, such as industry, by assessing engagement and impact?

Comment:

Not at all

The EI exercise was not the only trend driving behaviour. Changes in funding rules such as the National Interest Test requirements and the MRFF have driven more change across the sector

provide clarity to the Government and the Australian public about how their investments in university research translate into tangible benefits beyond academia?

Comment:

Not at all

Due to the limited definition of the end-user, and the various reference periods, a significant amount of research is excluded showing universities with a focus on fundamental research in a poor light. Without the discoveries in fundamental research, the next user which could include CSIRO or ANSTO could not apply it.

identify institutional processes and infrastructure that enable research engagement?

Comment:

A small amount

The evaluation, along with other trends in funding mentioned above, encouraged thought and debate. It did not support the development of business as usual institutional processes to identify processes or infrastructure that enable engaged research.

promote greater support for the translation of research impact within institutions for the benefit of Australia beyond academia?

Comment:

A small amount

As mentioned above, most of it is change is being driven by forces beyond this exercise.

identify the ways in which institutions currently translate research into impact?

Comment:

Not at all

The exercise was too proscriptive. It does not recognise the diverse ways that research gets translated into impact. An example of this is how some indigenous research preserves culture for future generations – the impact on future generations is excluded, though community could provide assurance that there has been impact.

Page 12: EI Policy /2

Q49

The EI objectives are appropriate for the future needs of its stakeholders.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

As below

Q50

What impact has EI had on:

the Australian university research sector as a whole

The exercise has trivialised fundamental research and hasn't moved the dial on applied research. It is a marketing exercise that hasn't been recognised in the business as usual context. Behaviour won't change until there is funding attached.

Individual Universities

Changes in universities are too ad hoc to say there have been consistent trends. Because there is so much uncertainty about the next EIA, universities won't make sweeping changes until there is stability in the regulatory environment. The work we are undertaking is about being more effective at attracting more investment in the current financial environment (Cat 2 and 3) rather than being able to respond to this exercise in the future. Each university assesses the value and benefit and with no funding attached to the exercise, the value it provides is low.

Researchers

The exercise itself touched very few academics as they often had little to do with writing of case studies. Any changes to behaviour are being driven by income sources, not this exercise. There is no reward from participating in this exercise.

Other sectors outside of academia?

EI has led to a flurry of vendors selling impact and engagement systems.

Q51

How do you, or your organisation, use EI outcomes?

We don't. There was little confidence in the method and an acknowledgement that it did not reflect the contribution the university makes to the world. The EI is a highly restrictive audit exercise rather than being an evaluation that is enabling and supportive to the universities. It is not designed to drive growth.

Q52

The EI outcomes are valuable to you or your organisation.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

It did not tell us anything valuable. Good case studies (such as the development of HECS) didn't fit the EI framework. Effort was made to fit a round peg into a square hole and the result wasn't a true reflection of the impact ANU has on the world.

Q53

How else could EI outcomes be used?

EI could be used by government to advocate to the Australian public about the importance and value of publicly funded research. We have seen little evidence of that.

Q54

The current Engagement definition is appropriate.

Disagree,

If you don't agree, what are your suggested amendments to the Engagement definition?:

Engagement is not just a 1:1 linear relationship. The exercise did not recognise complex pathways or that serendipity plays a role, instead encouraged simple to tell stories. There is an underpinning assumption that it is an orchestrated process. Luck and timing play an important role, particularly in the case of policy impact. The university contribution to managing COVID is an excellent case in point. Research engagement is not tied to a project. Researchers at ANU are on call to government, but the engagement is difficult to evidence or track. It also fails to recognise cumulative nature of expertise that is not tied to any specific project.

Q55

The current Impact definition is appropriate.

Disagree,

If you don't agree, what are your suggested amendments to the Impact definition?:

While highly restrictive, the existing definition did help people get beyond the idea of academic impact. It is important in future that it include a notion of contribution to impact as that opens up the concept that we're part of a larger set of factors not the sole factor that leads to impact. It is never just the research that brings about impact, and most occurs through collaboration. Policy impact is a good example of this.

Q56

The current end-user definition is appropriate.

Strongly disagree,

If you don't agree, what are your suggested amendments to the end-user definition?:

The concept of end-user is highly limiting and does not give proper value or recognition to the role fundamental research plays in the pathways to impact. We suggest using the term next user, where fundamental research is taken and then further applied by institutions that are not universities.

Q57

Are there any end-user categories excluded in the current definition of research end-user that you think should be included? Please explain your answer.

Institutions such as CSIRO and ANSTO, are our next users and the intermediaries between our research and the broader community or market place.

Q58**No**

Are there other key terms that need to be formally defined?

Q59

Are the two-digit Field of Research codes the most appropriate method to define units of assessment for Engagement and Impact?

No,

Please explain your answer.:

Engagement and Impact activities do not happen within academia, they should not be measured by academic disciplines.

Q60

Are there other ways to classify units of assessment in EI, for example SEO codes?

Yes,

Please explain your answer.:

SEO is a better measure of where the impact occurred. The FoR codes of where the research occurred could then be attached giving a more complete picture. Sustainable Development Goals might also be used. The SDGs are internationally recognised and provide a more enduring platform than any discrete assessment that ARC could develop. They would also enable discussion with international next users.

Q61

Should there be more or fewer units of assessment per university?

The same number as in EI 2018,

How many, and why?:

Contributions to the assessment should be based on disciplinary spread (eg academic unit) and FTE within the University, similar to the UK REF.

Q62

The EI low-volume threshold should continue to be based on the number of research outputs submitted for ERA.

Neither agree or disagree

Q63

If you disagree, how should eligibility for assessment in EI be determined?

If number of outputs is a measure of being research active then perhaps, but universities should be able to opt out if meeting the low volume threshold is a by-product of other activity rather than a deliberate research effort or if the FoR cannot produce a case study based on the restrictive definitions. NTROs are poorly reflected in the LVT. It is also erroneous to tie the amount of research being undertaken in an FoR with impacts that are occurring outside academia and therefore outside that FoR.

Q64

The low-volume threshold is set at the appropriate level.

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

The LVT needs to be different across disciplines. Universities need to be able to opt out when meeting the LVT is a by product of other things rather than a measure of research effort.

Q65

Overall, the engagement indicator suite for the assessment of research engagement is suitable.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

The indicators are naïve and do not reflect complex pathways to impact.

Q66

The cash support from research end-users using HERDC data is appropriate for the assessment of research engagement.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

So much engagement activity cannot be measured by money – policy advice and sitting on government committees are examples that it can't be the sole metric. There are also critical collaborative partners that have no money like indigenous communities.

Q67

The research commercialisation income is appropriate for the assessment of research engagement.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Commercialisation brings in grants but not royalties.

Q68

Are there additional metrics that would be appropriate across many or all disciplines?

No,

If you answered 'Yes', please outline the metrics. If you answered 'No', please explain your answer.:

Metrics need to be specific to the impact pathway, and they are complex. In kind contribution has previously been raised as a potential metric but as it isn't acquitted it could be gamed.

Q69

Are there alternative metrics that would be appropriate across many or all disciplines?

No**Q70**

Should any of the current engagement metrics be redesigned?

Yes,

If you answered 'Yes', which ones and how?:

Remove stipulated metrics and leave it open for universities to decide which are most appropriate for the impact pathway in question

Q71

The co-supervision of HDR students should be made an engagement indicator in future rounds of EI.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

This metric is too easy to game. It is easy to put an industry link on a supervision panel, but that doesn't reflect the contribution or connection to the HDR student.

Q72

In your opinion, are any of the ERA applied measures appropriate indicators of research engagement in EI?

Patents

Comment:

Yes

Yes potentially useful, depends on the case and discipline

Research commercialisation income

Comment:

Yes

Potentially useful but specific to the impact pathway, and they are complex

Registered designs

Yes

Plant breeder's rights

Comment:

Yes

Potentially useful but specific to the impact pathway, and they are complex

NHMRC endorsed guidelines

Comment:

Yes

Potentially useful but specific to the impact pathway, and they are complex

Page 16: EI Methodology /3

Q73

The narrative approach is suitable for describing and assessing research engagement with end-users.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

The assessment of engagement should not be disconnected from impact cases – the two are inextricably linked. Instead, the Engagement Narrative should be removed from the assessment exercises and the Approach to Impact should reflect the engagement approach of the institution and the particular case study.

Q74

If you disagree with the narrative approach, what alternative approach could be used to replace the narrative? If you are suggesting indicators, please be specific.

as above

Q75

One engagement submission per broad discipline is sufficient for capturing the research engagement within that discipline.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

As above, Engagement Narrative should be removed from EI2024

Q76

The engagement narrative needs to be longer.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

As above, Engagement Narrative should be removed from EI2024

Q77

Additional evidence is needed within the narrative.

Strongly disagree

Page 17: EI Methodology /4

Q78

The narrative approach is suitable for describing and assessing Impact.

Agree,

Please explain your answer.:

The narrative approach is the most appropriate approach to take, but future EIA should not be prescriptive about how the narrative is written. The sector needs more guidance about what elements can be included in the narrative, but 'more guidance' should not be interpreted to mean 'more rules' or 'overly prescriptive templates'. Simply provide more clarity about what we can include in a narrative, without being prescriptive.

Q79

If you disagree with the narrative approach, what alternative approach could be used to replace the narrative? Please explain your answer. If you are suggesting indicators, please be specific.

Respondent skipped this question

Q80

One impact study per broad discipline is sufficient for capturing the research impact within that discipline.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

One impact case per SEO or per Sustainable Development Goal, with the option to opt-out, would be more appropriate and sufficient.

Q81

The impact narrative needs to be longer.

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

It needs to be as long as it needs to be to tell the story - some narratives are more complex than others.

Q82

There is need for additional evidence to be provided within the impact narrative.

Disagree,

If you answered 'Yes', what evidence should be provided?:

The evidence gathering required for EIA2018 was already onerous on the sector. Requiring additional evidence, especially anything already within the public domain that the ARC could retrieve itself, would be a burden and poorly aligned with the ARC's interest in reducing the burden of the reporting exercise on the sector.

Q83

In your opinion, are there quantitative indicators that could be used to measure the impact of research outside of academia?

No,

Please explain your answer.:

Quantitative indicators should not be used as an alternative to a narrative in which the indicators used are tailored to and appropriate for that particular case study, its impact type and stakeholder types.

Q84**Respondent skipped this question**

If you answered 'yes' to the previous question, please name and describe the quantitative indicator/s, and the disciplines for which they are relevant.

Page 18: EI Methodology /5

Q85

The narrative approach is suitable for describing and assessing approach to impact.

Strongly agree,

Please explain your answer.:

There is no other way to do it as metrics are not suitable

Q86**Respondent skipped this question**

If you disagree with the narrative approach, what alternative approach could be used to replace the narrative? Please explain your answer. If you are suggesting indicators, please be specific.

Q87

One approach to impact narrative per broad discipline is sufficient for capturing the activities within that discipline.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

One approach to impact narrative at the level of the institution rather than at the level of each case study is more appropriate. There should be more clarity – not rules or prescriptive templates – about the approach to impact section as there's a lot of overlap with the engagement narrative.

Q88

The approach to impact narrative needs to be longer.

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

It should be as long as it needs to be to be able to tell the story.

Q89

There is a need for additional evidence to be provided.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

The evidence gathering required for EIA2018 was already onerous on the sector. Requiring additional evidence, especially anything already within the public domain that the ARC could retrieve itself, would be a burden and poorly aligned with the ARC's interest in reducing the burden of the reporting exercise on the sector.

Q90

Would there be benefit in combining engagement and approach to impact?

Yes,

Please explain your answer.:

The Engagement Narrative should be rolled into the Approach to Impact section of an impact case study. The Approach to Impact should be an institutional statement on the University's approach to supporting impactful research in different disciplines, rather than the approach taken in individual cases. Aspects of each case study could be woven into that institutional Approach to Impact.

Page 19: EI Methodology /6

Q91

The engagement rating scale is suitable for assessing research engagement.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

A rating scale doesn't help us rank ourselves against other submissions that were above or below us to help us improve. There was no feedback provided on how to improve. The Engagement Narrative should be removed as it overlaps with the Approach to Impact in the case study.

Q92

The descriptors for the engagement rating scale are suitable.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Distinctions between high, medium and low should be much clearer. None of the descriptors provided was particularly useful in identifying the difference between the ratings. It appears then that the ratings allocated were highly subjective among panels doing this kind of assessment for the first time.

Q93

The impact rating scale is suitable for assessing impact.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

A rating scale doesn't help us rank ourselves against other submissions that were above or below us to help us improve. There was no feedback provided on how to improve. As a result the outcomes seemed highly subjective, and a source of much controversy in the sector where individuals knew of cases that were not 'high impact' at all, but had been rated as such in the EIA.

Q94

The descriptors for the impact rating scale are suitable.

Disagree,

Please explain answer.:

The ARC should learn from/refer to the UK REF which has more distinctive differences between its star ratings.

Q95

The approach to impact rating scale is suitable for assessing approach to impact.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

The ARC should learn from/refer to the UK REF which has more distinctive differences between its star ratings.

Q96

The descriptions for the approach to impact rating scale are suitable.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

A rating scale doesn't help us rank ourselves against other submissions that were above or below us to help us improve. There was no feedback provided on how to improve. As a result the outcomes seemed highly subjective.

Page 20: EI Methodology /7

Q97

Should EI continue to include an interdisciplinary impact study in addition to the two-digit Field of Research impact studies?

No,

Please explain your answer.:

Cases are almost always interdisciplinary so the granularity of having an IN case/category is artificial. A move to SEO codes would further render this unnecessary.

Q98

Should the EI low volume threshold be applied to the unit of assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research in EI 2024 with the option to opt in if threshold is not met?

Yes,

Please explain your answer.:

Should be able to opt in to recognise a strength but as stated previously, FoR codes are unhelpful to this submission.

Q99

Should the unit of assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research include engagement in the next round of EI?

Yes,

Please explain your answer.:

We have proposed above that engagement is rolled into the impact case study and that SEO is a more appropriate reporting framework. If a university has strength in this area, then it should be able to report it.

Page 21: Overarching Issues Common to ERA and EI

Q100

How often should ERA occur?

Every five years

Q101

What impact would a longer assessment cycle (i.e. greater than three years) have on the value of ERA results, particularly in the intervening years?

A longer assessment cycle would reduce the administrative burden on universities and strategic changes in the research focus of the university would be better reflected in the evaluation.

Page 22: Overarching Issues Common to ERA and EI

Q102

How often should the EI assessment occur?

Other (please specify and explain your answer):

Instead of collecting a set of narratives every few years, an ongoing exercise where narratives are submitted at maturity rather than being forced to meet artificial deadlines might better reflect how the engaged and impactful work occurs and be regularly used to demonstrate the value to university research to the community.

Q103

What impact would a longer assessment cycle (i.e. greater than three years) have on the value of EI results, particularly in the intervening years?

No discernible negative impact would occur with a longer assessment cycle. If a 'rolling' timeline for submissions were considered (see above), it would allow Universities to put their best/strongest cases forward at the time when they are most mature rather than according to an artificial deadline.

Page 23: Overarching Issues Common to both ERA and EI

Q104

ERA and EI should be combined into the one assessment.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

The reporting burden of coupling the two exercises would be onerous as was experienced by universities in 2018, unless the ARC can ruthlessly streamline the required components for both reporting exercises.

Q105

What would be the advantages and/or disadvantages of ERA and EI being combined into the one assessment.

Disadvantages

Reporting burden is the key disadvantage.

Q106

Are there other ways to streamline the processes to reduce the cost to universities of participating in ERA and EI?

Yes,

Please explain your answer.:

Removing the Engagement Narrative entirely would streamline the processes. Further, ARC should use publicly available or already-accessible data rather than ask for that data to be resubmitted (for example the resubmission of the ERA data for the EI evaluation).

Page 24: Overarching Issues Common to Both ERA and EI

Q107

In your view, what data sources could ERA utilise?

There are no other data sources not covered in other parts of this questionnaire.

Q108

In your view, what are the most time consuming elements of the ERA submission?

Ensuring appropriate FoR coding is by far the most time consuming activity. When FoRs are allocated as an output is ingested into the research management system, the FoRs can be allocated with different strategies in mind. For example, some researchers think the more FoRs would make them look more impactful or be advantageous for purposes other than ERA. These all have to be checked by discipline experts and perhaps recoded to ensure compliance with the ERA submission guidelines.

Q109

Are there efficiencies that could be introduced?

Yes,

Please describe.:

By asking universities to submit only their best research, perhaps by Department such as in the UK REF, the reliance on accurate FoRs to describe the research effort appropriately is replaced by the structure that defines and supports the research. This might be particularly important for interdisciplinary research groups who get lost in the FoR structure.

Page 25: Overarching Issues Common to Both ERA and EI

Q110

In your view, what are the most time consuming elements of the EI submission?

The Engagement Narrative is the most time consuming it requires the artificial drawing together of different engagement strategies across the University by FoR rather than by the way the engagement occurs and is supported. Further, the narrative itself is superfluous to requirement given the Approach to Impact section exists.

Q111

Are there efficiencies that could be introduced?

Yes,

Please describe.:

Enable Universities to put cases forward when they reach maturity, in an ongoing way, rather than according to a reporting timeline for the whole sector. This would benefit both the ARC and the University sector by generating a showcase of the value to the Australian community resulting from publicly-funded research. The Australian government needs to advocate for the return on investment to the Australian public as much as the sector does. The impact case studies should be used to create greater efficiency and deliver a return on the cost of the EI to the ARC and to the sector. ARC should also reuse as much data as they can (e.g. ERA/HERDC research income) to reduce reporting burden on universities through the EIA exercise. Metrics related to industry (e.g. patents) could be pulled directly from ERA data.

Page 26: Overarching Issues Common to Both ERA and EI

Q112

ORCID iDs should be mandatory for ERA.

Agree,

Please explain your answer.:

When fully mature, ORCID will be a valuable tool

Q113

What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of mandatory ORCID iDs?

Disadvantages

The adoption of ORCID is not yet mature sector wide. The rates of adoption differ between HASS and STEM putting universities with strength in HASS at a great disadvantage.

Q114

The automatic harvesting of output data using ORCID iDs would streamline a university's submission process.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Incorporating ORCID into research activity is not yet mature sector wide. As it is 'owned' by the researcher, the university has little control over the creation and management of duplicate ORCIDs, or the content the researchers themselves add to it. This lack of provenance of ORCID records puts a significant risk in a submission that occurs at the University level rather than the individual level. Further, a researcher may choose to make their ORCID not public or not make the University a trusted entity. Some research information management systems are not yet set up to engage with ORCID. There is also a disciplinary bias with a slower uptake in HASS disciplines, giving further disadvantage to a university like the ANU with a strength in HASS.

Q115

What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of automatic harvesting of output data using ORCID iDs?

Disadvantages

As above

Q116

DOIs should be mandatory for ERA.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

DOIs are not standardly present for NTROs. These DOIs would need to be minted which would put significant burden on university libraries already suffering in the current funding climate.

Q117

What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of mandatory DOIs?

Disadvantages

As above

Q118

Are there other ways to collect data to reduce the cost and burden to universities of participating in ERA and EI whilst maintaining the robustness of the ERA and EI process?

No,

Please explain your answer.:

The EI process must remain in narrative form with only metrics and indicators appropriate to that particular activity. Much research activity is not yet fully captured in a publicly accessible and electronic way to enable automated data collection. This is particularly the case for HASS disciplines especially creative disciplines.

Q119

What are the advantages and/or disadvantages?

Respondent skipped this question

Page 28: Additional Comments

Q120

Please provide any additional comments:

Updated by AMc 26/10 to reflect Sophie's email requesting that permission to publish by changed to allowed
