Research is a grey area

Description

Disciplines have to understand each other better. The format of the impending REF (Research Excellence Framework) is forcing attention on increased understanding between disciplines, as departments re-align themselves ready to present their case in 2013-14. For example, in the 2008 RAE, Architecture and Built Environment subject areas were assessed independently from Town Planning, which was assessed by a different subpanel. In the REF a single panel will inspect both. Any institution that covers these areas will already be thinking about whether to combine submissions, and even genuinely to pool resources and to work together on research projects leading up to the REF. Art and Design might think of combining with History of Art and Architecture for similar reasons. Drama and Music face similar choices.

default watermark

A positive outcome of strategizing for the REF is the need to think about pooling research activity and resources between disciplines and across institutions. The REF will also involve a closer inspection of how disciplines treat the auditing of creative outputs, such as designs, as research.

The issue of outputs (other than texts) is not unique to architecture, but is a hot issue in art and design, media studies, music and performance, any of which may intersect with other disciplines in the sciences and humanities. In fact the UK research funding councils have been encouraging such explorations, and the generation of outputs that are often most readily associated with the new research term â??impact.â?•

The recent HEFCE report on the REF consultation introduces a new confluence of terms, identifying the eligibility of â??â??grey literatureâ?? and practice-based outputsâ?• for inclusion in portfolios of evidence for assessment of research quality. â??Grey literatureâ?• here refers to working documents, pre-prints and other written material not generally available through publication outlets. In the age of the Internet the rules for what counts as research output are ever changing.

This is an extract from Letter to the Editor â?¦ Coyne, Richard. 2010. Letters: Grey Areas. *Arq (Architectural Research Quarterly)*, (14) 2, 87-87.

Two-page note: PDF on practice-led research and triangulation

Category

1. Research related

Tags

1. collaboration
2. excellence
3. framework
4. gray literature
5. grey literature

6. REF
7. research

Date Created
September 18, 2010
Author
rcoyne99

default watermark