

## **Internal REF development and review timescales – update June 2024:**

### **Headline points:**

- The three elements of REF will be split into different internal processes for 2024-2025.
- There is only one deadline before the summer period (see under 'REF2029 Targets, below), but there are multiple deadlines in the autumn.
- The Elements Assessment module will be released to Schools in June for use in capturing estimated quality grades for outputs. UoA Leads are asked to begin using it as soon as possible after this, to build their output quality dataset (and to transfer any existing dataset held locally, e.g. on spreadsheets). Guidance and support will be available.
- The process for People, Culture and Environment will be affected by the decisions on a) whether we are selected to participate in the pilot exercise and b) the content of the pilot. The aim is for all units, even if not in the external pilot, to test available data relevant to PCE.
- Fuller mock exercises for all elements of REF will follow in 2025 and 2026.

### **REF2029 Targets:**

- All UoA Leads are asked to review their existing targets for REF2029 and record any adjustments, using a spreadsheet provided by RQI. Even if you believe the targets are already correct for your UoA, we ask you to complete this spreadsheet to review and update them. There will be regular future opportunities to update the targets, but as the existing targets generally pre-date information about the changes between REF2021 and REF2029, we ask all UoA Leads to take this initial opportunity to review them and complete the spreadsheet by 28 June 2024. (If you wish to undertake a more detailed review process before updating your UoA targets, we can extend this deadline to 31 July if necessary.)

### **Impact and Engagement:**

- This year's review process for impact and engagement will launch in June, with guidance from RQI on how we are defining impact stages internally.
- Submissions for this review process will be due in early September 2024.
- The submissions will be light-touch, consisting of a) a mapping of each potential case study to a particular stage of development, as defined by the internal guidance; b) a brief estimate of potential quality; c) a list of the key needs for the impact's further development.

### **Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding:**

- The Elements assessment module will fully launch in June, with a briefing and demo for all UoA Leads. UoA Leads are asked to begin using this tool to capture their estimated outputs grades from June onwards.
- There will be a light-touch review of output profiles as uploaded in the Elements assessment module in November 2024. UoA Leads are asked to ensure that a defined pool of outputs has been through a full review process by that stage. UoA Leads themselves will have the option to define this pool; for smaller units with a well-established internal review process, it may be possible to upload grades for all in-scope outputs produced since the start of this REF period; for others, this may only be possible for part of the period or for some other subsection of the total outputs. UoA Leads are encouraged to take into consideration the overall volume of outputs they will need to take through their review process during the REF period when determining an appropriate and achievable volume of outputs for this review.

**People, Culture and Environment:**

- We expect to find out soon whether or not we have been selected to participate in the pilot exercise on PCE being run by the four research councils;
- There is an exciting opportunity for individuals to apply to become part of the assessment panels for the PCE pilot. The deadline for this is 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024. It would be extremely valuable if staff with relevant experience (e.g. UoA leads or former panel members) would engage with this as it will really help us to better understand the new process. Interested candidates should confirm support from their HoS.
- Whether or not we are selected in the pilot exercise, there will be an internal PCE data exercise, with a snapshot expected to be taken in November 2024 and analysis of the snapshot in early 2025. This will include a mix of centrally- and locally-held data, depending on the indicators used in the pilot. This exercise will be focussed on the accessibility and management of the relevant data rather than on the substantive quality of the research environment and culture.
- The Research Councils are undertaking a broad consultation. This includes a series of 14 workshops on PCE organised by Vitae. We know from Vitae that two people from Sussex are participants in those workshops - Dominic Dean and one other; we do not currently know who that other person is, and it would be useful to find this out. Seb Oliver will be a facilitator in break-out sessions at three of the workshops. At the moment we know that initial desk-based research from Vitae has identified 10 areas that appear to be PCE priorities, and these are:
  - Equality, diversity and inclusion in research and/or research careers
  - Openness and open research
  - Research integrity and reproducibility
  - Collaboration and external engagement
  - Interdisciplinarity and team research
  - Professional and career development
  - Research strategy and capacity (including workload)
  - Recognition for all those involved in research
  - Broadening what is recognised as contributing to research
  - Collegiality