



CHEAD Welcomes Strong Performance of Art & Design Submissions in Research Excellence Framework

The outcome of the REF2014, published here [[http://results.ref.ac.uk/...](http://results.ref.ac.uk/)] confirms that Art and Design is competitive in the premier league of research excellence. Art and Design has produced a strong performance across all elements of the REF - outputs, impact and environment. This is testimony to the strengthening of research in art and design and reflects that the UK is a global leader in creative research.

1,603.76 full time equivalent staff were submitted by 84 institutions to Unit 34 and the subject produced an improved grade point average score that is competitive with other subjects and outperforming some.

The Research Excellence Framework 2014 (REF) is a process to assess academic research quality across all subjects in submitting higher education institutions in order to ensure that public money is spent fairly and effectively. The results determine how much research funding a university is granted –it is likely that only research awarded three and four ‘stars’ will secure some of the £2bn per annum research funding for its institution.

The assessment is also used to produce rankings of institutions in league tables. In the overall power ranking (Elsevier.com) four of the top five institutions in unit 34 are CHEAD members.

The big difference in REF2014 from previous assessments is that the impact research produces was also assessed by peers and by the people and organisations that use the research. The Institutions achieved this through the submission of 242 art and design impact case studies. The average number of case studies in art and design was 3. CHEAD nominated assessors for this purpose

73.8 % of Art and Design impact was judged to be very considerable or better and nearly 30% was outstanding, the highest accolade. This is tremendous recognition from society of the social, cultural economic benefits of art and design research.

In REF2014 the number of units of assessment shrunk to 36 from 67 in 2008. There were some changes to unit 34 that embraces art and design history along with theory and practice. Unit 34 reaches across a large number of disciplines and research methodologies in universities and Higher Education Institutions of all types and sizes.

Unit 34 Art and Design- History, Theory and Practice is the unit for most CHEAD members and a total of 84 submissions were made to Unit 34. Some art and design research is also be submitted to unit 34 or 35, and in some institutions submit architecture alongside art and design research.

One area where there is noticeable variation between institutions is in the proportion of staff submitted to the REF of those eligible to be submitted. The average 57.24% is lower than some other subjects, perhaps reflecting a focus on research quality in the part of submitting institutions together with a significant sector focus on teaching, professional practice and scholarship.



CHEAD is a long standing Association which brings together senior figures in UK Art, Design and Media education. It has a strong international reputation for its work in promoting UK Art and Design and in activity which examines contemporary issues affecting the HE curriculum and its implementation.

CHEAD Research Alliance, a network of art and design research leaders, will examine the implications of the REF2014 outcome in more detail in the coming months.

The 71% of the Art and Design research environment that REF2014 assessed to be 3 and 4 Star (internationally excellent and world leading) reflects the investment and commitment higher education institutions continue to make to the resources, facilities and people of art and design research. This includes PhD students and early career researchers and it bodes well for the future and global competitiveness of Art and Design research and education in the UK.

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