

# Model REF Data Collection Statements for HEIs

Updated: August 2019, February 2020 and July 2020.

## Model Staff Data Collection Statement for the REF 2021

The purpose of the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF 2021) is to assess the quality of UK research and to inform the selective distribution of public funds for research by the four UK higher education funding bodies. The REF is managed by the REF team, based at Research England (RE), on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies. RE is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and under this arrangement UKRI has the role of 'data controller' for personal data submitted by us to the REF.

If you are a researcher who has been included as part of our submission to the REF 2021, in 2021 we will send some of the information we hold about you to UKRI for the purpose of the REF 2021. The information will not be in coded form and your name and details such as your date of birth, Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID), research groups, and contract dates will be provided along with details of your research. If you have declared individual circumstances and a request is made to allow a reduction in the number of outputs submitted, without penalty, some details of your personal circumstances will be provided.

You can find further information about what data are being collected on the REF website, at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk) in particular publication 2019/01, 'Guidance on submissions'.

### Sharing information about you

UKRI may pass your data, or parts of it, to any of the following organisations that need it to inform the selective distribution of public funds for research and to carry out their statutory functions connected with funding higher education:

- Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland (DfE)
- Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)
- Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

Some of your data (Unit of Assessment, HESA staff identifier code and date of birth) will also be passed to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to enable it to verify coded data returned to it as part of our HESA staff return (see [www.hesa.ac.uk](http://www.hesa.ac.uk)). Data returned to the REF will be linked to that held on the HESA staff record to allow UKRI and the organisations listed above to conduct additional analysis into the REF and fulfil their statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 (England, Wales and Scotland) or the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Northern Ireland).

UKRI and the organisations listed above will use the information to analyse and monitor the REF 2021. This may result in information being released to other users including academic researchers or consultants (commissioned by the funding bodies), to carry out research or analysis, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679). Where information not previously published is released to third parties, this will be anonymised where practicable.

UKRI will require that anyone who has access to your data, held in UKRI's records, paper or electronic, will respect its confidentiality and will only process it in accordance with instructions issued for the purposes specified by UKRI.

Parts of your data will be passed to the REF expert panels and the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (whose members are independent of UKRI) for the purpose of conducting a systematic evaluation of submissions, in accordance with predetermined criteria and methods. Panels will make judgments about the material contained in submissions and will not form quality judgments about individuals. All panel members are bound by confidentiality arrangements.

### **Publishing information about your part in our submission**

The results of the assessment exercise will be published by UKRI, on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies, in April 2022. The published results will not be based on individual performance nor identify individuals.

Those parts of submissions that contain factual data and textual information about research activity will also be published by UKRI, on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies, and will be made available online. Published information is likely to include **textual information including impact case studies in which you may be referenced**. Your name, job title and periods of employment may be included in this textual information. Other personal and contractual details, including your date of birth and all information about individual staff circumstances will be removed. *[Guidance to HEIs: Note that impact case studies, environment statements and other textual information should not normally be submitted with personal information (other than names and job titles), and that usually any personal information (other than names and job titles) should be removed in the redacted version(s) that are submitted. You should include here any further clarifications based on your redaction process.]*

Unless redacted, the information to be published by UKRI, on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies, will include a single list of all the outputs submitted by us in each Unit of assessment. The list of outputs will include standard bibliographic data for each output, but will not be listed by author name.

### **Data about personal circumstances**

You may voluntarily declare personal circumstances to your submitting unit, which could permit us to submit your information to the REF without the 'minimum of one' output requirement (without penalty), or to submit a reduced number of outputs without penalty. If (and only if) we apply either form of reduction of outputs, we will need to provide UKRI with individual-level data that you have declared about your individual circumstances, to show that the criteria have been met for reducing the number of outputs. Please see the 'Guidance on submissions' document (paragraphs 151-201) for more detail about reductions in outputs and what information needs to be submitted. *[Guidance to HEIs: You may wish to refer to internal procedures for disclosing circumstances.]*

Submitted data will be kept confidential to the REF team, the Equalities and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs. All these bodies are subject to confidentiality arrangements. *[Guidance to HEIs: You should include here confirmation / clarification about how you will be anonymising data on circumstances provided in REF6].* The REF team will destroy the submitted data about individuals' circumstances on completion of the assessment phase.

We will send to Research England a report that will include a summary of all voluntarily declared personal circumstances, whether or not they were used to reduce the output requirements. This

report will only contain data in aggregated form and will not contain information that will identify individual members of staff.

### **Accessing your personal data**

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR, you have the right to request a copy of any personal information that UKRI holds about you. Further information about the Act and GDPR, and guidance on making a subject access request, can be found on the RE website at <https://re.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards/foi-data-protection/>

If you have any concerns about your information being used for these purposes, please contact:

Data Protection Officer  
UK Research and Innovation  
Polaris House  
Swindon, SN2 1FL

Email: [dataprotection@ukri.org](mailto:dataprotection@ukri.org)

**[HEIs should include a link to their own Privacy Notice, which should conform to the requirements of Article 13 of the GDPR]**

# Model Data Collection Statement for the REF 2021 – Non-Staff

## About the REF

The purpose of the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF 2021) is to assess the quality of UK research and to inform the selective distribution of public funds for research by the four UK higher education funding bodies. The REF outcomes are used to calculate about £2 billion per year of public funding for universities' research, and affect their international reputations. The results also inform strategic decisions about national research priorities. The next REF will be undertaken in 2021.

The REF was first carried out in 2014, replacing the previous Research Assessment Exercise. It included for the first time an assessment of the broader impact of universities' research beyond academia: on the economy, society, culture, public policy and services, health, the environment and quality of life – within the UK and internationally.

Impact is assessed through the submission of case studies, which describe the changes or benefits brought about by research undertaken by researchers at the institution. Impressive impacts were found across all disciplines, with 44 per cent of submissions judged to be outstanding. A database of case studies submitted in 2014 can be found here:

<https://impact.ref.ac.uk/>.

## Data collection

The REF is managed by the REF team, based at Research England (RE), on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies. RE is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and under this arrangement UKRI has the role of 'data controller' for personal data submitted by us to the REF.

You may have provided information for one or more impact case studies or environment statements as part of our submission to the REF 2021. In 2021 we will send information about impact case studies and environment statements to UKRI for the purpose of the REF 2021. The information will not be in coded form and your name - and details such as your job title and organisational affiliation - may be provided in these narrative statements. We refer to this information about you as 'your data'.

You can find further information about what data are being collected on the REF website, at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk) in particular publication 2019/01, 'Guidance on submissions'. Annex G of that document sets out the data that we will be required to share with UKRI.

## Sharing information about you

UKRI may pass your data, or parts of it, to any of the following organisations that need it to inform the selective distribution of public funds for research and to carry out their statutory functions connected with funding higher education:

- Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland (DfE)
- Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)
- Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

UKRI and the organisations listed above will use the information to analyse and monitor the REF 2021. This may result in information being released to other users including academic researchers or consultants (commissioned by the funding bodies), to carry out research or analysis, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679). Where information not previously published is released to third parties, this will be anonymised where practicable.

UKRI will require that anyone who has access to your data, held in UKRI's records, paper or electronic, will respect its confidentiality and will only process it in accordance with instructions issued for the purposes specified by UKRI.

Parts of your data will be passed to the REF expert panels and the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (whose members are independent of UKRI) for the purpose of conducting a systematic evaluation of submissions, in accordance with predetermined criteria and methods. All panel members are bound by confidentiality arrangements.

### **Publishing information about your part in our submission**

The results of the assessment exercise will be published by UKRI, on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies, in April 2022.

Those parts of submissions that contain factual data and textual information about research activity will also be published by UKRI, on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies, and will be made available online. Published information is likely to include **textual information including impact case studies in which you may be referenced**. Your name and job title may be included in this textual information. Other personal details will normally be removed.

*[Guidance to HEIs: Note that impact case studies, environment statements and other textual information should not normally be submitted with personal information (other than names and job titles), and that usually any personal information (other than names and job titles) should be removed in the redacted version(s) that are submitted. You should include here any further clarifications based on your redaction process.]*

### **Accessing your personal data**

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR, you have the right to request a copy of any personal information that UKRI holds about you. Further information about the Act and GDPR, and guidance on making a subject access request, can be found on the RE website at <https://re.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards/foi-data-protection/>

If you have any concerns about your information being used for these purposes, please contact:

Data Protection Officer  
UK Research and Innovation  
Polaris House  
Swindon, SN2 1FL

Email: [dataprotection@ukri.org](mailto:dataprotection@ukri.org)

**[HEIs should include a link to their own Privacy Notice, which should conform to the requirements of Article 13 of the GDPR]**