



Carsten Holz
<carstenholz@gmail.com>

RAE Re: FW: Please upload your outputs to ROSS as soon as possible

Carsten Holz <carstenholz@gmail.com>

Mon, Feb 12, 2018

To: [Division head]

Bcc: [School faculty]

Dear [Division head] (and colleagues in HSS),

Re the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE):

As a social scientist, I look for patterns and causalities. My past experience has been: Carsten makes a strong contribution to RAE [FN1] leads to Carsten receiving salary cuts [FN2]. [Footnotes at end]

My past experience makes me wonder about the causality. Is it symmetrical? I.e., if I choose to make a weak (or no) contribution to this RAE, will it lead to me receiving big salary increases?

Or is there no causality at all? I.e., Carsten gets salary cuts, period. And if he doesn't make a strong contribution to RAE, he'll be tarred and feathered, quartered and castrated.

So what's the deal? The RAE is a *research assessment exercise*. In the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), does one's contribution to the RAE have no impact on salary, or a positive impact, or a negative impact?

If the RAE has an impact on remuneration in HSS, then I need hard evidence. Hard evidence means the adoption of public university practices: release salary information, release the particular explanations of salary changes, release HSS and division budget information, release comparison data across university departments. Hard evidence for the past means the past ten years.

An alternative to professional public university procedures is, of course, to continue along the long lines of threats (and lies) that I (and mostly: we) have encountered since the early 2000s. "Learn from the Great Leader. Surpass North Korea in totalitarianism in 15 years."

-- Why not take the RAE seriously for what it is, a *research assessment exercise*? HKUST spends an enormous amount of resources on the RAE, going as far as starting the internal process two years earlier and hiring outside advisors. So, do a proper review of each faculty's research performance and give (transparent/published) promotions accordingly; the money for promotions comes from the retirement of senior people in the past 5 years. Salaries of junior new hires are below those of the retirees who have progressed and accumulated significant work and citations for forty more years, so surely the salary difference is big, and that difference is available to move along with faculty's progression in performance.

The currently ongoing thuggery can then be put to an end. As long as faculty are treated like civil servants from "annual leave" to the pretense of the Hong Kong civil servant

status of “substantiation,” the economy-wide average annual same-position salary increases that the Hong Kong government applies to civil servants independent of performance—and to HKUST in the government’s funding of HKUST—equally applies to HKUST faculty.

Best,
Carsten

[FN1] According to my communication with the University Grants Committee, my specific contribution to the RAE cannot be backed out of the cost centre muddle. That muddle is created by HKUST administrators, who have such complete information about individual faculty and such self-assured evaluation of individual faculty’s performance that they can group faculty into cost centres such as to maximize the likelihood of getting “full points” in the RAE. I look at my own record in the previous RAE and conclude that my record is worthy of “full points.” (I cannot get an outside evaluation in any way.)

[FN2] The previous RAE included three(!) years that I was not paid by HKUST. In these three years, HKUST got at least three(!) times more teaching (two times extra teaching) by hiring temporary instructors with my salary (instructors have lower salaries than I do, and teach more classes than regular faculty do). HKUST got *all* my publications including those of the three years that HKUST did not pay me. I, Carsten, paid for one of the three years of no-pay leave out of my savings, after Dean James Lee denied sabbatical leave. That amount of savings, at the end of my (expected) lifetime 40 years down the road, after investment, would have financed 4 years of living. I.e., I paid for my own sabbatical leave, which led to good publications and from which HKUST administrators then reaped the profit, on top of getting lots of extra teaching; in exchange, they remunerated me with salary *cuts* (and I lost of four years of my life). The numbers: after the release of the 2014 RAE results in early 2015, I received a 0.4% (real) salary increase in 2015 followed by two real salary cuts since; I received the average economy-wide nominal pay increase in 2015 (with no extra/promotion), and half the economy-wide nominal pay increase in 2016, 2017.

PS: Re my previous email, if HKUST forces access to my cell phone: I was issued a “hardware token,” something like a bank security device, which provides a pass-number to log into CANVAS.

PPS: I use bbc because I don’t like receiving an email where I have to scroll way down to get past all the email addresses and one secretary forwarding to the next and the next and the next before I finally get to the matter of the email (and HKUST does not give me access to the HSS mailing list). This is my HSS email list (copied down from the bcc field and appearing here, by gmail design, as names only): [omitted]

[Earlier email from Division head]

On Thu, Feb 1, 2018 at 11:19 AM, [Division head] wrote:

Dear Colleagues,

I know everyone is busy with the beginning of the semester, but if you have not done so already, **please submit 4 research outputs into the ROSS (Research Output Submission System) as soon as possible.**

<https://rae2020.ust.hk/ross>

The peer-reviewed publications need to be between October 1, 2013 and September 30, 2019. ROSS is linked to HKUST Scholarly Publications, so it won't take long for you to select four (or more) of your existing publications. During the pilot phase, I managed to do this from rural India despite repeated electricity outages.

As Dean Lee indicated at yesterday's School Board meeting, SHSS has hired external consultants for a mock RAE later this month. The results of this dry run will be used as a metric to define "research inactive" faculty, such that for every missing output, faculty will be expected to teach an additional 100 students over the annual expected average of 175 students/faculty member, effective Fall 2018.

(Note that it is possible that three submissions will be sufficient for faculty who have given birth or taken extended medical leave during the 2013-2019 assessment period. I recently learned about this exception from the UK's REF and am working on clarifying this for our 2020 RAE.)

Warm regards,
[Division head]



Carsten Holz <carstenholz@gmail.com>

RAE Re: FW: Please upload your outputs to ROSS as soon as possible

[Division head]

Mon, Feb 12, 2018 at 8:36 AM

To: Carsten Holz <carstenholz@gmail.com>

Dear Carsten,

Please let me know if you would like to meet in person to discuss these (or any other) issues.

Warm regards,
[Division head]



Carsten Holz
<carstenholz@gmail.com>

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Carsten Holz <carstenholz@gmail.com>

Wed, Feb 14, 2018 at 1:46 AM

To: [Division head]

Hi [Division head],
thanks.

My thinking is that if we had a fruitful discussion about the impact of the RAE on faculty remuneration, and/or on faculty remuneration practices, I would want to share it with everyone else and would thus end up writing another email to everyone, "channeling" what you said (and that is weird).

Otherwise, we could just have a very "diplomatic" meeting and that probably is a waste of our time and won't feel satisfactory.

I appreciate your openness to meet.

Let's do that at any point in time when one of us feels it makes sense for them.

Right now I wouldn't proceed (but can, no problem).

I wish you a happy Chinese New Year holiday.

Best,

Carsten