DASSH Conference - ADR Network Meeting
September 17, 2014
Meeting Notes

The DASSH ADR Network held a successful and very informative meeting prior to the main DASSH conference.

This event focused on three main agenda items:

1. ERA Submission Guidelines
Presenter: Dr. Tim Cahill, Director, Research Evaluation, Research Excellence Branch, ARC

Dr. Cahill outlined some of the main changes to the ERA assessment process for ERA 2015 and answered queries from network members. Key points noted included:

- The ARC definition of what constitutes research has deliberately been designed to take account of creative outputs
- Primary focus of the assessment for peer review disciplines is publishing profile, peer review assessment and category 1 income; a secondary focus is esteem and applied measures. ERA distinguishes between category 1 and category 2-4 income, with more weight placed on category 1
- Publishing profile for each unit of evaluation (UoE) will list most to least used publication outlets for each publication category
- 3 main Stages in REC evaluation process
    - Stage 1: 3 REC members assigned to every 2 digit unit of evaluation
    - Stage 2a: REC members given access to preliminary evaluation for 4-digit UoEs from other REC members and peer reviewers
    - Stage 2b: REC members given access to 2-digit UoEs from other REC members
    - Stage 2c: moderated assessments available to RECs
    - Stage 3: Meeting
- Peer reviewers will report on proportions of publications within a UoE on a 4 point quality scale, from lowest to highest. Quality distinctions should align with peer reviewers' responses to approach and contribution. Peer reviewers will not use the ERA 5 point rating scale. These scores will be assigned by the RECs
- Research reports for an external body will be evaluated with respect to the definition of research in the ERA guidelines.

2. Quality Assessment Criteria for Non-Traditional Research Outputs
Presenter: Prof. Will Christie, Pro-Dean Research, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Sydney

Prior to the meeting Prof. Christie had circulated to network members the draft U. of Sydney guidelines for assessing quality for NTROs. Discussion points included:

- Some members expressed concern that the U. Syd. guidelines were biased towards high culture, i.e. 'artists' not 'entertainers' or 'creatives'.
- Some members expressed discomfort that the quality criteria in the U. Syd. Guidelines referenced innovation as well as research. It was felt that the criteria should focus primarily on whether the work constitutes research
- How to distinguish major from minor creative outputs, and what equivalent HERDC point values should be given to the different categories of output. The discussion highlighted a range of different practices in different institutions.
- Whether quality assessment should be conducted by in-house panels or by external panels. At U. Syd assessment is conducted on an annual basis by an external panel appointed by the DVCR. The membership of the panel is not known to the researchers or to the ADR. In other institutions assessment is conducted either by internal panels or by ADRs.
- That good research must also be good art.
- That we need a good account of what counts as peer review for NTROs.
- The group strongly agreed on the need for sector-wide guidelines. Dr. Cahill agreed that these guidelines would be helpful for the ARC. ADR Network will ask DASSH to work with Deans of Creative Arts on this issue.

3. Category 2, 3 & 4 Funding Opportunities in HASS Disciplines
Presenter: Prof. Stuart Cunningham, Director, ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries, QUT

Prof. Cunningham pointed to the downward pressure on Category 1 funding in the current environment, including lower success rates for DP grants, the fact that the Industry Transformation Research Fund had been taken out of the Linkage program, reduction of Linkage rounds from 2 to 1 per annum. In this context HASS researchers need to be more agile and look to Category 2-4 sources of funding.

Category 2: Prof. Cunningham gave several examples of opportunities for both the Social Sciences and Humanities and emphasised the importance for projects of scale, multidisciplinarity, incorporation of both quantitative and qualitative research, and cross-sectoral collaboration.

Category 3: Prof. Cunningham highlighted the importance of identifying multiple and diverse sources of philanthropic funding both nationally and internationally. Nationally, HASS researchers should identify middle range donors for specific project funding; crowd funding was also discussed. Examples of international bequests and foundations amenable to HASS research include: Mellon, Templeton, Getty, Wenner Gren, Henry Luce Foundations.

Category 4: Challenges for HASS sector include projected budget funding cut of $80 million over the next 4 years for CRCs; Commission of Audit recommendation to abolish CRCs and fold into the Linkage program; CRCs must be user-led or industry-driven. Examples of HASS led CRCs or those with scope to include HASS researchers: Bushfire and Natural Hazards; Construction (design input); Water Sensitive Cities; Capital Markets; Young and Wells – focusing on new and emerging technologies to assist young people's mental health; Remote Economic Participation

– focusing on providing solutions to economic challenges of remote Australia.

Prof. Cunningham concluded by outlining Action Points for ADRs:

1. Importance of telling big stories – Category 2-4 research shouldn't be seen as dumbing down our research.
2. Develop frameworks for expanding HASS research, not just into the GLAM sector, but also through research cooperation with STEM disciplines, business. Examples of fertile areas for HASS involvement include environmental humanities, preventative medicine, digital media, arts and entertainment sector. It is important to emphasise that innovation is not just STEM-based and STEM-sourced.
3. The need to drive change in cultural attitudes with respect to HASS disciplines and their impact on society and the economy.
4. An audit is needed of available sources of funding across all four categories.
5. Ensure that the philanthropy and corporate engagement units in your institutions are attuned to HASS research.
6. Ensure that research offices in your institutions are more attuned to Category 2 & 3 funding sources and provide adequate support to researchers.

Agenda setting for May/ September ADR Network meetings

Follow up on Federal budget wash-up – higher education funding; ARC cuts

ERA wash-up and debrief

Report back on proposed alignment of HERDC and ERA data collection

Follow up on sector-wide guidelines for NTROs

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