Research Excellence Framework (REF)

Panel specific guidance
UOA 36 – Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and nformation Management (Main Panel C)

This information has been extracted from the Panel Criteria and Working Methods document (REF 01.2012) published by the REF Team in January 2012.

UOA Descriptor

The sub-panel recognises the rich diversity of research in communication, cultural and media studies, library and information management, and welcomes all outputs arising from this research, in whatever genre or medium, that can be demonstrated to meet the definition of research for the REF (as outlined in 'guidance on submissions',
Annex C). In setting out its remit, the sub-panel recognises that the UOA descriptor covers two broad
fields of research which are often distinct both organisationally and academically, and welcomes submissions that reflect this. It also recognises that the activities covered by its remit, even within its two broad fields of coverage, are often rooted in quite distinct research traditions or infrastructures. It will assess research on its merits, with no penalty for research which is plainly within a distinct tradition within the sub-panel's remit. It will nonetheless
welcome research which seeks to engage with questions and concerns, such as the 'information society', heritage (both cultural and museum aspects), networks or convergence, which may transcend field boundaries.

The UOA includes research that addresses or deploys theory, history, institutional, policy, textual, critical and/or empirical analysis, or practice within communication, culture, media, journalism and film studies. Within UK higher education much, but not all, of this work is likely to emanate from units or departments in communication studies, cultural studies, media studies, journalism, or film and television studies. This work will include research on
print media, broadcasting and the moving image, and will include computer-mediated communication, popular culture, and diverse information and communication technologies, which will be variably titled and organised. Much will also be conducted in units or departments situated elsewhere within the social sciences, arts or humanities. The sub-panel will assess research as defined above which addresses (but is not confined to): policy for regulation of culture and the media; the organisation, institutions, political economy and practice of cultural production; media and cultural texts, forms and practices; and media and cultural audiences, consumption and reception, including questions of power, identity and difference.

The UOA also includes research concerned with the management of information and knowledge in all formats, namely librarianship and information science, archives and records management, and information systems. This may include: research on the generation, dissemination and publication, exploitation and evaluation of information and knowledge; information policy; information media; information literacy; systems thinking; systems development; knowledge management systems; information retrieval; preservation and conservation;
impact assessment; digital humanities; and historical and cultural aspects of the disciplines.

The sub-panel will adopt an inclusive approach, and considers that it has the expertise to assess work in all of the areas covered by the UOA descriptor. Where research is at the boundaries of the UOA, submitting units are encouraged to submit their strongest work irrespective of the form of output or the extent of its interdisciplinary nature.

Sub-panels 34, 35 and 36 recognise that much research relating to a range of media platforms could readily meet the remit of any of them, and might sit in the wide boundaries that imprecisely separate the three areas of assessment responsibility. It will be the aim of these sub-panels to ensure that a decision to submit to any one of them should not advantage or disadvantage any

research. This will be ensured by a common approach to assessment within the three sub-panels, and cross-referral between them where appropriate.

The sub-panel also anticipates likely overlap of areas within its remit with the concerns of other subpanels
both within Main Panel D and without, including for example Sub-panel 11 (Computer Science and Informatics), Sub-panel 19 (Business and Management Studies) and other social sciences panels. The sub-panel will apply the arrangements set out in Part 1, paragraphs 92-100, where its expertise needs to be augmented.

Outputs

Citations	This sub-panel will not be provided with citation data by the REF Team. No panels will use impact factors, journal lists, rankings, or publisher quality information.
Eligible output types	All outputs are eligible providing they embody research as defined for the purposes of the REF[1].
Non-text or practice-based submissions	Accepted. HEIs must include a description of the research imperatives and process in REF2 for each applicable output (max 300 words). A portfolio must be provided to support outputs where, for example, the output is ephemeral or is one in a series of works.
Double-weighted outputs	Accepted in exceptional circumstances. HEIs may request that outputs of extended scale and scope be double-weighted. HEIs may include a 'reserve' output with each output requested for double-weighting. A justification (max 100 words) will need to be submitted for consideration by the sub-panel (see Main Panel D Criteria paragraph 64 for examples of what would constitute a double-weighted output).
Co-authored or collaborative outputs submitted in different submissions (same HEI but different UOAs, or different HEI same/difference UOA)	Accepted but only where an author has made a significant contribution to the output. No additional information is required, although if the sub-panel is unclear as to the significant contribution of an individual to the output then it may request further information from the HEI through an audit.
Co-authored or collaborative outputs submitted in the same submission (same HEI and same UOA)	All panels consider that the fullest and most favourable impression of research will normally be gained when each co-authored output is listed once within a submission. Co-authored outputs within the same submission only be accepted in very exceptional cases against a maximum of 2 individuals per submission (must be explained in REF2, max 100 words).
Additional output information required	None stated.

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[1] 'For the purposes of the REF, research is defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared'. See REF 02.2011 Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions for the full definition.

Criteria and level definitions	In assessing outputs, the sub-panels will look for evidence of originality, significance and rigour and apply the generic definitions of the starred quality levels as follows: In assessing work as being four star sub-panels will expect to see evidence of, or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics: • a primary or essential point of reference • of profound influence • instrumental in developing new thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences • a major expansion of the range and the depth of research and its application • outstandingly novel, innovative and/or creative. In assessing work as being three star, sub-panels will expect to see evidence of, or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics: • an important point of reference • of lasting influence • a catalyst for, or important contribution to, new thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences • a significant expansion of the range and the depth of research and its application • significantly novel or innovative or creative. In assessing work as being two star, sub-panels will expect to see evidence of, or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics: • a recognised point of reference • of some influence • an incremental and cumulative advance on thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences • a useful contribution to the range or depth of research and its application. In assessing work as being one star, sub-panels will expect to see evidence of, or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics: • based on existing traditions of thinking, methodology and/or creative practice • a useful contribution of minor influence. Research will be graded as 'unclassified' if it falls below the quality levels described above or does not meet the definition of research used for the REF.

Impact

Eligibility of submitting the impact of teaching	Excluded unless they extend significantly beyond the submitting HEI.
Impact case studies – quality of the underpinning research	The case study must include references to confirm the quality, for example, peer reviewed external income, outputs in peer reviewed journals, outputs have won prestigious prizes, etc

Environment

Additional environment data to be provided	None required.
Environment elements weightings (5 elements)	20% - overview 20% - strategy 20% - people 20% - income, infrastructure & facilities 20% - collaboration & contribution to the discipline
Structure of submissions	Not mentioned.