
Review of Research Assessment

RIBA response to the joint consultation by the four funding bodies for UK higher education on the recommendations of the Roberts Review of Research Assessment

KEY POINTS

Research Funding Councils – AHRB / EPSRC / ESRC

1. At present no specific funding streams or themes of sufficient volume exist within the research funding identified for architectural research. The RIBA requests that specific funding streams and/or themes are targeted at architectural research of sufficient volume to make an impact in the sector. The RIBA, the subject association for architecture, the Standing Conference of Heads Of Schools of Architecture and the Architectural Humanities Research Association should be consulted on terms of reference and performance indicators for research council funding streams.

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2. Given our concerns regarding the outcome and performance of architecture in the UOA 33 (Built Environment) in the last RAE, and given the volume of submissions from FTE's in architecture to the panel as a proportion of total FTE submissions, it is the RIBA view that architecture should be considered as a separate sub-panel in the next research quality assessment exercise. This view is endorsed in submissions to you from SCHOSA and AHRA.
3. The Architecture Sub-Panel should include architectural humanities, architectural design and applied architectural research. Consideration could be given to including landscape architecture (from town planning) within an architecture sub panel.
4. The RIBA is concerned, given the imbalance in panel membership in the previous exercise, (88 FTE's per architect panel member compared to 40 for Building Science) that the architecture sub-panel terms of reference and membership reflect the full scope of discipline. In addition, RIBA must have a formal role in nominating members to the panel and sub panel to ensure that the profession has confidence in the outcome of the next assessment exercise. We are not convinced that the current proposals regarding the role of the panel chair & moderator in selecting sub panel members will address concerns previously expressed by us to HEFCE regarding balance of membership in UOA 33.
5. It is the RIBA's view that the assessment criteria developed by the panel should be appropriate to the subjects of architectural research, especially design, and that these criteria are properly applied by the panel.
6. An appeal or review procedure should be introduced on the grounds of maintaining confidence in the system and to enhance its transparency to external audiences.

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Research Funding

7. The Funding Councils must state their procedures for funding research on the basis of the outcome of the RAE in advance of the exercise taking place.
8. Whilst the policy of concentrating research funding in fewer institutions is understood in terms of enhancing national research capability, due regard, and substantial funding, consideration must still be given to support emerging research in architecture and to support existing, established and professionally well regarded research in institutions which are not graded 5 or 5*. Funding must be maintained, and if possible, enhanced, in the interests of supporting, and extending, our knowledge base in the practice and delivery of good architecture.

For further information regarding this response, please contact:

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