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# Expressions of interest: institutional-level environment pilot panel members

### Background

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions (HEIs). The REF is undertaken by the four UK higher education funding bodies. An independent review of the REF was conducted in 2016, led by Lord Nicholas Stern, leading to a number of recommendations.

A key recommendation of the Stern review was the introduction of an institutional-level submission for the environment in which HEIs conduct their research. This recommendation aimed to reduce duplication in submissions, enable the accurate representation of aspects of an institution’s environment that reflect institutional-level activity, and capture institution-wide strategic objectives and cross-cutting structures and initiatives. Following consultation in 2017, the funding bodies set out their decision to pilot the assessment of the institutional-level environment alongside REF 2021.

The ‘Draft guidance on submissions’ (REF 2018/01) sets out further detail about the information that should be submitted in the institutional-level environment statement. This statement will be provided to the REF sub-panels to inform their assessment of the unit-level environment. However, it will not be separately scored by the sub-panels. The statements will be separately reviewed by a pilot assessment panel, to inform the inclusion of a discrete, institutional-level element in future exercises. The pilot assessment will not inform the outcomes of REF 2021.

### Appointment of a pilot panel

The funding bodies are inviting expressions of interest for membership of the pilot panel that will contribute to finalising the guidance and criteria for the institutional-level environment statements, and that will undertake the assessment of these statements in 2021.

The panel will meet twice between November 2018 and summer 2019, with the first meeting scheduled to take place in London on 30 November 2018. The panel will reconvene for up to three meetings in the assessment phase during 2020/21 to assess the institutional-level submissions. Outside of meetings during this phase, members will be required to review submitted statements. Following completion of the assessment, the panel will produce a final report setting out the process of assessment, advice and recommendations.

Members will be eligible to receive fees, and travelling and subsistence expenses will be reimbursed according to an agreed scheme.

#### Panel composition and roles

The panel, which is chaired by Professor Chris Day of Newcastle University, will be made up of members with a broad base of relevant skills, experience (including some prior REF / RAE experience) and perspectives for the work of the panel. This will include:

* 1. Members with strategic-level research leadership experience, representing a spread of disciplines, and diversity of size and type of UK HEI
	2. Members who are able to provide a senior-level, international research perspective
	3. Members who are able to provide senior-level research funder and / or user perspectives

### Expression of interest procedure

To be considered for appointment, please complete an expression of interest (EOI) statement of no more than two sides of A4, explaining how you meet the person specification below. Please also confirm that you will be available for the first panel meeting on 30 November 2018.

Those expressing interest in these roles will be asked to fill in an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form after submitting their EOI. These data will be used to monitor representation on REF panels. Data collected through this form will not be used in the selection process.

Completed EOIs should be sent by email to Kim Hackett, REF director, at admin@ref.ac.uk, by **noon on Thursday 1 November 2018**.

Queries can be addressed to Myles Furr (0117 931 7387) or via email to admin@ref.ac.uk.

#### Eligibility for appointment

Membership of the pilot is open all individuals who meet the criteria set out in the person specification below.

The UK’s higher education funding bodies recognise that diversity of thought and experience contributes fundamental insight and value to the work of the REF, and that this insight and value comes not only from academic achievement but also from other aspects of panel members’ lives. We would therefore encourage individuals from diverse backgrounds to express interest for these positions.

#### Appointment process

We will recommend members for appointment using the criteria set out in the person specification (below) on the basis of EOIs, and in accordance with our aim for a spread of research expertise and diversity of HEI types. The selection panel will make recommendations for appointment to the four UK higher education funding bodies (as represented through the REF Steering Group), who will agree the appointment of pilot panel members.

## Pilot panel member role profile

### Key tasks:

* Finalising criteria and working methods for pilot assessment of institutional-level submissions, following consultation feedback
* Contributing to REF engagement with the research community. Engaging stakeholders and main and sub-panel members
* Undertaking calibration and assessment of institutional-level environment statements and providing feedback to institutions
* Agreeing advice and recommendations, and contributing to the panel’s final report
* Participating in the evaluation of the pilot

## Person specification

#### Experience

1. Either:
	1. **Essential**: Senior level, strategic experience of leading research within higher education, with significant experience in decision making to support research and impact. This experience can be within the UK, and / or with experience of working in this capacity within an international context;

**Desirable**: Senior level, strategic experience of leading research within a variety of HEI sizes and types;

or

* 1. Senior level experience within a sector outside of HE (including private, public and / or voluntary), with significant experience in leading or commissioning the application of research, and of partnership working with HEIs;

or

* 1. Senior-level research funder experience, demonstrating strategic understanding and knowledge of the HE research landscape, with significant experience in commissioning research and / or its application across a range of disciplines.
1. Experience of peer review or research evaluation, and of applying research quality standards.
2. Experience at senior level of working within committees or groups, and offering sound and constructive advice or recommendations.

#### Knowledge and understanding

1. Understanding of the purpose and influence of the REF within the research landscape.
2. Understanding of the factors that contribute to a vital and sustainable environment for conducting research and enabling impact across an organisation.
3. Broad knowledge of equality and diversity issues within higher education and / or research.

#### Availability

1. Flexibility to attend and availability to participate in pilot panel meetings, to engage in preparatory and follow-up work, and to engage with the sector as required.