

#119

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, October 12, 2020 8:34:26 AM
Last Modified: Monday, October 12, 2020 9:29:54 AM
Time Spent: 00:55:27
IP Address: 110.33.50.187

Page 1: Personal Details

Q1

Your name

Australian Historical Association

Q2

Respondent skipped this question

Your organisation (leave blank if not applicable)

Q3

Respondent skipped this question

Are you making this submission on behalf of your organisation?

Q4

Email address

executive@theaha.org.au

Q5

What best describes your interest in making a submission?

Other, Please describe.:

Our organisation represents academic historians across Australia

Q6

Respondent skipped this question

Submissions may be made public unless you request otherwise.

Q7

Provide my responses through the online survey

What form of submission do you wish to make?

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:

A small amount

The AHA notes that as the ERA system has become embedded, an element of 'bracket creep' or 'grade inflation' seems to have occurred as institutions have learned how to make the system work to their benefit. The categories used for ERA evaluation lack coherence or meaning; if academics do not have confidence in their value, or are unable to understand what they mean, it is hard to see the wider community finding them helpful as quality measures. The ERA system, to some extent, competes for attention with international rankings and, for better or worse, the latter undoubtedly carry more weight with the community.

A moderate amount

It is not clear how the ERA is feeding into national research policy; there seems to be a lack of connection/disconnect between ERA results and government support/investment. It is unclear whether there is a systematic process whereby the identification of areas of strategic investment to improve performance bears any relationship to ERA results. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that some institutional decisions are being made in response to ERA data, but the existence of influential international institutional and discipline rankings, means that universities will inevitably look to a range of indicators in assessing their own performance and making decisions about research priorities.

Identify excellence across the full spectrum of research performance.

Comment:

A moderate amount

The ERA privileges grant funding and certain kinds of research output as measures of quality. While non-traditional outputs such as museum exhibitions, artworks and films are reported and evaluated they play a secondary role. Many outputs in History (Historical Studies) contribute to critical national infrastructure such as the Australian Dictionary of Biography, the country's largest and longest-running project in the humanities and social sciences, yet this kind of work is poorly recognised in the ERA process. The result is a mismatch between the conventional measures of quality and achievement in a discipline such as historical studies, and the 'research' that figures most prominently in the ERA. If this mismatch flows through to the signals delivered within an institution about what is and is not valued as research, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain these large collaborative projects that depend so substantially on the collective pool of skills and expertise of the national research community in Historical Studies. Similarly, outreach and engagement that are research-based, for instance, that result in research becoming influential among thousands of teachers and students via the school curriculum - are much less valued than an article in an academic journal read by few that a reviewer is willing to classify as 'above international standard'.

Identify emerging research areas and opportunities for further development.

Comment:

A moderate amount

The ERA system can help to identify fields in which Australia is weak - which might be indicated in a low number of institutions achieving a 4 or 5 in a particular round. Yet from the point of view of individual institutions, the ERA seems inadequately designed to identify emerging research areas. Universities are clearly organising their submissions in order to maximise their results, rather than primarily as a diagnostic tool. At the very least, a disappointing ERA result is just as likely to discourage institutional support for emerging research areas as promote investment, especially at a time when the sector is under significant financial pressure, as at present. In the field of Historical Studies, a very small number of institutions have directed additional resources to the development of the discipline with the ERA in view.

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

Comment:

A moderate amount

A moderate amount within Australia - but the categories are so limiting that it does not facilitate meaningful international comparison.

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.:

Stakeholders in Historical Studies include the GLAM sector (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums), users of our research such as media, government and education departments, and history teacher associations and students. A problem with the ERA in most of these contexts is that the categories it uses are unlikely to be meaningful outside the university sector. We are not aware, for instance, of students making decisions about where to study based on the ERA. In Historical Studies, there is a disconnect between the things that seem most valued in the ERA system of evaluation, such as articles and monographs with prestigious international publishers (with much of this work being inaccessible to potential end-users on grounds of cost as they are held behind pay walls), and the outputs that are valued most by our national stakeholders, such as accessible, accurate and authoritative research that usually omits the technical and theoretical apparatus expected in research 'above international standard'. The ERA does not adequately recognise achievement in the latter field, and are not captured through the Engagement and Impact methodology either. a. If you disagreed with the previous statement, what should the primary purpose of ERA be going forward? The primary purpose of ERA should be to provide governments and universities with a way of assessing the quality of research undertaken within a university. However as it is currently structured, ERA, in its basic methodology of assessing how Australian research measures up to an ill-defined international standard, is too remote from the expectations and needs of the broader Australian community. There is a need to integrate end-users of our research in the national context into the methodology of ERA.

Q12

What impact has ERA had on:

the Australian university research sector as a whole

Alongside rankings and other measures, ERA has pushed some university managements into micromanagement of academic research that, in some instances, poses a threat to academic freedom. It does so by dictating to researchers - the experts in their fields - where and how they will publish their research. It is reasonable for universities to develop policies (and incentives) around such issues to some extent, but it is not legitimate to develop finely-grained systems of punishment and rewards for compliance with centrally-designed schemes invariably based on inadequate knowledge or expertise. This is a particular problem for Historical Studies, which as a discipline thrives by addressing multiple audiences using a range of different research outlets and communication strategies. Researchers working in Australian Historical Studies are particularly disadvantaged by universities' adoption of a narrow range of (northern hemisphere-dominated especially American) quality measures when assessing outlets for research. The impact on Australian academic journals and Australian publishers which cannot compete with international journals and publishing houses including university presses is particularly evident.

individual universities

Universities now devote considerable time and resources in preparing ERA submissions and assessments. For this reason, and in the context of a sector that is now in crisis, it is critical that the process deliver returns to the universities and its stakeholders that are proportionate to the large bureaucracy and considerable resources that are devoted to this process. The ERA process also seems to provide advantages to larger institutions and academic units, which through concentration and volume have a better opportunity of producing a body of research likely to be assessed in the highest categories. This is a problem in Historical Studies, which is quite a small program even in some Group of Eight universities, and very small in some other institutions.

researchers

Many university researchers devote considerable time to the preparation of ERA submissions and assessments. The ERA, alongside competing measures of quality, do influence individual performance management within universities. This is not in itself a bad thing - indeed, it can be a useful prompt to better planning of academic units and individual careers - but if the ERA's approach to research excellence is too narrow or flawed, this process can be an uncomfortable and even damaging one.

Other?

This is not applicable to the AHA's submission.

Q13

How do you, or your organisation use ERA outcomes?

ERA results do not much figure in the activities of the AHA, which is committed to supporting history and the historical profession more broadly regardless of such measures. Some of our membership work externally to universities and there the ERA outcomes are of little relevance.

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?:

In theory, the AHA could use ERA results as the basis for claims about the strengths of history research in Australian universities. In practice, it has not generally done so, partly because of concerns that it may not provide an accurate picture of the state of the discipline across the country for reasons outlined above, such as institutional gaming, 'bracket creep'/grade inflation', and so on. There is also a sense among academics that the ERA is essentially an instrument for classifying and comparing Australian institutions rather than presenting a picture of the discipline across the entire university sector.

Q15

How else could ERA outcomes be used?

Q3.6 Do you have any suggestions for enhancing ERA's value to you/your organisation?

We would like to see a broader approach to assessing research excellence, one that gestures more strongly to the particular scope and needs of a specifically Australian research community and set of stakeholders. We do not support the idea of a neutral 'international standard' that must be the measure of all things. Research assessment needs to be better integrated with the communities in which it is embedded, and the international community of researchers in one's discipline is just one of these, as important as it is. It would also be helpful if the Australian Research Council produced simple, easily digestible accounts of the findings of ERA rounds that did, in fact, explain to the Australian community - including academics themselves - the nature of the research ecosystem in Australia. This may well promote better community understanding of, and engagement with, Australian research.

Q16

The current methodology meets the objectives of ERA.

Agree,

Please explain your answer.:

Please note the AHA is only discussing peer review here as this is the most appropriate methodology for evaluating the quality of research in Historical Studies. While the AHA strongly supports peer review as the main method for evaluating submissions in Historical Studies (alongside the overall volume and activity of publications), the generic questions for peer reviewers (around research method and forms of dissemination of research) do not necessarily capture the strengths of individual submissions.

Q17

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

Strengths

Peer review is crucial to evaluation of research in Historical Studies as citations fail to capture the impact and quality of humanities research. Citations are focused on academic journals and generally miss books and book chapters. It is crucial that peer review continues to be used as a method for evaluating historical research and the current methodology allows for this.

Weaknesses

Peer review is labour-intensive and time-consuming for reviewers, particularly when reviewing multiple submissions. Extending the period between ERA assessment years may help here.

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?

Peer-review for humanities and social science disciplines enables a more robust and meaningful comparison across these disciplines than the alternative.

Q19

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

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

This method is not appropriate for Historical Studies or most humanities disciplines for the following reasons: much research is produced via monographs (and book chapters) that are poorly captured in citation data; it can take up to a decade for citations to appear; citations and H-indices etc are generally lower in number in history than for many other disciplines because historians publish books and book chapters. The citation method may be appropriate for STEM, however it is not a suitable methodology for Historical Studies. We strongly support retention of peer-review methods for historical research.

Q20

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

Strengths

[See Q 3.7-3.11]

Weaknesses

[See Q 3.7-3.11]

Q21

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

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

[See Q 3.7-3.11]

Q22

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

Strongly agree,

Please explain your answer.:

Strongly agree - we reiterate the importance of peer review for our discipline [see 3.7-3.11]

Q23

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

Strengths

[See above Q 3.11]

Weaknesses

[See above Q 3.9]

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 noted above, peer review is very labour-intensive. One option would be to expand the pool of reviewers and limit the number of institutions they are required to evaluate, which could alleviate the burden peer review places on researchers. Alternatively, reforming ERA so it is conducted every 5 years would also reduce the workload burden. Either way, the significant workload needs to be more strongly recognised.

Page 7: ERA Methodology /2

Q25

The volume and activity indicators are still relevant to ERA.

Agree,

Please explain your answer.:

The history discipline has a wide range of outputs for different audiences (eg secondary school teachers) but which do not have a place in lists of publications - it is not appropriate to evaluate all outputs. If all are to be assessed we need broader methodological tools that recognises different outputs/audiences

Q26

The publishing profile indicator is still relevant to ERA.

Strongly agree,

Please explain your answer.:

It provides an opportunity for institutions to contextualise what they do, and an opportunity to explain the value of diverse tasks (such as journal editing roles etc.), register kinds of research infrastructure that are maintained for the common good of the discipline. It is also a place to capture factors such as esteem indicators, prizes, fellowships of learned academies.

Q27

The research income indicators are still relevant to ERA.

Agree,

Please explain your answer.:

Agree to a point. We would note that Historical Studies and humanities research is generally inexpensive and able to be successfully conducted with minimal funds when compared with STEM. There should be weightings attached to the indicators to accommodate this important point.

Q28

The applied measures are still relevant to ERA.

Patents

Comment:

Neither agree nor disagree

This is not applicable to the AHA's submission.

Research commercialisation income

Comment:

Neither agree nor disagree

This is not applicable to the AHA's submission.

Registered designs

Comment:

Neither agree nor disagree

This is not applicable to the AHA's submission.

Plant breeder's rights

Comment:

Neither agree nor disagree

This is not applicable to the AHA's submission.

NHMRC endorsed guidelines

Comment:

Neither agree nor disagree

This is not applicable to the AHA's submission.

Q29

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

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

The categories for assessing research are meaningless and arbitrary. The measure of 'world standard' is undefined, meaning that Australian research is compared to an imaginary international ideal. It is hard not to see the legacy of 'the cultural cringe' in this approach to research evaluation, in the way it invites local researchers to measure their work against ill-defined international standards (which are implicitly represented by the most prestigious British, United States and European publishers and journals) rather than against meaningful criteria that would appropriately recognise the needs and expectations of the Australian community that funds their research. Researchers working on Australian topics are particularly disadvantaged by an assumption that knowledge is nationally and culturally neutral; it is self-evident that arcane topics and mediocre research might be more valued because their reputed significance is supported by an influential and well-connected research community centred on the United States, Britain and Europe, as well as by prestigious and powerful 'international publishers' invariably based in the same places.

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.:

It would be more appropriate to rate research in terms of degrees of excellence - such descriptors would have an internal logic to them, making them a more meaningful alternative. For example, research could be assessed as 'of outstanding excellence', 'moderate excellence', and so on. Similar language could be used in ERA as in ARC grants, for example.

Q31

The ERA low volume threshold is appropriate.

Agree,

Please explain your answer.:

The current low-volume threshold is appropriate. We would not want to see any increases to the threshold as this might discourage investment in the Historical Studies discipline at smaller institutions. It is essential that smaller programs are not disadvantaged by the ERA and that it serves as a measure of research quality, not research volume.

Q32

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

See above [Q 3.25].

Q33

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

Please explain your answer.:

We see advantages and disadvantages with both approaches. Whereas a census date approach can incentivise 'poaching' of high-flying researchers at opportune times, a by-line approach might misrepresent an institution's research quality by counting work of researchers whom an institution has failed to retain. Either way, we would emphasise that it is vital that Early Career Researchers are not disadvantaged by the approach adopted.

Q34

What are the limitations of a census date approach?

A census-date approach might encourage 'gaming' of the ERA system by employing star researchers shortly before the census-date. It might also disadvantage ECR researchers who might be less able to compete with these 'star' researchers.

Q35

Would a by-line approach address these limitations?

Yes,

Please explain your answer.:

Yes, but it may introduce other concerns. For example, university research offices may be pedantic in adhering to a by-line approach and exclude relevant publications simply because no by-line is attached. Similarly this could have a negative impact on academics who move institutions for career advancement.

Q36

What are the limitations of a by-line approach?

As mentioned above, a by-line approach might misrepresent the research capacity of an institution by capturing research of academics no longer employed/associated there.

Q37

ERA adequately captures and evaluates interdisciplinary research.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Many historians work in interdisciplinary research. Furthermore, many historians are located in interdisciplinary schools/departments. It is not clear that the interdisciplinarity of their research is well reflected in the ERA. Splitting publications by percentages into different FOR codes does not measure interdisciplinarity. Rather, it dilutes their contribution to each of the disciplines concerned. We suggest that reinstating interdisciplinary evaluation would be worthwhile.

Q38

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

See above [Q 3.31a]

Page 9: ERA Methodology /4

Q39

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

Two-digit
Comment:

No response
This is not applicable to the AHA.

Four-digit
Comment:

No response
This is not applicable to the AHA.

Q40

Respondent skipped this question

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

Q41

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

Advantages

We are concerned that a substantial amount of historical research currently under Historical Studies could be coded as Indigenous Studies rather than Historical Studies. This could make the contribution of historians appear far weaker than it actually is. The way in which research is reported in this field should not undermine the obvious strengths of history as a discipline - in particular our strengths in Australian Indigenous History. Moreover, Indigenous Studies as an international field of research exists apart from Australian Indigenous Studies. The proposed approach risks siloing Australian Indigenous research from international research in Indigenous Studies. Australia's strengths, both in disciplines such as history (also anthropology, education etc.) as well as Indigenous Studies must be internationally recognisable in any evaluation system.

Disadvantages

We are concerned that a substantial amount of historical research currently under Historical Studies could be coded as Indigenous Studies rather than Historical Studies. This could make the contribution of historians appear far weaker than it actually is. The way in which research is reported in this field should not undermine the obvious strengths of history as a discipline - in particular our strengths in Australian Indigenous History. Moreover, Indigenous Studies as an international field of research exists apart from Australian Indigenous Studies. The proposed approach risks siloing Australian Indigenous research from international research in Indigenous Studies. Australia's strengths, both in disciplines such as history (also anthropology, education etc.) as well as Indigenous Studies must be internationally recognisable in any evaluation system.

Page 10: ERA Process /1

Q42

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

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

This is a matter of internal institutional administration and the AHA does not have an opinion on it.

Q43

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

Advantages

See above [Q 3.35].

Disadvantages

See above [Q 3.35].

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 be useful to have this data to contextualise the result.

Q45

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

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

The AHA has no opinion on this issue.

Q46

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

Advantages

The AHA has no opinion on this issue.

Disadvantages

The AHA has no opinion on this issue.

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)

The AHA has no opinion on this issue.

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

Collaborations are already embedded in HASS disciplines like Historical Studies, although current Engagement and Impact measures do not necessarily recognise these. The Engagement exercise relies on hard metrics gathered through ERA around income and commercialisation which do not readily speak to HASS collaborations nor necessarily to research impacts. This is because often the collaborations happen without any exchange of income and with volunteer and other in-kind provisions.

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

The EI exercise exists as a measure of accountability, but is flawed in that engagement and impact are measured separately on their own kinds of metrics or narrative. It is also not clear how much the Australian public or government accesses the outcomes of the evaluation exercise. Instead, it seems more an exercise only of interest to the tertiary sector and even there is limited.

identify institutional processes and infrastructure that enable research engagement?

Comment:

Not at all

Much of the research engagement in the Humanities and in History specifically is happening through partnerships developed between researchers and partners, be they industry, community organisations or government. More often than not the University plays little role in actively facilitating these processes. Again, the metrics used for the Engagement exercise are limited despite the changes in EI18. Income and commercialisation metrics are a good measure for some but not all disciplines. An absence of these measures does not mean engagement is not happening.

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

Comment:

A moderate amount

There is more talk at universities now about encouraging research impact and many universities now have portfolios to work on this. But these portfolios are often small, have no funding to give to researchers, and are not as important as the ERA/quality agenda. So while there is more discussion, the process of embedding policies to encourage impact remain very slow. Ideally, engagement and impact would be evaluated together as connected processes which would enable institutions to develop systems for supporting them.

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

Comment:

No response

[The Australian university sector as a whole?] A small amount. Impact is gathered unevenly across disciplines and institutions need more time to clarify mechanisms that will make it easier/possible for all research areas to understand and measure the meaning of impact, as defined by the evaluation exercise. The weighting on 'approach to impact' in the Impact exercise does not reflect the reality that these mechanisms have yet to take root. [Researchers?] Academics in HASS areas are being more encouraged to do more partnering where possible and more public-facing work where possible. There is still unevenness in how Universities encourage these activities (e.g. in academic workloads) and how they are measured. [Other sectors outside of academia?] The three main areas where historians engage with stakeholders are 1. GLAM sector, 2. Government, 3. Community organisations. The GLAM sector tends to be open about partnering with researchers and working with them to produce exhibitions and/or collect materials. Because so many community groups are volunteer-run or short on resources, they do not necessarily have the economic or policy capability to translate research into impact.

Page 12: EI Policy /2

Q49

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

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

EI is retrospective rather than being involved in "future needs". Few stakeholders involved in Historical Studies collaborations call for this measure, and many are baffled about its over-determined approach to 'measure' the impact that obscures actual collaboration and its real world impact.

Q50

What impact has EI had on:

the Australian university research sector as a whole

This section has been left blank as it does not apply to the AHA.

Individual Universities

This section has been left blank as it does not apply to the AHA.

Researchers

This section has been left blank as it does not apply to the AHA.

Other sectors outside of academia?

This section has been left blank as it does not apply to the AHA.

Q51

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

As an organisation AHA has not used EI outcomes beyond promoting the work of our members. It has not had much influence for collaborations outside the Australian tertiary sector.

Q52

The EI outcomes are valuable to you or your organisation.

Please explain your answer.:

See above [Q 4.4].

Q53

How else could EI outcomes be used?

See above [Q 4.4].

Page 13: EI Policy /3

Q54

The current Engagement definition is appropriate.

Strongly agree,

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

The definition is adequate but the means to measure the presence of EI are limited.

Q55

The current Impact definition is appropriate.

Agree,

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

The definition is good but how it is used/interpreted is challenging for historians. An impact is currently interpreted as facilitating a change. Often impact in the Humanities is 'raising awareness', generating public interest or contributing to public debates, which is socially and politically significant, but for the purposes of the impact exercise, is considered only as 'outreach' and not necessarily 'change'.

Q56

The current end-user definition is appropriate.

Agree,

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

The definition is appropriate, but the term 'end-user' is not. Stakeholder seems the more appropriate term for partnerships and collaborations in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

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.

There are often representatives of industry, particularly in the GLAM sector, who have adjunct or honorary appointments at universities, and therefore are not counted as end users. There needs to be a way to account for people who have fractional, adjunct, or honorary appointments to be counted as end users.

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 EI should remain assessed at 2 digit level (FoR 21 History & Archaeology) for flexibility within institutions in putting forward 'best' case study.

Q60

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

Please explain your answer.:

We do not recommend classifying by SEO codes because they do not speak as clearly as FoR codes to research in Historical Studies.

Q61

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

How many, and why?:

The AHA has no opinion on this issue.

Q62**Strongly agree**

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

Q63

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

This is about consistency – if thresholds are doing the work for ERA then they should also be obliged to do it for EI.

Q64

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

Agree,

Please explain your answer.:

Agree as above. However, it would be good to see scope for universities to submit EI case studies even if below threshold because there may be universities with small history programs where there is one or two researchers doing high impact work but without meeting the publication threshold.

Page 15: EI Methodology /2

Q65

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

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

There is nothing wrong with the indicator suite per se except that it is not an accurate reflection of engagement that goes on. Often in Historical Studies, we are working with community organisations or members of government on projects where there is no exchange of money. All of the indicators are related to money or income. There needs to be another suite of indicators to collate engagement which is not financial, whether that be through MoUs (though usually those are not used unless in very high level projects) or some other indicators. Volunteering for example.

Q66

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

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

It is appropriate as an indicator, but as above, many end users do not exchange money so there needs to be a way to capture non-remuneration actions.

Q67

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

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

This is more relevant for STEM disciplines. It is not so relevant to Historical Studies.

Q68

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

Yes,

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

There should be more flexibility in the metrics such that we can measure engagement in non-monetary or commercialisation ways. It would be easier to do this if Engagement and Impact were measured together as connected components because the Impact would be the measure of the Engagement without Engagement having to be only measured by formal funding arrangements.

Q69

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

Please specify the metrics.:

As above [Q 4.19], if Impact and Engagement were evaluated together, demonstrable Impact would be a measure of Engagement success.

Q70

Should any of the current engagement metrics be redesigned?

Yes,

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

As above [Q 4.19-20]: the way the system is set up to measure Engagement on metrics in separation from Impact sets automatic limits on the meanings and capacities of Engagement. It is not necessarily a case of adding 'more' metrics to the existing framework but a case of changing the weight of focus so that there is more flexibility in the narrative to describe the kind of Engagements that occur through their Impacts.

Q71

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

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Many universities have limits on who can serve as a supervisor (PhD-qualified) which sets limits on this indicator: not all or even many PIs are PhD qualified in some disciplinary areas.

Q72

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

Patents

Comment:

No response

This is not relevant to Historical Studies.

Research commercialisation income

Comment:

No response

This is not relevant to Historical Studies.

Registered designs

Comment:

No response

This is not relevant to Historical Studies.

Plant breeder's rights

Comment:

No response

This is not relevant to Historical Studies.

NHMRC endorsed guidelines

Comment:

No response

This is not relevant to Historical Studies.

Page 16: EI Methodology /3

Q73

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

Strongly agree,

Please explain your answer.:

The narrative is the most important part of the engagement story because that is where the universities can explain the types of engagement they do that are not necessarily captured in the income metrics. If anything, the narrative needs to be longer.

Q74**Respondent skipped this question**

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.

Q75

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

Strongly agree,

Please explain your answer.:

It would be an improvement to have a broad narrative and case study approach, and if Engagement were more closely tied to Impact.

Q76**Strongly agree**

The engagement narrative needs to be longer.

Q77

Additional evidence is needed within the narrative.

Strongly agree,

If you agree, what evidence should be provided?:

A longer narrative will provide the opportunity to include additional evidence.

Page 17: EI Methodology /4

Q78

The narrative approach is suitable for describing and assessing Impact.

Agree,

Please explain your answer.:

Agree, with the qualification that 'approach to impact' is over-weighted and should be woven into the impact narrative rather than a discrete section.

Q79**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.

Q80

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

Please explain your answer.:

The AHA suggests retaining one case study to allow flexibility in selecting how best to meet the named measures that are set for evaluation. A second option is that the number of case studies required would be proportional to FTE for each UoE (in other words, more FTE staff = more impact case studies).

Q81

The impact narrative needs to be longer.

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

The issue is less the length of the narrative than the organisation of parts (see comments above).

Q82

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

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

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.:
This will be very case study specific. In cases where there are quantitative indicators, they can be incorporated into the narrative.

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.

Strongly disagree,
Please explain your answer.:
The expectation to demonstrate approach is rather repetitive within the narrative, but more importantly is difficult to meet for some areas more than others because the practices have not been consistently in place.

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.

Respondent skipped this question

Q88

The approach to impact narrative needs to be longer.

Respondent skipped this question

Q89

There is a need for additional evidence to be provided.

Respondent skipped this question

Q90

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

Yes,

Please explain your answer.:

Many of the difficulties in demonstrating both Engagement and Impact in the ways they are measured is that they are measured separately rather than as two parts of a whole.

The AHA considers this one of the most significant issues to be addressed in the EI exercise. Many of our responses to other questions stem from this issue.

Page 19: EI Methodology /6

Q91

The engagement rating scale is suitable for assessing research engagement.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

We recommend a 5-tiered scale for consistency with ERA. This would also distinguish 'mediums' a bit more accurately.

Q92

The descriptors for the engagement rating scale are suitable.

Respondent skipped this question

Q93

The impact rating scale is suitable for assessing impact.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

We recommend a 5-tiered scale for consistency with ERA. This would also distinguish 'mediums' a bit more accurately.

Q94

The descriptors for the impact rating scale are suitable.

Respondent skipped this question

Q95

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

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

We recommend that approach to impact is not measured separately.

Q96

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

Respondent skipped this question

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.:

Historical Studies is interdisciplinary, as are many HASS disciplines. With the new FoR codes, Historical Studies research will likely fall under more 2 digit codes.

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, and as indicated above, the opt in should be universal for all FoR codes.

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.:

Yes. Engagement is the most important aspect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research because it needs to be working closely with communities to be undertaken ethically.

Page 21: Overarching Issues Common to ERA and EI

Q100

How often should ERA occur?

Other (please specify and explain your answer).:

It should occur every 5 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?

The AHA does not see how a longer cycle (for example 5 years) will have a negative impact, in fact it would be more useful and cost effective to all parties to have longer cycles. The next ERA is in 2023 which will be 5 years since the 2018 one so a 5 year cycle is already been trialled. The internal pressures on institutions and researchers is significant and these should be minimised to allow them to undertake teaching and research, their core business.

Page 22: Overarching Issues Common to ERA and EI

Q102

How often should the EI assessment occur?

Every five years

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?

A five-year cycle will allow researchers, universities and stakeholders time to properly assess the impact and results of research.

Page 23: Overarching Issues Common to both ERA and EI

Q104

ERA and EI should be combined into the one assessment.

Agree,

Please explain your answer.:

It will enable universities and researchers to focus on the one assessment every five years.

Q105

Respondent skipped this question

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

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.:

Engagement and impact (EI) should be evaluated as two parts of the one FoR narrative (how engagement leads to impact, including case study), not as separate evaluation steps on different metrics. In addition, the category 'Approach to impact' should be removed as its own evaluation measure, and instead integrated into the impact narrative.

Page 24: Overarching Issues Common to Both ERA and EI

Q107

Respondent skipped this question

In your view, what data sources could ERA utilise?

Q108

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

The ERA/EI submission takes researchers and universities away from their core business. The submissions are very time-consuming especially if they are done on 3-year cycles. Having ERA/EI conducted separately also means that universities and researchers are continually spending time on the submissions – which is not a good use of their time.

Q109

Are there efficiencies that could be introduced?

Yes,

Please describe.:

Make ERA/EI submissions together and every 5 years

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?

As above [Q 5.7]

Q111

Respondent skipped this question

Are there efficiencies that could be introduced?

Page 26: Overarching Issues Common to Both ERA and EI

Q112

ORCID iDs should be mandatory for ERA.

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

ORCID IDs are a useful method of gathering publication and research data however the AHA is not sure such tools should be mandated. The AHA does acknowledge that ORCID IDs are now being used in ARC grant applications, however, individuals can also personally input data themselves if they wish.

Q113

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

Respondent skipped this question

Q114

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

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

See above. Automated systems are not necessarily the best way to manage submission processes as there are always errors in the inputting of data. Universities would also have to ensure they have the right internal processes in place to manage the data, something not all universities have invested monies in to date. Should universities now have to invest more monies into these processes is up for debate.

Q115

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

Respondent skipped this question

Q116

DOIs should be mandatory for ERA.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

This only applies to citation metrics methodologies. Historical Studies generally uses peer review where DOIs are not relevant. To mandate the use of DOIs would discriminate against disciplines where citations are not so relevant or used.

Q117

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

Respondent skipped this question

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?

Respondent skipped this question

Q119

Respondent skipped this question

What are the advantages and/or disadvantages?

Page 28: Additional Comments

Q120

Please provide any additional comments:

The AHA would like to emphasise two key suggestions for a reconceptualisation of the EI Assessment:

- Engagement and impact should be evaluated as two parts of the one FoR narrative (how engagement leads to impact, including case study), not as separate evaluation steps on different metrics.
 - The category 'Approach to impact' should be removed as its own evaluation measure, and instead integrated into the impact narrative.
-