

**University of Central Lancashire**  
**The Funding Councils' Review of Research Assessment**

The University of Central Lancashire welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Review of Research Assessment and wishes to ally itself in large measure with the response of the Modern Universities Research Group (MURG). In doing so the University acknowledges that after five successive RAEs it is appropriate and timely to assess the ability of the exercise to assist the development of the UK's science base in an educational environment that has undergone considerable transformation since the early 1980s.

From its establishment in 1973 The University has grown from a relatively small polytechnic, the last to be created in England, to the 7<sup>th</sup> largest university in the UK, with over 32,000 full and part-time students. Naturally, the scope and breadth of the Universities activities has considerable altered, but the University remains firmly committed to the provision of education rooted in the need to provide the modern economy with students who have been taught in the highest quality an environment which enhances a sense of innovation and enterprise. As such the University has established a particular presence within the region and works closely with many leading companies and other public agencies in undertaking commissioned and collaborative applied research. In so doing we believe that to continue to assist regional economic development (at a time of deep structural change) it will be important for the University to maintain the strong upward trajectory of its research and continue to work with private industry and others to develop the region's knowledge base and associated workforce skills. The University therefore believes it essential that in any future review of research achievements, the assessment takes into account, more cogently than in the past, the notion of value-added within and contribution to regional and national economic growth. The University explicitly endorses the MURG response on the continued use of historical ratings. Such would not only fail to acknowledge the activity that increasingly flows from trans-disciplinary research, but would imply an open discrimination against a modern university seeking to assist the development of a region's economy and social well-being.

Similarly the University is opposed to the notion that assessment should be based at the institutional level, but does share with MURG the view that assessment could profitably be undertaken across wider cognate areas, so long as greater scope was given for achievements based on trans-disciplinary research.

We also have considerable reservation on the use of algorithms unless such are transparent, dealt equitably across the subject range and can incorporate regional impact on community and economic development.

The University has some sympathy for the use of self-assessment, as we believe it important for research assessment to reflect starting points in terms of developing new cultures and/or new areas of research. As indicated above we share MURG's view that the existing RAE format serves only to stereotype past practices and forms of research activity, rather than rewarding enterprise, innovation and initiative.

Finally the University shares the view of MURG on the issue of cross-cutting and would particularly like to underline the views expressed in paragraphs a), c), d) and i).

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Director for Research