



REF2021 Results Analysis Tool

FAQs

UPDATED: 27 April 2022

This document will list frequently asked questions as these are raised. It will be updated periodically.

1. Why do HEIs each upload their own data rather than Elsevier doing this centrally?

This was a question on which we specifically consulted our user community. The overwhelming (although not unanimous) support was for institutions to upload their own data. The principal reasons for this concerned the timing of the REF results release and the need for the university REF teams to be able to respond quickly to internal and external queries.

Universities will receive individual data on May the 9th alongside some comparator data. The full sector data will be made available to institutions under embargo on May 10th ahead of the public release on May 12th. Elsevier would not have been in a position to upload data itself until May 12th and this was deemed too late by many of our colleagues.

2. How did you determine which Comparator Groups to include?

Comparator Groups were included in the 2014 tool. We used those as a basis for this 2021 tool. We updated some mission groups and, following requests from the community we included KEF clusters and also a classification of Pre and Post 92 institutions.

In creating these groups, we have used a primary source where possible e.g. the Research England web site for the KEF clusters and the mission group web sites for the constituents of those groups.

Classifying the pre and post 92 institutions was more difficult as we found no single source from which we could draw. We were looking for the date when independent degree awarding powers were conferred but found that the history and heritage of some organisations made coming to a definitive conclusion difficult. We will correct the tool if or when we obtain further evidence. We apologise for any errors we have made.

3. How can we create our own Comparator Groups?

Administrators can do this for you.

They are provided with a list of all the institutions that submitted a REF 2021 return and they can select those they wish to include in a bespoke comparator group. The group is then available to all users at the individual HEI to use but will not be available to any users outside the HEI.

4. What happened to the HESA contextual data that was required in the REF 2014 tool?

The REF 2021 process did not require that data. The datasets provided by Research England directly included the data on % FTE submitted.

5. Why are some metrics like power only available for the analysis of category of Overall results and not for Outputs, Impact and Environment?

We took advice from our user community and, based on their experience, they advised that some metrics only tended to be used for the Overall category. We did not wish to add to the complexity of the screens without that providing adding value to the user experience.

We will however keep this position under review and if there is a demand for including these metrics for the other categories then we will, of course, consider adding them.

6. Who did you consult with in the community in developing the REF 2021 tool?

We were fortunate to benefit from many informal contacts in the period during which we were developing the new REF tool, many of whom had experience of the REF 2014 tool.

In terms of more formal or structured input, we worked largely with a subset of the Pure User Group and we are very grateful for the advice and guidance they gave use. The specific Universities who acted as development and testing partners were as follows:

- Royal Holloway, University of London
- Ulster University
- University of Aberdeen
- University of Bristol
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Northampton
- University of Portsmouth
- University of St Andrews