

## Workshop 1: Challengers for researchers

### Focus questions

1. What do you see as the likely consequences of the proposed research quality assessment scheme in Australia on our research practices in education?
2. How might the impacts of the research quality environment differ for postgraduate students, early career researchers and established researchers?

### What are the likely consequences?

#### *Consequences for publishing research*

- journal articles may become more prestigious (because quality metrics are more readily available) than book chapters than refereed conference papers, which may lead to increased numbers of journal articles (and decreased books, book chapters, refereed conference papers)
- greater time lag between submission, acceptance and publication of research articles in high status journals
- league tables for journals (and book publishers and conferences)
- quality assessed on basis of quality of journal (proxy for quality), which may lead to greater competition to get published in high status journals and perhaps the end of other journals
- greater demand for peer reviewing, particularly for high status journals
- increased influence for editors of high status journals
- increasingly, inclusion in citation indexes will become one of the determiners of journal status
- authors will become more strategic re when and where to publish and how often (ie. apart from a small leeway, article quantity beyond the number required for assessment may be redundant)
- metrics may be developed to assess the quality of books and book chapters (eg. status of publishers)

#### *Consequences for grant getting*

- where funding is sourced may become less important compared with what is done with it (ie. winning national competitive grants as one criteria of quality but not the only or prime one).

#### *Consequences for supervising research*

- development of new PhD pedagogies, including cohort and group supervision, inclusion of coursework units, etc. PhD research as part of and contributing to a larger research project
- greater emphasis on student publishing as part of PhD and/or PhD by publication (double dipping) and student-supervisor publications

#### *Consequences for research collaborations*

- creation of (new) research centers and concentrations
- teams established around star performers within institutions
- less incentive for cross-institutional collaborations
- postgraduate students and early career researchers constrained / shaped by research concentrations of institution
- room for star lone researchers
- partnerships with industry partners as a proxy for high research impact

#### *Consequences for academic workers and their work*

- greater diversity of workers (teaching-only, research-only, teaching and research) across the system
- early identification of potential star researchers, supported by resources (including mentoring); decreased opportunities for late bloomers
- involvement in professional associations (eg. AARE) and other community service less valued because not seen as direct contribution to research quality (although third stream funding may mediate this)
- difficulty for new research areas (and journals) to gain status
- greater intensification for researchers
- opportunity costs for those who take up new roles
- differentiation among academics may not be on basis of career stage (eg. early career researcher, established researcher, etc.) but employment status (eg. casual), nature of work, roles (eg. contract researchers)

## **Consequences of a RQF: A shift in the rewards for research and who is rewarded**

Possible shifts in:

*Pace* (but not necessarily intensity) from the scramble to produce (ie. the best researchers are highly productive) to claims / attempts to influence (ie. the best researchers are highly influential), where high productivity may be seen as suggesting excessive repetition.

*Legitimacy* (but not necessarily what matters) of multiple research agendas (the generalist researcher / faculty) to focused agendas embodied in by research concentrations of people and interests (the selective / specialist researcher / faculty), where research diversity may be seen as lacking direction or identity.

*Structuring* of academic work from multipurpose (ie. teaching and research) to single purpose (teaching-only, research-only) workers, where teaching-only academics / universities may be research aware yet may not be regarded as 'real' academics / universities. Also other new positions for academics around managing research (ie. governance, compliance, etc ...)

### **Possible strategies / actions for researchers**

More explicit guidance for postgraduate students and early career researchers and their careers; mentoring by retired senior academics

Breaking down research degrees into smaller components

Rethinking PhD supervision: improved supervision pedagogy; PhD by publication; student-supervisor co-authorship; PhD research organized around supervisor projects; creation of new positions to support RHD students

Utilizing programs (eg. long service leave, leave without pay, etc.) outside universities to create time to undertake research

Appropriation of education researchers and research outside of universities

Research teams, clusters, concentrations organized around clear 'stories'

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