

PBRF Consultation Paper 10: Recognising the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Due: 5 May 2023

Link to survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZY9H3VT>

Questions 1-5 pertain to demographic information

Q.6 Do you support Option 1: a standalone COVID-19 impact provision which operates under the Achievement Relative to Opportunity framework, with a specific set of eligible COVID-19 impacts?

- Yes
- No
- Propose a different approach (please provide details below)

TEU Response
<p>TEU supports Option 1 on the proviso that it is amended in the following way (see text in CAPS) so as to account for anomalous impacts that may fall outside of those listed as part of this option.</p> <p>Option 1: A standalone COVID-19 impact provision which operates under the Achievement Relative to Opportunity framework, with a specific set of eligible COVID-19 impacts restricted to those which are above and beyond the general research activity impacts, and which have had a minimum impact of six month. These INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO, [list of specific impacts].</p>

Q.7 Do you support Option 2: COVID-19 impacts are included within the Researcher Circumstances provision under the new Force Majeure type?

- Yes
- No
- Propose a different approach (please provide details below)

TEU Response

Q.8 Do you have any other comments on the consultation paper 'Recognising the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic'?

TEU Response

TEU members have long denounced the PBRF as a model built on systemic biases that has, since its inception, given rise to a variety of unintended outcomes and undesirable consequences. Among other factors, high transaction costs and use of the individual as the unit of assessment mean that Māori, Pasifika, women, researchers in vocational education, and early-career researchers are disproportionately disadvantaged by the PBRF system. These factors also lead to incentivising overly narrow and limited research ambitions, competition that works contrary to sustaining a rich collaborative research culture, and diminished support of emergent researchers who are yet to build their research reputations.

Although some members acknowledge that the PBRF has provided partial benefits in some areas whilst succeeding in both improving research performance and elevating the profile of research in our tertiary education institutions, the above factors continue to undermine the work of staff throughout the tertiary education sector and, as such, produce effects which are detrimental to the quality of research-led teaching across Aotearoa New Zealand. The same factors also illustrate the fundamental inadequacies of a model which endeavours to assign research funding to institutions by using the individual as the unit of assessment.

In other words, the PBRF is fundamentally flawed in ways which reflect and perpetuate the biases and inequities present throughout academia and wider society.

Following this, TEU does not support the PBRF. As such, our response to Consultation Paper 10 should be considered within the context of the commentary provided as a response to Q.8.