



AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION FOR MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN STUDIES

ABN: 32 595 701 126

Response to the ANZSRC review process.

ANZAMEMS is the peak organisation for Medieval and Early Modern Studies in Australasia. Our organisation has 250 members. The organisation represents the interests of scholars whose work covers, roughly, the period between 300 and 1800 of the Common Era. Geographically, the main concentration of scholarly focus pertains to the European continent, and adjacent regions such as North Africa and the Middle East. Our scholars work across a range of fields, including history, art history, literary studies, musicology, and, cultural studies.

Part of our membership also works in the reception of the Middle Ages and Early Modern periods in the modern era. We are not only concerned with the past, but with the way our period has constructed, and been constructed by, our present. Reception Studies is a field of substantial growth in Humanities research both within and beyond our membership where reception of the Classical Greek and Roman world and of the Victorian era represent significant fields within this emerging discipline.

The current FoR structure is not exhaustive, and as a result does not allow members to report their research accurately, resulting in flawed data reporting and collection that cannot support robust funding or evaluation processes.

As such, we welcome the opportunity to respond to this review process. For the reasons expressed below, our membership has considered current research classifications to inadequately represent the work that we do. This presents particular difficulties when it comes to having our research reach the best assessors under national competitive granting schemes. We would like to point out five major problems with the classifications for the ANZAMEMS cohort.

- 1) The current FoR structure, especially at 6-digit level, is not accommodating of our research because it does not recognise research that takes particular historical periods as its object of analysis. This compels our researchers to code their research under national codes which, as 2) below demonstrates, are unrepresentative of our research and result in poor data reporting.
- 2) The current FoR structure privileges national-based approaches to knowledge creation, focusing, for example, upon “Australian literature” or “English history”. Medieval and Early Modern Studies, however, is necessarily transnational and cross-cultural, because nation states do not exist for our period. Indeed, many members of



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our cohort recognise the fallacy of assuming modern nation states are “latent” in past polities.

- 3) The system discourages interdisciplinary research as FoR codes at 4- and 6-digit level assume a primary disciplinary. Medieval and Early Modern Studies demands interdisciplinarity, either in the form of methodological approach or in the form of collaborative scholarship, or both. Our members, although based in disciplines within the institutional structure of universities, produce scholarship that brings a range of approaches together, and which is frequently collaborative.
- 4) For literary researchers, the only current 6-digit code that accommodates research on literatures across cultures is 200524, Comparative Literary Studies. Comparative Literature is, however, a specific, linguistically-driven discipline that does not reflect our researchers’ approaches
- 5) The system does not recognise reception studies at all. Many of our members work in Medievalism Studies, which is the study of the cultural meanings of the Middle Ages in the present. Others work on the reception of Shakespeare in the contemporary world. At the moment, there is no clarity as to how they should code their work.

We therefore offer the following recommendations that we believe will better capture the nature of our research while addressing the principles of the review. We have offered two alternative approaches, which are designed to respond to revisions of different scopes. The first set of recommendations is designed for a revision in which existing structures are refined, while the second set of recommendations is designed to respond to a more wholesale revision of categories.

Recommendations for revisions under existing FoRC structure:

- 1) At the 6-digit code level, we argue for the inclusion of ‘Medieval and Early Modern Studies’ fields, to be housed under the following groups:
1903

2001, 2002, 2003 (2003xx Medieval and Early Modern Language Studies), 2004, 2005, 2099

2103 (2103xx Medieval and Early Modern History)

2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2299
- 2) At the 6-digit code level, we argue for the inclusion of ‘Reception Studies’ fields, to be housed under the following groups:
1903
2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 (2005xx Reception of Medieval and Early Modern Literature),
2099



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2103 (2103xx Reception of Medieval and Early Modern History)

2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2299

Recommendations for a revision to the existing FoRC structure:

The review Discussion Paper highlights a need to better classify interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research. As noted above, our members frequently conduct such research, and their work might be considered inherently interdisciplinary.

An alternative option that would align with the principles of the review – specifically mutual exclusivity, exhaustiveness, and statistical feasibility that are particular pressure points for data collection and management on interdisciplinary research – would be to establish a Division that eschews the current disciplinary-based structure altogether. The ARC Engagement and Impact Assessment of 2018 provided a cue with the opt-in Unit of Assessment ‘Interdisciplinary’. This was for submissions that could not be captured by existing two-digit codes. We recommend the following:

- 1) That the review panel consider the permanent establishment of a ‘Interdisciplinary Humanities’ Division, in order to capture, and encourage, interdisciplinary work.
- 2) That the 4-digit codes ‘Medieval and Early Modern Studies’ and ‘Reception Studies’ be established under this code
- 3) That appropriate 6-digit FoR codes be established as follows:
 - Medieval and Early Modern History
 - Medieval and Early Modern Literature
 - Medieval and Early Modern Art
 - Medieval and Early Modern Music
 - Reception of Medieval and Early Modern Culture

A new 2-digit Division would provide scope for additional Group and Field classifications that might meaningfully encompass a substantial proportion of emerging Humanities research beyond the immediate work of our members, including: Victoriana, Classics Reception, the Medical Humanities, and Humanities-based Science and Technology studies.