

Dr Lindsay Thomson
President, Forensic Psychiatry Research Society
Division of Psychiatry, School of Molecular and Clinical Medicine
University of Edinburgh
Kennedy Tower
Royal Edinburgh Hospital
Morningdale Park
Edinburgh EH10 5HF

25 July 2006

Dear Dr Thomson and Professors Taylor and Grubin

Re: Research Assessment Exercise 2008: Forensic Mental Health

Many thanks for your letter of 7 June. I must apologise for the delay in sending you this reply. The criteria and working methods for UOA9, Psychiatry, Neuroscience and Clinical Psychology, are published on the RAE 2008 website and are worth a careful read. I hope that they will provide some reassuring answers to your questions.

Regarding your first main question on the size and nature of external grant funding for research, paragraph 22 of the document says "The sub-panel recognises that the profile of research, and hence both the need and the ability to attract research funding, will vary across departments and subject areas, and it will take this into account when it makes its assessment."

Your second question relates to impact factors of journals. Paragraph 14 of the UOA9 document is explicit on this: "The sub-panel will not undertake bibliometric analyses in making its assessment of research outputs." The methodology that we propose to use is outlined under the section headed "Research Outputs" and makes it clear that outputs will be assessed on scientific merit rather than on the journal in which they are published and, as stated in paragraph 42, "The sub-panel will examine all research outputs submitted in sufficient detail to make an assessment."

You also raise a general issue in the second paragraph of your letter, which I think is a concern for many departments submitting to UOA9, that applied and practice based research will receive a fair hearing. Again the sub-panel and its parent main panel B have given this a good deal of thought, and there is an explicit statement in paragraph 35 of the UOA9 document, to the effect that applied research will not be disadvantaged in comparison with more basic work.



I hope that these comments adequately address your concerns and those of your forensic mental health colleagues.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

Professor Peter McGuffin
MRC Centre Director and Professor of Psychiatric Genetics

cc Professor Bob Stout, Chairman of RAE Main Panel B