

DASSH ADRs satellite event March 2019

Session 1: DASSH ADRs feedback on Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification Review 2019. Chaired by Sue Martin.

The ADR group offered two possible responses to the Review request, which might be categorised as light touch (A), and heavy touch (B).

(A) Light touch: Assuming that resources and appetite for overhaul are not present, recommends considering some essential changes to current codes, to rationalise the existing system within its parameters.

(B) Heavy touch: Recommends a complete overhaul of the system in the light of new technologies of data harvesting and sorting which suggest this form of taxonomic classification is outdated and unfit for purpose. The current FOR system is a mixture of disciplines, methods and objects of study

(A) Light touch

This response assumes retention of the existing system and recommends that under these circumstances some urgent interim changes are required to current codes, to rationalise the existing system within its parameters.

6. Is the current overall structure appropriate?

- This approach assumes that this is not to be changed.

6 a. Should there be more or fewer levels to the hierarchy?

- Fewer – remove 6-digit codes. Broader codes are better.
- The specific example identified for our area was the set of ‘niche codes’ beneath 1903 Journalism and 2001 Media and Communications where in ERA 2015 submissions from near identical disciplines were divided across these codes, and there was further confusion, and likely division, in ERA 2018. This was identified as the sector voting with its feet for fewer, bigger codes. Another issue is the distribution, at 6-digit level, of interdisciplinary areas, such as Indigenous studies, Environmental Arts and Humanities or gender and sexuality studies, which would be better identified in a code at a higher level.

6 b. Would it be useful to have broad themes or ‘one digit’ classifications such as Sciences, Medicine, Social Sciences and Humanities, similar to the ‘Sector’ level of SEO?

- There was some interest in this idea, but bemusement about the collation of ‘Social Sciences and Humanities’ in one bucket in the example. As ‘Sciences’ and ‘Medicine’ might share this, one digit might not be feasible, although this would be a useful classification for ERA, if it could be kept to nine sensible categories.

7. What criteria, in your view, should be applied to determine the classification of research?

a. What criteria should be applied to determine the boundaries between Division, Group and Field classifications?

b. Should research methodologies, publication practices, or any other factors be considered as key criteria for classifying research?

c. Apart from the Principles described in Section 2, are there any other specific criteria that should be applied?

- There were a variety of views on this topic across the group, which tended to agree more on what should NOT be used than what should. For areas including 2005, and 2103 there was strong agreement that the division of these fields at 6-digit level into Geo-political zones was archaic, counter-productive, in no way reflected the current state or directions of Literary or Historical studies, and submerged strong streams including the Postcolonial, and transnational. This type of coding produces perversity such as 200501 (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Literature) and 200502 (Australian literature excluding ATSI Literature); and 210301 (ATSI History), and 210303 (Australian History excluding ATSI), a pattern which is repeated across a variety of codes, but not all – so is inconsistent, as well as anomalous.
- ADRs noted that at both 2- and 4-digit levels, Fields of Research are an inconsistent mix of, in some cases disciplinary approaches (for example, geography, sociology) and in others a thematic focus (for example, Education, Business).
- There was some appetite for removing 4 digits entirely, and moving the ones that represent distinct disciplines (for example, Geography or Sociology) to the 2-digit level. We note that this could only be done after extensive surveying of the impact on small areas of research excellence which might then not meet thresholds etc.
- 2-digit codes should be agnostic in relation to method (for example whether data is generated through traditional or practice methods) and should be defined by underpinning ways of constructing knowledge (aka 'disciplines').
- The ADRs agreed on the importance of disciplines as entities with distinct histories, theoretical and methodological frameworks, and felt there was some capacity to align codes more clearly around clusters of disciplines/theories/methods? Geography, sociology, political science, economics, psychology, history, engineering, design, and the interdisciplinary studies that are more thematic, applied.

8. Where should the classifications change (at the Division, Group or Field level)? Please identify specific codes, where appropriate. In particular:

a. What new or emerging areas of research should be allocated FoR codes (and at which level)?

- Some ADRs suggested moving some of what are currently 4- or 6-digit codes up to the 2-digit codes:
 - i. Indigenous studies (this is also the answer to Question 9)
 - ii. Gender, sexuality and Queer studies

Possibly also other areas such as

- iii. Development studies
 - Note that the 'Heavy touch' approach proposes a different means to managing thematic studies such as these.

b. Should any of the existing FoR codes be split, deleted or merged?

- The group felt that the following codes could be removed:

- i. 1903 - Journalism
- ii. 2202 – History and Philosophy of Specific Fields
- iii. 1302 – Curriculum and Pedagogy – suggestion that this needs to be removed due to “chronic misuse”.
 - A number of the 19 codes should be rationalised (1901 and 1905 should be combined) or merged with their cognate 20 codes, acknowledging the alignment of creative practice with critical practice in these areas. For instance, 1902 and 2001 should be merged, Creative writing should be removed from 1904, and included in 2005, and so on.

c. Should any of the existing Group or Field codes be moved to other places in the classification?

- 12 code was identified as a thematic code encompassing a range of underpinning theories and methods: design, textiles, architecture, garden studies, planning and construction disciplines across a wide spectrum of theory, methodology and practices.
- Architecture, and Design practice, might also be moved to the 19/20 codes (see above)

d. Is there ambiguity or redundancy in the existing FoR codes? (e.g. areas where research could reasonably be classified in two or more different codes)

- Note recommendations on Indigenous studies, Gender and Sexuality studies, Development studies.
- 1605 (Policy and Administration) was identified as an area that might be better represented within its individual disciplinary areas, but opinions were mixed.
- 22 Religious Studies and Philosophy are not necessarily related fields.

9. How can the FoR codes better capture Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Māori Studies, and Pacific Peoples Studies research, and at what level (e.g. Field, Group, Division)?

- Move to 2-digit code.

10. How can the FoR codes better capture interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary research, and at what level (e.g. Field, Group, Division)?

- As noted above, some of these should be introduced at 2-digit level, but some ADRs thought the best option would be our second ‘Heavy touch’ option of reconsidering the basis for the taxonomy and working with information scientists to design new methods.
- A substantial number of ‘missing’ fields were identified for inclusion, but this does raise the issue of exhaustiveness and redundancy. In many codes – 20, 21, possibly 18, 12, at a minimum 4-digit codes need to be entirely overhauled – ideally using data science and researcher feedback - rather than new codes added.

(B) Heavy Touch

This approach works from the premise that from a data science point of view the current FOR system is no longer fit for purpose

6. *Is the current overall structure appropriate?*

No.

7. *What criteria, in your view, should be applied to determine the classification of research?*

- Technologies that allow agile and real time analysis of big data offer a radically different approach to organising research outputs. Word clouds are already working well as a way to find reviewers for ARC.
- ADRs with expertise in information science suggested that an expanded suite of 2-digit FoR codes at the disciplinary level could be allied with new approaches to big data to map data around topics like queer, indigenous, area studies, feminist research, and emerging research areas.

8. *Where should the classifications change (The rest of Q8 assumes an overall retention of existing FOR systems, and is dealt with under B8, below)*

- ADRs suggested considering a move to broad, 2-digit codes for taxonomy, abandoning any attempt to capture all emerging forms of research in detail (Viz Q 9 & 10 re Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and interdisciplinary studies), coupled with digital data harvesting using metadata/ algorithms.
- Such 2-digit codes (if codes were used) could be agnostic in relation to method and could be defined by underpinning ways of constructing knowledge/codes could be allocated according to the underlying bodies of theory. Overall the proposal was to abandon exhaustiveness in favour of agility and large-scale use of digital data harvesting for purposes of allocating resources and evaluating research.
- **Action:** notes from this ADR discussion to be presented to the DASSH Board for consideration as to next steps.

Session 2: Joint session 1: ADR/ADLT networks discussion. What are the best models for teaching/research integration? (or should it be 'learning/research integration'?). Chaired by Jill Lawrence and Alan McKee

- Agreement that 'learning/research integration' does not mean that researchers teach the content of their research interests to students.
- Rather, the key issue is having active researchers teaching undergraduate students.
- This means a 'research informed' way of teaching that is driven by, and helps students learn, transferable research skills (rather than disciplinary content knowledge).
- These include the ability to gather evidence, analyse evidence in a rigorous way, think critically, construct an argument, proceed ethically, etc.
- From this position, research-only positions and teaching-only positions are problematic.
- Some research-focused staff may find undergraduate teaching challenging – important that they're offered mentoring and career development.
- Some people stated that all researchers should do some undergraduate teaching.
- Some speakers noted that teachers can have students do research projects driven by real world concerns –partnering with external organisations such as NGOs to produce a project on homeless for example.
- A small number of undergraduate students will want to continue to become academic researchers – we can offer them a research methods subject, or research internships.
- As a group there was agreement that university strategies to promote research-learning integration have to have both research specialists AND learning and teaching specialists in the room.

Session 3: Joint session 3: ADI/ADR networks discussion. What are the best strategies to internationalise your faculty's research?. Chaired by Susan Oguro and Alan McKee

- In order to decide what are the best strategies for internationalizing research you have to know first – what do you want to accomplish? What is the purpose of international research?
- Philosophically – is it about learning from other cultures' ways of thinking about research issues? Or is it about being 'global' and publishing in the most prestigious world (ie, American?) journals with famous co-authors?
- Practically – what are the KPIs that drive international collaboration that we have to meet?
- Many of us have research collaborations with researchers in other countries – but they are overwhelmingly English-speaking, from Europe or America. If we're only working with people who already think the same way we do, how is that changing our thinking?
- In terms of KPIs - universities often measure 'internationalization' of research (to the extent that they do at all) through numbers of journal articles with co-authors in other countries in Scopus-ranked journals, driving particular kinds of research practice.
- For ADRs, internationalization offers the opportunity of accessing funding sources in other countries.
- Strategies to drive internationalization include staff mobility – bringing scholars to Australia, sending Australian scholars overseas.
- How useful are these in driving measurable outcomes?
- What are the implications of promoting global staff mobility in terms of sustainability? (can research budgeting include carbon offsets? Use of better communications technology to limit need to travel?).
- Other strategies for internationalization – add international PIs to ARC grants; encourage ECRs to work with researchers in other countries; one-to-one relationships between universities.
- HDR students might be the biggest driver of research internationalization? Many HDR students come to Australia from other countries, with an interest in studying their home countries – which drives their supervisors to develop more expertise in those countries; and if the HDR student is then employed as a staff member, increases international networks.
- It is important to appoint researchers to Australian universities from other countries, who bring with them their networks of researchers outside of Australia.
- QS rankings are a big driver – we need researchers in other countries to say our universities are great.
- Universities are often more advanced in the internationalization space in undergraduate teaching – how can we build on that for research?

Session 4: Plan S: the HASS perspective. Chaired by Rachel Ankeny.

- Rachel Ankeny presented on the principles of Plan S and challenges for HASS researchers (attached).
- Michele Wilson provided a briefing paper from Professor Cameron Neylon (attached).
- Plan S is designed to drive rapid change in the business model of academic journals away from commercial publishers to being run by universities on an author-pays basis.
- Group discussed the implications of Plan S for the publishing system as a whole, and the problems it creates for HASS researchers.
- As a general rule STEM researchers and journals are better placed to work with Plan S: more research funding for Author Processing Costs (APC); fewer niche journals with small audiences that can't survive the change in business models; we don't know what book publishers are thinking about Plan S; and there is no mention of NTROs.
- The group notes that we support the principle of open access, even if the proposals for operationalising it risk damaging HASS research publishing.
- The Council of Australian University Libraries and the Australasian Open Access Strategy Group have issued a joint response which supports the intent, but also raises issues (attached). Australian Learned Academies haven't made any public statements yet.
- If Australia doesn't sign up, is that a good thing? It makes research with international collaborators more difficult; and doesn't address the fact that Plan S represents a radical challenge to the academic publishing industry.
- One possible response – to promote open access institutional repositories?
- This could work legally – there has never been a case of a commercial publisher suing an academic for sharing a penultimate version of their article on a university repository.
- However institutional repositories aren't yet as searchable on the web as commercial journals, so we need to improve metadata in institutional repositories - and this doesn't address the fundamental instability of the journal publishing system facing this challenge.

- **Action:** all DASSH ADRs are invited to consult with colleagues and submit to Rachel Ankeny details of difficulties Plan S raises for HASS researchers. Rachel volunteers to lead a team with other interested ADRs to prepare a position paper that the Network Convenor can present to the DASSH Board.
- This position paper will identify challenges that Plan S causes for HASS; and might propose working with CAUL, AOASG and the Learned Academies to build dialogue from a HASS perspective.