Research Quality Framework
Assessing the quality and impact of research in Australia

Draft RQF Submission Specifications
July 2007
RESEARCH QUALITY FRAMEWORK:
Assessing the quality and impact of research in Australia

DRAFT RQF SUBMISSION
SPECIFICATIONS

July 2007
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1. OBJECTIVES OF THE RQF SUBMISSION SPECIFICATIONS

1.1 Purpose of the Specifications

The purpose of the Research Quality Framework (RQF) Submission Specifications is to provide an overview of, and specify the content and data requirements for, submissions that are part of the 2008 RQF. It also provides guidance to eligible higher education providers (henceforth ‘institutions’) on policy and practical matters in preparing submissions.

Institutions are Table A providers and Table B providers, as defined in the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (‘HESA’). This includes all campuses, in Australia and overseas, of an institution.

These Specifications should be read in combination with the Panel Specific Requirements and the RQF Technical Specifications. This material is available on the DEST website. The Guidance Material for Assessment Panels and Advisors will be released prior to the commencement of the submission process. Additional explanatory material may be provided by DEST from time to time during the process.

These Specifications are informed by advice from both the Expert Advisory Group (EAG)\(^1\) and the Development Advisory Group (DAG)\(^2\) as provided to the Australian Government.

DEST will use the information submitted by institutions for the purposes of conducting the RQF assessment process and to produce ratings for Research Quality and Research Impact for each Research Group. The final ratings will be published. This data will also be used to inform other analyses conducted by DEST.

1.2 Purpose of the Research Quality Framework

The primary purpose of the RQF is to establish an assessment framework that provides government, industry, business and the wider community with the assurance that the research conducted in Australian institutions has been rigorously assessed through internationally recognised processes.

The RQF aims to deliver a comprehensive assessment of the quality and impact of research conducted by Research Groups within the Australian higher education sector. The RQF is intended to allow Research Groups


to be benchmarked both nationally and internationally for all discipline areas. The RQF is also underpinned by the desire to promote a vibrant research culture, encourage researchers to undertake high quality research and make research available to the Government, the higher education sector, industry and the wider community.

1.3 Use of Information from the RQF

The Government has stated that data from the RQF will be used in the allocation of the Institutional Grants Scheme (IGS) and a significant proportion of the Research Training Scheme (RTS) from 2009. Allocations will be in the form of grants made under HESA Part 2-3. More specifically, the grants will be for the purposes specified in items 7 (for the IGS) and 8 (for the RTS) of the table in HESA subsection 41-10(1).

This means that DEST will use the Quality and Impact ratings and other data obtained through the RQF (and other sources) to provide the Minister for Education, Science and Training with information to determine the allocation of grants under the IGS and the RTS. The methods by which RQF data will be used in the calculation of IGS and RTS grants will be specified in the Other Grants Guidelines (made by the Minister under subsection 238-10(1) of HESA).

The Minister may use Quality and Impact ratings and other data obtained through the RQF (and other sources) for the determination of allocation mechanisms for other grants to institutions.

1.4 The Assessment Process

Expert review is central to the RQF. The RQF will conduct expert review through Assessment Panels and Advisors. There are 13 Assessment Panels based on Research Fields, Courses and Disciplines codes (RFCD). Each Panel has 12 members and includes a Chair, a minimum of three members of international standing and a minimum of three research end-users. The Panel Members for the RQF will be listed on the DEST website.

While Panel Members will draw on appropriate quantitative indicators to support their professional assessment of each Research Group’s evidence portfolio, expert review remains paramount. Advisors who are not members of an Assessment Panel may be used as required to provide advice on the quality and impact of one or more evidence portfolio(s) or part of an evidence portfolio. These Advisors will be selected by Panel Chairs with advice from the Panel Members.

Further detail on the Assessment Process will be provided in the Guidance Material for Assessment Panels and Advisors which will be released prior to the commencement of the submission process.  

3 All references to RFCD and SEO codes should be read with reference to: ABS (1998), Australian Standard Research Classification (ASRC), Cat. No. 1297.0, ABS, Canberra.
4 www.dest.gov.au/research/rqf
1.5 Definition of Research

For the purposes of the RQF, original research is defined as the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.

This definition of research is consistent with a broad notion of research and experimental development (R&D) as comprising ‘creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of humanity, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise applications’.\(^5\)

This definition is the same as the definition of research used in the draft 2008 Higher Education Research Data Collection Specifications for the Collection of 2007 Data,\(^6\) and broadly similar to definition of research used in the 2008 United Kingdom Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)\(^7\) and the 2006 New Zealand Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF).\(^8\)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) further classifies R&D into four types of activity:

- pure basic research;
- strategic basic research;
- applied research including new ways of achieving specific and predetermined objectives such as clinical practice; and
- experimental development including creative work and performance insofar as they are directly related to original basic and applied research.\(^9\)

This definition of research should be used by institutions when determining the acceptability of Research Outputs. Further information on determining the acceptability of Research Outputs is at section 4.3.5.

1.6 Definition of Quality and Impact

The RQF focuses on both Research Quality and Research Impact, which will be judged on the basis of assessments of evidence portfolios.

1.6.1 Research Quality

‘Research Quality’ refers to the quality of original research including its intrinsic merit and academic impact (as opposed to Research Impact which refers to the impact of the research on the broader community).

Academic impact relates to the recognition of the originality of the research by peers and its effect on the development of the same or related discipline areas within the community of peers.

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\(^7\) http://www.rae.ac.uk/


\(^9\) ABS (1998), Australian Standard Research Classification (ASRC), Cat. No. 1297.0, ABS, Canberra.
The overall Quality rating will be derived from assessment of the following aspects of the evidence portfolio:

- the Context Statement;
- review of the ‘best’ four Research Outputs nominated by each researcher in the Research Group;
- the body of work for all researchers in the Research Group; and
- associated metrics.

Further detail on these aspects of the evidence portfolio is at section 4.3.

Further detail on the assessment of Research Quality will be included in the Guidance Material for Assessment Panels and Advisors.

1.6.2 Research Impact

‘Research Impact’ refers to the impact or use of original research outside the academic peer community. Dissemination of this research therefore may occur via means other than traditional peer-reviewed literature. Impact refers to the extent to which research has led successfully to social, economic, environmental and/or cultural benefits for the wider community, or an element of the community. None of these take precedence over the other.

It is recognised that, while high quality research often leads to significant impact, there is frequently a significant time-lag between the conduct of the research and the impact. The RQF therefore allows for the impact of the Research Group to be based on original research published in the six years prior to the ‘assessment period’ (1 January 2001 to 31 December 2006). Research Groups may base their Research Impact on research in this situation provided that it can be shown to have a relationship to the Research Output included in the Research Group’s evidence portfolio (further information on Impact is at section 5.2).

1.7 Structure of the Specifications

The Specifications include the following information:

- eligibility requirements for researchers;
- requirements for Research Groups;
- requirements for RQF Submissions; and
- requirements for metrics.

Additional information is provided separately in:

- Panel-Specific Requirements;
- RQF Technical Specifications; and
- Guidance Material for Assessment Panels and Advisors.
2.  ELIGIBILITY

2.1  Eligible Researchers

‘Eligible researchers’ are the researchers who may be considered for inclusion in a Research Group as an assessed researcher. Only eligible researchers may be included in a Research Group. Further requirements for inclusion in a Research Group are outlined in section 2.2.

For the purposes of this section, all terms are defined in accordance with the 2007 Higher Education Staff Data Collection, unless otherwise specified.

To be eligible, a researcher must either:

Meet all of the following Criteria:

1. be employed in a Table A or B higher education provider as research-only academic staff OR teaching and research academic staff; and

2. be either:
   a. employed as a substantive Level B or above on the Staff Census Date (31 March 2007); or
   b. temporarily filling a Level B or above position on the Staff Census Date (31 March 2007) and have done so uninterrupted for three months or longer up to and including the Staff Census Date (i.e., beginning on or before 1 January 2007); and

3. be employed on the Staff Census Date (31 March 2007), either:
   a. in a tenured position or on a contract of three years or longer; or
   b. *in situ* at the relevant institution for three months or longer prior to the Staff Census Date (i.e., beginning on or before 1 January 2007); and

4. be employed as at least 0.40 full-time equivalent (FTE) on the Staff Census Date (31 March 2007).

Or fit one or more of the available categories of exemption from the above Criteria. These categories are:

1. if a researcher is employed on a contract of fewer than three years and does not meet the *in situ* criterion (may apply to be exempt from Criterion 3) (section 2.1.2); and/or

2. if a researcher is employed as an eligible Level A researcher on the Staff Census Date, (may claim to be exempt from Criterion 2) (section 2.1.3).

Staff who do not meet the above Criteria or who do not fit one or both of the above exemption categories are not eligible. They therefore may not be included as an assessed researcher in a Research Group.

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2.1.1 Eligibility Clarifications

Researchers who are employed by an eligible institution, but who work or are based overseas, including at an overseas campus of an eligible institution, are eligible subject to satisfying the ‘eligible researcher’ criteria or fitting an eligibility exemption.

A researcher who is on leave on the Staff Census Date is regarded as ‘employed,’ and therefore meets Criterion 3. The researcher’s employment agreement must require the researcher to return to their normal duties within one year of the commencement of leave. An eligible researcher who is on unpaid leave on the Staff Census Date must report the type of leave. Detail on the format in which this information must be provided is specified in the RQF Technical Specifications.

A researcher who is on leave and employed by another eligible institution may be included in both institutions, subject to satisfying the ‘eligible researcher’ criteria or fitting an eligibility exemption and as long as they satisfy the requirements for researchers in two Research Groups (section 2.2.2).

2.1.2 Exemption from the in situ Criterion

Institutions can apply to DEST on behalf of a researcher for an exemption from Criterion 3b above, that is, where the researcher was employed for fewer than three months prior to the Staff Census Date. The application must satisfy DEST that the staff movement was part of a long-term strategic decision or falls within the normal employment practice of the institution, rather than a short-term movement.

All applications for exemption from this Criterion must come from the institution’s Research Office (or equivalent), on the form available on the DEST website. The form must be delivered to the RQF contact addresses at section 7.7 by 5pm AEST, Friday 28 September 2007.

DEST will consider all requests for exemption in this category. Decisions on exemptions will be finalised and notified to institutions by 5pm AEST, Friday 26 October 2007.

2.1.3 Exemption for Level A Researchers

‘Level A researchers’ are exempt from Criterion 2 if the researcher is the lead researcher (e.g., chief investigator, principal investigator or equivalent), as named on any Australian competitive research grant or international peer-reviewed competitive research grant.

If the grant is an Australian competitive research grant, it must be listed on the 2007 Australian Competitive Grants Register for funding received in 2006. If the grant is an international peer-reviewed competitive research grant, it must be identified in the Research Group’s evidence portfolio.

Level A researchers are still required to meet Criteria 1, 3 and 4. Level A researchers may also be eligible to claim Other Assessed Researcher status (at section 2.2.1).

Institutions are not required to apply for an exemption for Level A
researchers, however Level A researchers must be identified in the evidence portfolio. The evidence portfolio must provide a short statement (50 words per researcher) in the field labelled 'Level A justification' outlining why these researchers meet the exemption from Criterion 2.

Institutions are only required to provide information for Level A researchers where they are included as an assessed researcher in a Research Group (section 2.2).

2.1.4 Institution Affiliates

‘Institution Affiliates’ are researchers including, but not limited to:

- adjunct appointees;
- Emeritus Professors;
- honorary appointees;
- visiting appointees; and
- researchers in organisations who are affiliated with but not employed by an eligible institution.

Institution Affiliates will not be eligible researchers for the purposes of the RQF as they do not meet Criterion 3.

The contribution of Institution Affiliates to the activities and outputs of the Research Group and therefore the Research Group’s Research Quality may be highlighted in the Context Statement (section 4.3.3).

The contribution of Institution Affiliates to the Research Group’s Research Impact may also be articulated in the Impact Statement provided they are listed as co-authors on one or more of the Research Outputs in the body of work for the Research Group (section 4.3.6).

2.2 Assessed Researchers

‘Assessed researchers’ are researchers who are included in a Research Group. An assessed researcher must first meet the requirements to be an eligible researcher (section 2.1). Assessed researchers must also either:

- have generated at least four acceptable Research Outputs within the assessment period; or
- fit an exemption category as an ‘Other Assessed Researcher’ (section 2.2.1).

2.2.1 Other Assessed Researchers

‘Other Assessed Researchers’ are exempt from the requirement to have generated a minimum of four Research Outputs over the assessment period. Other Assessed Researchers are required to have generated at least two acceptable Research Outputs over the assessment period to be considered, and may therefore submit two or three ‘best’ Research Outputs.
Other Assessed Researchers are:

- Early Career Researchers (ECRs); and/or
- Researchers who have had significant career interruptions; and/or
- Indigenous Researchers.

Institutions are not required to apply for an exemption for Other Assessed Researchers, however Other Assessed Researchers must be identified in the Research Group’s evidence portfolio. For ECRs and/or researchers who have had significant career interruptions, the evidence portfolio must include a short statement (50 words per researcher) in the field labelled ‘Other Assessed Researcher Justification’ outlining why they meet the exemption. Indigenous researchers are not required to provide a short statement.

It is the responsibility of the institution to determine the applicability of the criteria outlined above to an eligible researcher.

Institutions are not required to claim exemption for assessed researchers where the researcher has generated four ‘best’ Research Outputs, although a Research Group may highlight these researchers in its Context Statement.

2.2.1.1 EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS

‘Early Career Researchers’ (ECRs) are researchers who have been identified by their employing institution as an ECR, and on or after 31 March 2002 (i.e., five years before the Staff Census Date) had either:

- successfully completed their first research doctorate (or equivalent) and had not previously been employed as a research-only or teaching and research academic staff; or
- been employed for the first time as a research-only or teaching and research staff member and had not completed a research doctorate (or equivalent).

2.2.1.2 RESEARCHERS WITH SIGNIFICANT CAREER INTERRUPTIONS

‘Researchers with significant career interruptions’ are researchers who, during the assessment period, have:

- had significant parenting and/or carer responsibilities; and/or
- suffered a significant illness or other significant misfortune; and/or
- spent time employed outside the higher education sector (e.g., in business, industry, or the community).

2.2.1.3 INDIGENOUS RESEARCHERS

‘Indigenous Researchers’ are researchers who:

- are of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent; and
- identify as an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; and
- are accepted as an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in the community in which they live or have lived.

2.2.2 Researchers in Two Research Groups

Where an assessed researcher is in two Research Groups (section 3.3), the researcher must nominate four different ‘best’ Research Outputs for
each Research Group of which they are a member. The researcher must therefore nominate eight different ‘best’ Research Outputs if they are in two Research Groups.

Where an Other Assessed Researcher (section 2.2.1) is in two Research Groups, the researcher must nominate at least two ‘best’ Research Outputs in each Research Group of which they are a member. The researcher must therefore nominate at least four different ‘best’ Research Outputs if they are in two Research Groups.

Further information on compiling the body of work where a researcher is in two Research Groups is outlined in section 4.3.6.
3. RESEARCH GROUPS

The unit of assessment in the RQF is the Research Group. The institution is responsible for nominating Research Groups for assessment.

3.1 Research Group Size

Research Groups must include a minimum of five assessed researchers (numbers not FTE) unless they meet one or both of the exemptions below.

3.2 Small Research Groups

‘Small Research Groups’ are Groups that do not have five or more researchers. Where a Research Group does not have five or more researchers, it must state why this is the case in the evidence portfolio. This statement may include one or both of the following:

- disciplinary practice; and/or
- emerging research group or practice.

Researchers in a small Research Group are not precluded from claiming exemptions against the researcher eligibility criteria (section 2.1).

The Quality and Impact ratings of the Research Group will be published notwithstanding the Research Group’s size. The size of the Research Group may, indirectly or by implication, lead to a loss of anonymity for individual researchers.

Institutions are not required to claim an exemption for small Research Groups, however the small Research Group’s evidence portfolio must include a short statement (50 words) outlining how the Research Group meets the exemption (section 4.3.2).

3.2.1 Exemption: Disciplinary Practice

There may be cases in which the normal practice of the discipline does not generally involve the formation of a Research Group of five or more researchers. Where this applies, the institution is required to provide a small group justification. The Panel-Specific Requirements provide further detail on the conditions in which disciplinary practice is justification for a small Research Group.

3.2.2 Exemption: Emerging Research Group or Practice

There may be cases in which the Research Group is emerging or where the activity of the Research Group is in an emerging area of research which has not yet built sufficient critical mass for the formation of a Research Group of five or more researchers.

Where this applies, the institution is required to provide a small group justification. The Panel-Specific Requirements provide further detail on the conditions in which this is justification for a small Research Group.
3.3 Cross-institutional Research Groups

An institution may submit a cross-institutional Research Group which includes eligible researchers who are not employed by that institution, with the agreement of the employing institution.

A cross-institutional Research Group will be treated in the same way as any other Research Group from the Home Institution. Therefore, the Home Institution is responsible for creating and submitting the Research Group.

It is the responsibility of the institution that employs the researcher to ensure that a researcher’s FTE and other eligibility requirements are reported correctly for the Research Group.

It is the responsibility of the Home Institution to ensure that other information associated with the researcher (including the researcher’s four ‘best’ outputs and contribution to the body of work) is correct and to correct any identified errors for a researcher following a request from DEST as a condition of submitting the researcher; otherwise the researcher will not be considered an eligible researcher.

The Quality and Impact ratings for a cross-institutional Research Group will be attributed to the Home Institution, although all other associated institutions will be publicly reported as associated with the Research Group. It is up to the institutions involved to determine the conditions governing the relationship between the institutions, including the distribution of any financial or in-kind outcomes resulting from this relationship.

3.4 Inclusion of Researchers in Two Research Groups

A researcher may be counted in two Research Groups provided the researcher’s total FTE does not exceed 1.00. These Research Groups may be in the same institution or in different institutions. The researcher’s FTE for any Research Group must be at least 0.40 FTE regardless of whether the two Research Groups are in different institutions. This FTE requirement therefore means that a researcher cannot be in more than two Research Groups.

Additional requirements apply to the submission of the four ‘best’ outputs, the composition of the body of work and research income when a researcher is in two Research Groups.

3.5 Nomination of Home Panel

The ‘Home Panel’ is responsible for managing the assessment process for Research Groups. In the case of cross-disciplinary research, the Home Panel is responsible for managing the assessment process with relevant secondary Panel(s). Further detail on this process will be provided in the Guidance Material for Assessment Panels and Advisors.

Institutions must nominate a preferred ‘Home Panel’ for each submitted Research Group. Each Panel Chair has the discretion to move a Research Group to another Home Panel, where it is considered to be the most appropriate to assess the Research Group subject to agreement from the relevant Panel Chairs.
In the case of cross-disciplinary research (i.e., where the Research Group has listed an RFCD code with a weighting of 25 per cent or greater that refers to another Panel than its preferred Home Panel), the Research Group is also required to nominate relevant secondary Panel(s) for the Research Group.

The Panel Chairs involved have the discretion to change a Research Group’s Home Panel and secondary Panel(s), subject to agreement from the relevant Panel Chairs.

### 3.6 RFCD and SEO Codes for Research Groups

Research Groups must define the focus of their research activities under discipline-level (4-digit) RFCD and group-level (4-digit) Socio-Economic Objective (SEO) codes. Research Groups may nominate, as a percentage share, up to three separate 4-digit RFCD and 4-digit SEO codes, with a minimum 34 per cent share for its primary code and a minimum 20 per cent share for its secondary codes.

If it is not possible to accurately reflect the Research Group’s activities using discipline-level RFCD codes, the Research Group must use the ‘other’ discipline level code (e.g., 2799 for Other Biological Sciences).

If it is not possible to accurately reflect the Research Group’s activities using group-level SEO codes, the Research Group must use either a 4-digit subdivision code (e.g., 6700 for Manufacturing) or the ‘other’ group-level code (e.g., 7299 for Other Economic Issues).

Research Groups should also use the Context Statement to further explain the focus of their activities (section 4.3.3).
4. **RQF SUBMISSIONS**

4.1 **Institution Responsibilities**

Subject to the requirements outlined in these Specifications, it is the responsibility of each institution to nominate which researchers are to be included as assessed researchers.

4.1.1 **Certification**

The institution is responsible for collecting, validating and transmitting all information in each evidence portfolio by the due date for each stage of the Submission process and for certifying that all the reported information and statements of claims are accurate.

The Vice-Chancellor, or institutional equivalent, is required to provide a signed Certification Statement for the Institution Submission. No part of the Institution Submission is eligible for assessment without a signed Certification Statement. Further information on the requirements for certification is provided in section 7.2.

4.2 **Institution Submissions**

The institution must provide information in two stages:

- Stage 1: Expression of Intent to Submit (EIS); and
- Stage 2: Institution Submission.

4.2.1 **Stage 1: Expression of Intent to Submit**

The institution must provide an EIS. The EIS includes only provisional information to indicate to DEST the likely distribution of work across disciplines and Panels.

The EIS must comprise the following information for each intended Research Group:

- Name;
- RFCD Codes (up to three 4-digit codes);
- Indicative Home Panel;
- Indication of any cross-disciplinarity (between Panels); and
- Estimated number of assessed researchers.

As the EIS includes only provisional information, a Certification Statement is not required.

The institution is required to provide a completed EIS to DEST by 5pm AEDT, Thursday 31 January 2008.
4.2.2 Stage 2: Institution Submission

The institution must provide an Institution Submission which includes:

1. the evidence portfolio for each Research Group (see also section 4.3); and
2. eligible researcher information.

The institution must include the following information in the Institution Submission. Detail on the format in which this data must be provided is specified in the RQF Technical Specifications.

(a) Evidence Portfolio for Each Research Group

The institution must report the names of submitted Research Groups. Each Research Group should have an evidence portfolio compiled in accordance with the specifications outlined in section 4.3.

(b) Eligible Researcher Information

The institution is required to report the number and FTE of eligible researchers, as defined at section 2.1, by RFCD code. This information should also include all researchers within the institution who meet one or more of the eligibility exemption criteria.

The institution is required to report the number of eligible researchers, as defined at section 2.1, by gender and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status.

This information will used by DEST for statistical purposes only, and will not be used in the assessment process.

(c) Assessed Researcher Information

The institution is required to report the number and FTE of assessed researchers as defined at section 2.2.

4.3 The Evidence Portfolio

4.3.1 Overview

Each nominated Research Group is required to submit the following identifying information as part of its evidence portfolio:

a. Research Group Name;
b. up to three (4-digit) RFCD codes;
c. up to three (4-digit) SEO codes;
d. Home Panel and (if relevant) secondary Panel(s);
e. small group justification(s) if required (section 3.2);
f. Other Assessed Researcher justification(s) if required (section 2.2.1); and
g. Level A justification if required (section 2.1.3).

Further information on these requirements is outlined in section 4.3.2.
The evidence portfolio for the Research Group must comprise:

a. the Context Statement;

b. links to the ‘best’ Research Outputs for each assessed researcher in the Research Group, where available in the repository, or other summary evidence of the Output where it is not;

c. a list of all the fully-reported Research Outputs published during the assessment period for each assessed researcher in the Research Group;

d. a list of any other Research Outputs published during the assessment period for each assessed researcher in the Research Group; and

e. the Impact Statement (unless exempt under section 5.4).

Research Outputs that must be fully-reported and other Research Outputs that may be reported are defined in section 4.3.6. Fully-reported Research Outputs will be used for the development of one or more metrics for those disciplines where it is appropriate (section 6). The Panel-Specific Requirements provide further detail on which disciplines will be using metrics as well as which Research Outputs must be fully-reported in the body of work.

4.3.2 Components of the Evidence Portfolio

(a) Research Group Name

The Research Group must provide a name that is unique within an institution. For cross-institutional Research Groups, the name must be unique within the institutions involved.

(b) Up to three (4-digit) RFCD codes

The Research Group must define the focus of its research activities under discipline-level (4-digit) RFCD codes. The Research Group may nominate up to three separate 4-digit RFCD codes, with a minimum 34 per cent share for its primary code and a minimum 20 per cent share for its secondary codes. The total for the RFCD codes must add up to 100 per cent.

If it is not possible to accurately reflect the Research Group’s activities using discipline-level codes, the Research Group must use a division-level code (i.e., the 2-digit code), but ensure that four digits are entered in the Submission (e.g., 2700 for Biological Sciences).

(c) Up to three (4-digit) SEO codes

The Research Group must define the focus of its research activities under group level (4-digit) SEO codes. The Research Group may nominate up to three separate 4-digit SEO codes, with a minimum 34 per cent share for its primary code and a minimum 20 per cent share for its secondary codes. The total for the SEO codes must add up to 100 per cent.

If it is not possible to accurately reflect the Research Group’s activities using group-level SEO codes, the Research Group must use either a 4-digit subdivision code (e.g., 6700 for Manufacturing) or the ‘other’ group-level code (e.g., 7299 for Other Economic Issues).
(d) **Home Panel and (if relevant) secondary Panel(s)**

The Research Group must nominate its preferred Home Panel through the submitting institution. In the case of cross-disciplinary research (i.e., where the Research Group has listed an RFCD code with a weighting of 25 per cent or greater that refers to another Panel), the Research Group is also required to nominate relevant secondary Panel(s) for the Research Group. Home Panels will be required to consult any secondary Panel(s) nominated by the Research Group during the assessment process. Panel Chairs may move the Research Group to the Panel that is considered to be the most appropriate to assess the Research Group (section 3.4).

(e) **Small group justification, where the Research Group has fewer than five researchers**

See section 3.1 for further information.

(f) **Other Assessed Researcher justification(s), where the Research Group includes Other Assessed Researchers**

See section 2.2.1 for further information.

(g) **Level A justification(s) where the Research Group includes Level A researchers**

See section 2.1.3 for further information.

4.3.3 **The Context Statement**

The Context Statement allows the Research Group to inform Panel Members and Advisors of the Research Group’s objectives, including the extent of any cross-disciplinary and national/international cross-institutional research and the standing of its researchers in its discipline. It assists with explaining the research environment and allows Research Groups to demonstrate how the research environment has contributed to the Research Group’s quality.

The Context Statement comprises:

1. a Descriptive Component; and
2. Required Specified Fields.

4.3.3.1 **DESCRIPTIVE COMPONENT**

In making a case for the quality of its research, the Research Group may include information relevant to the assessment period under headings such as those outlined below, as considered appropriate by each individual Research Group, in the descriptive component of its Context Statement:

a. Statement of history, strategic focus and research objectives of the Group;

b. Summary of main achievements of the Group;

c. Collaborative research within the institution (including the involvement of Institution Affiliates), with researchers (at other institutions or agencies, both within Australia and overseas);

d. Extent of cohesion and collaboration, where it has occurred, within the Research Group;
e. Support for ECRs and HDR Students, including how they have collaborated or assisted with the production of Research Outputs submitted by other researchers; and

f. Comment on difficulties overcome and still being faced, including where factors outside the Group’s control have slowed or delayed research progress and how challenges were overcome.

The Panel-Specific Requirements provide further detail on information which may be included in the Context Statement.

The Research Group may include information presented in Tables and/or Figures. However the Research Group should not repeat information that is outlined in the Required Specified Fields component of the Context Statement (below). The Context Statement must not include any material for which the institution does not hold the copyright.

The descriptive component of the Context Statement must be submitted in Portable Document Format (PDF). It should not exceed five pages, including tables and figures and must comply with the following format:

- A4 paper size;
- text in single column black type;
- 12 point font (references may be reproduced in at least 10 point font);
- at least a 2 cm margin on all edges; and
- at least single line spacing.

Please use a highly legible font type such as Arial, Courier, Helvetica, Times New Roman or Verdana. Variants such as mathematical typesetting languages may also be used.

The form in which additional information should be provided is outlined in the Panel-Specific Requirements and in the RQF Technical Specifications.

4.3.3.2 REQUIRED SPECIFIED FIELDS

The Research Group is required to complete the following specified fields. Where no data is available, a nil response may be provided:

a. Details of each researcher in the Research Group;

b. HERDC Category 1 Research Income;

c. HERDC Category 2 Research Income;

d. HERDC Category 3 Research Income;

e. HERDC Category 4 Research Income; and

f. Other income that supports the Research Group.

Further explanatory information for these fields is provided below. Detail on the format in which this data must be provided is specified in the RQF Technical Specifications.
EXPLANATORY INFORMATION

(a)  Details of each researcher in the Research Group

The following information is required for each researcher in the Research Group:

- Name;
- FTE;
- Academic classification;
- Name(s) of any other Research Groups of which the researcher is a member;
- ‘Best’ Research Outputs;
- Other Assessed Researcher Status (if applicable);
- The researcher’s fully-reported component of the body of work; and
- The researcher’s other outputs in their body of work.

Detail on the format in which this data and other data related to each researcher in the Research Group must be provided is specified in the RQF Technical Specifications.

REPORTING RESEARCH INCOME

The Research Group must report categories 1-4 research income as defined in the draft 2008 Higher Education Research Data Collection Specifications for the Collection of 2007 data, as well as other income that supports the Research Group. Income should be reported as received regardless of where the researchers in the Research Group worked when the income was received.

Research Groups must count the full grant amount for any grant where an assessed researcher in the Group was named as a Principal-Investigator, Chief-Investigator, Co-Investigator, or other equivalent investigator. Research income should not be pro-rated between investigators in the one Research Group, although the Research Group must report in the Context Statement where an investigator from another Research Group was involved.

Research income must be reported for the Research Group as a whole. Therefore each individual source of research income should only be included once within each Research Group.

Where a researcher is in two Research Groups, the researcher must divide the research income they have received between those Research Groups.

Research income must be reported for each of the six calendar years of the Assessment period, to the nearest thousand dollars. Additional explanatory information is provided below.

(b)  HERDC Category 1 Research Income

Research income must only be included for programmes listed on the Australian Competitive Grants Register for the year for which income is to be reported.
(c) **HERDC Category 2 Research Income**

Research income must only be reported for this category where it meets the definition of research. The Research Group has the opportunity to report other income that supports the Research Group below.

(d) **HERDC Category 3 Research Income**

Research income must only be reported for this category where it meets the definition of research. The Research has the opportunity to report other income that supports the Research Group below.

(e) **HERDC Category 4 Research Income**

Category 4 research income must be reported for each of the six financial years of the Assessment period (2000-01 to 2005-06), to the nearest thousand dollars.

(f) **Other Income that supports the Research Group**

The Research Group may report other income that supports the Research Group but which does not meet the definition of research income, to the nearest thousand dollars.

This may include income received from Australian Government, state and territory sources, and from industry, private sector or community sources. Possible sources may include, but are not limited to:

- Australia Council for the Arts or equivalent;
- The Churchill Trust or equivalent; or
- Corporate, philanthropic or individual donations which do not qualify as research income.

The Research Group should report any income in this category that was received for a specific purpose related to an individual researcher in the Research Group or the Research Group as a whole. Additional information on how this should be provided is outlined, where relevant, in the *Panel-Specific Requirements*.

### 4.3.4 Four ‘Best’ Research Outputs

The evidence portfolio must include links to the four ‘best’ Research Outputs for each assessed researcher in the Research Group. It is up to the institution to determine, using whatever means it deems appropriate, what constitutes a ‘best’ Research Output.

### 4.3.4.1 INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED FOR EACH RESEARCH OUTPUT

The Research Group must provide the following information for each assessed researcher’s ‘best’ Research Output:

1. Research Output type;
2. Full title of the output;
3. Full title of outlet in which the output appeared;
4. Nominating author;
5. All named authors, listed in the order in which they appear;
6. Year Published;
7. Year Available (if different from above);
8. ‘Best’ output justification;
9. Location in the institution’s RQF repository (i.e., URL) or availability (if not in the institution’s RQF repository); and
10. ISSN, ISBN or equivalent (if available).

Detail on the format in which this data must be provided is outlined below and further specified in the RQF Technical Specifications.

Research Outputs submitted for a Quality rating are attributed to the Research Group to which the assessed researcher belongs at the Staff Census Date, notwithstanding where the researcher was employed at the time of publication.

The Research Group may provide additional publication information as appropriate to the discipline and the kind of Research Output. The form in which additional information should be provided is outlined in the RQF Technical Specifications.

4.3.5 Acceptable Research Outputs

For a Research Output to be included in the list of four ‘best’ Research Outputs, it must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. it must be research (as defined in section 1.5);
2. it must have been produced in an acceptable form (as defined in section 4.3.5.1);
3. it must have been published in the assessment period (as defined in section 4.3.5.2); and
4. it must be the published version (as defined in section 4.3.5.3).

4.3.5.1 Acceptable Forms of Research Outputs

Acceptable forms of Research Outputs include ‘traditional’ and ‘non-traditional’ outputs, multi-authored outputs and outputs which may have contributions from Institution Affiliates, external collaborators or HDR students. Theses that have been submitted for HDR assessment are not acceptable Research Outputs. An indicative list of acceptable Research Outputs is outlined at section 7.8. This list is not designed to be exhaustive. Further detail on acceptable Research Outputs, as well as those outputs which must be included in the body of work, is provided in the Panel-Specific Requirements.

The location of the researcher at the time of publication does not affect the acceptability of a Research Output, provided the output was published within the Assessment Period and the researcher meets the eligibility criteria. This means that Research Outputs generated while the researcher was not employed in an eligible institution are acceptable, provided the researcher meets the eligibility criteria.

4.3.5.2 Date of Publication

For a Research Output to be eligible for submission in the RQF, the Research Output must have been published or brought into the public domain through, for example, exhibition or performance. Research Groups are required to be able to demonstrate that the Research Output has been published.
(a) **The Date of Publication Rule**

Publication of the Research Output must have occurred within the Assessment Period (i.e., between 1 January 2001 and 31 December 2006 (inclusive)). Outputs from 2000 and earlier are not eligible to be included as one of the ‘best’ four outputs.

The years of publication of a Research Output must appear on the output and/or in the information to be provided for each Research Output (section 4.3.4.1).

Where the actual date of publication differs from the listed date of publication, this variance should be explained. This explanation is only required for the four ‘best’ outputs, not the body of work (section 4.3.6).

(b) **Date of Publication Definition for Non-Traditional and Confidential Outputs**

The Panel-Specific Requirements detail the relevant publication date for ‘non-traditional’ outputs. However, it is necessary that this date, however derived, falls within the assessment period.

In the case of confidential or sensitive outputs (section 4.3.5.8), which may not be made public, the overarching definition of year of publication remains, namely the date of finalisation that is stated within or on the output or the associated information to be provided for each Research Output (section 4.3.4.1).

(c) **Exceptions to the Date of Publication Rule**

Where a Research Output was originally produced in a medium where no year of publication is stated within or on the output, a letter from an editor, conference organiser or publisher may be acceptable evidence to identify the year of publication. A letter cannot override a year of publication stated within the output.

There is no requirement for the letter to be attached, however the letter should be referred to in the best output justification.

Provided no other date exists within or on the Research Output, the date an output was ‘presented’ may be acceptable evidence of the year of publication (e.g., to a conference in the case of a conference paper, or to the commissioning agent in the case of a report).

(d) **Revisions**

There may be some cases in which a Research Output was revised following the publication of the output (e.g., snapshots of publications on a website or a revised version of a computer programme). These outputs are only acceptable if the Research Group can demonstrate that the Research Output meets all the eligibility criteria (particularly the date of publication rule and the definition of ‘published’).

The year of publication is normally the latest of the year indicated as published, printed or the year of copyright. Institutions should note that copyright dates or ‘date last updated’ which appear on web pages, do not typically refer to a publication included on that page. Web page dates should not be used as evidence of the year of publication.
(e) **Reprints and Multiple Editions**

Where there has been a reprint or new edition of a Research Output within the assessment period and both versions have been included as ‘best’ outputs, the ‘best’ output justification attaching to the reprint or new edition must state how it has contributed substantially new research. A reprint or edition that does not meet the definition of research is not eligible for inclusion as a ‘best’ output or in the body of work.

Where there have been multiple prints or editions within the assessment period, none of which constitute substantially more new research than the other, the researcher may decide which edition or print is to be submitted for assessment.

Institutions are responsible for ensuring that any revisions or reprints that occurred outside the assessment period are not included as a Research Output.

4.3.5.3 **Published Version**

The Research Group is required to ensure that the Research Output included in the four ‘best’ outputs is the ‘published version’.

The following versions of a Research Output are eligible for submission in the RQF:

1. Publisher-generated version for publication; or  
2. Post-print (i.e., the final draft post-refereeing).

The following versions of a Research Output are not eligible for submission:

1. Unpublished / manuscript forms of a Research Output; or  
2. Pre-print (before any peer review, refereeing or quality assurance process).

Variations to this general definition which are applicable to each Panel are outlined in the Panel-Specific Requirements.

4.3.5.4 **Co-Authorship**

Co-authored outputs may be submitted for assessment by all co-authors, and thus could be submitted by more than one institution and for more than one Research Group. The contribution to a co-authored Research Output will not be assessed solely on the basis of the order in which co-authors are listed, nor on the basis of any claimed contributions. Researchers can explain their contribution to the Research Output in the ‘best’ output justification, however Research Outputs must not be pro-rated between co-authors, nor between Research Groups or institutions.

A co-authored Research Output can be listed as a ‘best’ output by each co-author within one Research Group. For example, a Research Group of 10 researchers is required to include a total of 40 ‘best’ outputs, but there may be fewer than 40 unique ‘best’ outputs if some of the outputs were co-authored, and the Research Group submitted an output by multiple co-authors in the Research Group.
4.3.5.5  ‘BEST’ OUTPUT JUSTIFICATIONS

A justification for the choice by the assessed researcher of the four ‘best’ outputs should be provided in no more than 100 words for each Research Output. The ‘best’ output justification must not include an abstract or summary of the output.

4.3.5.6  ACCESSIBILITY OF FOUR ‘BEST’ OUTPUTS

All ‘best’ outputs must be available for Assessment Panel and Advisor scrutiny for the period of the RQF assessment process. These Research Outputs must be stored in the institution’s RQF repository wherever possible. Where the institution or the researcher is the copyright owner, or where the copyright owner has given express permission for the Research Output to be stored in an ‘open access’ repository, the Research Output should be stored in an ‘open access’ repository or an ‘open access’ part of the RQF repository. Institutions must not submit the actual Research Output.

The institution must certify that the Research Outputs are available for scrutiny during the period of assessment. The evidence portfolio must provide a stable link (i.e., a URL) directly to the Research Output (or stable links, if the Research Output is made up of multiple objects). The link must not refer to a metadata page. Further detail on this process is outlined in the RQF Technical Specifications.

There may be limited circumstances in which an output cannot be stored in the institution’s RQF repository:

- the copyright owner does not give permission for the Research Output to be stored in an institutional repository; and/or
- reasons of sensitivity; and/or
- physical or technical limitations of the output.

A statement of reasons must be provided where a Research Output must be viewed outside the institution’s RQF repository for one or more of the reasons outlined above. The statement must identify the conditions under which this output can be made available (i.e., to certain Panel members, Advisors, or under embargo, etc.). Institutions are required to make the Research Output available within four working days of a request by an RQF Panel Chair or from DEST or for such other period as may be agreed to by the institution and DEST.

4.3.5.7  MANAGING COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

Institutions must make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the copyright owner has given permission to store Research Outputs in an institution’s RQF repository. This includes following the steps outlined at section 7.9. Where the copyright owner has not given permission for the Research Output to be stored in an institutional repository, the institution must provide a justification of:

- why the output cannot be stored electronically; and
- how the output can be provided to a Panel member or Advisor without breaching the licence conditions for the output.

This justification must state that the steps outlined at section 7.9 have been taken.
In this case, the Research Output must be provided following the process outlined in section 4.3.5.9.

4.3.5.8 SENSITIVITY: CONFIDENTIAL OR SENSITIVE OUTPUTS

The institution must identify where the Research Output cannot be stored in the institution’s RQF repository for reasons of sensitivity.

The institution is responsible for indicating the conditions in which it is both appropriate and inappropriate for these Research Outputs to be viewed. The sensitivity of the Research Output must be specifically identified.

DEST will treat Research Outputs based on the kind of sensitivity assigned to the output by the institution. Any disclosure of the output that exceeds the terms allowed by the institution will be treated as unauthorised.

Sensitive Research Outputs may include, but are not limited to:

- commercially sensitive Research Outputs;
- Research Outputs for Government agencies that have not been released to the public; or
- Research Outputs that are culturally sensitive.

The institution is responsible for identifying the nature of the sensitivity, the damage that may flow if sensitivity is not maintained or respected, and the conditions under which the Research Outputs may be assessed. DEST will regard such Research Outputs as having been submitted and received in confidence and will maintain the sensitivity of the output, unless otherwise required by law.

The institution is responsible for ensuring that any necessary permissions have been obtained from the organisation which commissioned the Research Output or from the researcher who conducted the research, as determined by the intellectual property arrangements in any commissioning contract or similar.

The institution is responsible for ensuring that the information submitted as part of a Research Group’s evidence portfolio identifies the conditions in which it is inappropriate for a Panel member to view a sensitive Research Output submitted by the Group. Further detail on this process is outlined in the RQF Technical Specifications.

Commercially Sensitive Research Outputs

A Research Output that is inherently confidential in nature may be submitted as part of the Research Group’s evidence portfolio provided the necessary permissions have been obtained.

Culturally Sensitive Research Outputs

A Research Output that is culturally sensitive may be submitted as part of the Research Group’s evidence portfolio provided the necessary permissions have been obtained.
Research for Government agencies that has not been released to the public

A Research Output that was produced for Government agencies but which has not yet been released to the public may be submitted as part of the Research Group’s evidence portfolio, provided that all necessary permissions have been obtained. The report must have been produced in the assessment period even if not publicly released.

Australian Government Security Classified Research Outputs

A Research Output that includes information classified in line with the Australian Protective Security Manual 2005 as either ‘in-Confidence’ or greater or ‘Restricted’ or greater may not be submitted as part of the Research Group’s evidence portfolio.

4.3.5.9 MANAGING PHYSICAL, TECHNICAL OR LEGAL LIMITATIONS

A statement of reasons must be provided where a Research Output cannot be stored due to physical, technical or legal limitations of the institution’s RQF repository. For example, it may be possible that an output cannot be physically stored in the repository, such as a sculpture or a book that was not provided in digital form.

The institution must identify the conditions under which this Research Output can be made available. Outlined below are suggested means by which the Research Output may be provided:

- from an institution’s library which has an agreement with another library (e.g., using inter-library loans, Document Delivery or equivalent processes, or the National Library of Australia);
- from a personal loan from the author; or
- by making the output available ‘on site’ to Panel Members at the Panel’s or DEST’s request.

4.3.6 Body of Work for Researchers in the Research Group

The ‘body of work’ for all assessed researchers in the Research Group is an aggregated list of the Research Outputs produced by members of the Research Group over the assessment period, including the four ‘best’ outputs for each assessed researcher. This data will be collected on an assessed researcher basis, and collated by DEST. The format in which this data must be provided is specified in the RQF Technical Specifications.

Each listed output must be an acceptable output as defined in section 4.3.5.

At a minimum, the body of work must include the following information for each listed Research Output:

1. Research Output type;
2. Full title of the output;
3. Full title of outlet in which the output appeared;
4. All named authors, listed in the order in which they appear;
5. Year Published;
6. Year available (if different from above); and
7. ISSN, ISBN or equivalent (if available).

Additional information may be provided to assist with verifying the existence of the Research Output. The format in which this data must be provided is specified in the RQF Technical Specifications.

Sufficient information must be provided in the evidence portfolio to enable the Panel to verify independently the existence of any Research Output listed in the body of work. However, there is no requirement for Research Outputs that are listed in the body of work to be made available for assessment.

Confidential or sensitive Research Outputs should also be listed in the body of work, as long as their confidentiality or sensitivity do not prevent the disclosure of the title or existence of the Research Output.

The body of work includes Research Outputs that must be fully-reported, other Research Outputs that may be reported, and older research included for Impact Assessment.

4.3.6.1 RESEARCH OUTPUTS THAT MUST BE FULLY-REPORTED

Research Outputs that must be ‘fully-reported’ are outputs of a kind that researchers must list in their entirety. These outputs will be used to derive one or more metrics for the Research Group where the Panel considers these relevant and appropriate. Further information is provided in the Panel-Specific Requirements.

This list of Research Outputs that must be fully-reported includes every acceptable Research Output that is produced by the Research Group in any of the following categories:

- Books;
- Book chapters;
- Journal Articles or equivalent;\(^{11}\) and
- Other outputs as required in the Panel-Specific Requirements.

4.3.6.2 OTHER RESEARCH OUTPUTS THAT MAY BE REPORTED

Research Groups may selectively list other outputs for inclusion in the body of work. These outputs should include any types of Research Outputs where it is considered by the Group to be relevant for the assessment of Research Quality. This section does not inform the calculation of metrics.

A sub-section of the body of work is provided for Research Outputs that were not published in the assessment period but have been included for the assessment of impact (section 5.2.4). This section does not inform the calculation of metrics.

4.3.6.3 BODY OF WORK WHERE A RESEARCHER IS IN TWO RESEARCH GROUPS

Where a researcher is in two Research Groups (sections 2.2.2 and 3.3), the researcher must divide their own Research Outputs, including their

\(^{11}\) Books, Book chapters, and Journal Articles or equivalent are defined in accordance with the Higher Education Research Data Collection.
body of work, between those Research Groups. This means that the researcher cannot list the same Research Output in the body of work for each Research Group. All Research Outputs must still be reported as required above.
5. Quality and Impact

5.1 Quality Scale

Assessment Panels will report their assessments of Research Quality using the following five-point, criterion-referenced scale. The criteria for quality are intended to assess research that has a predominantly international focus as well as that which has a predominantly national focus or application. Further information will be provided in the Guidance Material for Assessment Panels and Advisors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Research that is world leading in its field or makes an equally exceptional contribution in an area of particular significance to Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Research that meets world standards of excellence in its field or makes an equally excellent contribution in an area of particular significance to Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Research that is recognised internationally as excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which nonetheless falls short of the highest standards of excellence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Research that is recognised as methodologically sound in its field and of high originality, significance and rigour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Research that is deemed to fall below the standard of recognised quality work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Impact Statement

The Impact Assessment of the Research Group is based on an Impact Statement (including impact-related indicators) and the Required Specified Fields component of the Context Statement.

5.2.1 Overview

The Impact Statement for the Research Group must include the following:

- a statement of claims against generic and panel-specific impact criteria, including impact-related indicators (quantitative or other information) in support of those claims;
- up to four case studies that illustrate the Research Group’s claims of impact; and
details of end-users who may be contacted to support the Research Group’s claims.

As part of the Specified Fields component of the Context Statement, the Research Group is required to provide information on categories 1-4 research income for the assessment period, as well as other income that supports the Research Group. Where appropriate, the Research Group should include, as part of the Impact Statement, an explanation of how this information is relevant to Research Impact.

The Impact Statement can also include information additional to that in the Context Statement to assist Panel Members and Advisors to understand the strategic aims and objectives of the Research Group that are specifically relevant to the Impact assessment.

Consistent with the assessment of the Quality of the Research Group, Impact is attributed to the Research Group to which the assessed researcher belongs at the Staff Census Date, notwithstanding where the researcher was employed at the time of publication or when the impact occurred.

The Impact Statement is free text (i.e., graphs, tables, figures, etc., can be included) and must not exceed 10 pages in length. A template to assist with the compilation of the Impact Statement is available on the DEST website.

The Impact Statement must be submitted in Portable Document Format (PDF). It should not exceed ten pages, including tables and figures and must comply with the following format:

- A4 paper size;
- text in single column black type;
- 12 point font (references may be reproduced in at least 10 point font);
- at least a 2 cm margin on all edges;
- at least single line spacing.

The Research Group is required to ensure that no Australian Government Security Classified information is contained in the Impact Statement.

5.2.2 Conditions for Impact Assessment

For the Research Group to receive an Impact rating, it must achieve a threshold Quality rating of “2”, that is, the research of the Research Group must be recognised as methodologically sound in its field and of high originality, significance and rigour. Research Groups that receive a Quality rating of “1” will have a published rating for Impact of ‘Ineligible for Impact Assessment’.

Assessment Panels and Advisors will consider the impact of a Research Group as a whole and provide an Impact rating for the Research Group overall. The rating will not be determined by averaging out the ratings for individual case studies.

Further detail outlining how an Assessment Panel will arrive at Quality and Impact ratings will be outlined in the Guidance Material for 5. Quality and Impact.
Assessment Panels and Advisors.

5.2.3 Basis and Timeframe for Impact Assessment

The Impact Statement must be based on either:

- the ‘best’ Research Outputs for the Research Group; and/or
- body of work for researchers in the Research Group; and/or
- an ‘Older Research Output’ produced by assessed researchers between 1 January 1995 and 31 December 2000, provided that there is a demonstrated relationship between this output and either one of the ‘best’ Research Outputs or an output listed in the body of work.

Where the Research Group includes Research Outputs from the period 1 January 1995 to 31 December 2000, these must be clearly identified in the ‘Older Research Included for Impact Assessment’ sub-section of the body of work.

A Research Output that is published prior to 1 January 1995, or which does not meet the definition of research, cannot be a basis for Impact Assessment.

5.2.4 Older Research Included for Impact Assessment

‘Older Research Outputs’ produced by assessed researchers between 1 January 1995 and 31 December 2000 may be submitted to inform the Impact Assessment where there is a demonstrable link to a Research Output that was published in the assessment period.

Any Older Research Outputs referred to in the Impact Statement must be included in a sub-section of the body of work (section 4.3.6) entitled ‘Older Research Included for Impact Assessment’.

At a minimum, the body of work must include the following information for each listed Older Research Output:

1. Research Output type;
2. Full title of the output;
3. Full title of outlet in which the output appeared;
4. All named authors, listed in the order in which they appear;
5. Year Published;
6. Year available (if different from above);
7. Statement of the link between the Older Research Output and Research Output(s) in the body of work (50 words); and
8. ISSN, ISBN or equivalent (if available).

Additional information may be provided to assist with verifying the existence of the Research Output. The format in which this data must be provided is specified in the RQF Technical Specifications.

5.2.5 Statement of claims

In its Impact Statement, the Research Group must provide a statement of claims against one or more of the following broad criteria with
reference to its overall benefit:

- engagement with end-users, recognising the importance of the research to address a defined social, economic, environmental and/or cultural issue; and/or
- uptake of the research by the relevant end-users to generate new policies, products, processes, attitudes, behaviours and/or outlooks; and/or
- how the research has produced social, economic, environmental and/or cultural benefits for end-users regionally, nationally and/or internationally; and/or
- the extent of the benefit arising from the research.

These broad impact criteria are supplemented by Panel-specific criteria to help Research Groups with the development of their Impact Statements.

The Research Group should include identifiable and supportable impact-related indicators in support of its claims. This requires the Impact Statement to identify clearly the beneficiaries of the research and the way in which they have benefited. It is important to provide evidence in the Impact Statement that links the research of the Research Group to the benefit claimed.

The Impact Statement must not include any material where the copyright owner has not given permission for its inclusion.

Research Groups will not be assessed against prescriptive definitions of ‘impact’. Rather, the statement of claims should identify the type of impacts and related benefits against which the Research Group nominates to be measured. All impact will be considered against standards appropriate for each discipline. It is therefore expected that all disciplines will be able to achieve top level ratings.

While the Impact Statement should be structured to address the specific requirements of each rating descriptor, the Research Group must not self-rate its impact.

Further guidance on making a statement of claims for Impact is provided in the Panel-Specific Requirements.

5.2.6 Case Studies

The Research Group may provide up to four case studies that demonstrate the level of impact achieved by its research. These case studies count towards the 10 page limit for the Impact Statement.

5.2.7 End-User details

The Research Group may include details of end-users who can be contacted by DEST to seek verification of its claims. The Research Group should not seek end-user testimonials or assessments of impact, although prior to the assessment phase Research Groups should ensure that the end-users are aware that their details have been provided to DEST and have confirmed that they are willing to be contacted.

Where end-user details are provided, the Research Group must include
the following details in an appendix to the Impact Statement:

- Name;
- Position;
- Organisation;
- Contact details;
- Relationship with the Research Group; and
- Any potential conflicts of interest.

Impact Statements should not assume that any nominated end-users will be contacted. This will occur only where the Panel requests DEST to contact the end-user(s).

5.2.8 Impact Scale

The rating scale for assessing impact is outlined below. Further explanation and interpretation of each rating point is below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Adoption of the research has produced an outstanding social, economic, environmental and/or cultural benefit for the wider community, regionally within Australia, nationally or internationally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Adoption of the research has produced a significant social, economic, environmental and/or cultural benefit for the wider community, regionally within Australia, nationally or internationally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Research has been adopted to produce new policies, products, attitudes, behaviours and/or outlooks in the end-user community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Research has engaged with the end-user community to address a social, economic, environmental and/or cultural issue, regionally within Australia, nationally or internationally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Research has had limited or no identifiable social, economic, environmental and/or cultural outcome, regionally within Australia, nationally or internationally.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further information will be provided in the Guidance Material for Assessment Panels and Advisors.

Impact Assessments will be conducted on all Research Groups for which an Impact Statement has been provided, regardless of the Quality rating. Where the Panel determines that the Quality rating for a Research Group is less than “2”, the Group will be rated as ‘Ineligible for Impact Assessment’.

5. Quality and Impact
5.3 Explaining Impact for the Purposes of the RQF

Research Impact relates to the benefits of research produced by institutions that extend beyond academe into the wider community. Research Impact does not, therefore, relate to academic citations, academic research income, or markers of academic esteem. Members of the academic community may be considered to be end-users in some cases, for example, those cases where impact is based on research into higher education teaching practices, mediated through applied research or other forms of activities or outputs. In these cases the impact being claimed must be clearly related to the original research of the Research Group.

5.3.1 Domains of Research Impact

Research Impact can be demonstrated across four broad impact domains:

- **Social Benefit** - Adding to the social capital of the nation. For example, improving people’s health and quality of life; stimulating new approaches to social issues; changes in community attitudes; influence upon developments or questions in society at large; informed public debate and improved policy-making; enhancing the knowledge and understanding of the nation; improved equity; improvements in health, safety and security; improved social attachment; and improvements in the level and security of political rights.

- **Economic Benefit** - Adding to the economic capital of the nation. For example, improved productivity; adding to economic growth and wealth creation; enhancing the skills base; increased employment; reduced costs; increased innovation capability and global competitiveness; improvements in service delivery; as well as unquantified economic returns resulting from social and public policy adjustments.

- **Environmental Benefit** - Adding to the natural capital of the nation. For example, improvements in environment and lifestyle; reduced waste and pollution; improved management of natural resources; reduced consumption of fossil fuels; uptake of recycling techniques; reduced environmental risk; preservation initiatives; conservation of biodiversity; enhancement of ecosystem services; improved plant and animal varieties; and adaptation to climate change.

- **Cultural Benefit** - Adding to the cultural capital of the nation. For example, supporting greater understanding of where we have come from, and who and what we are as a nation and society; understanding how we relate to other societies and cultures; stimulating creativity within the community; contributing to cultural preservation and enrichment; and bringing new ideas and new modes of experience to the nation.

This list is not exhaustive or mutually exclusive and Research Groups are encouraged to identify other impacts relevant to their area or discipline. The impact domains are intended to provide prompts or starting points for Research Groups who are writing their Impact Statements. It will also be used to assist Assessment Panels and Advisors when assessing Impact Statements.
While it may be possible for Research Groups to demonstrate Research Impact across the four domains, this is not a requirement. High impact research may be demonstrated in one very specific field and may occur at the local or regional level as well as the national or international level.

Many of these benefits could be achieved in a variety of different ways. Often, impact will be achieved by directly affecting professionals and practitioners in the research area. In this case, Research Groups should consider the high-level outcomes desired in their own sector. These could include improved quality of products/services, cost-effectiveness, customer satisfaction, lives saved or productivity.

In other instances, Research Groups could achieve an impact through policy changes. Policy impact may be demonstrated throughout all four domains of impact and may be broader than its effect on government. Policy impacts can also include changes to policies of corporations, councils, professional groups and non-government organisations.

5.3.2 Linking the Impact Claimed to the Research of the Group

Research Groups must demonstrate the link between the original research and the impact being claimed. In many instances the research will be mediated through outputs other than the original Research Output. For example, it may often be the case that research reaches the end-user through pamphlets, textbooks, training seminars with industry or speeches given at practitioner conferences. In these circumstances, Research Groups should provide a clear reference to these outputs in their Impact Statement sufficient for their existence to be verified.

The Research Groups must make clear that these additional Research Outputs are based on their original research. Without evidence of these impact-related outputs, Assessment Panels and Advisors may find it difficult to identify the link between the original research and the final impact claimed.

Research Groups should also identify clearly the beneficiaries of the research and the way in which they have benefited. It is important to provide evidence that links the research of the Research Group to the claimed benefit.

Assessment Panels and Advisors will look for evidence of methods for supporting their impact. Research Groups should attempt to show a systematic approach to disseminating research and encouraging end-users to adopt research findings. This could include evidence of relationships and systematic interactions with end-users and end-user organisations. Further information is provided in the Panel-Specific Requirements.
5.3.3 Interpreting the Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Research has engaged with the end-user community to address social, economic, environmental and/or cultural issues, regionally within Australia, nationally or internationally.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ‘D’ rating represents the entry level of Research Impact and is broadly referred to as engagement. This is where Research Groups have actively engaged with end-users as they disseminate the outcomes of their research.

This rating would be appropriate where this engagement did not, or had not yet, led to the research being adopted through new products being created or new policies, attitudes, behaviours and/or outlooks adopted. A ‘D’ rating does not necessarily mean that the Research Group did not have a significant impact on society. In many cases, D level impact may be a first step to higher-level impact, which could be recognised in future RQF cycles.

Examples:\[12\]

- The research has led to the creation of, or is part of a Cooperative Research Centre (CRC), as this shows engagement with industry.
- Research into the genesis of mineral deposits, directly funded by industry and presented to industry through seminars, forums and industry publications.
- Research conducted to improve occupational health and safety (OH and S) in the workplace in collaboration with industry. Industry provided the funding and real examples of OH and S case studies. Recommendations have been examined by OH and S departments of the industry sponsors, but have not been adopted.
- Research conducted on the development of fundamental motor skills for primary school students. The results were presented to primary school physical education teachers and curriculum boards as the Research Group conducted clinics throughout Australia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Research has been adopted to produce new policies, products, attitudes, behaviours and/or outlooks in the end-user community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ‘C’ rating represents actual adoption of the research by end-users. This rating is distinct from engagement as end-users are already

\[12\] All examples in this section are indicative only and should not be taken to restrict a Panel’s consideration of the evidence before them.
familiar with the research, how it can address particular issues and the end-users have deliberately chosen to implement it. This adoption can be demonstrated in a number of ways including new policies, practices or legislation, changed attitudes, behaviours or outlooks, and new products, programmes, etc.

In the case of a research finding used to teach students, the end-users are the teachers, schools and curriculum boards (e.g. schools, the VET sector or universities). The decision to use the new research is evidence of the adoption required to achieve a rating of ‘C’. Adoption of research by the VET sector can show successful transfer and adoption of new innovations to firms and industries and practitioners.

A rating of ‘C’ would be awarded where these policies, products, attitudes, behaviours and/or outlooks did not, or had not yet, led to a significant or outstanding benefit.

Examples:

- Research into the genesis of mineral deposits adopted by the industry in their mineral exploration projects.
- Research conducted to improve OH&S in the workplace in collaboration with industry. Industry provided the funding and real examples of OH&S case studies. Recommendations were implemented by the industry and/or government.
- A new method in electrotechnology being taught in universities or the VET sector.
- Research conducted on the development of fundamental motor skills for primary school students. As a result of clinics for physical education teachers, a number of schools incorporated the research into their physical education programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Adoption of the research has produced an outstanding social, economic, environmental and/or cultural benefit for the wider community, regionally within Australia, nationally or internationally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Adoption of the research has produced a significant social, economic, environmental and/or cultural benefit for the wider community, regionally within Australia, nationally or internationally.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ‘B’ and ‘A’ ratings represent the social, economic, environmental and/or cultural benefit for the wider community as a result of the research having been adopted. Generally, this benefit will have accrued because of the new policies, products, attitudes, behaviours and/or outlooks which the research has produced (see Rating ‘C’, above). To receive a ‘B’ or an ‘A’, the Impact Statement must show how the policy, product, attitude, behaviour, etc., actually benefited the wider community. This would include identifying the beneficiaries and the benefit; and explaining how the research has led to the claimed benefit.
The difference between rating ‘B’ and rating ‘A’ is one of degree, rather than a substantive difference. It is expected that the ‘A’ rating will only be awarded in limited cases in relation to the highest Research Impact.

Examples:
- Research into the genesis of mineral deposits adopted by the industry in mineral exploration projects resulting in a more focused mineral exploration, thus creating the best chance for a mineral discovery, reduce exploration risk, prevent wasteful spending on less scientific targets and increase spending on the scientifically best-justified targets. Achievement of an ‘A’ rating would require significant economic benefits for the involved company.
- Research conducted on ways to improve OH and S in the workplace in collaboration with industry. Industry provided the funding and real examples of OH and S case studies. Recommendations were implemented by the industry and/or government, and employers reported a reduced incidence of accidents and work-induced illness, resulting in increased productivity, performance and morale.
- Research conducted on the development of fundamental motor skills for primary school students. The programme is picked up at a state or national level and feedback from physical education teachers shows that students’ motor skills have improved over the period of implementation, resulting in higher levels of physical activity amongst students.

5.4 Applying for an Exemption from Impact Assessment

In some cases, the research orientation, the discipline and/or the stage of development of the research may mean that the Research Group considers it is not appropriate for it to be assessed for Research Impact.

The Research Group’s application for exemption from Impact Assessment must include a statement of reasons, of no more than one page, outlining why the Research Group claims exemption. The statement should be based on one or more of the following:

- the research conducted by the Research Group is too new to have had any identifiable or verifiable impact;
- the sole intent of the research conducted by the Research Group is the advancement of knowledge in the discipline; and/or
- the research conducted by the Research Group takes longer than 12 years from publication to lead to an identifiable or verifiable impact.

Assessment Panels and Advisors will consider each application for exemption from Impact Assessment. If the Assessment Panel decides that the statement of reasons meets the above criteria, the Research Group will get a publicly reported ‘Not Assessed’ rating for Research Impact. If the Assessment Panel decides that the statement of reasons is insufficient, the Research Group will get a publicly reported ‘E’ rating for Research Impact. A Research Group will not be given the opportunity to submit a late Impact Statement in these circumstances.

Research Groups will not be permitted to submit an Impact Statement if they are applying for an exemption from Impact Assessment.
6. METRICS

The following quantitative measures may be used in the RQF assessment process:

1. Ranked Research Outlets;
2. Citation Data; and
3. Research Income.

Where appropriate, metrics will be used to supplement the expert review process. They provide additional indicators of the quality of a Research Group. They will not be combined or weighted in any formulaic way to obtain a single quantitative rating. These quantitative measures will be applied on a discipline-specific basis. Therefore, some disciplines may use all three measures, while others may use one or two.

6.1 Ranked Outlets

A research ‘Outlet’ refers to the avenues in which an output appears, such as journal name, book publisher, theatre, art gallery, etc. A Research ‘Output’ refers to the individual journal articles, book chapters, artistic performances, films, etc. that are contained in a Research Group’s body of work.

Research outlets, journals, publishers, conferences, venues, etc., will be classified into tiers according to the following distribution: Tier A* (top 5%), Tier A (next 15%), Tier B (next 30%) and Tier C (bottom 50%).

DEST will sort the relevant outputs from the fully-reported component of the body of work for each Research Group, distributing them across the four prestige tiers according to the rankings developed through sector consultation at the discipline level. DEST will provide a summary table to Panels showing the number and distribution of publications across tiers for each Research Group being assessed by that Panel.

Research Groups should refer to the Ranked Outlets List for their discipline, which will available on the DEST website prior to the commencement of the submission process.

6.2 Citation Data

Two forms of bibliometrics are being used in the RQF to assist with the creation of metrics:

1. Standard bibliometrics; and
2. Non-standard bibliometrics.

6.2.1 Standard Bibliometrics

Standard bibliometrics are measures based on indexed journal literature. The two standard measures to be used in the RQF are:
1. citations per publication; and
2. the centile distribution of the Research Group’s Research Outputs.

Further information on which disciplines will use Standard Bibliometrics is will be available in the final Panel-Specific Requirements.

6.2.1.1 CITATIONS PER PUBLICATION

DEST will analyse the relevant outputs from the fully-reported component of the body of work for each Research Group, obtaining total publication and citation counts, and calculate a citation per publication rate for each using a commercial citations database. DEST will provide this data in summary form to the Panels, together with relevant world and Australian benchmark data for the disciplines they cover.

6.2.1.2 CENTILE DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH GROUP’S OUTPUT

DEST will analyse the relevant outputs from the fully-reported component of the body of work for each Research Group and obtain a distribution of these outputs across centile bands. This will show the number and proportion of each Research Group’s Research Outputs in the body of work that are judged to be among the top 1%, 10%, 20% and 50% most highly cited publications for its discipline in any given year.

The benchmark data on which this analysis is based will be obtained from citations indices. Further information on this process will be available in the final Panel-Specific Requirements.

6.2.2 Non-standard Bibliometrics

Non-standard bibliometrics may be used for books, book chapters, and journal articles (or equivalent) in the fully-reported component of the body of work that are not traditionally covered by extant citation indices.

Further information on which disciplines may use non-standard bibliometrics is available in the Panel-Specific Requirements.

6.3 Research Income

DEST will develop research income metrics using data on research income for each Research Group as submitted in its evidence portfolio.

DEST will conduct analyses of Research Income and provide metrics to Assessment Panels for each Research Group.

Further information on which disciplines will be using Research Income metrics will be available in the final Panel-Specific Requirements.
7. APPENDICES

7.1 Summary of Exemptions

As outlined in the body of the Specifications, there is a range of areas in these Specifications which allow for exemptions to be claimed by researchers or Research Groups. These include the following self-exemptions in which there is no requirement for institutions to apply:

- Level A researchers;
- Other Assessed Researchers; and
- the minimum Research Group size.

There are two exemption processes which are considered by DEST and/or the Assessment Panels. These are:

- exemption from the *in situ* criterion; and
- exemption from Impact assessment.

7.1.1 Self-Exemptions

Exemptions for Level A researchers, Other Assessed Researchers and minimum Research Group size are self-assessed. This means that the Research Group must provide a short statement of reasons outlining why the researcher and/or the Research Group meets the exemption.

7.1.2 Exemption from the *in situ* Criterion

Institutions seeking to obtain exemptions from the *in situ* criterion are required to complete an application form seeking an exemption. The application form will be available on the DEST website.

This application form must by signed by the Vice-Chancellor or institutional equivalent.

7.1.3 Exemption from Impact Assessment

Research Groups seeking to obtain an exemption from Impact Assessment are required to provide a statement of reasons outlining why the Research Group believes it meets the exemption.

Assessment Panels will consider each application for exemption from Impact Assessment. If the Assessment Panel decides that the Statement of Reasons meets the above criteria, the Research Group will get a publicly reported ‘Not Assessed’. However, if the Assessment Panel decides that the Statement of Reasons is insufficient, the Research Group will get a publicly reported ‘E’. A Research Group will not be given the opportunity to submit a late Impact Statement in these circumstances.

No appeals will be allowed from the Assessment Panel’s decision on the matter of exemptions.
7.2 Certification of the Institution Submission

The institution is responsible for collecting, validating and transmitting all information in each evidence portfolio by the due date of the Submission.

The Vice-Chancellor, or institutional equivalent, is required to provide a Certification Statement for the Institution Submission. No part of the Institution Submission is eligible for assessment without a signed Certification Statement.

The Vice-Chancellor, or institutional equivalent, is required to certify that:

- all assessed researchers are eligible or have requested and been granted an eligibility exemption by DEST;
- no Research Outputs stored in the institution’s RQF repository for inclusion in the RQF infringe the owner’s copyright;
- where the institution or a researcher in the institution owns the copyright for a Research Output, DEST is granted a royalty-free site licence for the storing, communicating, linking to and/or copying of this output for the purposes of the RQF for the purposes of the RQF;
- the institution gives an express licence to DEST for the use of material submitted as part of the RQF;
- the institution has complied with relevant privacy requirements and all individuals named in evidence portfolios or elsewhere in the submission are aware of this and of the uses to which DEST may put this information (including provision to the Assessment Panels and Moderation Panel);
- the institution acknowledges that the final ratings for Quality and Impact for each submitted Research Group will be published and that some or all of the evidence portfolios may be published by DEST with the institution’s consent; and
- the institution acknowledges and agrees that all information in the Submission may be used for policy development and programme management other than for the purposes of the RQF, from time to time as required, within DEST.

The Vice-Chancellor, or institutional equivalent, is also required to indicate that they have made all reasonable efforts to verify that the information submitted as part of the Institution Submission and the evidence portfolios is correct and has been compiled in accordance with these Specifications.

A proforma Certification Statement is available on the DEST website. The submission must be certified through the RQF Information Management System (IMS) no later than 5pm AEST, Wednesday 30 April 2008. The hard-copy signed Certification Statement must arrive at DEST no later than 5pm AEST, Wednesday 7 May 2008.

The Department will accept a late Certification Statement only in exceptional circumstances considered by DEST to be beyond the control of the institution, which includes where a Certification Statement is late due solely to mishandling by DEST.
An institution must provide any evidence requested by DEST to support its claim that failure to meet the deadline was for reasons beyond its control. DEST reserves the right whether or not to seek such further evidence.

Evidence which may be considered includes proof of submission or posting of the Certification Statement which clearly shows the time and date of submission or posting. DEST’s decision, with respect to consideration of late submission or posting, will be final. No correspondence will be entered into in relation to the decision other than to inform the institution of the decision.

### 7.3 Incomplete, False or Misleading Information

Providing false or misleading information is a serious offence.

If DEST considers that any information provided by an institution, either as part of the Institution Submission or an evidence portfolio, is incomplete, inaccurate or contains false or misleading information, DEST may in its absolute discretion decide not to provide this information to Chairs, Panel Members or Advisors for consideration.

If an institution and/or researcher submitted or assessed as part of the RQF provides DEST incomplete, unsatisfactory, inaccurate, or misleading information in relation to any part of the RQF, DEST may in its absolute discretion decide to not provide this information to Chairs, Panel Members or Advisors for consideration.

If it appears that any institution or person knowingly has provided false or misleading information, or knowingly has omitted any matter or thing without which the information is misleading, or it appears that any other criminal offence may have been committed, DEST may investigate the matter with a view to prosecution under Commonwealth criminal law. The Commonwealth is committed to protecting its revenue, expenditure and property from any attempt, by members of the public, contractors, sub-contractors, agents, intermediaries or its own employees, to gain financial or other benefits by deceit.

Examples of misleading information and misconduct include, but are not restricted to:

1. providing, in whole or in part, fictitious evidence portfolios;
2. making false claims in lists of Research Outputs;
3. failing to disclose to DEST the existence, and nature of, actual or potential conflicts of interest of any of the parties involved in information provided to DEST (such as any affiliations or financial interest in any organisation that has a direct interest in the matter or outputs of the project); or
4. submitting forged documentation.

### 7.4 Privacy Complaints and Advice

DEST is bound, in administering the RQF, by the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988* (‘Privacy Act’). Section 14 of the Privacy Act contains the Information Privacy Principles (IPPs) which prescribe the rules for handling personal information. In brief, the IPPs require that:
o personal information is collected in accordance with IPPs 1-3;
o suitable storage arrangements, including appropriate filing procedures, are in place;
o suitable security arrangements exist for all records containing personal information;
o access to a person’s own personal information held by an organisation is made available to the person at no charge;
o records are accurate, up-to-date, complete and not misleading;
o where a record is found to be inaccurate, the correction is made;
o where a person requests that a record be amended because it is inaccurate, but the record is found to be accurate, the details of the request for amendment are noted on the record;
o the personal information is only to be used for the purposes for which it was collected, or for other purposes where expressly allowed by IPP 10; and

Complaints about breaches of privacy should be referred to:

Privacy Contact Officer
Litigation and External Review Section
Procurement, Assurance and Legal Group
GPO Box 9880
Canberra ACT 2601.

Privacy complaints may also be emailed to privacy@dest.gov.au.

Privacy complaints can be made directly to the Federal Privacy Commissioner, however the Federal Privacy Commissioner prefers that DEST be given an opportunity to deal with the complaint in the first instance.

7.5 Freedom of Information

All documents sent to DEST with regards to the RQF are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (‘FOI Act’). Unless a document falls under an exemption provision, it will be made available to the general public if requested under the FOI Act. Decisions regarding requests for access will be made by DEST’s authorised FOI decision-maker in accordance with the requirements of the FOI Act.

7.6 Intellectual Property

DEST does not claim ownership of any intellectual property submitted by an institution as part of a Submission for the RQF, however institutions are required to give an express licence to DEST for the use of material submitted as part of the RQF for the purposes of the RQF.

Except where permissions have been sought and obtained by DEST from copyright owners (section 7.9), each institution is required to have obtained a licence or licences sufficient to store Research Outputs in institutional repositories and to allow Chairs, Panel Members or Advisors to evaluate Research Outputs provided for the purposes of the RQF, except in situations covered in section 4.3.5.9.

The institution must make all best efforts at obtaining the copyright
permission to store Research Outputs in institutional repositories.

Where this information contains sensitivities that may be managed under the provisions of section 4.3.5.8 (Managing Reasons of Sensitivity), it is the responsibility of the institution to ensure that this is indicated in the institution submission.

DEST retains the intellectual property in all materials created by DEST, Chairs, Panel Members or Advisors in the process for assessing Research Groups in the RQF.

7.7 Contact Details

Queries concerning the RQF and these specifications should be directed to:

rqf@dest.gov.au

Please include your name, institution and contact details in your query.

The Department maintains a website which contains all documentation relating to the RQF. See:

www.dest.gov.au/research/rgf

7.8 Acceptable Research Outputs

Research Outputs are broadly defined as any form of assessable output embodying research as defined for the RQF. Research Outputs generally should be publicly available. Research Outputs that are not publicly available may be submitted as long as they meet the criteria outlined at section 4.3.5.8.

The institution, in providing its Certification Statement, is required to verify that the submitted Research Outputs meet the definition of research for the purposes of the RQF. Each Assessment Panel has provided additional details on their expectations for Research Output in the Panel-Specific Requirements. Where there are differing requirements for Panels, this is reflected in the Panel-Specific Requirements.

Subject to the requirements of these Specifications, the following list gives an indication of Research Outputs that may be acceptable for the RQF:

- Books (Authored Research, Edited, Revision or New Edition)
- Book Chapters
- Journal Articles (Refereed, Scholarly Journal, Other Contributions to Scholarly Reviewed Journal, Non-Refereed Articles, Letters or Notes
- Major Reviews
- Conference Publications (Refereed, Non-Refereed, Extracts of Paper)
- Edited Volumes of Conference Proceedings
- Audio-Visual Recordings
- Computer Software, Databases
7.9 Managing Copyright in Research Outputs

The RQF is affected by the Copyright Act 1968 (‘the Copyright Act’) at two key points:

1. the process of ‘storing’ Research Outputs, whether in the institution’s RQF repository or through any form of linking or copying; and
2. the storing of Research Outputs in institutional repositories and subsequently enabling Chairs, Panel Members or Advisors to view and assess Research Outputs, through the RQF IMS and institutions’ RQF repositories.

When storing and/or copying Research Outputs and creating links to these outputs, institutions are required to ensure that permission has been granted by the copyright owner to make the Research Output available to Chairs, Panel Members or Advisors for the purposes of the RQF.

The permission must relate to the version of the Research Output that is submitted and which therefore meets the definition of ‘published’ as outlined in section 4.3.5.3. Licences or permissions to store, communicate, link to, and/or copy a version of the Research Output that do not meet this definition are not sufficient for the purposes of the RQF.

Institutions are required to carry out the steps outlined in the following sections to ensure that they have not infringed the rights of the copyright owners of the Research Outputs submitted for the purposes of the RQF.

Where the institution or the researcher is the copyright owner, or where the copyright owner has given express permission for the Research Output to be stored in an ‘open access’ repository, the Research Output should be stored in an ‘open access’ repository or an ‘open access’ part of the RQF repository. In these cases, permissions are not required to provide for the Research Output to be stored in an ‘open
access’ repository.

The Vice-Chancellor’s Certification Statement requires that all copyright clearances and/or steps taken below have been obtained prior to the Institution Submission cut-off date.

7.9.1 Agreements Allowing the Use of Outputs for the RQF

Institutions or researchers who hold the copyright for Research Outputs that are submitted as part of the RQF do so on the condition that they grant a royalty-free site licence to DEST for the storing, communicating, linking to and/or copying of this output for the purposes of the RQF.

The Vice-Chancellors’ Certification Statement also states that no Research Outputs may be stored in the institution’s RQF repository for inclusion in the RQF which infringe the owner’s copyright. If an institution or researcher has a licence to use a Research Output that is not broad enough to allow the Research Output to be stored, communicated, linked to and/or copied for the purposes of the RQF, then the institution must ensure they have permission from the copyright owner for the output to be stored, communicated, linked to and/or copied for the purposes of the RQF.

With the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL), and assisted by the Open Access to Knowledge Law Project (OAKLAW) and Universities Australia (UA), DEST conducted a process for arranging for copyright owners to allow the storage, communication, linking to and/or copying of Research Outputs for the purposes of the RQF. Following this process, CAUL and DEST have negotiated with publishers to obtain agreement to store, communicate, link to and/or copy Research Outputs in the institution’s RQF repository for the purposes of the RQF. These publishers will not seek remuneration from DEST or any institution for the use of these Research Outputs for the purposes of the RQF.

This also means that institutions and researchers whose Research Outputs are covered by the publishers identified above are not required to obtain specific approval to store, communicate, link to and/or copy Research Outputs in the institution’s RQF repository for the purposes of the RQF.

The publishers are listed on the DEST website.

7.9.2 Copyright Checklist for the Use of Outputs for the RQF

A checklist is provided on the DEST website to assist researchers and institutions ensure that they have appropriate permission for the use of their Research Outputs in the RQF and the storage of those outputs in their institution’s RQF repository.
### 7.10 Assessment Panels by RFCD Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PANEL NAMES</th>
<th>RFCD CODES</th>
<th>DISCIPLINE &amp; SUB-DISCIPLINE AREAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Biological sciences</td>
<td>2701-2799</td>
<td>Biochemistry and cell biology, Genetics, Microbiology, Botany, Zoology, Physiology, Ecology &amp; evolution, Biotechnology, Other biological sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Physical, chemical and earth sciences</td>
<td>2401-2699</td>
<td>Astronomical sciences, Theoretical &amp; condensed matter physics, Atomic &amp; molecular physics, Nuclear &amp; particle physics, Plasma physics, Optical physics, Classical physics, Other physical sciences, Physical chemistry, Inorganic chemistry, Organic chemistry, Analytical chemistry, Macromolecular chemistry, Theoretical &amp; computational chemistry, Other chemical sciences, Geology, Geophysics, Geochemistry, Oceanography, Hydrology, Atmospheric sciences, Other earth sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Engineering and technology</td>
<td>2902-2999</td>
<td>Aerospace engineering, Manufacturing engineering, Automotive engineering, Mechanical &amp; industrial engineering, Chemical engineering, Resources engineering, Civil engineering, Electrical &amp; electronic engineering, Geomatic engineering, Environmental engineering, Maritime engineering, Metallurgy, Materials engineering, Biomedical engineering, Computer hardware, Communications technologies, Interdisciplinary engineering, Other engineering &amp; technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mathematical and information sciences and technology</td>
<td>2301-2399, 2801-2899</td>
<td>Mathematics, Statistics, Other mathematical sciences, Information systems, Artificial intelligence &amp; signal &amp; image processing, Computer software, Computation theory &amp; mathematics, Data format, Other information, computing &amp; communication sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Agricultural, veterinary, food and environmental sciences</td>
<td>2901-3099</td>
<td>Industrial biotechnology &amp; food sciences, Soil &amp; water sciences, Crop &amp; pasture production, Horticulture, Animal production, Veterinary sciences, Forestry sciences, Fisheries sciences, Environmental sciences, Land, parks &amp; agricultural management, Other agricultural, veterinary &amp; environmental sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Clinical sciences and clinical physiology</td>
<td>3201-3206, 3208-3210 (less 321021) 321204</td>
<td>Medicine – general, Immunology, Medical biochemistry &amp; clinical chemistry, Medical microbiology, Pharmacology &amp; pharmaceutical sciences, Medical physiology, Dentistry, Optometry, Clinical sciences (exc. Psychiatry), Mental health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Public health and health services</td>
<td>3211-3299 (less 321204)</td>
<td>Nursing, Public health &amp; health services (exc. Mental health), Complementary/alternative medicine, Human movement &amp; sports science, Other medical &amp; health sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Social sciences and politics</td>
<td>3601-3705 (less 3702)</td>
<td>Political science, Policy &amp; administration, Other policy &amp; political science, Sociology, Anthropology, Human geography, Demography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Economics, commerce and management</td>
<td>3401-3599</td>
<td>Economic theory, Applied economics, Economic history &amp; history of economic thought, Econometrics, Other economics, Accounting, auditing &amp; accountability, Business and management, Banking, finance and investment, Transportation, Tourism, Services, Other commerce, management, tourism and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Law, Education and Professional Practices</td>
<td>3301-3399, 3901-4099 3709</td>
<td>Education studies, Curriculum studies, Professional development of teachers, Other education, Journalism, communication and media, Librarianship, Curatorial studies, Social work, Other journalism, Librarianship &amp; curatorial studies, Law, Professional development of practitioners, Justice &amp; legal studies, Law enforcement, Other law, Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Humanities</td>
<td>3706-3799, 419901 4201-4499</td>
<td>History &amp; philosophy of science &amp; medicine, Other studies in human society, Art History and appreciation, Language studies, Literature studies, Cultural studies, Other language &amp; culture, Historical studies, Archaeology &amp; prehistory, Other history &amp; archaeology, Philosophy, Religion &amp; religious traditions, Other philosophy &amp; religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Creative arts, design and built environment</td>
<td>3101-3199, 4101-4199 (less 419901)</td>
<td>Architecture and urban environment, building, Other architecture, urban environment and building, Performing arts, Visual arts &amp; crafts, Cinema, electronic arts &amp; multimedia, Design studies, Other arts (exc. Art history &amp; appreciation)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 7.11 List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACGR</td>
<td>Australian Competitive Grants Register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADST</td>
<td>Australian Daylight Saving Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AEST</td>
<td>Australian Eastern Standard Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA</td>
<td>Australian Postgraduate Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APAI</td>
<td>Australian Postgraduate Award (Industry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARC</td>
<td>Australian Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASCED</td>
<td>Australian Standard Classification of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAL</td>
<td>Copyright Agency Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAUL</td>
<td>Council of Australian University Librarians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRC</td>
<td>Cooperative Research Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAG</td>
<td>Development Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEST</td>
<td>Department Education, Science and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOHA</td>
<td>Department of Health and Ageing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAG</td>
<td>Expert Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECR</td>
<td>Early Career Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFTSL</td>
<td>Equivalent Full Time Student Load</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIS</td>
<td>Expression of Intent to Submit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTE</td>
<td>Full-time Equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOI</td>
<td>Freedom of Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDR</td>
<td>Higher Degree by Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEP</td>
<td>Higher Education Provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HERDC</td>
<td>Higher Education Research Data Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HESA</td>
<td><em>Higher Education Support Act 2003</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGS</td>
<td>Institutional Grants Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMS</td>
<td>Information Management System</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPP</td>
<td>Information Privacy Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISBN</td>
<td>International Standard Book Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISSN</td>
<td>International Standard Serial Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRI</td>
<td>Medical Research Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>NHMRC</td>
<td>National Health and Medical Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAKLAW</td>
<td>Open Access to Knowledge Law Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBRF</td>
<td>Performance-Based Research Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAE</td>
<td>Research Assessment Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;D</td>
<td>Research and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDC</td>
<td>Research and Development Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFCD</td>
<td>Research Fields, Courses and Disciplines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQF</td>
<td>Research Quality Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTS</td>
<td>Research Training Scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEO</td>
<td>Socio-economic Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UA</td>
<td>Universities Australia</td>
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<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training</td>
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</tbody>
</table>