

Reference line

REF 2021: Physics sub-panel
criteria and working methods

Date

2nd November 2018

For attention of

Professor Padgett
School of Physics and Astronomy
University of Glasgow
G12 8SU

Dear Professor Padgett and Professor Grady,

Thank you for speaking at the IOP and RAS town hall meeting on 24th September on the REF consultation on the draft criteria, working methods and guidance on submissions, and particularly for answering the questions from the physics community.

This letter is a follow up on some issues raised during the meeting where attendees requested further information. This is separate from the IOP's formal submission to the consultation from the four UK higher education funding bodies.

There were four areas raised in the meeting where we would welcome an update on the sub-panel's views:

1) Balance and coverage of sub-panel members

We are concerned that the current sub-panel membership for UOA 9 does not adequately cover all the discipline, nor does it have enough members to assess all outputs. A complete sub-panel would allow for a greater diversity of views, experience and coverage of the subject areas in physics. We would be grateful for confirmation of when the next round of sub-panel member nominations will take place and how best the community can support this process.

2) Interdisciplinary outputs

We would value further clarification on how the interdisciplinary advisors in UOA 9 and Main Panel B will work to assess interdisciplinary outputs. In particular, whether outputs flagged as interdisciplinary could be referred to multiple sub-panels where appropriate rather than just one, and whether papers can be fully referred to another panel.

3) Allocating outputs

We would be grateful for any further information regarding how the sub-panel will allocate outputs to sub-panel members. Other sub-panels in Main Panel B have requested information such as keywords for allocating outputs to sub-panel members (paragraph 250, draft panel criteria and working methods) but, to our knowledge, sub-panel 9 has not.

4) Scoring

We would be pleased to receive an update following your discussions at the Main Panel on whether the same paper would receive the same score regardless of which panel it was submitted to.

We would be grateful for any information that you are able to provide in response to the points above.

Finally, we would be delighted to work with both of you and the other sub-panel members on providing evidence on the performance of UK physics as a discipline in due course.

Thank you again for your continued engagement, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Connor', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alex Connor
Head of Policy