

### Main Panel C supplementary criteria – level definitions

1. In assessing outputs, the sub-panels will look for evidence of originality, significance and rigour, and apply the generic definitions of the starred quality levels as follows:

- a. In assessing work as being **four star** (quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour), sub-panels will expect to see some of the following characteristics:
  - outstandingly novel in developing concepts, paradigms, techniques or outcomes
  - a primary or essential point of reference
  - a formative influence on the intellectual agenda
  - application of exceptionally rigorous research design and techniques of investigation and analysis
  - generation of an exceptionally significant data set or research resource.
- b. In assessing work as being **three star** (quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence), sub-panels will expect to see some of the following characteristics:
  - novel in developing concepts, paradigms, techniques or outcomes
  - an important point of reference
  - contributing very important knowledge, ideas and techniques which are likely to have a lasting influence on the intellectual agenda
  - application of robust and appropriate research design and techniques of investigation and analysis
  - generation of a substantial data set or research resource.
- c. In assessing work as being **two star** (quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour), sub-panels will expect to see some of the following characteristics:
  - providing important knowledge and the application of such knowledge
  - contributing to incremental and cumulative advances in knowledge

- thorough and professional application of appropriate research design and techniques of investigation and analysis.
- d. In assessing work as being **one star** (quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour), sub-panels will expect to see some of the following characteristics:
- providing useful knowledge, but unlikely to have more than a minor influence
  - an identifiable contribution to understanding, but largely framed by existing paradigms or traditions of enquiry
  - competent application of appropriate research design and techniques of investigation and analysis.
- e. Research will be graded as '**unclassified**' if it falls below the quality levels described above or does not meet the definition of research used for the REF.