

# Research Excellence Framework (REF)

## What do I need to know?

- The REF is the UK's system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education (HE) institutions. It first took place in 2014. The next exercise will be conducted in 2021.
- The aim of research assessment is to secure the continuation of a world-class research base within UK HE. This is expected to be achieved through the threefold purpose of the REF:
  - To provide accountability for public investment in research and produce evidence of the benefits of this investment.
  - To provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks, for use within the HE sector and for public information.
  - To inform the selective allocation of funding for research.
- The REF is a process of expert review, carried out by expert panels for each of the 34 subject-based units of assessment (UOAs), under the guidance of four main panels.
- For each submission, three distinct elements are assessed: the quality of **outputs** (e.g. publications, performances, and exhibitions), their **impact** beyond academia, and the **environment** that supports research.
- In REF 2021, the profile weightings are: Outputs 60%; Impact 25%; Environment 15%.
- Submissions to REF 2021 will be made in Nov 2020, and outcomes published in Dec 2021.
- The assessment period for outputs runs from 1 Jan 2014 to 31 Dec 2020 whereas for research income, PhD completions and impacts it runs from 1 Aug 2013 to 31 Jul 2020.

## What do I need to do?

- If you are employed on a contract which includes responsibility for research of 0.2 FTE or greater, and continue to be employed until the REF census date of 31 July 2020, you will need **at least one** high quality publication (preferably more).
- You will need to ensure that you comply with the REF Open Access requirements and the School's Policy for Open Access Publication.
- If your research is likely to result in a change / benefit beyond academia, contact our Impact Officer for help and guidance.

## Where can I find key information?

- [REF Website](#) for information
- [Our REF pages on the SOAS website](#)
- [MySOAS REF Area](#) for important internal updates about REF 2021

## What policies do I need to follow?

- [REF 2021 Guidance](#)
- [Research England – Staff circumstances and submissions to REF 2021](#)

## Where can I get support?

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- Email: [outputs@soas.ac.uk](mailto:outputs@soas.ac.uk)
- Email: [rex@soas.ac.uk](mailto:rex@soas.ac.uk) (for general information and support on REF 2021)