

Output Assessment Criteria

The criteria for assessing the quality of outputs are **originality, significance and rigour**

Originality is understood as the extent to which the output introduces a new way of thinking about a subject, or is distinctive or transformative compared with previous work in an academic field.

Significance is understood as the extent to which the work has exerted, or is likely to exert, an influence on an academic field or practical applications.

Rigour is understood as the extent to which the purpose of the work is clearly articulated, an appropriate methodology for the research area has been adopted, and compelling evidence presented to show that the purpose has been achieved.

Papers are given stars relating to their originality, significance and rigour as follows:

Four Star

Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour

Three Star

Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence

Two Star

Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour

One star

Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour

Unclassified

Quality that falls below the standard of nationally recognised work. Or work which does not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of this assessment

In more detail

four star (quality that is world leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour) with evidence of some of following types of characteristics:

- agenda-setting
- research that is leading or at the forefront of the research area
- great novelty in developing new thinking, new techniques or novel results
- major influence on a research theme or field
- developing new paradigms or fundamental new concepts for research
- major changes in policy or practice
- major influence on processes, production and management
- major influence on user engagement

three star (quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence), with evidence of some of following types of characteristics:

- makes important contributions to the field at an international standard
- contributes important knowledge, ideas and techniques which are likely to

have a lasting influence, but are not necessarily leading to fundamental new concepts

- significant changes to policies or practices
- significant influence on processes, production and management
- significant influence on user engagement

two star (quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour), with evidence of some of following types of characteristics:

- provides useful knowledge and influences the field
- involves incremental advances, which might include new knowledge which conforms with existing ideas and paradigms, or model calculations using established techniques or approaches
- influence on policy or practice
- influence on processes, production and management
- influence on user engagement

one star (quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour) with evidence of some of following types of characteristics:

- useful but unlikely to have more than a minor influence in the field
- minor influence on policy or practice
- minor influence on processes, production and management
- minor influence on user engagement.

Further pointers

The use of primary or secondary data does not in itself influence estimates. What is important is the extent to which the data is robust and ensures rigour. A secondary dataset that is representative and uses recognised measures can enable research questions to be addressed as rigorously than primary data.

Systematic reviews can achieve a high rating and especially if they are not 'empty' (in other words, that they identify key gaps in knowledge). Points raised above around *originality*, *significance* and *rigour* apply to these reviews in exactly the same way as any other research method.