



Newsletter No.5 of August 2007

Introduction

What a busy time it has been for us all. You will note there was not a July *Newsletter*, this was due to the large consultation period that has just occurred. Major milestones have been reached in the Research Quality Framework (RQF) process in the last month and I acknowledge the hard work of your institution in the recent consultation processes. As you are aware the draft *RQF Submission Specifications* and draft *RQF Technical Specifications* have been circulated for consultation and all responses have now been received. Applications under the ASHER programme have closed and we expect to announce grant allocations later this month and then commence allocating both ASHER and IAP.

Your contributions in the last month have greatly assisted the implementation process for the RQF and I would like to thank everyone for their feedback.

Outside of the recent consultation processes more important work towards the RQF has been happening.

This *Newsletter* provides information on:

- key decisions following RQF Reference Committee meeting;
- consultation and finalisation of *Specifications*;
- RQF copyright update;
- Metrics update;
- update on Panel-Specific Requirements;
- Panel 11 workshop;
- update on outcomes summary from Pre-Implementation Trials;
- venue for 2008 RQF assessment process.

Cheers

Leanne Harvey
Branch Manager of RQF Taskforce

Key decisions following RQF Reference Committee meeting

The RQF Reference Committee held its 4th meeting in Canberra on Monday 30 July. Important discussions were had on three key areas in the *Submission Specifications*: eligibility for “Level A” Researchers; multiple Research Groups; and the exemption for Impact Assessment.

Following these discussions and in response to feedback regarding the *RQF Submission Specifications*, the Minister has made the following key decisions:

- the criteria for participation in the RQF will be broadened to include “Level A” researchers at the discretion of participating institutions;
- researchers will be allowed to be a member of two Research Groups at the institution’s discretion; and
- institutions will self-assess Research Groups for exemption from Impact Assessment. Where a Research Group does not submit an Impact Statement, institutions are required to indicate the reasons.

The next meeting of the Reference Committee will be held mid-September 2007.

Consultation and finalisation of *Specifications*

DEST released the draft *RQF Submission Specifications* for public consultation on 24 July 2007, with comments due by 7 August 2007. DEST is considering the feedback it received and anticipates that it will release the final *RQF Submission Specifications* in September 2007.

The updated draft *RQF Technical Specifications* have now been released for public consultation and can be found on the DEST website at:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/policies_issues_reviews/key_issues/research_quality_framework/documents_and_forms.htm#RQF_Technical_Specifications.

The attachments to this document have not been included as they are intended for the technical audience that will be tasked with implementation. The full package has been sent to RQF Contact Officers today.

This revised version incorporates changes arising from previous consultation with RQF Contact Officers and the public consultation of the *RQF Submission Specifications*. Responses close on 23 August 2007.

It is anticipated that the final version of the *RQF Technical Specifications* will be released with the *RQF Submission Specifications* in September 2007.

DEST has commenced building the RQF Information Management System and has begun testing aspects of the IMS, including repository access, with institutions.

RQF copyright update

DEST has recently concluded negotiations with publishers to allow the use of publishers’ versions of research outputs for the purposes of the RQF. DEST will shortly announce the list of publishers who have agreed to allow researchers to make their research outputs available to RQF assessment panels and advisors for the purposes of the RQF. DEST will also announce the process for managing research outputs that are not covered by this list.

Metrics update

DEST has released a FAQ about the bibliometric measures that will be used to inform the RQF assessment process and the metrics development work. The FAQ also sets out a timeline for the public release of the finalised metrics. The FAQ can be found on the DEST website at:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/policies_issues_reviews/key_issues/research_quality_framework/default.htm#Frequently_Asked_Questions

We are currently in the process of determining the citation data supplier, and will publicly announce this in early September.

DEST has engaged the National Academies Forum to facilitate the outlet ranking consultation for the majority of disciplines. DEST will publish the draft ranking lists and the relevant bodies who are facilitating the consultation once the draft lists have been developed.

Update on Panel-Specific Requirements

The draft *RQF Panel-Specific Requirements* have been sent to RQF Contact Officers and peak bodies in the sector for consultation. They provide guidance on information requirements among the RQF Assessment Panels. The draft *Panel-Specific Requirements* have been drafted with the assistance of Assessment Panel Chairs, and with input from RQF Discipline Workshops (held in Canberra in February and March 2007) and a subsequent workshop follow-up questionnaire, as well as taking into account the outcomes of RQF Pre-implementation Trials.

Feedback is now being sought more broadly, particularly in the following areas:

- Small Research Groups;
- The Context Statement;
- Publication Date for Research Outputs; and
- The Impact Statement.

A questionnaire accompanies the draft *Panel-Specific Requirements* and should be used to form the basis of all responses. Peak bodies will also be able to submit a consolidated response representative of their members' views directly to DEST.

Responses to the draft *Panel-Specific Requirements* close on 23 August 2007.

Panel 11 workshop

The proposal for a one-day Panel 11 workshop came out of discussions earlier this year with the Panel Chair, Professor Hilary Charlesworth. The purpose of the workshop was to provide an opportunity for representatives from relevant disciplines to discuss issues of interest to the development of Panel-Specific Requirements for Panel 11. Approximately 40 participants nominated by peak bodies attended the workshop, which was held in Canberra on 23 July 2007.

Panel 11 – Law, Education and Professional Practices - covers the following discipline and sub-discipline areas:

Education studies, Curriculum studies, Professional development of teachers, Other education, Journalism, communication and media, Librarianship, Curatorial studies, Social work, Other journalism, librarianship and curatorial studies, Law, Professional development of practitioners, Justice and legal studies, Law enforcement, Other law, justice, law enforcement.

Update on outcomes summary from Pre-Implementation Trials

A summary report from the RQF Pre-Implementation Trials will be available on the DEST website at the end of next week.

Thank you to all of the HEPs who participated in the Trials, and put in a great deal of work to ensure their success.

Venue for 2008 RQF assessment process

DEST has advertised on AusTender for a venue for the 2008 RQF Assessment Panels Main Selection Meeting. This is an open tender process and proposal will be received until 17 August.