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**Author**

TAPPER, Ted

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Ted Tapper and Brian Salter

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**Abstract**

Given that the current Research Assessment Exercise (RAE 2001) has been completed, it is an appropriate time to explore the impact of the RAEs upon the character of British higher education. This timeliness is reinforced by the earlier publication of HEFCE's own 'Review of Research' (September 2000), the report from the House of Commons' Select Committee on Science and Technology Committee (April 2000), with a report due in April 2003 from the Joint Funding Bodies (under the auspices of Gareth Roberts). We are therefore in a period of review and consultation, which may culminate in a new assessment regime or, as its severest critics would hope, even its demise. While our analysis genuflects to these contemporary developments, it is constructed within a framework that interprets the RAE process as constituting a continuous struggle for the control of the production of high-status knowledge. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)