

REG/RPG Consultation responses

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Research Excellence Grant proposals	
Volume - as the two major drivers of REG distribution, the SFC proposes that a fixed proportion of the REG be allocated on the basis of 'Quality and Volume' (with appropriate subject weights). Do you agree that this approach supports the principles of the grant? The SFC would welcome views on alternative approaches where there are clear linkages to delivering the purpose of the grant.	<p>Yes, we firmly believe that "quality and volume (with appropriate subject weights)" should be the major drivers for the REGa part of the allocation, for the compelling reasons listed in paragraphs 20 – 26. This is undoubtedly the best way to support and enhance excellence in the Scottish research base.</p> <p>However, the proposed subject weighting of 1.2 for the Mathematical Sciences (UoA 10) is wholly inappropriate – placing the subject at a disadvantage relative to cognate disciplines such as Computer Science, Physics and Engineering, and at a funding disadvantage compared to the weightings used by HEFCE. This has already caused significant damage to the health of Scottish Mathematical Sciences compared to other STEM disciplines – Scottish Mathematical Sciences staff numbers submitted to REF2014 decreased by 5.5% compared to RAE2008 submissions, (that is from 249 to 235 FTEs). This contrasts both with the 7.1% increase in Scottish staff numbers submitted to the rest of Panel B in REF2014, (from 1450 in RAE2008 to 1553 FTEs in REF2014), and also with the 1.2% increase in submitted FTEs from the rest of the UK to the Mathematical Sciences Subpanel (from 1675 to 1695). It is vital for the preservation of the high quality of mathematical sciences research and teaching in Scotland that these declines relative to other STEM subjects and relative to mathematical sciences in the rest of the UK are reversed. The 2012 Deloitte Report shows that the economic benefit of Mathematical Sciences research is substantial (contributing 16% of UK gross value added, about £208 billion).</p>
Other Activity Indicators: Research Assistants and Research Students - The SFC proposes to not include the other activity indicators 'research assistants' and 'research students' in the model. The SFC would welcome views on the potential impact of this approach on delivering the aims of the grant and on individual disciplines.	<p>We strongly support this proposal, to avoid double counting and for the other reasons given in paragraph 29: the environment measure of the REF is influenced by RA and research PG numbers; RAs are typically grant-funded, and hence counted in REGb or REGc; and the RPG is the appropriate mechanism to provide support for PhD students.</p>
Other Activity Indicators: Research income and charity income - SFC proposes to adopt a	<p>We strongly support the proposal to separate the REG allocation into REGa,b,c as described. It is not clear that the contribution to top up the charitable research income (REGc) should be greater than that for non-charitable research</p>

<p>revised approach for supporting research income and charity research income in the REG model. Should SFC support research income and charitable research income in the way proposed? Is it essential that the model support charitable research income</p>	<p>income (REGb), but this new system would allow SFC to exercise appropriate control over commitments in the top-up elements of the REG.</p>
<p>Research Postgraduate Grant - SFC proposes to not make changes to the current approach to distributing the RPG. Are you content with this approach? Should a quality factor be applied when calculating the RPG allocation? Is £73k a sufficient minimum amount for the smaller institutions to invest in their research training environment and to develop their student base?</p>	<p>We are content with the current approach to distributing the RPG, but recommend that the current definition of “research postgraduate students” should be tightened up to not include students who are registered for a standalone Masters qualification, to eliminate game-playing such as re-classifying MSc degree programmes as MRes in order to inflate research PG numbers. This would allow more investment in genuine quality research and PhD training.</p>
<p>Additional Comments</p>	<p>We hope that SFC will reconsider the subject weighting for Mathematical Sciences to avoid further damage to this important discipline. We would be happy to discuss this, or provide further information.</p>