

#133

**COMPLETE**

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## Page 1: Personal Details

**Q1**

Your name

**University Response** Lisa Nechvoglod**Q2**

Your organisation (leave blank if not applicable)

The Universtiy of Adelaide

**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

lisa.nechvoglod@adelaide.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:

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

Comment:

**A moderate amount**

Gives a good time series of data for ERA since 2010.

**A moderate amount**

Those areas rated 4 and 5 show quality and strength and lesser ratings show areas that need development.

**A moderate amount**

The previous FoR codes allowed assessment across a wide range of disciplines although there were clearly areas that were not well addressed; hence the need for the review of FoR Codes. Overall, ERA has led to a focus on quality rather than quantity but does not publish where there is a high volume of quality (or high volumes of lowly rated research) so there is no way of knowing the depth of quality at an institution.

**A small amount**

The structure of ERA ratings does not really facilitate meaningful comparisons internationally but does certainly allow some comparisons nationally. The lack of indication of volume of outputs limits the usefulness of the ratings for comparison across institutions to some extent. The lack of meaningful feedback on Peer Review disciplines makes both international and national comparisons quite difficult as it does not address why the ratings were achieved. Citation disciplines receive much more detailed feedback to enable an understanding of the ratings awarded.

**Q11****Respondent skipped this question**

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

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Page 5: ERA Policy /2

**Q12****Respondent skipped this question**

What impact has ERA had on:

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**Q13**

How do you, or your organisation use ERA outcomes?

ERA results were used widely by universities for strategic planning and strategic recruitment.

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**Q14**

ERA outcomes are valuable to you or your organisation.

**Agree,**

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

ERA has assisted in identifying internal strengths and provided a focus for recruitment and retention strategies, keep ERA consistent to allow for time series analysis.

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**Q15****Respondent skipped this question**

How else could ERA outcomes be used?

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Page 6: ERA Methodology /1

**Q16**

The current methodology meets the objectives of ERA.

**Agree,**

Please explain your answer.:

Methodology is fine, continue with discipline-specific approach (peer review and citation analysis FoR's). Strongly prefer to continue to keep peer review FoR codes assessed by peer review as there are a lack of reliable citation metrics for many of these FoRs, especially Non Traditional Research Outputs (NTRO's), over the relatively short time period covered in ERA.

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**Q17**

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

Weaknesses

**Applied measures are not relevant for peer review codes. In addition, the methodology does not allow meaningful comparisons between different types of assessment, notably citation-based FoRs, peer review FoRs, and those peer review FoRs focused on NTROs.**

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**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?

Citation analysis is appropriate for current disciplines to which it is applied, as are peer review measures for those FoRs, but they are not comparable (see Q3.9 and Q3.8 above). We have concerns about the consistency across the assessment, given that peer review ratings are consistently lower than those awarded in citation analysis codes.

**Q19**

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

**Agree,**

Please explain your answer.:

Provides a robust assessment of disciplines.

**Q20**

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

Weaknesses

**Dependant on index referred to (e.g. Scopus or Clarivate); if it is not listed then cites are not counted but this is fairly rare.**

**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.:

There is little doubt citation analysis could be improved but at present we have a robust and sound methodology that produces results that can be understood and compared; as such, any modification would be risky and arguably is not needed at this time.

**Q22**

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

**Neither agree nor disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

The concern here is not so much with the methodology itself, but its lack of capacity to deliver meaningful feedback that can facilitate improvement. A suggested improvement is to provide rubric style feedback for components that contribute to ratings in peer review codes.

**Q23**

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

Strengths

As with all peer review processes, strengths include allowing detailed review of outputs rather than relying on proxies or on metrics that are not well-established in the disciplines in question.

Weaknesses

The ERA peer review process lacks transparency about the norms utilised and can differ significantly from discipline to discipline, and even assessor to assessor; without more detailed feedback on how rankings are generated, the peer review methodology can at times seem capricious and imprecise. See suggestions to provide a rubric style feedback above.

**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.:

We would strongly recommend introducing a rubric with rankings for subsections that contribute to the overall rankings in the peer review codes.

Page 7: ERA Methodology /2

**Q25**

The volume and activity indicators are still relevant to ERA.

Agree,

Please explain your answer.:

They provide context to submissions.

**Q26**

The publishing profile indicator is still relevant to ERA.

Agree,

Please explain your answer.:

They provide context to submissions.

**Q27**

The research income indicators are still relevant to ERA.

Agree,

Please explain your answer.:

The funding of research, particularly for research that is peer or expert reviewed is a reasonable, but not perfect, marker of quality.

**Q28**

The applied measures are still relevant to ERA.

Patents

Comment:

**Neither agree nor disagree**

The applied measures are not relevant for the peer review codes.

Research commercialisation income

Comment:

**Neither agree nor disagree**

The applied measures are not relevant for the peer review codes.

Registered designs

Comment:

**Neither agree nor disagree**

The applied measures are not relevant for the peer review codes.

Plant breeder's rights

Comment:

**Neither agree nor disagree**

The applied measures are not relevant for the peer review codes.

NHMRC endorsed guidelines

Comment:

**Neither agree nor disagree**

The applied measures are not relevant for the peer review codes.

## Page 8: ERA Methodology /3

**Q29**

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

**Agree,**

Please explain your answer.:

The five band ERA rating scale is suitable for assessing research excellence. If another band is introduced this will limit the ability to compare over time. Perhaps to enable a more insightful view of the rating it may be useful to supplement the rating with a volume indicator but not have this contribute to the rating awarded. There great concern is that there are clear issues with the application of the rating scale and these are seen in the results from ERA which clearly show the application of the ratings across the different methods of assessment (citation compared to peer review) are not really comparable. This is evidenced by the large number of 5's and 4's for citation analysis fields as compared to peer review ones: based on rankings alone, it is much harder to score a 5 in a peer review code. We wonder if it would be possible to monitor and/or direct assessment panels to ensure there is uniformity across these areas. Specifically, it is difficult to know whether a more mathematical approach to 'world standard' applies in citation analysis while a higher benchmark of 'world class' may apply in peer review codes. Suggest that the ARC provide feedback on peer review codes in the form of a Rubric.

**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.:

The five band ERA rating scale is suitable for assessing research excellence. If another band is introduced this will limit the ability to compare over time. Perhaps to enable a more insightful view of the rating it may be useful to supplement the rating with a volume indicator but not have this contribute to the rating awarded.

**Q31**

The ERA low volume threshold is appropriate.

**Neither agree nor disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

We generally think it is a good idea to have a low-volume threshold as it would not be appropriate to assess codes with a relatively small number of outputs, especially in the peer review areas. It might be useful to consider raising the number for the lower volume threshold for some citation disciplines at the 4-digit level as 50 IJ's is possibly too small to be statistically significant. We would not support an increase in thresholds for any of the peer review codes as 50WO is sufficient to judge quality in these areas. The 2-digit low-volume thresholds should be raised to 100IJ for Citation codes and 100WO for Peer review codes.

**Q32**

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

Vary depending on discipline areas – see above comment.

The 2-digit low-volume thresholds should be raised to 100IJ for Citation codes and 100WO for Peer review codes.

**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 is the preferred method. At present ERA is about the quality of researcher's outputs currently at the institution rather than the quality of researcher's outputs that were previously at the institution. By-lining will be open to future manipulation as institutions may seek to improve future ERA outcomes by encouraging researchers not employed or affiliated with their institutions to jointly by-line the publications. Also, the census date approach to attributing publications to the collection is more appropriate as different publishers have rules about by-lines (e.g. only one by-line per author) and this can mean universities miss out on genuine publications that they should be able to claim.

**Q34**

What are the limitations of a census date approach?

**Respondent skipped this question**

**Q35**

Would a by-line approach address these limitations?

**No,**

Please explain your answer.:

No, by-lining of publications is more open to manipulation than having to ensure researchers are actually employed by the institution on the census date. In addition to the comment above, publishers sometimes limit how many by-lines can go on a publication and so university may miss out on publications that they should be able to genuinely claim.

**Q36**

What are the limitations of a by-line approach?

If ERA shifts to a by-line approach this may create a new collection & possibly quite different outcomes. Continue with census date approach to attributing publications to the collection as different publishers have rules about by-lines and this can mean universities miss out on genuine publications that they should be able to claim.

**Q37**

ERA adequately captures and evaluates interdisciplinary research.

**Disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

Truly interdisciplinary research simply is coded to more than one FoR but the interdisciplinarity disappears into those disciplines, except in cases where the FoRs are themselves interdisciplinary. It is not clear what the solution might be given the existing system which relies on FoRs, and we are not convinced this is a main goal of ERA.

**Q38**

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

**Respondent skipped this question**

Page 9: ERA Methodology /4

**Q39**

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

Two-digit

**No**

Four-digit

**No**



**Q40**

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

Other (please describe).:

We would favour an approach that would allow all research to be coded both to its traditional home discipline, but also noting where it might fulfil the marks of Indigenous research (for which we need more detailed definitions) without formally having to share outputs across the traditional codes and the Indigenous codes. This then could be combined with proposal c above, which would allow an inventory of current research in these areas despite there being what we expect to be low volume for many universities. We would favour not awarding rankings in this round of ERA but doing a preliminary assessment of available research to shape future iterations of ERA.

**Q41**

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

Disadvantages

**Problem with point c above would be finding appropriate assessors who are non-conflicted, and versed in all of the FoRs in question as well as in methodologies in this area.**

Page 10: ERA Process /1

**Q42**

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

**Strongly disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

Added burden for universities without clear benefits. The suggestion to move to an annual collection of ERA data is not supported as this would increase the reporting burden for universities. It would also increase costs due to having to change software systems and other structures set up to deal with the ERA submission. Rather than annual we suggest the frequency of collections could increase to six years and alternate between ERA and EI submission so either ERA or EI would be run every 3rd year allowing space between each collection to reduce the burden on universities.

**Q43**

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

Disadvantages

**See above comment**

**Q44**

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

**Yes,**

Please explain your answer.:

All publication data should be published with assignment to specific disciplines following completion of the ERA round.

**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.:

All publication data should be published with assignment to specific disciplines following completion of the ERA round.

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**Q46**

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

Advantages

**This will provide a powerful data set that provides insights into emerging areas of expertise and possible collaboration opportunities.**

Disadvantages

**Although publishing the data has the potential to lead to poaching of strong researchers and research teams, in reality the major publishers have tools that facilitate this type of analysis so the risk here is not that great.**

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**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 would be useful to publish however specifically, publication of volume data and FoR codes would be useful.

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**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:

**A small amount**

Currently there is no real impetus for universities to change behaviour and increase their engagement with end users more than what is currently being done. There is no funding attached to EI and the assessment results are difficult to unpick and see tangible lessons that could be applied broadly by other universities. Also, not all submissions are published and thus not accessible to universities and other relevant stakeholders as a foundation for learning and continuous improvement.

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

Comment:

**A small amount**

Given EI captures such a small sample of actual activity and related benefits, it does not really provide an overview but rather a snapshot of some benefits to society. The ranking of individual codes in individual universities on a 3 point scale does not enable the Australian public, in particular, to have clarity on the benefits that arise. This would be more easily achieved by a sector wide impact analysis.

identify institutional processes and infrastructure that enable research engagement?

Comment:

**Not at all**

It is difficult to unpick and see any tangible lessons that could be applied broadly by other universities due to the ambiguous nature of the EI narratives. Also, not all submissions are published so not all of the narratives are available for universities to read and draw lessons from.

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

Comment:

**A small amount**

The learnings from the results of EI are very limited and difficult to apply broadly across the university as some are very specific to the impact studies.

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

Comment:

**No response**

While some mechanisms supporting translation of research into impact are identified, due to the nature of the submission (focus on a specific impact study), these tend to be unique to the individual impact case study and so are not necessarily applicable at a broad level across an institution.

**Q49**

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

**Disagree,**

Please explain your answer:

To meet the future needs of its stakeholders, the EI objectives have to ensure that university-research end-user engagement for impact develops the “new normal” for Australia. Australia needs a whole of sector approach to EI; it is about jointly growing opportunities for everyone by establishing higher education as a trusted partner for research end-users, one for which successful engagement and the generation of impact is an integral and a well understood part of its DNA. While this assessment framework ensures the necessary focus on engagement and impact, its assessment of individual universities and individual FOR codes amplifies the competitive nature of institutions in this space. This limits the impetus on learning from each other with the aim of improving as a sector – and by doing so grow the opportunities for everyone and maximise the benefit to society. Hence, it is recommended that the objectives are amended to reflect a stronger focus on sharing and a sector-wide approach to EI: • provide clarity to the Government and the Australian public about how their investments in university research translate into tangible benefits beyond academia; • identify and share institutional processes and infrastructure that enable research engagement; • promote greater support for engagement and for the translation of research impact within institutions for the benefit of Australia beyond academia; • identify and share the ways in which institutions currently translate research into impact; and • Encourage a collaborative approach to sector-wide continuous improvement efforts.

**Q50**

What impact has EI had on:

the Australian university research sector as a whole

**EI has increased the reporting and cost burden on the University sector.**

Individual Universities

**EI has increased the reporting and cost burden on the University sector. The work required to provide the requested information was very time consuming, required the employment of additional professional staff and consumed a great deal of academic staff time, especially in conjunction with the ERA submission.**

Researchers

**Researchers were involved in developing and writing the EI submission and there was a significant amount of time required from researchers to assist in producing the submission. Many researchers who were involved in the ERA submission preparation were also involved in EI submission preparation, which significantly reduced the time they had available for other activities.**

**Q51**

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

Impact studies were used for some marketing and promotional material, where possible. Engagement narratives and data were not used in the institution at all.

**Q52**

The EI outcomes are valuable to you or your organisation.

**Agree,**

Please explain your answer.:

There has been some moderate benefit. The impact case studies have been used for other research promotion activities and have highlighted individual instances of outstanding impact of university research outside of academia.

**Q53**

How else could EI outcomes be used?

**Respondent skipped this question**

Page 13: EI Policy /3

**Q54**

The current Engagement definition is appropriate.

**Disagree,**

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

The engagement definition needs to be changed to capture the extent to which engagement is integrated in the conduct of research, aligned with the rating scales. Research engagement is the interaction between researchers and research end-users outside of academia as a part of the development and ongoing conduct of research, for the mutually beneficial transfer of knowledge, technologies, methods or resources.

**Q55**

The current Impact definition is appropriate.

**Agree**

**Q56**

The current end-user definition is appropriate.

**Disagree,**

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

Educational institutions, including international universities, should be included as an end user category; this is a logical place for education to engage and have impact. Some of the impacts and benefit of increasing the levels of education in society include closer alignment of relevant skills, economic stability, increased health and wellbeing and long term economic growth.

**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.

Educational institutions, including international universities, should be included as an end user category; this is a logical place for education to engage and have impact. Some of the impacts and benefit of increasing the levels of education in society include closer alignment of relevant skills, economic stability, increased health and wellbeing and long term economic growth.

**Q58****No**

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

Page 14: EI Methodology /1

**Q59**

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

**Yes,**

Please explain your answer.:

The broad discipline or two-digit FoR codes are appropriate for EI assessment as they cover multiple sub-areas within the two-digit code.

**Q60**

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

**Yes,**

Please explain your answer.:

SEO codes may be a better representation for Impact but given the alignment to ERA for engagement it is preferred to keep FoR codes.

**Q61**

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

**More units of assessment,**

How many, and why?:

There should be an increase in numbers of impact studies required based on FTE (i.e. >80 FTE up to a maximum of two per two-digit code). Where a university does not meet the above condition the number of units of assessment should remain the same for the next assessment. However, ability for a university to request that the UoA not be assessed for EI should be retained where they have a focus on primarily basic or fundamental research and / or the area was too new to have had impact. This allows for the university to still focus on research that can later be translated and build up new areas of focus. ARC should allow joint submissions across universities as this is how academics work (collaborate). Given the mobility of academic staff, it would be valuable if research underlying impact can take place in one institution and then another could support the impact further, therefore enabling it to materialise across multiple institutions.

**Q62****Neither agree or disagree**

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

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**Q63**

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

It would be possible to have an alternative threshold for eligibility to reflect the level of FTE in a 2-digit FoR code. There should be a minimum threshold for submission based on FTE, set at 20 FTE at the 2-digit level.

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**Q64**

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

**Agree,**

Please explain your answer.:

If this is to remain as the indicator for assessment then the low volume threshold is set at the appropriate level. However, universities should be able to opt in for EI even where they do not meet the low volume threshold for EI assessment. If it is changed to FTE then it should be an alternative threshold for eligibility to reflect the level of FTE in a 2-digit FoR code. The suggestion is that there should be a minimum threshold for submission based on FTE, set at 20 FTE at the 2-digit level.

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Page 15: EI Methodology /2

**Q65**

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

**Disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

Co-authored publications (with industry) should be added as a metric for engagement (possibly co-authored publications divided by industry funding). Other metrics noted, such as patents, commercialisation income, registered designs etc. do not reflect engagement, as they do not align with the definition or rating scales of engagement – they don't reflect interaction for mutual benefit that is integrated into the development and ongoing conduct of research. Patents etc. may enable future interaction and mutual value creation. However, by themselves, they commonly reflect the end of a research process in that research outcomes are prepared for a one-way transfer to end-users. They do not demonstrate that engagement is integrated in the research process.

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**Q66**

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

**Disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

Total cash from industry partners indicates that a partner places value on the research conducted but it is dependent on the resources of the partner and thus cannot be compared blankly. Furthermore, by itself it does not indicate the depth or breadth of the engagement. Co-authored publications (with industry) should be added as a metric for engagement (possibly co-authored publications divided by industry funding), as this would provide a better indication of the integration of engagement with end-users in the research process.

**Q67**

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

**Strongly disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

Research commercialisation income is not a suitable measure; again it doesn't align with the definition or rating scale of engagement. Research commercialisation income reflects the value placed on the outcome of the research but by itself does not indicate the depth or breadth of industry engagements or provide evidence of interaction, mutual benefit or integration in the research process.

**Q68**

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

**No****Q69**

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

Please specify the metrics.:

Number of co-authored publications (with industry) should be added as a metric for engagement (possibly co-authored publications divided by industry funding).

**Q70**

Should any of the current engagement metrics be redesigned?

**Yes,**

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

The current engagement metrics should be made optional as these do not apply appropriately to all discipline areas and thus do not meet the objectives of being applicable across all FoR codes / disciplines.

**Q71**

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

**Neither agree nor disagree**



**Q72**

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

Patents	<b>No</b>
Research commercialisation income	<b>No</b>
Registered designs	<b>No</b>
Plant breeder's rights	<b>No</b>
NHMRC endorsed guidelines	<b>No</b>

## Page 16: EI Methodology /3

**Q73**

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

**Agree,**

Please explain your answer.:

Engagement should include a narrative but should also include an approach section if the institutional processes and infrastructure that enable research engagement are what the ARC wants to identify. This section could be best framed as approach to engagement, rather than approach to impact, to capture the approach beyond the individual case studies.

**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.

**Respondent skipped this question**

**Q75**

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

**Agree**

**Q76**

The engagement narrative needs to be longer.

**Strongly agree,**

Please explain your answer.:

The engagement template needs more space as limits are too restrictive and do not allow adequate representation or discussion of engagement in any detail. Providing a cursory summary misses the opportunity to provide learnings to the sector on engagement techniques that are successful.

**Q77**

Additional evidence is needed within the narrative.

**Agree ,**

If you agree, what evidence should be provided?:

If the aim of the engagement narrative is to identify institutional processes and infrastructure that enable research engagement then perhaps an approach to engagement is more appropriate. If we want to identify institutional processes and infrastructure that enable research engagement we need to keep a section outlining the approach used; best framed as approach to engagement, rather than approach to impact, to capture the approach beyond the individual case. In this way the approach would represent a more holistic capture of information related to approach within that institution.

Page 17: EI Methodology /4

**Q78**

The narrative approach is suitable for describing and assessing Impact.

**Strongly agree,**

Please explain your answer.:

The narrative approach is the most suitable as it allows for a flexible approach to presenting impact. However, the timelines underlying impact should be expanded and possibly changed to account for varying lead times for impact in different discipline areas.

**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.:

It would be more appropriate to set the requirements to more than 80 FTE and a maximum of 2 impact studies per 2-digit FoR code.

**Q81**

The impact narrative needs to be longer.

**Strongly agree,**

Please explain your answer.:

The limits of the submission template did not allow adequate space to fully explain the impact and required simplification and shortening of the narrative to adhere to these requirements. However, the timelines underlying impact should be expanded and possibly changed to account for varying lead times for impact in different discipline areas.

**Q82**

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

**Neither agree nor disagree,**

If you answered 'Yes', what evidence should be provided?:  
If appropriate there should be an option to provide additional evidence, as is currently the case.

**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.:  
None that apply across all discipline areas. One option would be to reduce the narrative to a short description of the case study, complemented by a formal economic or social impact analysis for each case.

**Q84**

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

**Respondent skipped this question**

Page 18: EI Methodology /5

**Q85**

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

**Agree,**

Please explain your answer.:  
Yes the narrative approach is the most appropriate for describing approach to impact. It would be more appropriate to remove approach to impact from impact and move to engagement.

**Q86**

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****Q87**

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

**Agree,**

Please explain your answer.:  
If approach is to remain as currently is, aligned with the specific impact, then it is appropriate to maintain the discipline structure for the submission.

**Q88**

The approach to impact narrative needs to be longer.

**Agree,**

Please explain your answer.:  
The limits of the submission template did not allow adequate space to fully explain the approach to impact and required simplification and shortening of the narrative to adhere to these requirements.

**Q89**

There is a need for additional evidence to be provided.

**Neither agree nor disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

Where appropriate, additional evidence could be included.

**Q90**

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

**No,**

Please explain your answer.:

If we want to identify a holistic institutional approach including processes and infrastructure that enable research engagement we need to keep a section outlining the approach used; best framed as approach to engagement, rather than approach to impact, to capture the approach beyond the individual case. In this way the approach would represent a more holistic capture of information related to approach within that institution. It would be more appropriate to remove approach to impact from impact and move to engagement.

Page 19: EI Methodology /6

**Q91**

The engagement rating scale is suitable for assessing research engagement.

**Agree,**

Please explain your answer.:

The three point rating scale is appropriate but lacks granularity. It would be useful for the ARC to provide written feedback to accompany the rating as by itself it doesn't provide much useful detail.

**Q92**

The descriptors for the engagement rating scale are suitable.

**Strongly disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

The descriptors relating to the second dot point of the rating scales, and thus the integration of engagement throughout the research process, require improvement. In particular, the wording should be aligned across all ratings; currently one refers to development and ongoing conduct, another to relevant parts of the research process, and the third just to research process. Also, the descriptors should not focus on "improving" or "being developed"; it is an assessment of evidence regarding engagement at one point in time, and thus what is evidenced, not whether it is improving or not.

**Q93**

The impact rating scale is suitable for assessing impact.

**Agree,**

Please explain your answer.:

The three point rating scale is appropriate but lacks granularity. It would be useful for the ARC to provide written feedback to accompany the rating as by itself it doesn't provide much useful detail.

**Q94**

The descriptors for the impact rating scale are suitable.

**Strongly disagree,**

Please explain answer.:

The descriptors are not appropriate and the 'gap' between medium and low is too much: It is suggested that the framing is reconsidered, as going from significant to little or no contribution beyond academia creates challenges. Descriptors should either be significant for high, impact for medium and little/no impact for low, or it needs to be highly significant, significant, and then impact. Furthermore, the multifaceted nature of the rating scale seems unclear. It might make sense to confirm the link between the research and impact prior to that impact being evaluated, rather than both points being part of the descriptors.

**Q95**

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

**Agree,**

Please explain your answer.:

The three point rating scale lacks granularity. It would be useful for the ARC to provide written feedback to accompany the rating as by itself it doesn't provide much useful detail.

**Q96**

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

**Strongly disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

It would be useful to clarify whether the mechanisms are specific to the case or broadly across UoA – in the measure. The use of both 'effective' and 'integrated' requires clarification on what evaluation is most suited if the evaluation of both differs. Furthermore, the multifaceted nature of the rating scale seems unclear. It might make sense to confirm whether the mechanisms facilitated the impact before assessing the mechanisms, thus making one a required foundation for the other.

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?

**Yes,**

Please explain your answer.:

Interdisciplinary (Impact only, optional) should remain optional.

**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.:

Yes, the option to opt in should remain for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Impact study.

**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.:

While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research could include report engagement it could be quite difficult to identify so should remain optional.

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Page 21: Overarching Issues Common to ERA and EI

**Q100**

How often should ERA occur?

Other (please specify and explain your answer).:

Every 6 years, with ERA and EI alternating with each other so that every 3 years one assessment is submitted. ERA should be spaced out to run every six years with submission each alternate 3 years so there is sufficient time in between submissions to allow universities to prepare and provide the required information. This is especially relevant given the impacts of COVID on the university sector.

**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?

The longer assessment cycle would allow for real changes to be seen in ERA EI results.

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Page 22: Overarching Issues Common to ERA and EI

**Q102**

How often should the EI assessment occur?

Other (please specify and explain your answer):

Every 6 years, with ERA and EI alternating with each other so that every 3 years one assessment is submitted.

**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?

EI should be spaced out to run every six years with submission each alternate 3 years so there is adequate time between submissions to allow universities to prepare and provide the required information. This is especially relevant given the impacts of COVID on the university sector.

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Page 23: Overarching Issues Common to both ERA and EI

**Q104**

ERA and EI should be combined into the one assessment.

**Strongly disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

There seems to be no real benefit in combining ERA and EI as in the REF as this has a different structure and funding set up and these assessments measure different attributes. Maintaining these collections as separate allows for spreading out and balancing workload within the institutional units that provide the submissions to the ARC. Decoupling ERA and EI and running each in different years. The ARC has already announced that next rounds of ERA and EI will occur in 2023 and 2024, respectively. We support the decoupling but 1 year does not provide a significant break between these collections.

**Q105**

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

**Respondent skipped this question**

**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.:

The suggestion put forward in the consultation paper of the single collection of HERDC data would be advantageous in reducing reporting burden however the data structure is different and HERDC data does not have FoR codes assigned so unless this changes it will not be useful for reusing for ERA and EI. Even if HERDC is required to be submitted with FoR codes this will just shift the burden of reporting from ERA and EI to HERDC so probably would not save any time and effort. Mechanisms for reducing the burden on universities and streamlining reporting are supported in principle but without details it is difficult to assess risks and benefits: e.g. although shifting to automation of FoR coding for publications may streamline some reporting, we would still need to be able to change these pre-assigned codes where necessary to reflect content. A suggestion would be to reduce the reporting requirements for Indexed Journals to just an identifier (either DOI or Indexer ID) and our list of authors, all other information could be gained from the world dataset that the indexer provides the ARC. We support aligning and re-using data where possible to alleviate burden on university sector.

**Q107**

In your view, what data sources could ERA utilise?

We support the use of publicly available data especially that available to the ARC via the world data set. This would reduce the requirements that take a lot of unnecessary effort on the part of universities such as the requirement to submit all of the meta-data for journal publications that are assessed by citation analysis. This information is already available to the ARC and includes all meta-data for tagged publications. A suggestion would be to reduce the reporting requirements for Indexed Journals to just an identifier (either DOI or Indexer ID) and our list of authors, all other information could be gained from the world dataset that the indexer provides the ARC.

**Q108**

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

Assigning Grant ID; providing all meta-data and ensuring it is correct – e.g. author names on publications; collecting evidence for NTRO's and breaking this down into 30mb size. We suggest removing the requirement to scan whole books into the repository.

**Q109**

Are there efficiencies that could be introduced?

**Yes,**

Please describe.:

Change the requirements for NTRO's to allow bigger file sizes; remove the requirements for Grant ID; remove the requirements for each institution to provide the same data that is available in the world data set obtained by the ARC from the citation provider.

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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?

Finding impact studies that fit within the specified timeframes and gathering evidence for these impact studies. Entering data into the SEER system required copy and paste of individual numbers.

**Q111**

Are there efficiencies that could be introduced?

**Yes,**

Please describe.:

Allow an upload into the SEER system to avoid copy and pasting individual numbers into boxes. Extend timeframes for impact to allow for broader assessment timeframes.

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Page 26: Overarching Issues Common to Both ERA and EI

**Q112**

ORCID iDs should be mandatory for ERA.

**Strongly disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

There are issues with the ORCID iD such as people not having these linked to their publications therefore this would not provide a complete representation of a person's publications. Also, ORCID iDs may not work for some types of outputs such as NTRO's as there is nowhere to add an ID.



**Q113****Respondent skipped this question**

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

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**Q114**

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

**Agree,**

Please explain your answer.:

Currently, there are issues with the ORCID iD such as people not having these linked to their publications therefore this would not provide a complete representation of a person's publications. This may be something to use in future when the uptake and application of Id's to all publications is more complete.

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**Q115****Respondent skipped this question**

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

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**Q116**

DOIs should be mandatory for ERA.

**Strongly disagree,**

Please explain your answer.:

DOI's will not work for some types of outputs such as NTRO's as there is nowhere to add a DOI on an output. They are however mandatory for journals so this could be used to harvest publications metadata.

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**Q117**

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

Advantages

**Could be used for journals**

Disadvantages

**Not relevant for NTRO's**


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Page 27: Overarching Issues Common to Both ERA and EI

**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?

**Yes,**

Please explain your answer.:

ARC could harvest meta-data and reduce the collection of data that is publicly available – strip down the submission, especially for Indexed Journals.

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**Q119**

What are the advantages and/or disadvantages?

Advantages

**Less work for Universities who supply data that is available in the world data set that the ARC gets for calculating benchmarks etc.**

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Page 28: Additional Comments

**Q120**

Please provide any additional comments:

Feedback that applies to both assessments:

- Submission documents should be released at an early date, so as to enable adequate time to plan and accommodate changes.
- Key terms across both ERA and EI need to be clearly defined.
- Feedback on ratings applied to each UoA (Unit of Assessment) should be provided, which could include the strengths and weaknesses in each area of assessment.
- Regarding the frequency of collections, the timeframe should be increased to six years and alternate between ERA and EI submission. That means, either ERA or EI would take place every 3rd year, allowing space between each collection to reduce the burden on universities.
- Mechanisms for reducing the burden on universities for reporting are supported in principle but without details it is difficult to assess risks and benefits: e.g. although shifting to automation of FoR coding for publications may streamline some reporting, we would still need to be able to change these pre-assigned codes where necessary to reflect content. A possible suggestion would be to reduce the reporting requirements for Indexed Journals to just an identifier (either DOI or Indexer ID) and our list of authors. All other information could be gained from the world dataset that the indexer provides the ARC.
- Aligning and re-using data where possible will help alleviate the burden on university sector.
- No more than one person per university should be represented on each Research Evaluation Committee (REC).

Feedback on ERA assessment:

- Assessment and rating for FoR codes assessed by peer review should be reviewed, as the difference between ratings for peer review and citation analysis are evident.
- We note a strong preference to continue assessment of peer review FoR codes by peer review, as there are a lack of reliable citation metrics for many of these FoRs over the relatively short time period covered in ERA.
- Rubric style feedback should be offered for components that contribute to ratings in peer review codes.
- In relation to the publication of ERA data, a greater level of transparency would be valuable, without encouraging 'poaching'.
- Census date is preferred over by-line attribution for publication eligibility as a change would represent a different collection.
- Hybrid approaches to Indigenous studies outputs are preferred, allowing coding both to the new Indigenous studies codes and to their disciplinary homes. It is proposed that the ARC should run a trial in the next ERA without rating to gauge outputs and appropriate minimum threshold in these areas.

Feedback on EI assessment:

- All definitions need further clarity and refinement.
- Template changes are necessary to allow more space for narratives. A clearer structure is also required to avoid confusion.
- Timelines underlying impact should be expanded and possibly changed to account for varying lead times for impact in different discipline areas.
- The numbers of impact studies required should be based on FTE (i.e. >80 FTE up to a maximum of two per two-digit code).
- Rating scales should be improved to ensure they are both clearer and mutually exclusive across levels.
- Approach should be removed as a separate assessment related to impact and instead integrated into the assessment of engagement.
- Co-authored publications (with industry) should be added as a metric for engagement (possibly co-authored publications divided by industry funding).
- On a more fundamental level, we note that EI objectives are better addressed by not assessing individual UoA at individual universities but rather by shifting to a collaborative approach to support universities in their efforts to develop their engagement strategies – they can share information rather than compete.