The Recommended RQF

- On 14 November 2006, the Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, released the *Recommended RQF* and announced that the Government had agreed to proceed with the Research Quality Framework (RQF).

- The RQF will strengthen the assessment of research carried out in Australia, with panels to assess the quality and impact of research undertaken in Australian universities and other eligible higher education providers.
Quality and Impact
The RQF will focus on both **Quality** and **Impact**:

- **Research Quality** refers to the quality of original research including its intrinsic merit and ‘academic impact’ (as opposed to Research Impact within the broader community). ‘Academic impact’ relates to the recognition of the originality of the research by peers and its affect on the development of the same or related discipline areas within the community of peers.

- **Research Impact** refers to the impact or use of original research outside the academic peer community. This will typically not be reported in traditional peer reviewed literature. It refers to the extent to which research has led successfully to social, economic, environmental and/or cultural benefits for the wider community, or an element of the community.
RQF Submission and Assessment Process

**Stage one: Expression of Intention to Submit**
Provisional information that will provide an early indication to DEST of the likely distribution of work across disciplines.

**Stage two: Institution Submission**
Data collected at the level of institution including: Institution Submission and Evidence Portfolios for all submitted Research Groups

- **Submission Specifications**
- **RQF Technical Specifications**
- **Panel Specific Guidance**
- **Evidence Portfolio**
- **Guidance to Assessment Panels**
- **Assessment Panels**
- **Research Groups**
Submission and Assessment Timeline

- In January 2008 institutions will be asked to provide Expressions of Intention to Submit (EIS)

- In March 2008 the RQF IMS will open for submissions of Evidence Portfolios

- The deadline for Vice-Chancellor’s Certification of Full Submissions is 30 April 2008

- Assessment will occur from July 2008
Quality Assessment for a Research Group

• Institutions will be required to submit an Evidence Portfolio for each nominated Research Group. This should contain:
  
  – A Context Statement (including metrics)
  – The four ‘best’ Research Outputs for each submitted researcher in the Research Group
  – Full list of Research Outputs for the Group in the 6 year period (2001-2006)
  – The Impact Statement
Quality Metrics

• Based on recommendations of the Metrics Working Group, DEST has commenced development of Quality Metrics for the RQF.

• Discipline-specific quality metrics will be drawn from the following basket of measures:
  – Ranked Outputs – peak bodies to assist in journal ranking process in May-June 2007
  – Citation data – measured against centile benchmarks
  – Grant Income – DEST categories 1-4, reported separately

• DEST will be working with RQF panel chairs to arrive at appropriate metrics for panels.
Assessment Panels

• The 13 Assessment Panels are based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ Research Fields, Courses and Disciplines (RFCD) Codes.

• The Assessment Panel Chairs were announced by Minister Bishop on 17 April 2007.

• The Chairs are senior researchers of international standing who will make judgements on the quality and impact of research submitted based on sound, transparent and accountable processes.

• Advertisements are now out for Panel members (closing date 14 May 2007)
Implementation Progress - 2007

• Assessment Panel Chairs announced (April 2007)

• Advertisements for Panel members (April 2007)

• Limited pre-implementation trials addressing specific issues (May 2007)

• Draft RQF Specifications released to RQF contact officers (May 2007)

• Draft ASHER and IAP Guidelines released for consultation (May 2007)

• Release of RQF Specifications for sector-wide consultation (July 2007)

• Commencement of ASHER and IAP (July 2007)
Discipline-specific Workshops

• Discipline-specific workshops were held in February and March 2007

• 120 researchers attended and were asked to provide input on:
  – the appropriate research outputs for the disciplines within the relevant Panel
  – appropriate indicators to aid the assessment of research quality and research impact, and
  – the type of supplementary information that can be included in a Research Group's context statement

• Indicators tailored to each discipline, i.e., Sciences vs Creative Arts, will input into the panel-specific parts of the Specifications

• Information on the outcomes of the workshops are on the DEST website
Implementation Funding to support Universities

Almost $42 million will be provided to universities through two new programmes. This programme funding includes:

- $16.4 million for the RQF Implementation Assistance Programme (IAP)

- $25.5 million for the Australian Scheme for Higher Education Repositories programme (ASHER)
Australian Scheme for Higher Education Repositories (ASHER)

- Establishment of institutional repositories for storing research outputs for the purposes of the RQF.

- ASHER will provide support for:
  1. purchase of hardware and software to establish a repository, or for institutions to update their existing repository, and
  2. support to meet the workload involved with populating the institution’s repository.

- Programme will also assist with the delivery of the Accessibility Framework.
ASHER Guidelines

• DEST is drafting guidelines and detailed administrative requirements for the ASHER programme.

• DEST will specify technical requirements for repositories to be eligible for ASHER funding rather than specify repository software/products.

• Details will be provided to the sector as a draft for consultation with Guidelines finalised after passage and Royal Assent of Higher Education Legislation Amendment (2007 Measures No. 1) Bill 2007, likely in June 2007 at the earliest.

• DEST is aiming for guidelines to be in place by July 2007 for institutions to apply for funding shortly after.
ASHER – Funding Allocation

• Grants will be based on institutions’ readiness as of 15 December 2006

• DEST’s Repository Readiness Survey from December 2006 has informed programme design.

• Guidelines will specify the additional information required from institutions in funding applications.

• Funding will be allocated to give universities resources in time for the RQF. Additional funding after the RQF will fulfil broader Accessibility Framework objectives.
Copyright Issues

• DEST is examining the most cost-effective solution for DEST and the sector to comply with the Copyright Act 1968

• DEST and the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL), with the AVCC, have developed a sector-wide approach to negotiating with publishers (will be commencing shortly)

• DEST intends that there should be no need for institutions to negotiate licences to use copyright materials

• Early identification (not negotiation!) of copyright owners of research outputs should be a priority for all institutions
Update on a Few Known Issues

• Is DEST going to prescribe submission of the publisher version?
• Is DEST going to allow linking from the repository to the publisher’s website for the full text version?
• When will DEST release the business/policy and technical specifications?
• What about books?
• What kinds of research outputs are acceptable for assessment?
• How will ‘year of publication’ rules be applied?