AAH Policy

AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND STANDARD RESEARCH CLASSIFICATION (ANZSRC) REVIEW 2019

The Australian Academy of the Humanities (AAH) welcomes the opportunity to contribute a submission to the ANZSRC Review. Ours is a brief, high-level submission at this point in the process. We would be happy to participate in further consultation and note that this initial submission round is the first stage of an iterative consultation throughout 2019.

The AAH is the peak body for the humanities in Australia with a Fellowship of over 600 leaders and experts in culture, history, media, communications, languages, linguistics, philosophy and ethics, archaeology and heritage.

Our submission concentrates on principles for change, how to better reflect emerging areas of research, and flags some problems with existing classifications and/or gaps in the current ANZSRC taxonomy. These have emerged as either a result of the evolution of research activity itself which needs to be better reflected in the codes or as an unintended consequence of implementation. In both instances, the proposed ANZSRC principles provide a sound rationale for advocating change.

We have been in contact with several discipline-specific professional associations (including the Australian Historical Association, the Australasian Consortium of Humanities Research Centres, the Languages and Cultures Network for Australian Universities, and Australian and New Zealand Communication Association) and are aware of several other submissions which propose specific changes to codes.

Principles

The AAH support the overarching principles to guide the development of the revised ANZSRC. With regards to the fields of research (FoR) these need to meet the test of appropriateness and accuracy to capture current research activity and practice. Based on those principles canvassed in the Discussion Paper, we think there are some areas where the current classifications are not delivering regards 'mutual exclusivity', 'exhaustiveness' and/or 'fit[ness] for purpose'.

The last review of the ANZSRC was in 2008 and in the intervening period there have been changes to research activity and practice not least through digital and big data developments that have impacted on many fields of humanities research.

The Discussion Paper itself raises other areas for attention aimed at better capturing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research, and interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research, which we agree is warranted.

We observe that Canada is undertaking a similar exercise to develop a Canadian Research and Development Classification (CRDC) and have consulted their draft research classification standard, being jointly developed by the federal research granting agencies, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of

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Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the Canada Foundation for Innovation, and Statistics Canada.

Type of activity (ToA)

The AAH is not persuaded that the Frascati manual definitions should supersede the current ANZSRC ToA classifications. Our current system includes four categories of R&D: pure basic research, strategic basic research, applied research, and experimental development. The two categories of basic research can be aggregated to map to the Frascati classification.

Fields of Research (FoR)

Regards the overall classification hierarchy, this is broadly appropriate; we do not think a 'one digit' classification system would be useful for Australia and such a development would not be commensurate with international systems (including Canada's draft taxonomy).

In terms of changes to the current classifications, one of the priorities, which has been identified in the Discussion Paper, is the visibility of **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research**. This is dispersed at six-digit level. Currently, it is not possible to enumerate the volume of research activity in this area or levels of investment. We understand that there will be a number of submissions advocating for a new Indigenous Studies four-digit classification and support this agenda and that the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium (NATSIHEC) is also advocating for new six-digit FoRs as well as SEO codes within this rubric.

Other areas that we have received feedback are inadequately captured in the ANZSRC are:

- **Gender studies** – this is an important, long-standing areas of research in the humanities that is under-represented in the existing classification. There is a code at six-digit level in Cultural Studies [200205 – Culture, Gender, Sexuality] but not a code within Historical Studies [2103], for example. We are aware that much of gender studies research is being coded to what has become a 'catch all' residual code – Other Studies in Human Society [1699] at the six-digit level [Gender Specific Studies] which is an imperfect solution.
- **Classical studies** – Australia's system subsumes ancient philosophy, ancient history, ancient Greek and Roman literature, and classical archaeology under current codes, but this means that Classical studies has become hidden in the research profiles of universities. We note the Canadian draft CRDC includes a code at the four-digit level – 'Classical Studies'.
- With regards to **Asia-focused research,** there are codes at the six-digit level but, as with other areas noted above, this research is effectively invisible in the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) exercise because assessment is at two- and four-digit code level.

Two other four-digit codes have come to our attention at this stage in the process, both of which have had challenges of meeting research thresholds within ERA are:

- **Language Studies [2004]** – analysis of ERA results over time indicate that increasingly that Language Studies research is being coded to Linguistics [2004] and to other areas such as Literary Studies etc. ERA results would indicate declining number of Units of

Assessment (UoA) in this code which is not necessarily a reflection of activity but of institutional drivers and perverse incentives directed at achieving higher ERA ratings.

- **Journalism and Professional Writing [1903]** – like Language Studies, Journalism and Professional Writing has seen reduced numbers of UoA across the ERA exercises (in 2018 there was only one UoA in this code). We are aware of submissions from the relevant professional associations that there is a case for 1903 to be relocated (as a new six-digit code) within the four-digit Communication and Media Studies [2001] code.

In addition, there are new and emerging areas in the humanities which have consolidated into significant areas of research since the last ANZSRC review, specifically **digital humanities** and **environmental humanities**.

In the case of **digital humanities**, it is not presently possible to map the extent of research activity in this area within the existing code structure. The ARC's Executive Director of the Humanities and Creative Arts, Professor Joanne Tompkins, has done an analysis of digital projects in the humanities and presented these findings at the AAH's Humanities, Arts and Culture Data Summit in March 2019. In attempting to capture the full spectrum of relevant digital research in the humanities, projects were selected on the basis that they contained at least one relevant six-digit code and a keyword and then were manually verified and vetted. This method revealed 108 research projects funded in the 2011-2018 period awarded a total of $41.4M and representing approximately 16 per cent of ARC-funded humanities projects.

Taxonomic classifications like the ANZSRC are not ready-made to accommodate cross-cutting research and make it especially difficult to track research that is **multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary** in nature. Multidisciplinary research is increasing in intensity across the humanities reflected in the use of multiple FoR codes used in research grant applications and apportioning of ERA outputs across multiple FoRs. There is also some provision within the existing codes for capturing this research, such as Asia-focused research via the 'catch-all' six-digit code [Studies of Asian Society – 169903], but again this research is not visible within ERA and the '16' code is in the social sciences.

Socio-economic objective

At this stage in the process we have not developed a formal position on changes to the SEO structure. We are aware of proposals for changes to SEOs for Indigenous research. We are also aware of a proposal for industry categories to better reflect emerging areas of economic activity and innovation (for policy planning purposes), including the cultural and creative industries.

Implementation

The AAH uses the codes for analysis of the humanities and arts disciplines against indicators of performance and capacity, including investment, staffing, and ERA ratings. The AAH's ***Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia*** (2014) report worked with both the ANZSRC and Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED) classifications to provide a data mapping of the HASS sector in Australia. We encountered difficulties dealing with these data, including but not limited to the fact that there are areas of research not visible within the existing classification system. From our standpoint, it has also been very difficult to develop a complete picture of the humanities teaching and research workforce because these data are maintained by the Higher Education Statistics Collections (and staff data by academic

organisational unit does not map to the FoR classifications) but only available at a four-digit level for teaching-only and teaching-and-research staff and the ERA data reports research-only and teaching-and-research staff. We would also observe that a top-down FoR approach to understanding the sector needs to be augmented by other qualitative data collection.

To develop a more meaningful picture of humanities research and an account of the extend of research on important social and cultural challenges, topic modelling approaches are needed. For the Academy's ***Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia*** report we were able to work with the ARC to conduct keyword searches across the ERA output dataset to identify output on Asia-related topics (p.66).

We think that there is a case for more responsiveness within the ANZSRC, including the possibility of updating codes on an ongoing basis in response to stakeholder feedback. This would ensure that the codes are dynamic and help offset some of the unintended or perverse consequences that can arise from implementation, including through ERA.