

Subject Weights Review

- This paper presents the findings and recommendations of the Working Group formed by RKEC to review the subject weightings for six units of assessment.

Recommendations

- RKEC is asked to consider the findings of the Working Group, decide whether to support these, and agree a course of action to recommend to the Board.

Financial implications

- None at this stage.

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Subject Weights Review

Purpose

1. This paper presents the findings and recommendations of the Working Group formed by RKEC to review the subject weightings for six units of assessment.

Background

2. The RKEC agreed on 11 October 2018 (RKEC/18/21) that a subject weights review should be undertaken, and that a Working Group would be established for this purpose.

Membership

3. Membership of the Working Group was:

Chair: Professor Lesley Yellowlees (University of Edinburgh & Chair of RKEC)

Professor Susan Craw (Robert Gordon University & Member of RKEC)

Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli (University of Glasgow & Member of RKEC)

Professor Andrew Porter (University of Aberdeen & Member of RKEC)

Dr Helen Reddy (University of St. Andrews)

Professor Eleanor Riley (The Roslin Institute)

Terms of reference and scope of the review

4. The aims of the review were:
 - to review the relative **costs** of undertaking research associated with six Units of Assessment (UoAs), taking into account changing practices in research in these areas; and
 - to make recommendations to RKEC on any proposed adjustments to subject weights, to be implemented in funding allocations no earlier than AY 2022-23
5. The review focussed on the following Units of Assessment:
 - UoA 2: Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care
 - UoA 3: Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy
 - UoA 4: Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience

- UoA 10: Mathematical Sciences
 - UoA 17: Geography, Environmental Studies and Archaeology
 - UoA: 35: Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts
6. The Executive examined standard sector data and issued questionnaires seeking stakeholder feedback on changes in research activity in these UoAs since the weightings were established.

Decisions taken by the Group

7. The Group met four times, and reviewing evidence in tranches. Initially it was agreed to conduct two tranches seeking evidence from stakeholders, but due to the poor response in relation to Units of Assessment 2 and 3, a third tranche questionnaire was issued, offering a further opportunity for evidence to be considered.
8. The Group held its final meeting on 25 July 2019, and agreed to recommend to RKEC as follows:
- UoA 2: Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care – based on the lack of evidence for change submitted, there was no proven case for adjusting the weighting. The weighting should remain at 1.2 (mid cost).
 - UoA 3: Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy – based on the lack of evidence for change submitted, there was no proven case for adjusting the weighting. The weighting should remain at 1.2 (mid cost).
 - UoA 4: Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience – based on the evidence received, this unit’s weighting should be increased to 1.6 (high cost).
 - UoA 10: Mathematical Sciences – based on the evidence received, this unit’s weighting should be increased to 1.6 (high cost).
 - UoA 17: Geography and Environmental Studies only - based on evidence submitted, there was no proven case for adjusting the weighting. The weighting should remain at 1.2 (mid cost).
 - UoA 17: Archaeology¹ only – based on the evidence received, this unit’s weighting should be increased to 1.6 (high cost).
 - UoA 35: Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts – based on the evidence received, this unit’s weighting should be increased to 1.2 (mid cost).

¹ Archaeology will be considered as a stand-alone UoA in REF 2021.

9. If accepted by RKEC, these adjustments will be recommended to the SFC Board for consideration when the REG formula is reviewed following the results of REF 2021.

Financial implications

10. If these recommendations are accepted and made to the SFC Board, they will ultimately lead to the redistribution of available REG funding from AY 2022-23. They will not have a direct, or immediate, impact on the *amount* of REG funding.

Recommendations

11. RKEC is asked to consider the Working Group's recommendations, decide whether to support these, and agree a course of action to recommend to the Board.

Equality and diversity assessment

12. An equality and diversity assessment will be carried out for any changes recommended by RKEC before any review of REG funding to take account of REF 2021.

Publication

13. This paper will be published on the Council website.

Further information

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