

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2005-2006 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 3

Output Group: 3.2 – Assistance for science collaboration and innovation

DEST Question No. E665_06

Senator Wong asked on 2 November 2005, EWRE Hansard page 116

Question:

Research Quality Framework (RQF)

Please provide on notice any correspondence from DEST to the ARC and the NHMRC, in which it is indicated that the RQF is intended to also apply to their processes.

Answer:

Research Quality Framework (RQF)

On 22 December 2004, Dr Evan Arthur, Group Manager, Innovation & Research Systems Group in DEST wrote to the Chief Executive Officers of the Australian Research Council and the National Health & Medical Research Council setting out the terms and conditions of their membership on the Expert Advisory Group (EAG) for the development of the Research Quality Framework. The Terms include that the EAG members will:

Comment on and advise the Department on models and measures of research quality (including in the area of research training) as well as research consultancies that support the development of the RQF, on, but not limited to, the following topics:

- options for units of assessment for research quality assessment;
- international experiences of implementing research quality assessments and options for international benchmarking;
- options to ensure comparability of research quality assessment mechanisms within agreed units of assessment;
- cost effective approaches to undertaking research quality assessment processes; and
- advantages and drawbacks to linking research quality assessment in universities and PFRAs to research funds allocation.

Copies of correspondence are attached.

Documents that show the scope of the RQF are also attached.



Australian Government

Department of Education, Science and Training

Attachment: E665_06

Our Ref : ES04/31532
Your Ref :

Professor Peter Høj
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Research Council
GPO Box 2702
CANBERRA ACT 2601

**MEMBERSHIP ON THE RESEARCH QUALITY FRAMEWORK'S
EXPERT ADVISORY GROUP**

Dear Professor Høj

I am pleased that you have agreed to be a Member on the Research Quality Framework's (RQF) Expert Advisory Group (EAG). The Australian Government, acting through the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), is establishing the EAG to provide expert advice to the Australian Government and support the development of the RQF for publicly funded research, as announced by Minister Nelson on 21 December 2004. This letter is the Department's agreement with you and sets out the terms and conditions of your membership on the EAG.

As a Member of the EAG you will contribute to the activities of the EAG including participating in the meetings of the EAG to advise the Minister throughout the RQF development process in relation to preferred model(s) for the RQF and other related matters.

You will also support the development of the RQF through provision of advice on processes and measures to assess the quality and impact of research in Australia's universities and Publicly Funded Research Agencies (PFRAs). Specifically, you will:

- (a) Comment on and advise the Department on models and measures of research quality (including in the area of research training) as well as research consultancies that support the development of the RQF, on, but not limited to, the following topics:
 - options for units of assessment for research quality assessment;
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 - options to ensure comparability of research quality assessment mechanisms within agreed units of assessment;
 - cost effective approaches to undertaking research quality assessment processes; and
 - advantages and drawbacks to linking research quality assessment in universities and PFRAs to research funds allocation;
- (b) Advise on appropriate processes for consultation with universities and PFRAs and other key stakeholders to progress consideration of a RQF, and as required:

- present information, on behalf of the Australian Government Minister for Education, Science and Training, to a range of audiences on the development of the RQF;
 - contribute to the consultation process with key stakeholders in the development of the RQF; and
 - participate at the National Stakeholder Forum to facilitate discussions; and
- (c) Prepare advice to the Minister on all aspects of the RQF through but not limited to the preparation of five written reports from the EAG, as follows:
- Progress Reports – following each of the three EAG meetings during 2005;
 - Interim Report – following National Stakeholder Forum, May 2005; and
 - Final Report – following conclusion of consultation and trialling phases of work, December 2005.

The anticipated timetable of events for the development of the RQF by the EAG during 2005 is:

Task	Start	End
Bilateral consultations	October 04	January 05
Discipline-specific/cross-disciplinary workshops	February 05	March 05
Issues Paper	February 05	March 05
Written Submissions	March 05	April 05
National Stakeholder Forum	May 05	May 05
Development of Framework model/s	June 05	July 05
Trialling of model/s with selected agencies and universities	July 05	September 05
Recommendation to Minister	December 05	December 05

This agreement will expire on 31 December 2005.

The amount payable to you by DEST for approved travel relating to the operation of the EAG is:

- (a) **Air Fares** – business class of air travel within Australia;
- (b) **Travelling allowance** - rates per overnight absence (which includes accommodation, meals and incidentals) is:
 - \$A227 for Canberra;
 - \$A278 for Sydney;
 - \$A274 for Melbourne; and
- (c) **Daily fees** - not applicable

The Commonwealth agrees to pay you within 30 days of:

- (a) attendance at each EAG meeting and stakeholder forum; and
 - (b) completion of other DEST services;
- subject to receipt of completed Activity Summary form (Attachment A) / tax invoice (if appropriate).

You agree to comply with the Information Privacy Principles in section 14 of the *Privacy Act 1988* (found at <http://scaleplus.law.gov.au/html/pasteact/0/157/pdf/Privacy1988.pdf>) as if you were an 'agency', as defined in that Act. In addition, I ask that you familiarise yourself with the following documents:

- (a) *Commonwealth Criminal Code* found at www.austlii.edu.au; and
- (b) *DEST Code of Conduct in Contracting* which is a framework for relationships between DEST and people who do business with it (Attachment B).

I enclose the following documents that you are asked to complete and return to DEST with your acceptance of this agreement:

- (a) *Conflict of Interest* form (Attachment C) - to ensure no inconsistencies between your participation on the EAG and your other responsibilities;
- (b) *Deed of Confidentiality* form (Attachment D) - to ensure appropriate protocols are maintained in the operation of the EAG; and
- (c) *Vendor Record Data* form (Attachment E) - to ensure information is recorded on the DEST payment system to make payments to you.

This letter forms our entire agreement and may only be varied if both parties agree in writing.

If you agree to the terms and conditions set out in this letter, you must notify us by signing and dating where indicated at the end of this letter and returning it together with your completed forms (Attachments C, D and E) to DEST by 24 January 2005.

If you have any questions about this agreement, please contact:

<p>Name: Valetta Buker Assistant Director, Research Quality Assessment Framework Team (from 22 to 24 December 2004 and then from 24 January 2005)</p> <p>Phone: 02 6240 9639 Facsimile: 02 6123 5209 E-Mail: valetta.buker@dest.gov.au</p>	<p>Or Anne Byrne Director, Research Quality Assessment Framework Team (between 10 and 24 January 2005)</p> <p>02 6240 7775 02 6123 5717 anne.byrne@dest.gov.au</p>
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Yours sincerely



Evan Arthur
Group Manager
Innovation and Research Systems Group

22 December 2004

Professor Høj accepts the terms and conditions set out in this letter.

(signed)

Dated this day of 200

Name:	
Title:	

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**Australian Government****Department of Education, Science and Training**

Our Ref : ES04/31532

Your Ref :

Professor Alan Pettigrew
Chief Executive Officer
Office of NHMRC (MDP 100)
GPO Box 9848
CANBERRA ACT 2601

**MEMBERSHIP ON THE RESEARCH QUALITY FRAMEWORK'S
EXPERT ADVISORY GROUP**

Dear Professor Pettigrew

I am pleased that you have agreed to be a Member on the Research Quality Framework's (RQF) Expert Advisory Group (EAG). The Australian Government, acting through the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), is establishing the EAG to provide expert advice to the Australian Government and support the development of the RQF for publicly funded research, as announced by Minister Nelson on 21 December 2004. This letter is the Department's agreement with you and sets out the terms and conditions of your membership on the EAG.

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If you have any questions about this agreement, please contact:

Name: Valetta Buker
 Assistant Director,
 Research Quality Assessment
 Framework Team
 (from 22 to 24 December 2004
 and then from 24 January 2005)

Phone: 02 6240 9639
 Facsimile: 02 6123 5209
 E-Mail: valetta.buker@dest.gov.au

Or Anne Byrne
 Director,
 Research Quality Assessment
 Framework Team
 (between 10 and 24 January
 2005)

02 6240 7775
 02 6123 5717
anne.byrne@dest.gov.au

Yours sincerely



Evan Arthur
Group Manager
Innovation and Research Systems Group

22 December 2004

Professor Alan Pettigrew accepts the terms and conditions set out in this letter.

(signed)

Dated this day of 200

Name:	
Title:	

Note: This letter is to be signed and returned to DEST with the completed:

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Documents which show the scope of the RQF

	Task	Date
	<p>The BAA-BOFTSI Budget statement describes the RQF as including:</p> <p>Two frameworks for publicly funded research are to be developed in consultation with universities and publicly funded research agencies: a Research Quality Framework to measure the quality of research conducted in universities and publicly funded research agencies, as well as its benefits to the wider community; and a Research Accessibility Framework to ensure that information about research and how to access it is available to researchers and the wider community.</p>	<p>May 2004 Available on Innovation website: http://backingaus.innovation.gov.au/2004/research/qual_pub_res.htm (see Attachment A)</p>
	<p>The RQF Discussion Starter Document states that: <i>Consultations will be concurrently undertaken with the wider range of publicly funded research agencies and research funding agencies, for example the Australian Research Council and the National Health and Medical Research Council. It is anticipated that the framework will be utilised by all government portfolios to assess the quality and impact of research funded by the Australian Government</i>" as well as asking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How would it be applied to research providers and different categories of research providers?</i> 	<p>Published in October 2004 Available on RQF website: www.dest.gov/resqual/default.htm</p>
	<p>Terms of Reference for EAG state: <i>The Expert Advisory Group will support the development of the Research Quality Framework through provision of advice on processes and measures to assess the quality and impact of research in Australia's universities and Publicly Funded Research Agencies (PFRAs) including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>international experiences of implementing research assessments and options for international benchmarking;</i> • <i>options to improve the comparability of quality assessment mechanisms across discipline areas;</i> • <i>cost effective approaches to undertaking research quality assessment processes;</i> • <i>advantages and drawbacks to linking quality assessment in universities and PFRAs to research funds allocation; and</i> • <i>appropriate processes for consultation with universities and PFRAs and other key stakeholders to progress consideration of a Research Quality Framework.</i> 	<p>2 December 2004 Available on RQF website: www.dest.gov/resqual/default.htm</p>
	<p>The RQF Issues Paper states that: <i>"At a later stage, an RQF may be linked to other PFRAs". The ARC and NHMRC are listed in Table 1, Appendix A. The text reads that: "In examining options for the broader applicability of an RQF, consideration will need to give to which Australian Government organisations constitute PFRAs."</i></p>	<p>Published in March 2005 Available on RQF website: www.dest.gov/resqual/default.htm</p>

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-  [NEWS](#)
-  [AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT MAY 2004](#)
-  [BACKING AUSTRALIA'S ABILITY AN INNOVATION ACTION PLAN FOR THE FUTURE 2001](#)
-  [CONTACT](#)

Quality and Accessibility Frameworks for Publicly Funded Research

The Australian Government is providing \$2.8 million over the next two years to establish Quality and Accessibility Frameworks for Publicly Funded Research.

What's it all about ?

Two frameworks for publicly funded research are to be developed in consultation with universities and publicly funded research agencies: a Research Quality Framework to measure the quality of research conducted in universities and publicly funded research agencies, as well as its benefits to the wider community; and a Research Accessibility Framework to ensure that information about research and how to access it is available to researchers and the wider community.

The Government is providing \$2.8 million over two years to support the development of the frameworks.

Why do it?

The Australian Government makes a major investment in research, science and innovation (totalling over \$5 billion in 2003-04).

Currently there is no robust and consistent way to measure the quality of research conducted in universities and publicly funded research

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