

University of Tasmania

Institutional Response to the Draft ERA Submission Guidelines (Clusters 1 & 2)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Guidelines. This institutional response results from consultation across as wide a cross-section of the University as manageable in the available timeframe.

Clarity of Guidelines

Generally, many colleagues commented that the Guidelines are difficult to follow and not always clearly expressed. Information key to understanding the different aspects of the submission process is scattered across many sections:

e.g. information about low volume at 3.6 refers to "indexed journal articles", a reference which is not explained until 5.4.1.3 under a non-numbered heading.

e.g. p.13 states that "A statement identifying the research component of each HCA-specific eligible research output must be available in an institutionally-supported repository." On p.63, it becomes clear that this is only required "for these (sic) research outputs which are selected for peer review"

Guidelines: Section 2.3 Use of Information from ERA

UTAS supports the **public release of outcomes at the institutional level**. Note that results from the UK RAE have always been released publicly, even the first round. Many improvements to subsequent rounds are attributable to the robust discussions that took place following the release of results.

No one expects that the ERA will be without flaws: all assessment methodologies have their pros and cons. Nevertheless, if the ERA is to be useful in focusing the development of research in Australia, then all institutions need to be able to benchmark themselves within the system.

Research Higher Degree Data

The absence of Research Higher Degree programs, candidates and their outputs in the ERA is regrettable and may weaken the overall value of the ERA. The ERA should ideally be able to directly complement the development of research training.

Guidelines: 5.4.4.1 Date of Publication Rule

The ERA request for the "earliest date indicated as published" appears to be inconsistent with HERDC, which has asked for the "latest year mentioned on the article".

G uidelines: S. 3.3.3

The restriction of no more than two Institutional Units per research output may act to discourage interdisciplinary research, and seems unnecessarily restrictive. What

will happen with research outputs over the period undertaken by researchers at more than two Institutional Units?

Teaching only appointments

There is some ambiguity about the status of a teaching only appointment who has, in the relevant period, been associated with an eligible research output. A teaching only appointment would meet the criteria set out in parts a – c of S. 5.3.1, but S 5.3.2 indicates that it is not necessary to include staff who are not expected to undertake research – and this would be the case with our teaching only people (of whom we have a few). However, in S. 5.3.2.7, reference is made to teaching only people who have produced a submitted output. It is not clear to me whether teaching only staff with an eligible output, or a contribution thereto, may be included (i.e. at the discretion of the institution), or must be included if they are associated with an eligible output.

Research Outputs

It appears that "Books-Authored Research" excludes books where joint authors share responsibility for a book and have jointly written many but not all chapters or sections. This seems unnecessarily tough. Perhaps the word "entirely" from (d) in 5.4.1.1 could be replaced by words to mean a majority of the book.

In S. 5.4.1.4 there is the requirement that conference publications need to be presented at conferences, workshops or seminars of "national or international significance". The meaning of "national or international significance" in particular needs clarification.

Guidelines S. 6.1.4

There may be a potential problem with using the Australian Protective Security Manual 2005 (PSM) to clarify whether information should be included or excluded in a cluster submission in that the PSM is not available to people from outside the Australian Government to help assess which security classification is relevant. Universities are not considered to be part of the Australian Government - this may need to change?

PCE Cluster

This process appears relatively straight forward. **The format and timely release of the ERA Journal Rankings is crucial to University preparation.**

HCE Cluster

Built Environment and Design

Peer reviewed published conference papers have been left out as a ranked outlet, and as a peer reviewed output. This omission will have detrimental effects to the indication of performance and research profile of the disciplines under the FoR 12 Built Environment and Design. We estimate 40-60% of research outputs will not be

counted nationally, and the figure is possibly higher for UTAS. This is an unusual omission ADBED as well as other institutional bodies such as the Heads of School committee of the Association of Architecture Schools of Australasia (AASA) and the Australian Institute of Architects (AIA) have worked closely with the ERA/ARC as well as the RQF in the past on this matter.

There is very little clarification on how design creative works, such as architecture, interior design and product design are to be measured or defined as 'Original (Creative) Works in the Public Domain'. The criteria are clear for the visual and performing arts, but because exhibitions and public display/performance are not the usual means by which architecture and design are documented and 'displayed' in the public domain, nor how their impact and esteem are measured.

Visual Arts

3.5.2 Peer Review

This doesn't seem to adequately acknowledge the extensive use of peer review processes within the visual arts and crafts.

5.3.1. Eligible Researcher Criteria

(b) Member of Staff

The exclusions paragraph is ambiguous; references to 'contract' and 'self-employed person' need clarification – most artists operate as 'sole-traders' and 'independent contractors' for much of their professional work – many artists employed as 'continuing' or tenured academics also have independent professional roles that might be at odds with readings of this section. And how does this concern sit with 'casual basis' in (b)(i)?

5.4.1.1. Books-Authored Research

Exhibition catalogues come in a wide range of formats; many of those written by academics have a high level of scholarship and serve as important contributions to developing knowledge in the field. Major exhibition catalogues would meet the criteria for an eligible book except for the requirement that they be published by a commercial publisher. Very few catalogues are so published; it is regrettable if the ERA neglects some of the best and work in a field. It is curious that although not included major exhibition catalogues are not listed as likely exclusions. Can major exhibition catalogues be excluded from the clause requiring a commercial publisher?

5.4.2. HCA-Specific Eligible Research Output Types: Creative Works

We think the requirement for a statement identifying the research component is sound.

5.4.2.1. Original (Creative) Works in the Public Domain

We don't agree with the use of 'paintings' as an indicative collective noun, it is too limiting; 'fine art and crafts' is preferable. ('Visual arts' is increasingly accepted as the generic and inclusive descriptor for the art and craft field – 'fine art' and 'craft' remain acceptable 'sub-field' terms.)

Is an exhibition catalogue included as an accepted Research output in this category?

It is curious that multiple presentations of original creative works are explicitly excluded. Given the objective to acknowledge and evaluate quality, the ERA must be able to recognise the importance of recurrent exhibitions (biennales, etc.), major special thematic exhibitions, retrospective and survey exhibitions. Most of these comprise a mix of new work and older work that is reconsidered and re-contextualised. They are also usually presented in more prestigious venues, these

exhibitions are consequently seen and valued by far more general visitors and discipline peers than was possible when the work was initially presented in the public domain.

If the intention of the 'no multiple counting' clause is to exclude multiple counting of art works in a specific exhibition and multiple counting of the exhibition itself – the obvious example being touring exhibitions – then the clause should be re-crafted with greater clarity to make that specific point. We do not think travelling exhibitions and the works within them should be counted more than once. (The 5.4.2.2 example Description for the Music Performance Research Output would solve the problem for art works previously presented, but significantly reinterpreted, etc.)

The use of reviews in the public domain as acknowledged in 5.4.2.2. should be utilised in Original (Creative) Works.

5.4.2.3. Recorded (Performance) Public Works

This title appears to be a category aimed at performing arts, however the emphasis on digital and electronic media examples moves to visual arts – suggesting that visual art practices utilising these technologies should be included. If it is appropriate to separately identify new technologies within the Performance sub-discipline, why not also do it for visual arts – especially as it is one of the few areas in which the creative arts might address the themes detailed in Appendix D? Alternatively open up the category by using a more inclusive and meaningful heading.

5.4.2.4. Curated or Produced Substantial Public Exhibitions, Events, or Renderings: Title confusing – what might a curated or produced rendering be?

Research Output – Description:

The reference to 'first time' needs to be made clearer – is this specifying that the art works in the exhibition must never have been seen publicly before, or that they must never have been seen in this arrangement (exhibition) previously? If the intention is the latter, then the point is appropriate – just improve the expression; if it is the former, then the early points about re-presentations needs to be considered again.

Specification that presentation must be in a 'recognised gallery or museum' is counter-productive if measuring research output innovation and quality is the aim; many and increasingly important exhibitions and presentations occur outside the standard art gallery and museum context – examples include major site-specific projects, public artworks, and exhibitions such as the Biennale of Sydney and the Venice Biennale.

5.4.4.6. Eligible Versions of Research Outputs for Review

The paragraph referring to 'non-traditional research output types' needs elaboration, in particular to clarify which aspects of non-traditional art, craft and design research are being considered in the phrase.

5.5.2.3. Curatorial role (head curator, membership of curatorial board) of a prestigious event

An invitation to contribute a major piece of writing for the catalogue for such an event or exhibition is also very prestigious, certainly as significant as being a member of a curatorial board for such an event. Such an invitation should be recognised by the ERA as a measure of esteem (NB such catalogues will be rarely published by a commercial publisher).

Although museums are not mentioned herein, despite being so in 5.4.2.4 (an inconsistency), we note that many of the types of project recognised in this esteem measure occur outside museums/galleries – often in temporary premises and

environmental sites. The organisations that develop and present such exhibitions are often independent bodies established for the purpose of developing and presenting the event exhibition, they are not museums, although they will have museum expert on their advisory/peer panels (e.g. Biennale of Sydney, Documenta, & Venice Biennale).

5.5.2.6 Recipient of nationally competitive research fellowship

Local, state and commonwealth arts funding agencies (all of which use a standard peer processes) and from philanthropic foundations provide most of the 'fellowship' level support for artists. Reliance on the narrow and inappropriately exclusive Australian Competitive Grant Register will deny the ERA access to significant esteem measures in the creative arts.

5.5.2.6 Recipient of a prestigious prize or award (national/international)

Where do prestigious awards such as travelling scholarships and artist-in-residencies sit in the ERA? Australia has a long history of providing opportunities for creative artists to travel and work in places dedicated to arts research and practice – such residency programs are highly valued and generate exciting and valued new research outputs.

The funding for art and craft research creative arts practice is most commonly secured by artists from local, state and commonwealth arts funding agencies (all of which use a standard peer review process) and from philanthropic foundations. These are not adequately recognised in (nor the creative arts more generally) within the Australian Competitive Grant Register (despite having similar objectives if the names of grant programs can be considered indicative). If the funds cannot be recognised within 5.6.3, then the esteem such assistance bestows should be. Therefore the guidelines should include more than just prizes and awards (unless the definition of 'award' is to be taken very broadly).

Invitations to chair and sit on important discipline committees and boards are esteem measures and should be recognised by the ERA.