



higher education & training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Directorate: University Policy and Development Support

Communiqué 2 of 2015 – August 2015

Research Output Policy (2015)

Introduction

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) recently published *Research Output Policy (2015)* in the government gazette (Vol. 597 11 March 2015, No. 38552). This policy is a newly revised version of the *Policy and Procedures for Measurement of Research Output of Public Higher Education Institutions of 2003*. The revised policy will be effective from 1 January 2016, and will therefore be applicable to the 2016 research outputs that will be evaluated in 2017 and onwards. The purpose of this communication is to explain the key amendments incorporated in the revised policy and their implications thereof.

Journals

- a) With the implementation of the revised policy in 2016, three additional journal lists will be added, bringing the total of DHET subsidised lists to six, namely:
- ISI,
 - IBSS,
 - SA list,
 - Scopus,
 - SciELO SA, and
 - Norwegian list.

- b) You will note that these Indices are no longer stated in the policy as it was the case with the previous policy. In future, changes to the list of subsidised Indices will be communicated through the Annual Ministerial Statement on University Funding. However, the Department will still send out the lists of journals at the beginning of each reporting year as usual.
- c) As stipulated in clause 5 (5.2) of the revised policy, the Department will determine, in consultation with the sector, which lists of accredited journals and indices are approved in terms of this policy. The Department will issue, on or before 31 January each year, updated official lists of journals for each reporting year. In order to ensure stability of the system, approved lists will not change drastically from year to year or in a way that would cause confusion.
- d) Authors are reminded to acquaint themselves with the policy criteria for journals to be eligible for subsidy, and safeguard against predatory journals whose main purpose is financial gain rather than the quality of research. Articles published in journals not meeting the criteria as set out in the Research Output policy will not be subsidised, regardless of whether or not the journal appears in one of the above mentioned lists of accredited journals.
- e) With respect to South African journals, the Department will continue to periodically sample and review journals listed in the DHET list to assess if they still meet the policy requirements. South African journals no longer meeting the policy criteria will be removed from the list immediately (*Please refer to clause 5 (5.10) for the journals policy criteria*).
- f) Clause 5.10(c) of the Research Output Policy requires that *at least 75% of contributions published in the journal must emanate from multiple institutions*. Meaning, South African journals listed in the DHET list of

accredited journals that will be evaluated in 2017 will be required to have no less than 75% of contributions emanating from multiple institutions and beyond.

Conference Proceedings

Only articles published in approved conference proceedings are subsidised.

Approved conference proceedings are those which appear in approved conference lists or other approved indices or those which meet the criteria laid out in this policy.

- a) Institutions are reminded that following the advice of the Research Output Evaluation panel, the Department has decided to suspend the DHET list of accredited conferences until such time that a more stringent and permanent criteria can be introduced. Meaning, as from 2015 (that is, conference proceeding to be evaluated in 2016), the Department will no longer have a list of DHET accredited conferences.

(Please refer to page 26 of the Report on the Evaluation of the 2013 Universities' Research Outputs).

- b) Conference proceedings which appear in the above subsidised indices or those which meet the criteria laid out in the Research Output Policy will be recognised in the usual manner as they have been in the past.
- c) The Department will determine, in consultation with the sector, which lists or indices of published conference proceedings must be approved. Updated official lists of proceedings will then be issued, on or before 31 January of each reporting year.

- d) As with journals, the Department will periodically sample published conference proceedings to assess if they continue to meet the criteria laid out in the research output policy (*Please refer to clause 7 (7.4) for the conference proceedings policy criteria*).

Books and Chapters in Books.

- a) You will notice in clause 6 (6.4) that the calculation of book units has changed. A book may be subsidised to a maximum of 10 units based on the number of pages being claimed relative to the total number of pages of the book, where relevant.
- b) The following is a guide on unit allocation for book publications as stipulated in Clause 6 (6.4) of the research output policy:
- A chapter in a book = 1 unit
 - A book of a minimum of 60 pages but less than 90 pages = 2 units
 - A book of 90 pages and above, but less than 120 pages = 3 units
 - A book of 120 pages and above, but less than 150 pages = 4 units
 - A book of 150 pages and above, but less than 180 pages = 5 units
 - A book of 180 pages and above, but less than 210 pages = 6 units
 - A book of 210 pages and above, but less than 240 pages = 7 units
 - A book of 240 pages and above, but less than 270 pages = 8 units
 - A book of 270 pages and above, but less than 300 pages = 9 unit
 - A book of 300 pages and above = 10 units

General Information

- a) In terms of Clause 5 under sub-heading: *Reporting Procedures*, the policy makes provision for submission of research outputs to be uploaded to the Research Information Management System (RIMS) hosted at the National Research Foundation (NRF). Institutions must submit their research output claims to the Department using the excel spreadsheets that are sent to

universities at the beginning of each reporting year. The Department will then forward the data to the NRF to be uploaded into the RIMS.

- b) Audited subsidy claims for publications appearing in approved journals must still be submitted to the Department as usual.

Conclusion

We hope that the above information is clear and will assist in clarifying the questions and uncertainties you might have regarding the revised policy. Please take note that the Department is planning on hosting a workshop on the implementation of the revised *Research Output Policy (2015)* before the end of this year. A communication will be sent out to institutions once the logistics have been finalised. Where there are issues that still require clarity, do not hesitate to contact the Department at the email addresses and telephone numbers below.

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