
UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENTS WITH THE ERA

ISSUE

To provide an update on developments with the ERA.

BACKGROUND

The ARC have announced a Pilot of the ERA system with a focus on testing the IT system to capture a subset of ERA information — in particular, the four major research publication categories and Australian competitive grant income.

See <http://www.arc.gov.au/era/SEER.htm> for further information on the Pilot.

COMMENTS

UNSW will volunteer to undertake the pilot. Key points detailed in the pilot documentation include:

- The “pilot” study will be conducted over the next 3 months nominally to test the IT systems in place for the ERA submission, but it will also generate feedback on the early draft ERA guidelines.
 - Note that this is just the “Pilot Study” so many aspects of the full-ERA have yet to surface.
 - The Pilot submission is for Chemical, Physical and Earth Sciences only.
- The Census date for staff whose outputs may be included in the ERA evaluation is 31 March 2008. This census date will apply no matter when a discipline is evaluated in the first round (which may be 2010 or 2011).
- The ERA exercise will pick up the outputs for **all staff**.
 - We have not been asked to select staff to put into groups.
 - While we will be required to provide a list of staff, there appears to be nothing which actually links staff to their individual outputs.
- **Outputs from the period 2002-2007 only** are being considered. This will also apply to later discipline rounds which might not occur until 2010.
 - This means that the 2nd and 3rd round ERA submissions will be very backward looking and there may be difficulties in tracking some data for staff who have left in the meantime.
- Information is being collected for HERDC eligible publications (2002-2007) and Category 1 (Australian Competitive Grants) income only (2005-2007).
- All assessments will occur at the four-digit FoRC (Field of Research Code) level.
 - The census date applies to authors of publications i.e. to count the publication, the authors has to be on staff at the census date.
 - Income will not be linked to staff or census date – this will basically be our reported HERDC income broken down by FoRC.
 - Most of the required information will be available from the HERDC return but it will need to be categorised by FoRC.
- Non-salaried staff members’ outputs may be included (?) - this includes employees of “an organisation that has a demonstrated publication association with an eligible institution”.

- We think that this means that we will be able to include the research outputs from our conjoint appointees in our affiliated research institutes.
- It will be important for the outputs of all “non-salaried” staff to be clearly badged with UNSW attribution by-line.
- From the technical specifications provided so far, as part of the final ERA we may(?) have to provide links to outputs in a repository or other online location.
 - The detail here is not yet clear but it must focus up soon as people start to undertake the pilot study.

RECOMMENDATION

For Noting

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