Research Quality Assessment - Stage 3*

**Aim:** To obtain a publication quality rating for all budget units (i.e., all schools and centres responsible to a dean), which can be used in the next UWA budget allocation process.

**Plan A**

Use the method approved in November 2003 - external assessors rate 1-4 publications from all academic staff members, then an average rating for each school/centre is obtained.

A ... Options 1-4 (attached) provide details of the process and several variants, together with costs for each option.

**Advantages:**
- Uses method already approved by Academic Board.
- Option 1 should provide good reliability (if assessors are wisely chosen).
- Options 2-4 offer less costly alternatives.

**Disadvantages:**
- All options place a major impost (publication assessment) on the academic system.
- Option 1 is very time-consuming and costly.
- Options 2-4 would give less reliable results - probably unacceptable to UWA community.
- Options 1-3 will take significant senior UWA staff time to determine assessors.
- Option 1 results will take considerable time to obtain.

**Plan B**

Rather than assessing actual publications, instead rate the journals and publishers UWA staff publish with. Ask UWA academic staff at Associate Professor and above to rate the journals and publishers for all DEST category UWA publications from 2001-2003, using the 4-point quality scale approved by Academic Board (plus a category for 'unknown'). Obtain an average rating for each journal and publisher, then prepare a profile for each school/centre, showing: total number of publications; % of DEST publications; % of total DEST publications in each of 4 quality bands relating to the 4-point quality scale. The Executive or Planning and Budget Committee could then derive a quality rating for each school/centre from these profiles. See detailed plan attached.

**Advantages:**
- Can provide publication quality data for all schools/centres relatively quickly.
- No need for external assessors to rate actual publications.
- Lower cost than Plan A.
- Provides useful information about UWA publication practices and perceptions.

**Disadvantages:**
- Uses different quality assessment method from that approved last year.
- Reliability issues - staff ratings will need to be monitored.

Lorna M Robertson
12 July 2004

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*Stage 1 was assessing the quality of publications in 5 UWA departments using a version of the UK RAE. Stage 2 was developing and gaining approval of a model to assess the quality of UWA publications for incorporation into the school review and budget processes.*
Use the method approved by Academic Board in November 2003 - external assessors rate 1-4 publications from all academic staff members - to obtain an average rating for each school/centre.

Because of the high cost and time involved in doing this (Option 1), three other options based on this method are described and costed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. As approved by Academic Board in 1-4 publications from each eligible staff member 1155 staff, 100 assessors, estimate average 2.5 pubs per person</td>
<td>Costly!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. As above but 1 publication per person 1155 staff, 100 assessors, 1 pub per person</td>
<td>Some saving of school staff time cf option 1, but poorer measure likely to give smaller spread of quality, ie less worthwhile result for effort. Validity of result questionable. Probably not acceptable to schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 1 publication from random sample of 25% of staff in each school Estimate 300 staff, 80 assessors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Trial 1 or 2 faculties eg FLAPS 1-4 pubs from each eligible person FLAPS 211 staff, 10 assessors, avg 2.5 pubs per person</td>
<td>Less costly but doesn't give baseline for UWA. Good start to see shift in 1 or 2 faculties and trial method.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The University of Western Australia

Research Quality Assessment - Plan B
Rate Publishers and Journals

Aim

To obtain a publication quality rating for all budget units (i.e., all schools and centres responsible to a dean), which can be used in the next UWA budget allocation process.

Proposal

UWA academic staff at Associate Professor level and above rate the journals and publishers for all DEST category UWA publications from 2001-2003, using the 4-point quality scale approved by Academic Board (plus a category for 'unknown').

Obtain an average rating for each journal and publisher, then prepare a profile for each school/centre, showing: total number of publications; % of DEST publications; % of total DEST publications in each of 4 quality bands relating to the 4-point quality scale. A quality rating for each school/centre could then be derived from these profiles.

The reliability and usefulness of the exercise does, however, depend on academic staff cooperation and honesty in the rating of journals and publishers.

Some Facts

2001-2003 UWA Publications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality equates top 10% in the discipline</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality equates top third but not top 10% in the discipline</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality equates top middle third in the discipline</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality equates to bottom third in the discipline</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality not known</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Process

1. Obtain from the publications database a list of all publishers, journal and conference titles for UWA 2001-2003 DEST publications – each publisher/title to be listed once only. This involves cleaning the data held in the database (correcting typos and variants of publishers/titles - around 15% of the data). Clean data is a prerequisite for the exercise.

2. Sort list of publishers/titles by field of research and determine appropriate sub-lists to be rated by academic staff members at A/Prof level and above, plus Heads of School, using the following rating scale:
3. Add ratings module to publications database to enable rating to be done by specified academics on the web using a simple web form. Application to record rater ID and school, allow sub-lists by field of research for raters to select, and produce results in spreadsheet format for analysis.

4. Request academics at A/Prof, Prof and Head of School level to rate publishers, journals and conferences using web form. Explain aim to obtain publishing profile of each school/centre (& relation to budget?).

5. Analyse ratings spreadsheet to calculate the average rating for each publisher, journal and conference. Show also the number of staff who rated each, and a quality band for each (eg Band 1 = rating < 1.5; Band 2 = 1.5 ≤ rating < 2.5; Band 3 = 2.5 ≤ rating < 3.5; Band 4 = rating ≥ 3.5).

6. Prepare a profile for each school/centre showing the total number of publications, % of DEST publications and % of total DEST publications in each of the 4 quality bands, eg:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School/Centre</th>
<th>Total No. Pubs</th>
<th>DEST Pubs</th>
<th>% of DEST Pubs in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 3</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre 4</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. If required, a formula could then be applied to obtain a single number for each school/centre, which could be used as a quality multiplier Q of publication quantity (publication points). For example, the formula below would result in a quality multiplier of between 0.75 (where no DEST publications) and 4 (where only DEST publications, and all in Band 1):

\[ Q = \% \text{Non-DEST} \times 0.75 + \% \text{DEST} \times (4 \times \% \text{Band 1} + 3 \times \% \text{Band 2} + 2 \times \% \text{Band 3} + 1 \times \% \text{Band 4}) \]

Costs

It is estimated that this would cost around $133 000 in total. Details are attached.

Lorna M Robertson
27 July 2004