

School of Arts, Humanities and Environment, University of Edinburgh

I welcome the opportunity to provide a submission on behalf of Architecture, as a subject area in the School of Arts, Culture and Environment, at the University of Edinburgh. I understand that the consultation extends beyond detailed concerns about the last RAE, and I have been a contributor on a focus group concerned with the wider issues as outlined in the Invitation to Contribute. But there are matters which arise from our own treatment in the last RAE, and the treatment of Architecture in general by UoA 33 (Built Environment). Clearly we are keen that a system is set in place that avoids the problems we encountered. Formal letters of complaint have been submitted to HEFCE, by various Architecture Departments, individually and in combination. In summary, from the point of view of Architecture there are three issues that need to be addressed for the next RAE, should it follow the same model as the last round.

1. There needs to be a fair and transparent election of assessors to the RAE panel. Architecture as a discipline was under-represented for UoA 33, and complaints to this effect went unheeded. The panel was biased towards the science and technology aspects of the built environment and seemed to have little appreciation of Architecture as a discipline that crosses the boundaries of the humanities, arts and sciences. There was little appreciation of the value of creative design output, or of book output that crossed the technology/history divide.
2. Were we to strategize for the next RAE, we would do as some Architecture Departments did for the last round and put our creative output into Art and Design, our history into Architectural History, building science into Built Environment, and computing into Computer Science. The RAE should not serve to fragment a discipline in this way.
3. We would urge that there be a separate UoA for Architecture, or at least that all the sub-disciplines of Architecture be represented on the RAE panel. Architecture needs to be assessed fairly.

I hope these comments are of some value to the Review.

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