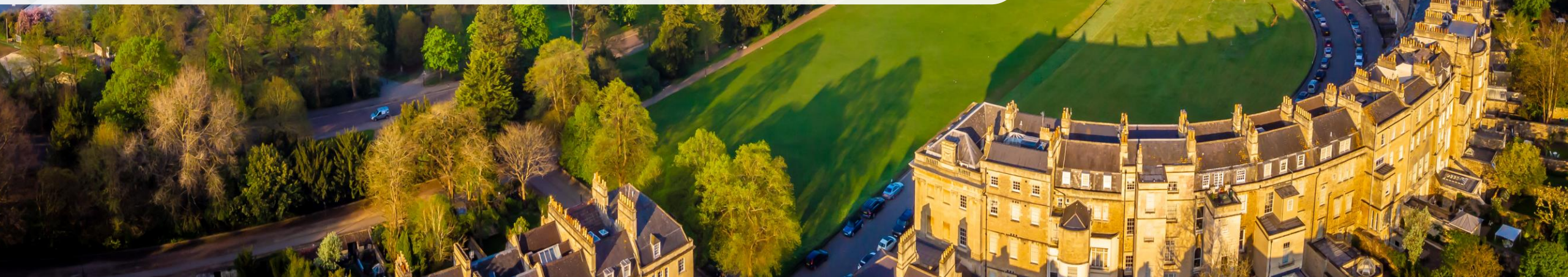


# Response: What's Next on REF 2029?

Sarah Hainsworth

PVC Research and Enterprise

University of Bath





# The Headline Changes

- Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding up to 55% from 50% in the initial decisions announcement
- People, Culture, and Environment (PCE) relabelled as Strategy, People and Research Environment (SRPE)
- Engagement and Impact (E&I) remains at 25%
- HESA data record retained
- Recommended maximum of 5 outputs per researcher
- Greater access to small units exceptions process
- Panels will meet in early 2026 to set their criteria

CKU  
55%

SPRE  
20%

E&I  
25%

# Key Benefits of the REF

Cornerstone of  
the UK dual  
support system

Quality  
Benchmarking

Funding  
Allocation

Reputation &  
Visibility

Strategic  
Planning

Accountability

Impact Focus

Collaboration

# What's Challenging from an Institutional Perspective

Resource  
Intensive

Complexity of  
Rules

Pressure on Staff

Impact Evidence

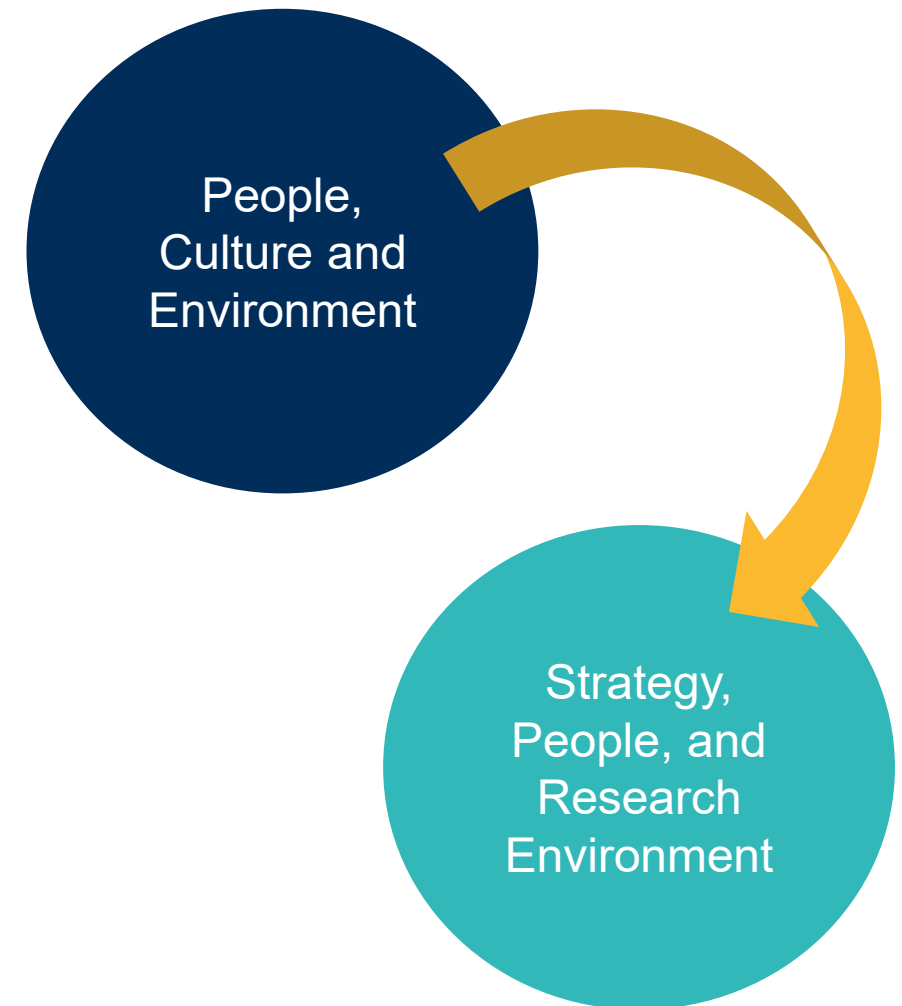
Data  
Management

Strategic  
Decisions

Changing  
Frameworks

# Strategy, People and Research Environment

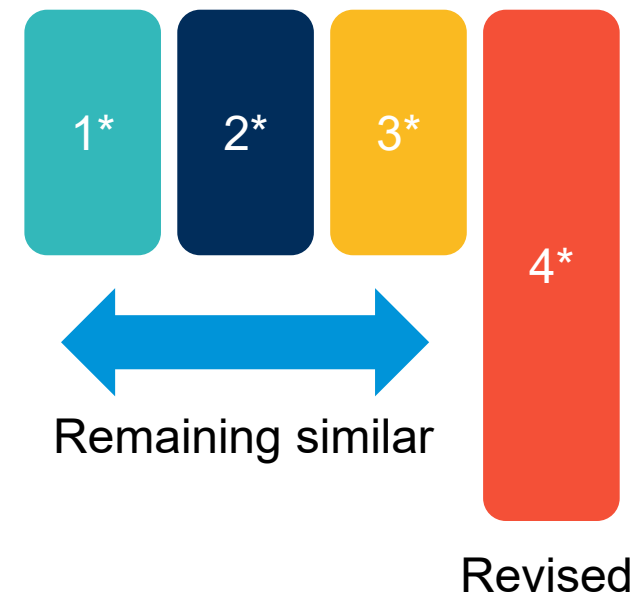
- Will closely resemble the 2021 environment template, with indicators from the PCE pilots confirmed as viable, but largely based on existing data.
- Recognises the importance of Institutional strategy
- Pilot report notes that other indicators remain important, but not all can be robustly assessed across all institutions.
- Concern: Larger institutions performed better in pilot



# Strategy, People and Research Environment

## 4\* Quality Descriptor

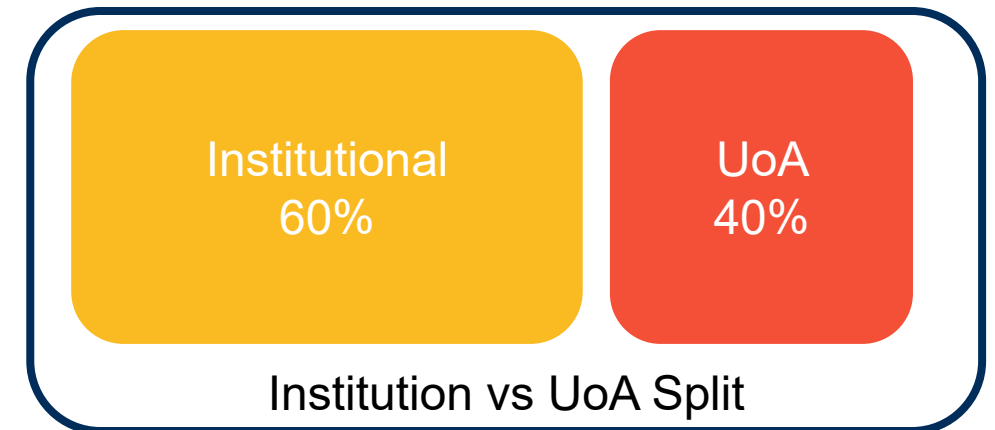
- Focus shifts from evidencing sector-wide impact to institutional reflection and sustainable future plans.
- May include sharing good practice and/or learning from experiences.
- Welcome change: less than 10% of pilot submissions scored 4\* (previously below Environment rate).
- This change helps raise the bar for achievable excellence.



- Statements on diversity of CKU moved to SPRE section. Awaiting clarity on updated expectations.
- Pilot suggests reporting diversity and pay gaps for research-enabling staff, stratified by grade. This will require robust definition and identification of these staff within the MSA bracket.

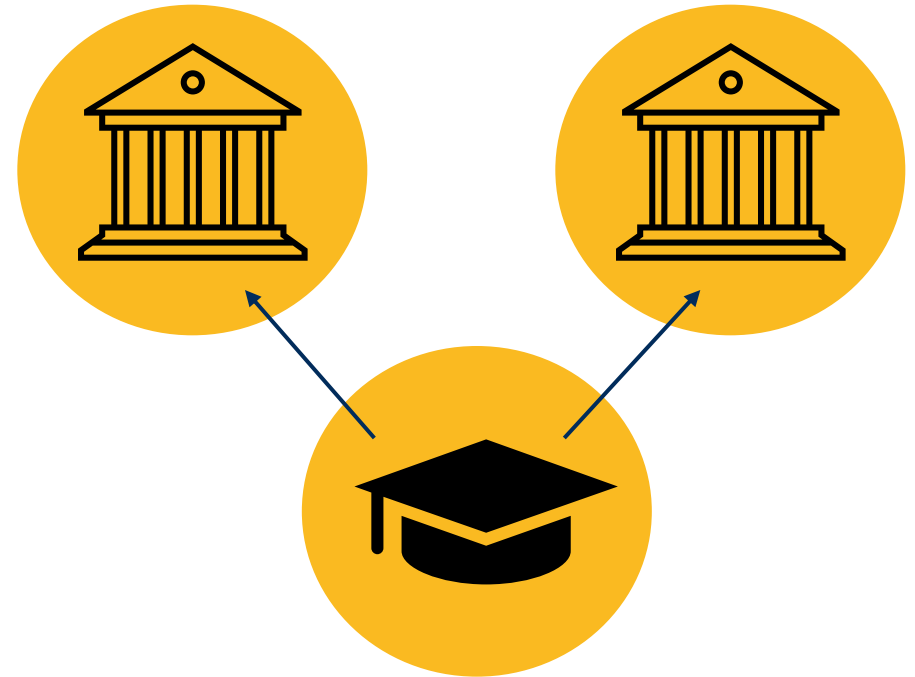
# Strategy, People and Research Environment

- Driving positive changes
- Good compromise – some new changes but not breaking the sector
- Move to Institutional Assessment. Previously all measured at UoA level.
- Interaction with panel level assessment will be critical, announcement was clear that there won't be overlap
- Responsibility for setting and changing culture placed in a defined way on institutions
- All UOAs will need to articulate how the culture allow them to deliver world-class research
- Research England's parallel work to expand requirements for demonstrating good research cultures for QR and within grant applications.



# Portability

- Institutions can now submit work that has been supported after someone has left
- However, cannot take outputs published before someone joined
- Portability of long-form outputs allowed for up to 5 years



Thank you

