


Mixed response following HEFCE announcement on reduction in REF impact weighting

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Earlier this month, the Higher Education Funding Council for England ([HEFCE](#)) announced that the measure of the impact of research on the wider world will now count for 20 per cent in the [2014 Research Excellence Framework](#) (REF), as reported in [THE](#).

As part of the new system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions, output will count for 65 per cent and research environment for 15 per cent.

Before the announcement was made, it was expected by many that impact would account for 25 per cent. Wendy Piatt, director general of the [Russell Group](#) was quoted in THE as believing that the figure should be “considerably lower... giving such a high weighting to a new and untested assessment adds a further element of uncertainty and risk to a sector already subject to a period of considerable change and instability.”

Others were more satisfied with the 20 per cent figure, however. Pam Tatlow, chief executive of [Million+](#), was noted as happy with the weighting following the results of the 2010 pilot impact assessment exercise. Rachel Winzer, director of the research at [1994 Group](#), also agreed that the figure was the “sensible option”, but called upon HEFCE to make clear the impact weighting in its funding formula.

Finally, Professor Philip Moriarty of the [University of Nottingham](#) was quoted as saying he “did not care” what the figure was, believing the process of attempting to assess research impact is “fundamentally flawed.”

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