

Report on DASSH Satellite Event - ADR Network Meeting

Griffith University, May 19, 2014

The DASSH ADR Network held a successful and informative one day satellite event on May 19. The event was attended by around 20 ADRs from universities across the country. There were three main discussion sessions.

1. The first session, led by Ms. Leanne Harvey, Executive General Manager, ARC, focused on ERA 2015.

The main topics discussed included:

- Main changes since ERA 2012, especially introduction of new category of commissioned reports. This category was introduced in response to feedback from disciplines that undertake a lot of commissioned research.
- Importance of explanatory statements in the ERA assessment process, especially in peer review 4 digit FoR codes.
- Importance of research statements for the assessment of creative output portfolios. The ARC does not have written guidelines for what constitutes peer review for creative outputs. It is important for peak bodies to develop definitions and explain the peer review process in creative arts.
- Peak bodies are encouraged to provide feedback on journal and conference lists, as the ARC takes this feedback very seriously.
- Assessment ratings are based primarily on quality of the output assessed rather than on the volume of output within a FoR code at that institution.
- Research income is factored into assessment ratings as one indicator, among others, of quality.
- The ARC monitors and checks submissions for 'gaming' or anomalous data during the submission period, especially in the citation disciplines (e.g. citation spikes, mismatch between outputs reported to HERDC and outputs included in ERA submission, unexplained inclusion or exclusion of outputs by particular researchers compared to previous ERA).
- ERA is an ongoing research evaluation program and a 3-4 year roll out cycle is likely for the foreseeable future. We should therefore expect there to be an ERA assessment in 2018.
- Impact evaluation is not on the immediate horizon, and there are difficulties in developing an adequate definition of impact; nevertheless some form of impact assessment is likely at some point in the future. It will be important for HASS disciplines to engage with the development of an adequate definition of impact.

2. The second session was a presentation by Robert Griew, Associate Secretary (Higher Education), Department of Education.

The satellite event took place the week after the Federal Budget was announced, so participants found this presentation extremely helpful in providing a detailed overview of some of the main changes to higher education funding introduced in the

budget. In addition to speaking about fee deregulation, changes to the HELP scheme, and changes to the funding tiers affecting HASS disciplines, Mr. Griew also spoke specifically about changes to research and research funding including:

- Changes to ARC funding (one-off efficiency dividend; reprioritizing of ARC funding to dementia, juvenile diabetes, tropical health research, as well as funding for Antarctic Gateway)
- Indefinite continuation of Future Fellowship Scheme (100 x 4 year fellowships per year)
- NCRIS funding extended until 2015/16
- 10% reduction in RTS funding; fees to be recouped by universities charging these fees to students
- Chief Scientist is revising Strategic Research Priorities and restructuring PM Science Advisory Council

In line with Ms. Harvey's comments about impact, Mr. Griew also emphasized the importance of HASS disciplines being engaged in the development of any impact assessment process.

3. The third session was led by Prof. Denise Meredyth, Executive Director, Humanities and Creative Arts, ARC.

Prof. Meredyth spoke to a number of slides (available on the [ARC website](#)) providing statistics on success rates within the HASS disciplines by institution and by discipline and sub-discipline field for a range of different ARC grant schemes. Other issues raised in the discussion included:

- Likely downward impact on success rates as a result of cuts to ARC budget
- ARC takes seriously research opportunity (ROPE) in assessment of track record; detailed assessors need some guidance and mentoring re taking ROPE into account
- Importance of HASS disciplines applying for LIEF applications to build knowledge platforms and resources (e.g. digital resources)
- CRC funding scheme will be reviewed in 2014
- Mapping Humanities and Social Sciences project includes ERA results and ARC success data and will provide comprehensive overview of state of HASS disciplines in Australia.

4. The event concluded with a discussion of the agenda for the ADR Network meeting at the September DASSH conference. It was decided that the September meeting will include sessions on:

- Developing sector-wide guidelines for quality assessment for creative outputs. Prof. William Christie (University of Sydney) will take responsibility for gathering and compiling documentation about processes for quality assessment from a number of universities prior to the September meeting
- Category 2 & 3 funding schemes in HASS disciplines

- Discussion of the ERA guidelines, which should have been released by the time of this meeting
- Discussion of Open Access publishing
- Follow up on implementation of Federal Budget changes to Higher Education and research funding

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