

#167

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Page 1: Personal Details

Q1

Your name

Incomplete submission University Response Tracey McNicol

Q2

Your organisation (leave blank if not applicable)

University of Canberra

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

tracey.mcnicol@canberra.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:

A moderate amount

ERA is a significant time and financial investment. In essence, it has not changed significantly for over a decade. Significant automation is possible to reduce the burden. University effort and funding is better spent on undertaking and funding the research, not reporting on it. While there is no doubt that ERA brings value for the government I would ask the question if industry and businesses are aware of the exercise and if so if the results are considered while decision-making (example: partnerships).

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 moderate amount

There are clear discrepancies between citation and peer review disciplines. The highly subjective nature of Peer Review panels creates a disparity between the overall trending performance when compared with citation disciplines. The existing model fails to capture the whole picture and nuanced character of some disciplines and does not appropriately recognise interdisciplinary research.

Identify excellence across the full spectrum of research performance.

Comment:

A moderate amount

ERA does capture that which can be easily measured. Translation, changing practice and changing outcomes are more important, but harder to measure. Innovation, and creativity also, not really reflected.

Identify emerging research areas and opportunities for further development.

Comment:

Not at all

Given its a backward looking exercise with significant lag, ERA is not useful as a tool to identify future directions. The danger of ERA outcomes is that it leads to institutions reinvesting in the same areas over and over again, thereby cementing the past without identifying and investing in the future. Every 3-5 years is insufficient to be agile in actioning opportunities. Emerging areas are identified internally by coding not through this exercise.

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

Comment:

A moderate amount

National and international comparisons are more usefully captured in the citations based disciplines. However, it is not in peer review disciplines which the approach needs to be reconsidered.

Q11

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

Neither agree nor disagree,

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

ERA was beneficial a decade ago but has had diminishing returns. When ERA was first conceived, other external comparisons were not readily available. Times have changed. More recently, world rankings have been a greater driver of performance improvement than ERA and they are more readily recognised across the world. ERA is not considered outside of Australia. Current and future stakeholders reach well beyond Australian borders. Externally available data such as through Elsevier and Clarivate Analytics is available on an annual or constant basis making it more useful to monitor institutional performance. ERA does allow universities to concentrate investment strategically. However the cost mostly outweighs the benefit.

Page 5: ERA Policy /2

Q12

What impact has ERA had on:

the Australian university research sector as a whole

Initially it provided greater awareness of research metrics and a focus on quality. However, it has served its purpose with diminishing returns. It is now difficult to separate the effects of ERA from effects of world rankings which are what attract the best staff, students and collaborators.

individual universities

It generally confirms what Universities already know, though can provide an external validation for strategic decision making. Though it can also dominate decision making within universities, emphasising gaming and short term decisions. It does provide a greater focus on building critical mass through hiring strategies. ERA has encouraged Universities to invest in their areas of research strength. The downside is that the investment can be at the expense of emerging or smaller research areas, and that has encouraged strong research teams to move from one University to another.

researchers

It has helped to focus researchers on quality. However, much of the discussion can be on what needs to be done to improve ERA results rather than really about how to improve quality. Also, those who are in niche research areas that don't meet thresholds can be devalued regardless of the quality of the research.

Q13

How do you, or your organisation use ERA outcomes?

To contribute to strategies for what the university will focus on in the future. Identify where more support is needed in research at the discipline/Faculty level. ERA is used to benchmark measures that are not available through other means currently (e.g. income by discipline). However, as this data is open "gaming" it becomes less useful. The frequency is also an issue.

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?:

There are other means to measure performance that are more frequent and less burdensome. ERA itself has had diminishing returns. As a snapshot of past performance, ERA outcomes are somewhat beneficial.

Q15

How else could ERA outcomes be used?

University funding.

Page 6: ERA Methodology /1

Q16

The current methodology meets the objectives of ERA.

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

In citation disciplines more so than peer review disciplines. The use of peer review methodology (without further information regarding results) is problematic in terms of meeting the objectives. The evaluation at the 4-digit level is useful as it provides enough granularity. The evaluation at the 2-digit level is less useful as the 2-digit FOR codes are too broad. At best it provides a view of where gaming may be occurring (where a higher result occurs at the four digit than the two).

Q17

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

Strengths

Citation analysis works well in the STEM disciplines, it could be applied more broadly across other disciplines.

Weaknesses

The use of peer review in some disciplines and citations in others is not well justified. Peer review and citations are not in any way equivalent measures, with the former measuring peer perception of quality and the latter measuring academic impact. At present there are two completely different ERA processes and measures and this is not made clear in reporting. Marni Hughes-Warrington's trajectory of 'two ERAs' is dangerous and is the central flaw in the system. Clearly sciences are going to move towards a peer review system and they shouldn't, and moving to a citation index only would seriously disadvantage some humanities and creative practice disciplines. Though perhaps a combination of citations as the external validation and a lesser level of peer review could work. The submission process is highly open to gaming.

Q18

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

Not in its current format. It should be investigated if the citation methodology can be applied across all disciplines to some extent, not just STEM. It provides some additional external validation than just the highly subjective peer review process.

Q19

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

Agree,

Please explain your answer.:

It could be strengthened through automation of FoR coding through Elsevier or Clarivate Analytics, potentially with just a review by Universities with limited changes allowed.

Q20

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

Strengths

Transparency, clear metrics that one can follow. Provides external validation.

Weaknesses

Internal FoR coding open to "gaming". Automation through external parties such as SciVal would remove gaming and burden on Universities. The coverage of journals and other publication outlets by the citation provider is critical. For some disciplines, the coverage is good, for others it is less so.

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.:

Use automatic external FoR coding that is being developed by Elsevier through AI algorithms using of keywords, abstracts and titles. Include metrics such as FWCI to provide a better way of handling discipline-specific measures, while allowing overall a fair comparison between disciplines and greater transparent international benchmarking. It further allows for University to track performance more frequently than ERA allows.

Q22

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

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Peer review in principle might be appropriate, but the current approach has deep flaws. The process is highly subjective and cannot be externally validated. There is th potential to include some citation based metrics to externally validate. Many peer review discipline have changed to a greater citation focus, ERA has not changed with those times. NTROs are not mentioned in this review. Would recommend removing NTROs from ERA. If there is sufficient research to justify inclusion, then works should be encourage to be developed into traditional research outputs. The new research behind NTROs can be invisible, and the research statements that go with them, to anyone but the university and ARC.

Q23

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

Strengths

In the peer review disciplines, qualitative evaluation of the research is a strength but flawed in the current process.

Weaknesses

How we do it can be improved. The review is highly dependent on who were selected as REC and reviewers. There may be a large gap in reviewer's judgement. However, the mechanism to moderate this at the panel level seems weak and inconsistent. More importantly the process is largely unknown. There needs to be more transparency regarding the process. In practice, and especially for REC members, the amount of reading required is impossible. So reviewers take short cuts. They may look at citations, even when they are not supposed to. They may go by quality of journal, rather than quality of article. They may even be guided by the historical reputation of the institution in the area in question. Another weaknesses is that some disciplines are more harsh than others when it comes to the character of peer review. Political scientists are notoriously harsh on each other, in assessing grant applications and reviewing articles for journals. Note that the inflation in scores we see over time for citation disciplines does not happen for peer review disciplines. Also the fact that peer reviewers can apply their own sampling frame to determine which outputs they assess introduces all kinds of possibility for error. Some sample on the basis of expected quality (i.e. choose to asses only outputs they think will be good). Some sample to minimize the efforts they will need to take.

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.:

The administrative burden on peer-review disciplines and the lack of objectivity put a severe question mark over the peer review methodology. Combination of externally validated metrics with reduced peer review could be a solution? Making the process more transparent – who is selected and how, disclosure of conflict of interest, disclosure of reviewers (not individually but as a collective).

Page 7: ERA Methodology /2

Q25

The volume and activity indicators are still relevant to ERA.

Agree,

Please explain your answer.:

Useful for general context.

Q26

The publishing profile indicator is still relevant to ERA.

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

REC panels are broad and cannot be across all disciplines and sub-disciplines and therefore judgement on journal quality can be limited and highly flawed. Could include externally validated quality metrics such as SciMago for journals.

Q27

The research income indicators are still relevant to ERA.

Agree,

Please explain your answer.:

Ability to attract income is an important aspect of research performance. However, it is an indirect measure at best. If one postulates that quality research publications will lead to research income then it would be a useful indicator but if not, then not. And even if it is, would the quality not already have been measured via the publication quality? Research income - or national average - is also very discipline specific and often very specific to the location of the institution as well. It is therefore questionable that research income as an indicator in the current form is useful.

Q28

The applied measures are still relevant to ERA.

Patents

Comment:

Neither agree nor disagree

Patents are available publicly. This could be sourced separately rather than burdening Universities. It is not clear that it provides a good indicator for research quality, nor that it is used to make any assessment decisions.

Research commercialisation income

Comment:

Neither agree nor disagree

Not useful for ERA but more useful for EI.

Registered designs

Comment:

Strongly disagree

Registered designs are available publicly. This could be sourced separately rather than burdening Universities. It is not clear that it provides a good indicator for research quality, nor that it is used to make any assessment decisions. Would rather remove.

Plant breeder's rights

Comment:

Strongly disagree

Plant breeders' rights are available publicly. This could be sourced separately rather than burdening Universities. It is not clear that it provides a good indicator for research quality, nor that it is used to make any assessment decisions. Would rather remove.

NHMRC endorsed guidelines

Comment:

Disagree

It is not clear that it provides a good indicator for research quality, nor that it is used to make any assessment decisions. Would rather remove.

Q29

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

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

With most Citation based disciplines now above or well above, there's no where else to go to continue to improve performance

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?

No,

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

An additional band above 5.

Q31

The ERA low volume threshold is appropriate.

Agree,

Please explain your answer.:

50 is a fairly arbitrary number, it's probably a little low for the STEM disciplines but right for HASS. However, ERA should never be about quantity, only quality.

Q32

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

Perhaps an option to be considered: set a minimum to ensure critical mass in both publications and a staff FTE (maybe 2.0) minimum. Under the current process a single individual can met the requirements to say an FoR is a University strength.

Q33

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

By-line,

Please explain your answer.:

Both have weaknesses. By-line would future-proof any potential automation going forward.

Q34

What are the limitations of a census date approach?

'Purchasing CVs' can be a problem but it can also mobilise the university sector, which is a good thing. It is also a fairly accurate indicator of employment which is an important indicator of 'investment' and 'support' in a unit. Though good staff can be bought by those who can afford it - greater separation for the haves and have nots. Strategic hiring also doesn't guarantee the maintaining of performance at the new institution - different teams, equipment, support, facilities etc

Q35

Would a by-line approach address these limitations?

Yes,

Please explain your answer.:

More likely representative of the quality of the work at the institution at the time of the research. Encourage Universities to try to maintain and support their good staff, rather just hire in for the census date.

Q36

What are the limitations of a by-line approach?

Each person can have multiple affiliations, and which by-line someone chooses to use varies. Can encourage game playing. Those who are not on staff (not paid) can contribute through various affiliations. This is not an accurate reflection of the actual intellectual contribution as they will less likely to be engaged in teaching or mentoring. This also advantages universities with higher global reputation which is not the intention of evaluating excellence in research. Using first affiliation only might ensure less game playing and encourage universities to review the affiliations their staff are using.

Q37

ERA adequately captures and evaluates interdisciplinary research.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Given ERA's evaluation is based on FOR codes, it is difficult to see how this process could be made to work for interdisciplinary research. An entirely different approach would be needed. The current approach is geared towards identifying strong past performance in individual research fields / disciplines, not interdisciplinary research. Not surprising then, institutions try to maximise outcomes in disciplines where they can get a high ERA outcome rating. There are currently no incentives in ERA for interdisciplinary research.

Q38

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

A possible method would be to give extra 'score' when a unit is clearly interdisciplinary.

Page 9: ERA Methodology /4

Q39

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

Two-digit
Comment:

Yes

Isn't there only one? FoR 45?

Four-digit
Comment:

No

None.

Q40

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

Other (please describe).:

It is still too early to fully assess this. New FoRs have only just been released. Universities need to recode the past 6 years worth of publications to establish the new baseline. It is likely to meet any thresholds, we'd need combine multiple 4 digits FoRs or all at the 2 digit level.

Q41

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

Advantages

Too early to assess this.

Disadvantages

Too early to assess this. Normal threshold may be too high, combining all might meet threshold but may not make sense in assessment of university strengths, HASS/STEM separation would ignore important cross-discipline work.

Page 10: ERA Process /1

Q42

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

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Annual collection could occur only if automated or through expansion of a currently collected datasets such as HEIMS staffing data and the HERDC submission. The addition of FoRs at that time would reduce the ability to "game" and reduce the overall time effort as this information is already collected by institutions. Annual automation should be possible for publications in citation based disciplines. Not stated whether this means annual collection and annual reporting or just collection with maintaining 5 year assessment.

Q43

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

Advantages

only if automated or through expansion of currently submitted data (HEIMS/HERDC). Would be harder for institutions to game.

Disadvantages

Increase in burden if collections are not automated. The administrative overheads are too big. Moreover, it is questionable that a yearly data collection would reveal any particularly illuminating pieces of information.

Q44

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

Yes,

Please explain your answer.:

Transparency and benchmarking purposes. More useful if FTE also available at this level. Please note, this agreement is for context purposes only, it is quality, not quantity that is important.

Q45

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

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

How would the ARC action the likely overwhelming responses from Universities who will highlight any perceived coding discrepancies. Universities may try to expose their competitors for their own gain. Would reveal the weakness in the entire ERA system.

Q46

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

Advantages

Increased transparency and will reduce gaming.

Disadvantages

Potential backlash or questioning as to why a particular output was assigned to a particular FOR code.

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)

Decision boundaries between ERA ratings, e.g. what is the decision boundary between an 'At world level' and an 'Above world level'? It would provide greater transparency.

Q48

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

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

Comment:

Not at all

Decisions on engagement and impact are not driven through the EI exercise. Other incentives encourage collaboration. We have not seen any evidence that it has fostered more industry or end-user engagement.

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 assessment appears to be more ideologically driven by a government beholden to the notion that universities waste money, conduct taxpayer funded ivory tower research, and have no relevance to the community. The EI assessment and other government initiatives would give the impression that only short-term applied research is valuable, while long-term basic research is not really needed. That is a dangerous path that will lead to shortcomings in future years in the Australian economy and society. Research is a marathon, not a sprint, and requires foresight and investment, not short-termism.

identify institutional processes and infrastructure that enable research engagement?

Comment:

Not at all

This is already known by institution through standard management practices. EI does not add any value to this process.

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

Comment:

Not at all

Universities are already supportive of the translation of research impact through other incentives. This adds no value.

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

Comment:

A small amount

Can learn from others case studies but not sure anyone actually does.

Q49

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

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

The whole process seems to be ideologically driven. We are not aware of a single business that decided to work with a university because of the EI assessment and the information revealed within it. It has validity issues (i.e. am I measuring what I think I'm measuring) and is even more open to gaming than the ERA exercise. The value of research to industry should speak for itself.

Q50

What impact has EI had on:

the Australian university research sector as a whole

None. This exercise has been of little worth. It has had little impact on the Australian university sector. A widespread concern is that only short-term, applied research is considered to be valuable, at the expense of more fundamental, basic research.

Individual Universities

None. EI has had no impact on UC. It has not acted as an incentive or changed any practices. Engagement and impact are driven regardless of EI.

Researchers

None. EI is not fully known among researchers. It has not changed any behaviours.

Other sectors outside of academia?

None. EI is not known outside of academia. ARC will need to engage more with the industry sector to ensure what they are looking for.

Q51

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

Very minimal. EI has not been used to any real extent. Some of the narrative was re-purposed for marketing but very little.

Q52

The EI outcomes are valuable to you or your organisation.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

EI outcomes are not useful. They have little to no value from an institution perspective.

Q53

How else could EI outcomes be used?

No value. Both ERA and EI assessments have the inherent danger of being used (or abused) to drive research funding decisions at the expense of a long-term vision.

It is concerning that the nature of the questions posed do not consider whether the EI exercise has merit and should continue at all.

Q54

The current Engagement definition is appropriate.

Neither agree nor disagree,

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

The definition is OK but broad which leads to the question of: How does one capture this information? The issue isn't with the definition but with the exercise overall. It is a significant burden with little value.

Q55

The current Impact definition is appropriate.

Disagree,

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

The definition is not inappropriate but could be more clearly defined and the measures need to be refined.

Q56

The current end-user definition is appropriate.

Neither agree nor disagree**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.

The boundary between medical research institutes, (university affiliated) hospitals and other healthcare providers are not clear.

Q58

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

No

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?

No,

Please explain your answer.:

Four digit codes would be just as effective as impact can come from a very narrow area as well as a broad area. Perhaps impact should not be confined to specific disciplinary areas to encourage a broader university level strategy of engagement. It may also encourage cross-disciplinary work.

Q60

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

Yes,

Please explain your answer.:

Yes. Sustainability Development Goals which allows for interdisciplinarity and is more aligned to international goals and standards.

Q61

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

Fewer units of assessment,

How many, and why?:

None preferable, fewer better than more. More would disadvantage small institutions. If you made this exercise entirely optionally for institutions, I suspect you would received little to no submissions as the value isn't there.

Q62

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

Neither agree or disagree**Q63**

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

Respondent skipped this question**Q64**

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

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Low volume doesn't determine impact or engagement - you can have significant in both without volume.

Page 15: EI Methodology /2

Q65

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

Neither agree or disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Generally suitable.

Q66

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

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Generally suitable.

Q67

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

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Generally suitable.

Q68

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

No,

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

The point of this review was to reduce burden, further metrics shouldn't be considered.

Q69

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

Please specify the metrics.:

The point of this review was to reduce burden, further metrics shouldn't be considered.

Q70**No**

Should any of the current engagement metrics be redesigned?

Q71**Disagree**

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

Q72

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

Patents

Yes

Comment:

Dependent on the discipline.

Research commercialisation income

Yes

Comment:

Dependent on the discipline.

Registered designs

Yes

Comment:

Dependent on the discipline.

Plant breeder's rights

Yes

Comment:

Dependent on the discipline.

NHMRC endorsed guidelines

Yes

Comment:

Dependent on the discipline.

Page 16: EI Methodology /3

Q73

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

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

The narratives provide rather subjective views. It might be better to stick to the measurable / quantifiable metrics. There was also a correlation between those who paid for writers and those who couldn't afford to. If you need narrative perhaps short dot points: -easier for assessors - less burden for universities -more likely to be succinct (less florid, verbose prose).

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**Neither agree nor disagree,**

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

Please explain your answer.:

Depends on the size of the institutions and sub-discipline spread. Less is more.

Q76

The engagement narrative needs to be longer.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

There appeared to be a clear correlation between those that did well in EI and those that hired professional writers. Dot points would suffice and would save time for all parties - Universities and assessors.

Q77

Additional evidence is needed within the narrative.

Disagree,

If you agree, what evidence should be provided?:

This review is about simplifying and streamlining, not increasing the burden.

Page 17: EI Methodology /4

Q78

The narrative approach is suitable for describing and assessing Impact.

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

The narratives provide rather subjective views. It might be better to stick to the measurable / quantifiable metrics. There was also a correlation between those who paid for writers and those who couldn't afford to. If you need narrative perhaps short dot points: -easier for assessors - less burden for universities -more likely to be succinct (less florid, verbose prose).

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.

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Depends on the size of the institutions and sub-discipline spread. Too narrow an approach.

Q81

The impact narrative needs to be longer.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

There appeared to be a clear correlation between those that did well in EI and those that hired professional writers. Dot points would suffice and would save time for all parties.

Q82

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

Disagree,

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

This review is about simplifying and streamlining, not increasing the burden.

Q83

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

Yes,

Please explain your answer.:

Similar to citations within academic outputs, non-academic references and citations to the academic work (e.g. government reports) can be used, as a measure of policy impact. This can be applied to any discipline. Can also consider Impact metrics as reported in SciVal. Patents citing research, research citing patents

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.

Indicator 1

Co-publishing with non-academic co-authors.

Indicator 2

Patents citing research

Indicator 3

Research citing patents

Page 18: EI Methodology /5

Q85

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

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Exactly the same as question 4.28. The narratives provide rather subjective views. It might be better to stick to the measurable / quantifiable metrics. There was also a correlation between those who paid for writers and those who couldn't afford to. If you need narrative perhaps short dot points: -easier for assessors -less burden for universities -more likely to be succinct (less florid, verbose prose).

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.

Short dot points: -easier for assessors -less burden for universities -more likely to be succinct (less florid, verbose prose).

Q87

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

Neither agree nor disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Case by case approach would seem more logical than a broad statement.

Q88

The approach to impact narrative needs to be longer.

Strongly disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

This review is about simplifying and streamlining, not increasing the burden.

Q89 There is a need for additional evidence to be provided.	Disagree, Please explain your answer.: This review is about simplifying and streamlining, not increasing the burden.
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Q90 Would there be benefit in combining engagement and approach to impact?	Yes, Please explain your answer.: Could reduce burden.
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Page 19: EI Methodology /6

Q91 The engagement rating scale is suitable for assessing research engagement.	Neither agree nor disagree
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Q92 The descriptors for the engagement rating scale are suitable.	Neither agree nor disagree
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Q93 The impact rating scale is suitable for assessing impact.	Neither agree nor disagree
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Q94 The descriptors for the impact rating scale are suitable.	Neither agree nor disagree
---	-----------------------------------

Q95 The approach to impact rating scale is suitable for assessing approach to impact.	Neither agree nor disagree
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Q96 The descriptions for the approach to impact rating scale are suitable.	Neither agree nor disagree
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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.: Okay if done in addition and optionally.
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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?

No,

Please explain your answer.:

It is more important to include than to strictly count by numbers in this instance.

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.:

This a distinct field that is often interdisciplinary.

Page 21: Overarching Issues Common to ERA and EI
Q100

Every three years

How often should ERA occur?

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?

Reduces burden and costs on institutions and the government. Research performance doesn't change significantly in shorter periods of time and where it does, there are other ways of measuring this. Would allow more time to focus on doing the research rather than reporting on it.

Page 22: Overarching Issues Common to ERA and EI
Q102

How often should the EI assessment occur?

Other (please specify and explain your answer):

Minimum 5 year but prefer if this exercise was ceased. It is extremely time consuming with little value to universities or stakeholders. Impact in some disciplines can take decades. This exercise doesn't drive behaviour.

Q103

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

No impact other than reducing burden.

Page 23: Overarching Issues Common to both ERA and EI
Q104

ERA and EI should be combined into the one assessment.

Disagree,

Please explain your answer.:

Small universities cannot absorb the workload or afford the cost of managing both exercises at the same time unless significant effort is made to reduce the burden through greater automation.

Q105

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

Advantages

There may be some advantage if more can be automated. Otherwise none.

Disadvantages

Increase in burden. They are designed to measure / evaluate different aspects of research. It is best to keep them separate.

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.:

Automation through use of SciVal/Incites for publications including coding. Collect FoRs in HERDC submissions and HEIMS staff submissions. University involvement should be minimal.

Page 24: Overarching Issues Common to Both ERA and EI

Q107

In your view, what data sources could ERA utilise?

SciVal, HERDC, HEIMS. Collect once, use for multiple purposes.

These days, there are enough AI-enabled algorithms around to allow for data integration from multiple sources, thereby overcoming the coverage problem of single data sources.

Q108

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

FoR code assignment. Creating NTRO narratives. Collecting outputs for peer review.

Q109

Are there efficiencies that could be introduced?

Yes,

Please describe.:

Use machine learning algorithms to automatically search through the content of publications to allow for a faster/easier FOR code assignment. Excluding NTROs from the submission and reducing peer review requirements.

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?

Choosing the case(s), linking it to the approach to impact, creating the narrative.

Wasting time trying to interpret to unclear instructions

Remove this exercised that is not driving behaviour within institutions and is rarely used by stakeholders. This is not an exercise the at University or the Government can afford in the current environment.

Q111

Are there efficiencies that could be introduced?

Yes,

Please describe.:

Cease the exercise completely. It isn't adding value.

Page 26: Overarching Issues Common to Both ERA and EI

Q112

ORCID iDs should be mandatory for ERA.

Strongly agree,

Please explain your answer.:

Prepares for future automation. Encourages staff to maintain complete and accurate records that can lead to increased discoverability of their research.

Q113

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

Advantages

Clarity and transparency. Future proofing for automation.

Disadvantages

Requires academic staff maintaining their ORCID profiles accurately.

Q114

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

Strongly agree,

Please explain your answer.:

In theory, definitely. However, it would depend on how this would work practically. Insufficient information has been provided to answer this question. No FoRs are allocated in ORCID. Would this be used to provide publication names, types, DOIs which would then be sent back to Universities to code? There are also insufficient quality controls in ORCID.

Q115

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

Advantages

Simplified data collection process

Disadvantages

Quality controls

Q116

DOIs should be mandatory for ERA.

Strongly agree,

Please explain your answer.:

Ensure correct citations attributed to publications and should mean no need to provide institutional repository copies of publications. Simplified data collection, ensuring that each output is accounted for and avoiding misspelling and other mistakes that can lead to duplicate entries.

Q117

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

Advantages

Ensure correct citations attributed to publications and should mean no need to provided institutional repository copies of publications. Simplified data collection, ensuring that each output is accounted for and avoiding misspelling and other mistakes that can lead to duplicate entries.

Disadvantages

Not all research outputs have DOI. NTROs in particular may not have DOIs.

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.:

There are opportunities for significant automation through use of SciVal including smart algorithm for FoR coding and through the addition of FoRs to the HEIMS staff submission and HERDC submission. The current process is not considered robust as it is too open to gaming across the sector. Automation would reduce burden and gaming.

Q119

What are the advantages and/or disadvantages?

Advantages

Automation through use of SciVal/Incites, collect FoRs in HERDC submissions and HEIMS staff submissions. Reduces gaming and burden

Disadvantages

None.

Page 28: Additional Comments

Q120

Please provide any additional comments:

Respondent skipped this question