



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

REF2021

University of Edinburgh
REF 2021 Code of Practice
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Code of Practice

Part 1: Introduction

1. The Research Excellence Framework 2021 (hereafter referred to as REF 2021) is the system for assessing the quality of research in higher education institutions (HEIs) in the UK. The purpose of the exercise is to assess the quality of UK research and inform the selective allocation of research grants to institutions by the four UK higher education funding bodies with effect from 2022-23.

Section 1: A culture of inclusivity

2. REF 2021 is governed by three principles: equity; equality; and transparency. The University of Edinburgh embraces these principles and in doing so we strive to build a culture which supports inclusion, celebrates difference, challenges prejudice and ensures fairness. We aim to create a university community where all individuals are able to develop to their full potential so that they can contribute to the success of the University as a world-leading centre of academic excellence. Our staff and students are our greatest assets and we are committed to ensuring that all members of the University community are able to excel, and to be respected and valued for their unique perspectives and contributions. It is recognised that individuals contribute to the goals of the University in different ways at different stages in their career and not all academic staff will be included in the REF 2021 submissions. **There will be individuals performing roles which support fully the objectives of their College or School/Deanery, whose primary focus will not constitute independent research, where non-inclusion in the REF 2021 submissions will not affect a person's career opportunities within the University. The University takes a long term and holistic view of the output of its research active staff; no decision about an individual's career trajectory will be taken on the basis of the REF 2021 assessment cycle.**
3. The principles outlined in this Code echo the values of the University of Edinburgh Strategy 2030 <https://www.ed.ac.uk/about/strategy-2030> . These values include:
 - welcoming community;
 - diverse, inclusive and accessible;
 - a place of transformation and of self-improvement;
 - ambitious, bold and act with integrity;
 - principled, considerate and respectful.

Section 2: Update of actions taken since REF 2014

4. There have been a number of changes made to REF since REF 2014 and the [Stern Review](#) that followed. Various new measures have been introduced with the purpose of ensuring equality and diversity in research careers is promoted.
5. REF 2014 allowed HEIs to select which eligible academic staff should be included. In contrast, REF 2021 has an expectation that all staff with significant responsibility for research should be included. REF has given 2 routes to achieve this: identifying which academic staff with research in their roles have significant responsibility for research, and only submitting that subset; or submitting all eligible academic staff. The University will do the latter.
6. The University will be as inclusive as possible, through a return of 100% of its eligible academic staff. Eligibility is defined by REF as: "Academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, on the payroll of the submitting institution on the census date, whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'teaching & research'. Staff should have a substantive research connection with the submitting unit. Staff on 'research only'



contracts should meet the definition of an independent researcher.”¹ These staff are known as Category A eligible staff. This Code will therefore cover the processes for determining research independence. It will also cover the process for selecting outputs associated with eligible staff to be returned to REF 2021.

7. Following changes to data protection legislation on 25 May 2018, when the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 came into force, replacing the Data Protection Act 1998, the University continues to work to implement this new data legislation. Owing to the various types of personal data that will be required for validation and audit purposes in relation to the University’s REF 2021 submission, a separate [University Privacy Notice for REF 2021](#) has been developed to complement the [University of Edinburgh Privacy Notice for Staff](#).
8. Since REF 2014, the University has taken a wide variety of actions to increase the support for staff from a range of protected characteristic groups. These are listed in our Mainstreaming Equality Progress Report, which can be found on our [website](#). Highlights include:
 - Introduced unconscious bias training for staff involved in recruitment and selection.
 - Receiving the Athena Swan Silver award at institutional level in recognition of support for women in academic careers. Received for the first time in 2015 and renewed in 2018.
 - Established a BME staff network and refreshed the existing LGBT+ staff network
9. All staff, irrespective of contract type, are treated the same. This includes in terms of equality and diversity, and also in relation to the way in which decisions about REF 2021 will be made. The University is committed to periodic review of its policies to ensure they remain current and aligned to good practice across the sector. Recent examples include:
 - In collaboration with UCU Edinburgh, the University has been working to enhance the employment experience of those staff on fixed-term (and guaranteed hours) contracts.
 - The University is committed to the good practice advocated within the refreshed Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

Section 3: Demonstrating fairness

10. The REF 2021 ‘Guidance on submissions’ (hereafter GoS) and ‘Panel criteria & working methods’ (hereafter PCWM) provide the basis for the detailed advice contained in this Code of Practice. This Code of Practice has three core purposes:
 - To determine who is an independent researcher. It provides research only staff with clear guidance about the process through which individuals will be identified as independent researchers and included in the University’s REF submissions; and provides those staff involved in the decision-making process with clear guidance and advice about how to apply the selection criteria.
 - To define the process for selection of outputs in the REF 2021 submissions.
 - To promote the principles of equality and diversity, and to comply with all relevant employment legislation. Protected characteristics and other relevant employment legislation are outlined in Appendix K.
11. The University will therefore ensure that the criteria, policies and procedures that support the REF 2021 process will be subject to equality impact assessments (EIA) to test their fairness (see Part 4). The outcome of the University’s final EIA will be made openly available along with the actions taken to address any issues that arise. EIAs will be undertaken in line with University policies and procedures (further information is available on the [University E&D webpages](#)).
12. The Code has been developed in light of the REF 2021 publications, and in consultation with:

¹ From the [Guidance on submissions REF 2019/01](#) (paragraph 117).



- The University HR Services;
- Vice Principal People & Culture;
- Trades unions, involving consultation with UCU Edinburgh and Scotland, and the University's Combined Joint Consultative Negotiative Committee (CJCNC), including presentation at CJCNC's March 2019 meeting;
- The University's academic staff, via an open consultation, including a series of 6 town hall meetings in January 2019 across the University's campuses;
- University committees including: the University's REF Board; University People Committee; *Senatus Academicus*; and the University Executive (UE).

We are grateful for comments from individuals and the various groups, which have helped ensure clarity and flow of the document. Suggestions about staff circumstances and the communications plan have been particularly informative in helping shape these key elements of the Code.

13. The University submitted its Code of Practice to REF by 7 June 2019, as required, and is submitting this amended code in October 2020. The approved Code of Practice will be published by REF before the submission, and the Code will also be published by REF with the University's submission in 2022.

Guiding principles

14. In addition to REF 2021's principles, this Code is underpinned by six guiding principles to demonstrate fairness to the University's staff:
- *Transparency*: All processes for determining research independence, and selecting outputs for inclusion in the University's REF 2021 submission will be available in an easily accessible format and publicised to all academic and other relevant staff across the institution. This information will be made publicly available on the University website and drawn to the attention of those staff who are absent from work (see footnote 3). The processes setting out: i) how research independence will be determined; and ii) how outputs will be selected for submission are laid out in Part 2 and Part 3, respectively. The Code is supported by a clear programme of communication to explain the selection process; this is laid out in the Code communication strategy below.
 - *Consistency*: The University is committed to ensuring that its REF 2021 decision-making processes are consistent across the institution and that the Code of Practice is implemented uniformly. The Code therefore sets out the principles and criteria that will be applied at all stages of the process where decisions will be made.
 - *Accountability*: Individuals and bodies appointed to make decisions with respect to: i) the determination of research independence; and ii) the selection of outputs for the REF 2021 submission will have clearly defined terms of reference and responsibilities. These are outlined below. Acknowledging that the preparations for REF 2021 are already well underway, the processes adopted to date will be reviewed following approval and publication of this Code and, where necessary, adjustments made. The Code includes a detailed training plan and details of the training undertaken by those who are involved in the REF 2021 processes will be recorded centrally. Operating criteria and terms of reference for individuals, committees, advisory groups and any other bodies concerned with these processes are available to all individuals and groups concerned via this Code.
 - *Inclusivity*: The University is firmly committed to fostering and promoting an inclusive environment and will apply this Code across all Units of Assessment (UOAs), enabling the University to identify all research only academic staff who meet the REF definition of



Category A eligible² who are independent researchers, and the excellent research produced by all eligible staff.

- *Quality*: While adhering to all other principles, decisions on output inclusion for REF 2021 will be based primarily on the quality of the outputs in terms of originality, significance and rigour. For impact case studies the quality in terms of reach and significance will be assessed to inform selection for submission. Output selection decisions will also have to factor in the REF 2021 rules including, but not limited to, minimum/maximum outputs per person.
- *Application*: The processes defined in the Code of Practice and the outcomes of 'independent researcher' and 'output selection' decisions are only to be applied in the context of REF 2021. These decisions will not impact on an individual's employment status, pay or condition of service. This is regardless of whether they are excluded from the REF 2021 submission, based on the University's interpretation of REF's criteria for research independence. For those individuals included in the submission, the University stresses that the number of an individual's outputs included in the University's submission to REF 2021 is not the only indication of the contribution made by the individual to the University of Edinburgh. The final publication of the REF submission will not include the names of staff submitted (GoS 38).

Section 4: Code communication strategy

15. The purpose of the Code communication strategy is to ensure effective dissemination of the Code to explain the processes and procedures related to the determination of researcher independence and the selection of outputs for the University's submission (Appendix G).
16. Once the Code was signed off by the University Executive, a variety of mechanisms for communication of the Code were implemented. This included:
 - University-wide email to all academic staff.
 - Heads of College to disseminate the Code (via email and other means as needed) to all academic staff within their College, with the expectation that the Code will be discussed at Staff Meetings as part of normal REF 2021 discussions.
 - Announcement in College and School/Deanery newsletters.
 - Publication of the Code of Practice on the University website (only once approved by REF).
 - Publication of the Code on the University intranet and internal wikis and SharePoints (in .pdf and .doc formats) that are relevant to REF 2021.
 - Notices about the Code in the following internal publications/portals: eBulletin; Bulletin; Staff News; MyEd.
 - Circulation of hard copy notices about the Code to the Schools/Deaneries.
 - Mail of hard copies to the home addresses of those who are away from work on long term absence³.
 - A series of open/town hall meetings hosted around the University.
 - The Code and associated documents and communications will be made available in accessible formats, as appropriate.

² Eligibility as defined in the REF 2021 Guidance on submissions, Part 3, Section1 – see Appendix M

³ In line with University policy, contact with staff on long term absence (>4 weeks) will be maintained as a line management responsibility. This is unless the University's occupational health unit or another medical body advise/request for contact to not be maintained between the workplace and employee during their absence.



Section 5: Management and decision-making structures (staff and committees)

17. The submission will be overseen by the Vice Principal (Planning, Resources and Research Policy), and will be managed by the Governance & Strategic Planning (GaSP) University Team REF, led by the University REF Manager (Appendix D).
18. The University's Research Policy Group (RPG) is responsible for all matters relating to research, including having oversight of the delivery of external assessments such as REF. RPG reports to the University Executive (UE), and recommended to UE that the University form the REF Board and proposed the membership for the Board.
19. The REF Board will play a key role formulating the University's REF 2021 submission strategy and policy. It is the main forum for REF discussion and will make the final decisions regarding the University's submission to REF 2021, consulting with the UE and RPG as appropriate. Terms of reference of REF Board have received formal approval from UE (see Appendix A).
20. Each College and UOA has named academic and administrative coordinators, who together are responsible for the management and administration of the REF 2021 submission process in their area (see Appendix C). Lists of staff involved are available on the [REF 2021 SharePoint](#).
21. UOA-level review panels, led by the UOA coordinator, include sufficient staff from across the UOA to provide the requisite range of expertise to effectively evaluate proposed outputs. UOA coordinator appointment and review panel selection is undertaken at a local level, the processes for which have been reviewed via an EIA (Appendix L).
22. The University Team REF, chaired by the University REF Manager, and including representatives from the Colleges, GaSP and Library Research Support, oversees the administrative arrangements for REF 2021. It provides operational support to members of REF Board in the exercise of their responsibilities.
23. The REF Board has appointed a REF 2021 Equality & Diversity Review Group (EDRG) to advise the University's REF Board, Heads of College and Heads of School/Deanery on REF 2021 matters relating to equality and diversity. EDRG comprises a REF Board appointed Chair and members present in an *ex officio* capacity as follows: a representative from University Human Resources Services (UHRS); a representative from GaSP; a College-appointed senior academic or professional manager from each of the Colleges of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, Science & Engineering, and Medicine & Veterinary Medicine; and a representative of UCU Edinburgh. All members have been selected based on their experience and expertise of equality and diversity issues, as well as their knowledge of the REF 2021 guidance. The EDRG terms of reference are available in Appendix A.
24. An EIA will be undertaken regarding the University's REF 2021 management and decision-making structure to identify any areas of potential discrimination and in response, to develop steps to enhance equality and diversity. (Appendix L)
25. The management structure and the roles and responsibilities of the different entities/individuals involved in REF 2021 decision-making are summarised in Appendices B, C and D.

Section 6: Training

26. Members of University groups, committees and panels, designated officers and staff (both academic and professional services) involved in the compilation of the University's REF 2021 submission have been offered REF-focused development and training opportunities designed to meet their needs with regard to equality and diversity and which enable them to understand their respective responsibilities in the process. The training is mandatory for individuals involved in any decision-making as follows.
27. Following release of the final versions of the REF 2021 publications (31 January 2019), and further expert advice from REF and AdvanceHE in spring/summer 2019, the University



coordinated development of a bespoke training package, tailored to the REF 2021 process and including modules on unconscious bias, staff circumstances, legal context and equality impact assessments. The EDRG actively input to this development.

28. **Unconscious bias training** is being provided to all individuals involved in any REF 2021 advisory or decision-making processes, including the determination of independent researchers and the selection of outputs. There are two stages to the provision of unconscious bias training:
 - Individuals involved must have completed the University's "Overcoming Unconscious Bias" training module (up to September 2019) or "Challenging Unconscious Bias" (after September 2019). This is an online course that aims to increase understanding of unconscious bias in the workplace.
 - , Individuals should complete the unconscious bias module in the University's REF 2021 training package (paragraph 26). It is a requirement that all staff involved in any decision-making related to REF 2021 have completed this module.
29. **Staff circumstances training** is provided to all individuals involved in the processes of requesting, processing, reviewing and evaluating the voluntary declaration of individual staff circumstances related to the University's REF 2021 submission (Appendix B). In addition, staff in receipt of the associated staff circumstances metadata (excluding details of the circumstances), including UOA coordinators, are also required to complete the staff circumstances training module. The training covers processes relating to voluntary declaration of both clearly defined staff circumstances and staff circumstances requiring a judgement (including those requiring a minimum of 1 waiver), as defined in Part 4. This training is also provided via the University's REF 2021 training package (paragraph 27).
30. Case studies are used as an integral part of the training to offer staff the opportunity to practise implementation of the equality guidance.
31. In addition to unconscious bias and staff circumstances, the training package provides information about **relevant legislation and explains the legal obligations** that apply to individuals and organisations.
32. Training requirements of the individuals, groups and committees involved in REF 2021 decision-making are summarised in Appendix B. More detailed information about the training package is available to staff via the [University's training delivery system \(Learn\)](#). Completion of training is monitored.
33. UOA academic coordinators must ensure that any external advisors receive appropriate briefing in the application of the Code when participating in University processes. In particular, guidance is provided via the intranet about the types of comments sought from external advisors on individual outputs.

Part 2: Determining research independence

34. The University, as a research-intensive institution, plans to be as inclusive as possible in terms of the staff being returned to REF 2021.
35. Information submitted through the University's Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) returns from 2017-2018 onwards will be used as the basis for our REF 2021 submission. Staff will be included if they are:
 - Classified on the University's HR system (Oracle) as i) 'teaching & research' or ii) 'research only'
AND
 - On a contract of 0.2 FTE or above
AND
 - For those identified as 'research only', are identified as an independent researcher



36. ALL staff whose primary employment function (as defined in job segment 3) is 'teaching & research' are eligible and will be returned, regardless of grade. For the avoidance of doubt, all 'teaching & research' staff are assumed to be independent researchers with significant responsibility for research and will consequently be submitted to REF 2021. Appendix E, page 26, contains a flowchart that illustrates eligibility.
37. As detailed in paragraph 6, Category A eligible staff who are 'research only' must, in addition to having a contract of 0.2 FTE or more, be classified as an independent researcher to be considered Category A submitted for REF 2021. The University has iteratively developed a set of criteria based on the information provided in the GoS (paragraphs 128-133).

Section 1: Policies & procedures

38. For all staff whose primary employment function (as defined in job segment 3) is 'research only' the following criteria will be applied to ascertain research independence at the census date (31 July 2020).
- If one of the following criteria is met, the researcher is considered to be independent:
 - Principal Investigator (PI) on an external research grant
 - Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement (REF have provided a non-exhaustive list which is available [online](#))
 - Responsible for a distinct body of research on a large external research grant (for example, a Co-Investigator (CoI) and/or work package leader)
 - If a researcher does not meet the above criteria, but does meet one of the following combinations of criteria, then they will be considered to be an independent researcher for the purpose of REF 2021:
 - Conducting self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research; AND responsible for a distinct body of research on a smaller external research grant (for example, a CoI)
 - Conducting self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research; AND leading a research group
 - Conducting self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research; AND supervisor of a PhD student (within the REF 2021 assessment period, but not necessarily on the census date)
39. The research independence summary and flowchart presented in Appendix E can be used to help inform decisions.
40. Researcher independence is determined at College level, involving College Academic Coordinators and College REF Officers, in liaison with the GaSP Team REF, utilising the common decision matrix/flowchart detailed above and in Appendix E. The process for research independence determination commenced in late 2018 and continued through 2019, ongoing until the census date, as appropriate. A targeted exercise took place in the last six months of 2019 to ensure the independence status of researchers is clarified as soon as possible for the majority of researchers.
41. Once the initial process for research independence determination was carried out at College level, Heads of School/Deanery or academic line managers were responsible for confirming, based on the criteria, whether the 'research only' staff they manage meet the criteria. Once confirmation was received, staff who were identified, for REF 2021 purposes, as independent researchers (they will be included in the REF 2021 submission) were notified by email (or other means, as appropriate), to their work email address (or, if currently absent from work, by other means as appropriate (see footnote 3)). There was a general announcement to all 'research



only' staff about the appeals process (paragraphs 46-49) for independent researcher determination, highlighting that if staff have not received notification of independence they should assume they have been determined as being a non-independent researcher for the purposes of REF 2021 (they will not be included in the submission). All communications related to this made clear that this is purely for REF 2021 purposes, and will have no impact on their career.

42. See Appendices F and G for the research independence timeline and communications.
43. The University's method for identifying staff who meet the definition of an independent researcher has been designed to ensure transparency and consistency in the process across the University's 3 Colleges. Decisions should be, where possible, based on information available in University's HR, finance and student record system, ensuring as objective an approach as possible.
44. In the interests of consistency and in order to monitor the process effectively for identifying individuals who meet the definition of an independent researcher, evidence in support of decisions/actions will be collated and logged centrally.

Section 2: Staff, committees and training

Please refer to Part 1, Section 6.

Section 3: Appeals

45. The University developed an appeals process (paragraphs 46-49, below) to support the REF 2021 exercise in order to facilitate appeals to be dealt with expeditiously within the timeframe for the REF 2021 census date (31 July 2020).
46. Any person who is dissatisfied with the decision regarding their research independence status may lodge a written appeal to the Principal, care of the Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning, setting out the grounds for appeal. The appeal must be evidence-based and refer to this Code of Practice. All appeals were to be lodged by April 2020.
47. A special University-level group composed of senior officers with no previous involvement in the case, comprising a Vice Principal, the Director of Human Resources and the Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning, will be invited by the Principal to consider the case and make its recommendation to the Principal. The group will record the reasons for its recommendations.
48. The appellant and their Head of School/Deanery (or nominee/equivalent) and Head of College were to be notified of the outcome of their appeal in writing by July 2020.
49. The decision of the Principal is final.
50. The process for defining research independence has been designed to ensure a transparent and consistent process that is evidence based. It is hoped that this, in combination with an effective communications plan, will minimise the incidence of any persons being dissatisfied about the ruling regarding their research independence.
51. On that basis, there are only 2 grounds for appeal:
 - Points of error in the databases being checked for evidence of the individual meeting the research independence criteria (*for example, incorrect record of a PhD student's supervisor(s)*)
 - The individual's situation has changed since the original assessment, such that they now meet the criteria (*for example, they have recently secured an externally funded research grant as a PI*)
52. Communication of the appeals process includes:
 - Details of the process clearly articulated in this Code of Practice (above), and publicised via the Code communication plan (Part 1, Section 4)
 - Reiteration of the appeals process and timeframe in the notification to staff (paragraph 41)

Section 4: Equality impact assessment

Please refer to Part 4.

Part 3: Selection of outputs

Section 1: Policies & procedures

53. The main factor that will inform decisions regarding which outputs will be submitted to REF 2021 is that of the quality of the research outputs. In addition the University will need to ensure that the requirements by REF (including minimum/maximum number of outputs per staff member) are adhered to. In making these assessments, the University will take due consideration of the REF 2021 publications.
54. The University expects its submission will reflect the breadth and dynamism of research at the University conducted during the REF 2021 assessment period. We expect the majority of outputs that we return to REF 2021 will be associated with current Category A submitted staff but, where the highest quality of research would be illustrated by including outputs associated with eligible staff who are former employees on the census date, we will consider including these on the same basis as any other eligible output, and these outputs will be subject to the processes outlined in this document. This will apply regardless of the reason that the individual staff member is former. This is in line with the [Key Decisions](#) document, published by the REF 2021 Steering Group.
55. The University's REF Board will make the final decisions about the UOAs to which the University will submit, and take responsibility for the research outputs included, acting upon any recommendations made by RPG. The decisions with respect to any staff circumstances will be informed by the REF Equality & Diversity Review Group's recommendations to REF Board.
56. The University has developed a rigorous, fair and transparent procedure for output selection that can be applied consistently across the University. This is outlined below (paragraphs 57-63) with more detailed recommendations presented on the [REF 2021 SharePoint](#).
57. Individuals will have the opportunity to nominate outputs for consideration. An internal peer review process will lead to identification of individual/personal "bests" to satisfy the "minimum of one" requirement.
58. The remainder of a UOA output pool will be determined via ordinal ranking (best of the rest) of outputs, involving a system with adequate granularity to ensure fairness and efficiency in the determination of which outputs are ultimately included in the University's submission. Iterations will be undertaken as needed, to ensure no individual has more than 5 outputs in the submitted pool attributed to them.
59. To ensure consistency and transparency across the University's submission and help implement its REF 2021 strategy, while adhering to the REF rules, the University has provided general recommendations to Colleges/UOAs for review, ordinal ranking and selection of outputs for submission. The document is available to all staff via the [REF 2021 SharePoint](#)
60. Selection of outputs is an iterative process that will continue until the final submission is made to REF. This process will ensure that the highest quality research in REF terms for each of the University's UOAs is submitted and that there is maximum opportunity for individuals to have their research that has been undertaken within the assessment period considered for submission.
61. As part of its commitment to the responsible use of metrics in the assessment of research, the University has signed DoRA, the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment. We have also developed an agreed [set of principles](#) on the use of quantitative data and metrics on research activity which will direct all research evaluation and assessment undertaken at the University. This was published in May 2019.



62. Our guidance to Colleges and UOAs is in line with the principles of DoRA and the broader University of Edinburgh principles (paragraph 61). In particular, decision makers (Appendix C) will use discipline-appropriate established quantitative and qualitative information across the full range of research activity to support the evaluation of outputs for inclusion in REF 2021.
63. No single quantitative metric will be used in deciding which outputs are to be included.

Section 2: Staff, committees and training

Please refer to Part 1, Section 6.

Section 3: Voluntary declaration of circumstances

64. REF require that a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 5 outputs must be attributed to each member of staff, with an average of 2.5 outputs per FTE included in the University's REF submission.
65. However, as a key measure to support and promote equality and diversity in research careers, the effect that an individual's circumstances may have on their productivity during the assessment period will be recognised through a voluntary declaration process. Such declarations will be reflected in the University's expectations of the affected individual's contribution to the output pool.
66. There are 2 types of applicable circumstances: clearly-defined circumstances (paragraph 67); and circumstances requiring a judgement (paragraph 68).
67. Applicable clearly-defined circumstances are as follows (GoS 160a-d):
- Qualifying as a REF-defined early career researcher (first became an independent researcher since 1st August 2016)⁴ (ECR; GoS 148-149)
 - Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks
 - Qualifying periods of family-related leave⁵ (GoS Annex L, paragraphs 6-9)
 - Junior clinical academics⁶ (JCA; GoS 162-163)

The nominal reductions associated with clearly-defined circumstances are outlined in Appendix H.

68. Circumstances with an equivalent effect to absence, that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs (GoS 160e):
- Disability (GCoP Table 1);
 - Ill health, injury, or mental health conditions;
 - Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of, or justify the reduction of further outputs in addition to, standard qualifying periods of family-related leave;
 - Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member);
 - Gender reassignment;
 - Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed in the REF Guidance on Codes of Practice (Appendix K; GCoP, Table 1). This includes any direct or indirect COVID-19 related circumstances.
69. Additionally, while part-time working is already accounted for via the UOA output pool requirement, a staff member may make a voluntary declaration should their FTE late in the assessment period substantially differ from their average FTE over the whole assessment period, for example if they have moved from 0.2 to 1.0 FTE.

⁴ See Appendices H and M for more details

⁵ See Appendix H for more details

⁶ See Appendices H and M for more details



Minimum of 1 waiver

70. Exceptional circumstances (GoS 181) that would reduce the outputs required by an individual to zero will be recognised, and applied at both the individual and output level.
71. Where staff have not produced a REF-eligible output within the assessment period and where exceptional staff circumstances have been the reason for this, the University will recognise these circumstances and reduce the required outputs of the individual to zero and the UOA output pool by 1, as permitted in the REF 2021 Guidance on submissions (GoS 178).
72. Applicable circumstances within the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020 will be in line with those identified by REF (GoS 178-183):
 - Total period of absence from research of 46 months or more, due to one or more of the circumstances listed in paragraphs 67 and 68 *e.g. an ECR who has only been employed as an eligible staff member for part of the assessment period.*
 - Circumstances equivalent to a total period of absence from research of 46 months or more, where circumstances (paragraphs 68) apply. *Such as mental health issues, caring responsibility, long-term health conditions.*
 - Two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave (paragraph 67).
 - (Amendment following publication of Guidance on revisions to REF 2021, paragraph 21ab): Disruption caused by COVID-19 situation on ability to finalise an eligible output and overall impact combined with other applicable circumstances causing disruption to the production of an eligible output.

Processing declarations and calculating reductions

73. From August 2019, a staff circumstances voluntary declaration form was circulated to all Category A-eligible staff. Declarations are being processed centrally, and individuals are therefore requested to forward their completed voluntary declaration form for processing to the GaSP Team REF only.
74. We intend for individuals to be able to: independently determine whether or not they have eligible circumstances that have impacted on their ability to research productively in the assessment period; and decide whether or not they wish to declare those circumstances, such that their impact will be reflected in the University's expectation of the individual's contribution to the REF 2021 exercise.
75. To ensure the declaration process is safe and robust, we:
 - Provide assurance that the decisions made for the University's REF 2021 submissions will be for the purpose of the assessment exercise only, and have no impact on an individual's career.
 - Provide absolute clarity in the declaration form about eligible circumstances.
 - Provide a safe and secure process by which declaration forms can be submitted; this includes use of a securely configured SharePoint site.
76. To guard against undue pressure being placed on staff to declare circumstances:
 - The process is being managed centrally, involving a limited number of staff.
 - Units of assessment coordinators will be informed as to the scale of any output reductions from the potential maximum of five that should be applied to the output pool, and any minimum one outputs that should also be removed.
 - Disclosure of the staff name and their associated indicative output reduction to the relevant UOA coordinator were only made once the March 2020 staff circumstances advance deadline has passed. While we do not anticipate this impacting on the outputs selected by a UOA for the submission (because output quality has primacy), these data are important for UOAs to know which individuals have been granted a minimum of 1 waiver and the total



output pool reduction (this will include reductions over and above the minimum of 1 waiver reductions), and to prevent undue pressure being placed on an individual with circumstances to nominate additional outputs for submission.

77. In collaboration with University HR Services, the GaSP Team REF are processing all voluntary declaration forms (Appendix I):

- For clearly-defined staff circumstances (paragraph 67), data are processed by HR/GaSP. Indicative reductions for staff who have voluntarily declared eligible circumstances will be calculated in line with the tariffs prescribed by REF (Appendix H; and GoS Appendix L).
- For staff circumstances requiring a judgement (paragraph 68) (including cases for minimum of 1 waiver), HR/GaSP forward the information provided, anonymised where possible (otherwise pseudonymised), to the REF 2021 EDRG for consideration. Appropriate indicative reductions will be determined by EDRG, based on the period of absence and associated REF tariffs (Appendix H; and GoS Table L2).
- For minimum of 1 waiver cases, GaSP independently verify that individuals have not produced any research outputs in the assessment period (paragraph 71), before forwarding to EDRG for review and decision.
- Following the March 2020 REF advance deadline, staff who have declared circumstances were notified by email (or other means, as appropriate) of the indicative output reduction calculated, including justification.

UOA output pool reductions

78. The University does not anticipate routinely making requests for UOA output pool reductions. We hope that the majority of UOAs will be able meet their output requirements through managing any adverse effects of staff circumstances on the overall productivity of the unit within the flexibility of the REF 2021 output rules (average 2.5 outputs per FTE; minimum of 1 output/maximum of 5 outputs per individual).

79. In exceptional cases, the University will apply to REF for UOA output pool reductions. Factors that will be considered when assessing whether UOAs have been disproportionately affected by staff circumstances will include:

- Size of the UOA. Typically it will not be expected for larger (>100 FTE) UOAs to require a reduction request, while very small UOAs (<30 FTE) may be more significantly impacted by staff circumstances.
- Incidence of staff circumstance disclosures (number of affected staff, as well as the associated total reduction tariff) relative to UOA size;
- UOAs in which the disciplinary publishing norm is for fewer outputs to be produced by researchers across the publication period;
- The size of the available output pool (from which selection will be made; this will be determined from Pure) relative to the total number of outputs required for submission;
- The ratio of FTE to headcount.

80. The potentially complex interplay of the factors listed in paragraph 79 mean that thresholds will not be set for any of the factors, but each case will be assessed, with all factors taken into consideration, in combination with a supporting reduction request statement from the UOA coordinator, before any final judgement is made.

81. To ensure consistency in the application of reduction requests across the University's submissions:

- The data to accompany the cases was collated centrally by GaSP, not submitted by UOAs;
- The cases were assessed by a REF Board sub-group in a single meeting in early 2020, following advice from EDRG.



82. From August 2019, UOA coordinators were able to initiate a UOA output reduction case, for consideration by REF Board. This was done via submission of a 300 word statement and will centre on context of the UOA, not the circumstances of individual staff or numbers of staff who have circumstances (details and a template were circulated in summer 2019 and made available via the REF 2021 SharePoint). For schools that map directly onto UOAs this is easier than for UOAs with staff from different UOAs (schools typically having a reasonable sense of the incidence and impact of the circumstances which were the most commonly occurring in previous exercises, notably ECR and Junior Clinical Academic status, and secondments/career breaks). The deadline to submit will be the end of February 2020.
83. The value of any UOA output reductions requested will be based on the voluntarily declared staff circumstances and the associated REF tariffs (see Appendix H).
84. The internal process is as follows:
- *August 2019*: circulate staff voluntary declaration form; ask UOAs to submit first draft context statements (without knowledge of which staff have declared)
 - *August 2019 – January 2020*: processing of declarations will be undertaken throughout this period; GaSP review clearly defined circumstances requests and request more information from staff if needed (review on submission); EDRG review voluntary circumstances declarations requiring judgements and minimum one waiver cases; EDRG request more information from staff if needed.
 - *December 2019*: deadline for submitting voluntary circumstances declarations to GaSP/HR.
 - *February 2020*: deadline for UOA context statements.
 - *Early 2020*: EDRG advise on UOA reduction requests; REF Board decide on unit reduction requests and notify UOAs.
 - *March 2020*: request advanced individual and unit reductions from REF.
 - *July 2020*: advise staff if their voluntary declaration has been accepted; advise UOA coordinators which individual staff members have circumstances to take into account.
 - *September 2020*: learn outcomes of circumstances requests from REF and advise UOAs.
 - *September 2020*: review reduction requests for new staff and those with changed circumstances since December 2019.
 - *March 2021*: submit revisions of reduction requests.
85. All staff employed by the University by January 2020 were encouraged to include all circumstances in the original March 2020 advance reduction request. Revisions to the reduction request may be made in [November-March 2021](#) as part of the REF 2021 submission. These are specifically expected to be in the following circumstances:
- Staff are no longer employed by the unit; this would reduce a unit reduction request.
 - Staff join the unit between January and July 2020, and have applicable circumstances (GoS 199)
 - Staff who were employed by the university prior to March 2020 who were not previously REF eligible have a change in role which makes them Category A eligible, and have applicable circumstances.
 - Staff circumstances changed directly or indirectly due to COVID-19.
 - Staff circumstances changed significantly for other reasons.

Section 4: Equality impact assessment

Please refer to Part 4.



Part 4: Equality impact assessment

86. The University will conduct equality impact assessments (EIAs) at critical points over the course of the REF 2021 submission preparation period (see Appendix F). In acknowledgement of the REF 2021 preparations being already underway, the processes adopted to date will be reviewed, including via EIAs, once this Code is published and adjustments will be made, as necessary.
87. These will provide a thorough and systematic analysis of the research independence and output selection policies to determine whether this may have a differential impact on particular groups. The analysis will cover all eligible staff and will, where possible, engage and involve staff from protected groups to inform an EIA. The EIAs will analyse data on all the protected characteristics for which sufficient/reliable data are available. The relevant characteristics are outlined in Appendix K. The findings from these assessments will be used to inform this Code of Practice to ensure that it is improved and enhanced, if required, through the course of the University's preparations for the REF 2021 submission.
88. All EIAs will be reviewed during the submission preparation period to ensure that the University's decision-making processes are fair, transparent and equitable, specifically:
 - When the EDRG meet to consider staff circumstances decisions;
 - When the Principal considers appeals;
 - When preparing the final submission.
89. The University will present reports on EIAs to the relevant University committees (e.g. RPG, UE) highlighting areas of potential discrimination and examples of good practice. Where there is potential discrimination, this will be drawn to the attention of the local areas affected. Good practice will be promoted more widely across other areas of REF work, where these have demonstrated a positive impact on equality and diversity.
90. The University will publish the final EIA conducted as part of this exercise after the submissions have been made, in keeping with good practice.
91. The REF Board will monitor the processes described in this Code for identifying and processing staff circumstances. In accordance with the six principles of this Code, the University will ensure that its decisions are evidence-based and that its reasons and actions are recorded formally.
92. In order to ensure independent assessment of the equity and fairness of decisions, the REF team will prepare a report, in collaboration with the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC), and the Equality & Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC), based on available information and analysis derived from EIAs carried out to date and other relevant materials on equality, diversity and inclusion. This will be presented to the REF Board and RPG, so that they can be considered fully prior to any final decisions being made. The REF team, EDIC and EDMARC will then prepare a full report on the final EIAs from the final submission in May 2021, reflecting any changes made and identifying lessons learned for the University. This will be made publicly available on the University's REF 2021 website.

Part 5: Joint submissions

93. The University will share this Code of Practice with institutions with whom we make any joint submissions and will ensure that joint decision-making across institutions does not compromise adherence to the terms of this Code and its overriding principles.
94. In addition, the University has both Memoranda of Understanding and Data Sharing Agreements with each of the joint submission partners.
95. Selection of outputs for UOAs involving joint submissions will be made in the context of the entire submission. A common set of criteria for each joint submission and a joint selection process which adheres to the principles of both institutions' Codes of Practice will be agreed. For example, members of staff from the partner institution who are authorised to make output



selection decisions and other comparable individuals may be invited to hold joint selection approval meetings.

96. As part of the submission preparation process, appropriate members of staff from our joint submission partners may be made aware of the existence of individual staff circumstances and our internal assessment of any output reductions to be applied to the UOA without penalty, but they will not have access to any information about the circumstances.

Note: If you have any general complaints about the processes presented here, or their implementation, please email GaSP Team REF directly: REF2021@ed.ac.uk



Part 6: Appendices

Appendix A: Terms of reference

Terms of Reference University REF 2021 Board

Purpose

The periodic UK-wide Research Excellence Framework (REF) is vital in determining the University of Edinburgh's (UoE) reputation in research and innovation. It directly determines our income from the Scottish Funding Council's Research Excellence Grant (REG) and exerts a major influence on our ability to compete for grant and innovation funding for the next six years. The REF 2021 Board will ensure that all UoE submissions to REF 2021 optimally reflect the excellence of our research outputs, impact and environment.

Remit

- To manage the REF 2021 process for UoE
- To develop a high-level strategy for the University's submissions to REF 2021 for approval by the University Executive Group
- To propose investments for any requirements for staff and other capabilities to support the optimal delivery of REF 2021 to the University Executive Group
- To produce high-level guidance for all Units of Assessment (UOA)/School REF teams to support optimal collation, assembly and production of REF 2021 submissions
- To coordinate and collate results from the Mock REF 2021 exercise and modify guidance as appropriate
- For any joint submissions with other universities, to agree Memoranda of Understanding and Data Sharing Agreements and ensure that preparatory processes are well aligned
- To coordinate the production of university-wide generic data and text for use in submissions
- To feedback and iterate with all UOA leadership groups optimally to hone submissions
- To appoint a REF 2021 Equality & Diversity Review Group to report on equality and diversity matters relating to the University's submissions

Membership

The membership of the University's REF 2021 board draws from the Colleges and the Heads of Support Services responsible for: data underpinning REF submission; research, knowledge exchange and impact support and strategy; and IS systems support. Members will be present in an *ex officio* capacity as follows:

- Vice Principal Planning, Resources and Research Policy (Convener)
- The 3 Heads of Colleges
- The 3 College Research Deans and/or Deans of REF
- Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning
- Director of Research Support Office
- CEO of Edinburgh Innovations
- Deputy Director of Human Resources
- Head of Strategic Performance and Research Policy
- Head of REF2021 submission



- Head of Library Research Support

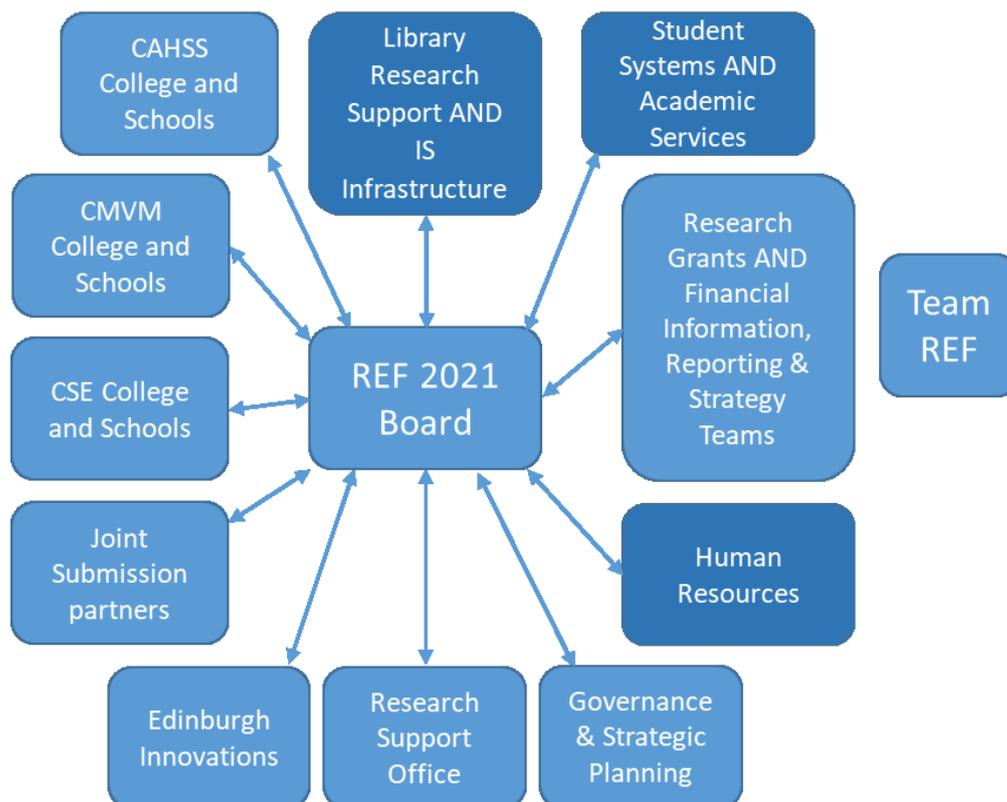
Officers in attendance

- REF Project Manager, GaSP (Secretary)
- College REF Officers (Research Officer/Manager) from CSE, CAHSS and CMVM

Other colleagues will be invited to attend meetings for specific items as appropriate.

Governance and relation to other groups that support REF 2021 preparations

REF 2021 progress reports will be provided to Research Policy Group and the University Executive Group.



Meetings

The Group will meet 3-4 times in 2018. Frequent meetings in 2019 and 2020 will review UOAs' draft REF textual submissions and metadata, and offer feedback to the UOAs. With joint submissions, close liaison with partners will ensure smooth and efficient working.

All Papers are deemed commercially confidential. Papers that can be shared with College Research Committees will be marked accordingly.

Revised by Governance & Strategic Planning, August 2020



Terms of Reference

University REF 2021 Equality & Diversity Review Group

Remit

- Appointed by REF Board, the EDRG reports to REF Board on equality & diversity matters relating to the University's REF 2021 submission.
- To give particular advice on the application of the University of Edinburgh REF 2021 Code of Practice and highlight any relevant employment and equality legislation that must inform decisions regarding staff inclusion in the University's REF 2021 submission.
- To advise on the development of training for staff involved in any decision-making related to the University's REF 2021 submission.
- To review the University's REF 2021 equality impact assessments (EIAs) at appropriate stages in the submission preparation process.
- To provide oversight for administration of clearly defined staff circumstances submitted to and processed by HR and the Team REF in Governance & Strategic Planning.
- To consider anonymised (or pseudonymised, if this is not possible) staff circumstances declarations requiring a judgement, and to determine eligibility for waiving the REF 2021 minimum requirement of one research output.

Membership

EDRG members have been selected to ensure a breadth of perspectives from across the University are represented. While individuals have been appointed *ex officio*, or nominated by a specific body, they will be expected to contribute to the Group in an *ad personam* way, bringing their personal experiences and viewpoints to bear.

EDRG Chair	Sandy Tudhope (REF Board-appointed)
Governance & Strategic Planning	University REF Manager (<i>ex officio</i>)
Human Resources	University Human Resources Representative (<i>ex officio</i>)
College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	Claire Conlon (College-nominated)
College of Science and Engineering	Sandy Tudhope (REF Board-appointed)
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine	Helen Sang (College-nominated)
University & College Union	UCU Edinburgh representative (<i>ex officio</i>)

Communications & reporting

- Administrative support of the EDRG will be provided by the Team REF in GaSP.
- The EDRG will report directly to REF Board and provide updates and advice as needed.
- College representatives will be responsible for representing the interests of their College and will also be expected to report back to their Colleges, via Deans of Research (or equivalent) and relevant committees.
- Details of any staff circumstances declarations will be treated as strictly confidential.

REF Project Manager, Governance & Strategic Planning, August 2020



Appendix B: Committee/panel summary table

Committee/Panel	Members	Mode of operation	REF 2021-specific training requirements	Record-keeping procedures
RPG	Vice Principal Planning, Resources and Research Policy; 3 College Deans of Research; Director of Research Support Office; Head of Strategic Performance and Research Policy; Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning; Chief Information Officer and Head of ISG; IAD Assistant Director/ Head of Researcher Development; Chief Executive Edinburgh Innovations	Meets 5 times per year	Not applicable, except for those members who also sit on REF Board (below)	A public record of RPG meetings is available online: www.ed.ac.uk/governance-strategic-planning/research/rpg
REF Board (<i>appointed by RPG</i>)	Vice Principal (Planning, Resources, & Research Policy); 3 Heads of College; 3 College Deans of Research/REF; Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning; Director of Research Support Office; CEO Edinburgh Innovations; Director of Student Systems; Director of Finance; Director of Human Resources; Chief Information Officer; Head of Strategic Performance and Research Policy/University REF Manager; Head of Library Research Support	REF Board met 3-4 times in 2018, with the frequency of meetings increasing in 2019-2020	Unconscious bias training and staff circumstances training	All REF Board papers are deemed commercially confidential. Papers that can be shared with College Research Committees will be marked accordingly. REF Board report to RPG.



Committee/Panel	Members	Mode of operation	REF 2021-specific training requirements	Record-keeping procedures
EDRG (<i>appointed by REF Board</i>)	REF Board-appointed Chair; a representative from University Human Resources Services (UHRS); a representative from Governance & Strategic Planning (GaSP); a College-appointed senior academic or professional manager from each of the Colleges of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, Science & Engineering, and Medicine and Veterinary Medicine; a representative from UCU Edinburgh	EDRG will meet on a regular basis in 2019 and 2020. The frequency of these meetings is likely to average 6 times per year, but this will depend to an extent on the number of exceptional circumstances voluntary declarations that are submitted for EDRG consideration.	Unconscious bias training, Equality impact assessment training and staff circumstances training	All EDRG papers are deemed commercially sensitive and may also contain personal data. Papers that can be shared internally will be marked accordingly and appropriate redaction in line with data protection law will be undertaken prior to sharing. EDRG report to REF Board.
UoE Team REF	Head of Strategic Performance & Research Policy (University REF Manager); 3 College REF Officers; Representatives from GaSP; Representatives from Library Research Support	Administrative working group of the REF Board facilitating the administration of the University's REF 2021 submission. Monthly meetings, increasing in frequency as the preparation for REF 2021 proceeds.	Unconscious bias training and staff circumstances training	Report to REF Board via papers which are deemed commercially confidential. Papers that can be shared with College Research Committees will be marked accordingly.
UOA Coordinators and Administrators	Academic (Coordinator) and administrative (Administrator) team to coordinate the UOA submission.	The UOA team will coordinate the submission	Unconscious bias training and staff circumstances training	Report to relevant Dean of Research/REF and Head of College. Record-keeping primarily via the University's research information system,



Committee/Panel	Members	Mode of operation	REF 2021-specific training requirements	Record-keeping procedures
				Pure. Appropriate access control to particular data is monitored centrally.
Output selection panels <i>(nominated/appointed by UOAs including input from Heads of School/Deanery, UOA Coordinators and College Deans of Research/Heads of College, where appropriate)</i>	Heads of School/Deanery; UOA Coordinators; Academic staff with the requisite expertise to objectively evaluate outputs	Each UOA will have a group of staff responsible for the review and ordinal ranking of outputs.	Unconscious bias training	Record-keeping primarily via the University's research information system, Pure. Appropriate access control to particular data is monitored centrally.



Appendix C: Output selection roles and responsibilities summary table

Role	Advisory/decision-making
UOA Coordinator	Decision-making
Deans of REF/Research	Decision-making
Output reviewers / output selection panel members	Advisory
External advisors	Advisory

Appendix D: University REF 2021 organogram

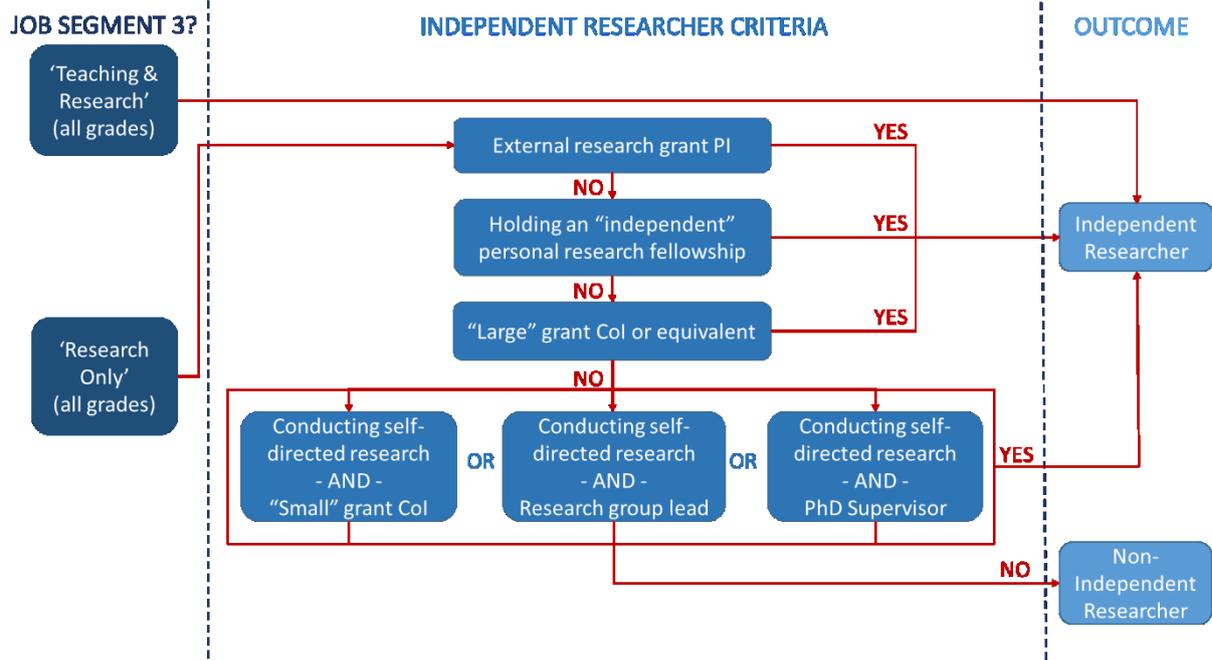


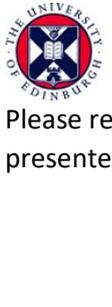
Appendix E: Research independence summary and flowchart

Valid minimum criteria to define research independence	Evidence to ensure consistent application of the Code and for audit	Comment
Principal Investigator (PI) on any external research grant	eFin record or confirmed in writing by grant holder.	
Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement	eFin record or confirmed in writing by grant holder.	REF have provided a non-exhaustive list - available online
Responsible for a distinct body of research on a large external research grant (for example, a Co-Investigator (CoI) and/or work package leader)	eFin record; or confirmed in writing by grant holder.	If required, "large" may be determined at College-level to ensure it reflects the disciplinary norm



<p>Conducting self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>Responsible for a distinct body of research on a smaller external research grant (for example, a Col)</p>	<p>Articulated in job description; or confirmed in writing by line manager or Head of School.</p> <p>eFin record or confirmed in writing by grant holder.</p>	<p>If required, "small" may be determined at College-level to ensure it reflects the disciplinary norm</p>
<p>Conducting self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>Leading a research group</p>	<p>Articulated in job description, or confirmed in writing by line manager or Head of School.</p> <p>Articulated in job description, or confirmed in writing by line manager or Head of School.</p>	
<p>Conducting self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>Supervisor of a PhD student (within the REF 2021 assessment period, but not necessarily on the census date)</p>	<p>Articulated in job description, or confirmed in writing by line manager or Head of School.</p> <p>EUCLID record</p>	
<p>Conducting self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>Having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research</p>	<p>Articulated in job description, or confirmed in writing by line manager or Head of School.</p> <p>Articulated in job description, or confirmed in writing by line manager or Head of School.</p>	<p>As defined by Panel C and D, Panel Criteria and Working Methods, paragraph 189.</p>





Please refer to paragraph 38 for more detailed definitions of independent researcher criteria presented in this figure.



Appendix F: Timelines

2019	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
General REF timetable	Final Pubs (31)				Small unit requests	CoP deadline (7)	Audit info published		Reductions invitation			
Code of Practice Development	Consult, develop and UoE sign-off					Submit CoP (7)		Response (16)	Submit version 2 (20)		Response (8) Submit 3 (15)	CoP publication
REF Board meetings		11				01					UOA output reductions	
Communications	Code consultation			Code of Practice town hall informational events				Staff circumstances declaration process announcements		Complete Ind. Res. notifications		
UoE Review Panels									Review Panel 1			
Training timetable		Development of UoE REF 2021 training package (unconscious bias, staff circumstances, legal context, EIAs)				Training opened to staff. Staff notified.		Periodic review of training “attendees” and reminders sent, as appropriate				
Research Independence	Process started 2018				Code of Practice Town Hall Events					Complete research only staff notifications		
Staff Circumstances							Declaration process open					Declaration process close
UOA Output Reductions							UOAs to submit cases for consideration to REF Board		Reductions invitation	Feedback to UOAs		
EIAs	UoE Mock REF		UOA Coordinators and review panel appointment				Preparation REF (Round 1 Review)					
EDRG meetings				30		18				01	08	03

(blue denotes internal; orange denotes REF/external)



(blue denotes internal; orange denotes REF/external)

2020	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
General REF timetable			Reductions deadline (5th)				Census date/ Circumstances & Environment period closes (31st)		March Reductions result expected		REF review	Outputs & Impact period closes (31st)
REF Board		UOA output reductions			Consultation on submission changes		Consultation on mitigations					Submission overview (TBC)
UoE Review Panels	Review Panel 1/1.5	Review Panel 1.5		Review panel 2			Review panel 2/2.5		Review panel 2/2.5	Review Panel 3		
Communications							Declaration results to individual and UOAs	Declarations process to REF1as without a minimum one			Declaration results to individual and UOAs	
Research Independence						Appeals deadline	Appeals outcome					
Staff Circumstances			Declarations form reopened				Circumstances window closes (31st)		Form closes (13th)	UOA and staff notified of March EDAP results	Declaration results to individual and UOAs	
EDRG meetings	(24 th)					(8 th)			(29 th)			
UOA Output Reductions	EDRG make recommendation to REF Board	UOA notified of request/ REF Board decision	Reductions submissions deadline (5th)					Review requests	March reduction applications result expected			
EIAs											Staff circumstances declaration process	



2021	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	
General REF timetable			Submission (31)	Audit through 2021									Results expected 2022 ->
REF Board		UOA output reductions (TBC)	Sign off & Submission (15th)										
UoE Review Panels	Final impact case study reviews												
Communications				Thank you to all participants									
Research Independence													
Staff Circumstances													
EDRG meetings	TBC												
UOA Output Reductions	EDRG make recommendation to REF Board	UOA notified of request/ REF Board decision	Submit revisions and new applications (15 th)										
EIAs	EDIC and EDMARC review of EIAs and other equality materials		Final EIA of full submission		EDMARC review of EIAs								

(blue denotes internal; orange denotes REF/external)



Appendix G: Code of Practice communications

What	When	Who	How
Code of Practice consultation	January 2019	Academic staff community	Notification of consultation via: intranet, direct emails cascaded from College; and MyED. Draft Code of Practice available on the intranet (REF 2021 wiki) for comment either via email or in person at one of 6 consultation events across the University's campuses.
Code of Practice general announcement, including: researcher independence and staff circumstances processes and timelines	Spring / summer 2019	Academic staff community	Town hall informational events across the campuses. University-approved Code will be communicated by a variety of mechanisms, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Published on wiki - Circulated to staff - Announced in newsletters and publications at University, College and School level - Hard copy circulation to absent staff (see footnote 3)
Staff circumstances declaration	Summer 2019 Autumn 2019 Summer 2020	Academic staff community Staff who submitted declaration forms	Staff will be notified via email once the declaration process opens. A reminder email will be circulated (For those staff who are absent from work, there will be no additional communication prior to outcomes, over and above the general announcement (above)). Staff will be notified of the indicative output reduction that has been agreed by EDRG.
Independent researcher determination	Rolling throughout 2019 End 2019 July 2020	Independent researchers Research only staff Appellants	Research only staff who meet the independent researcher criteria will be formally notified. General announcement about the appeals process for independent researcher determination. Appellants will be notified by email of the outcome of their appeal ahead of the census date.

Appendix H: Staff circumstances tariff table

Staff Circumstance	Details	Indicative reduction
Early Career Researcher	<i>Date at which individual first met the REF 2021 ECR definition – see Appendix M</i>	
	On or before 31 July 2016	0
	Between 1 August 2016 and 31 July 2017 inclusive	0.5
	Between 1 August 2017 and 31 July 2018 inclusive	1.0
	On or after 1 August 2018	1.5
Family-related leave	<i>Qualifying periods of family-related leave</i>	
	1 period of statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave taken substantially during the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020 (regardless of duration)	0.5
	1 period of additional paternity or adoption leave, or shared parental leave (4 months or more) taken substantially during the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020	0.5
	Every additional qualifying period of family-related leave within the assessment period. Note: Individuals without any outputs are eligible for a minimum of 1 waiver where there have been 2 or more qualifying periods of leave (see below).	0.5
Junior Clinical Academic	Clinically qualified academics who have not gained a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) or equivalent prior to the 31 July 2020	1.0
Secondments or career breaks	<i>Total months absent between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2020</i>	
	Fewer than 12 calendar months	0
	At least 12 calendar months, but less than 28	0.5
	At least 28 calendar months, but less than 46	1.0
	46 calendar months or more	1.5
Circumstances with an equivalent effect to absence, that require a judgement	Indicative reduction values will be determined on a case-by-case basis, guided by the tariffs presented for “Secondments or career break” (above)	0 to 1.5
Minimum of 1 waiver	Overall period of, or equivalent to, at least 46 months absence from research during assessment period, due to one or more circumstances.	2.5 (pool to be reduced by only 1.0 unless a UOA output reduction is being requested)
	Two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave	
	Disruption caused by COVID-19 situation on ability to finalise an eligible output and overall impact combined with other applicable circumstances causing disruption to the production of an eligible output.	

Appendix I: Staff declaration data sharing

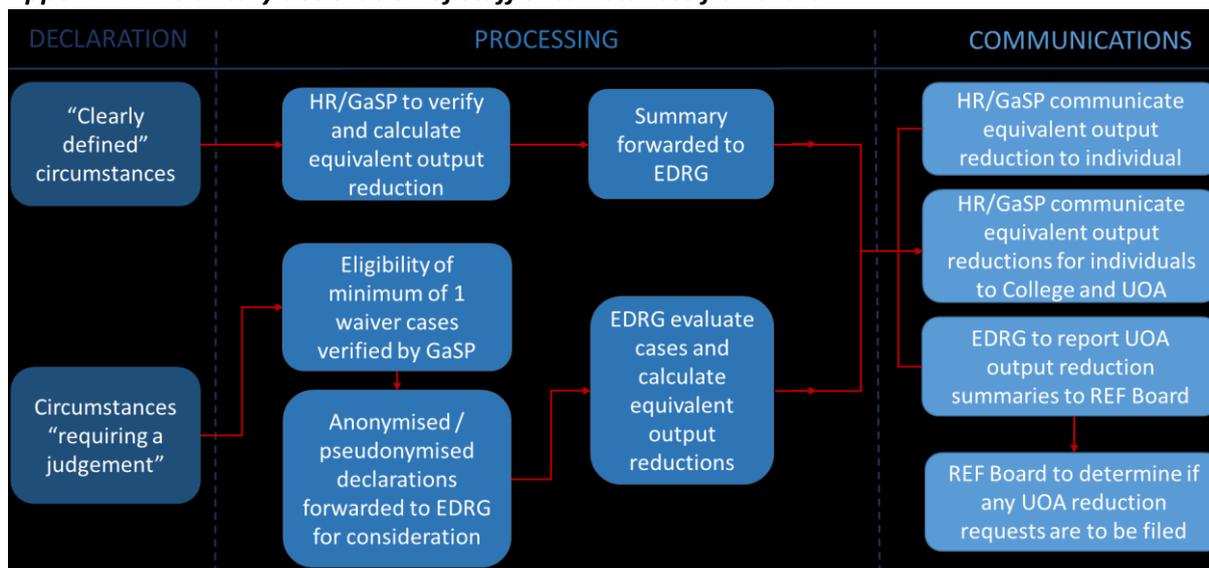
Stage	Who?	Which data?	When?
Point of declaration	GaSP (central Team REF)	All data	Deadline <u>December 2019</u>
Consideration by EDRG	EDRG	<p>For <i>clearly defined circumstances</i>, only a summary of these data, including type of circumstance and number of individuals and associated indicative reductions, will be forwarded to EDRG.</p> <p>For <i>circumstances requiring a judgement</i>, declaration forms will be pseudonymised prior to sharing with EDRG. 'Section 1, Personal information' of the forms (including, name, staff ID, School/Deanery, UOA, contact information) will be removed, and any names in the other sections will be redacted.</p>	A series of meetings will take place through <u>winter 2019-2020</u>
Report to REF Board	REF Board	For <i>both clearly defined circumstances and circumstances requiring a judgement</i> , a summary of data by UOA will be provided. This will include: type of circumstance, number of individuals per circumstance and associated indicative reductions (including minimum of 1 waivers).	REF Board will consider the staff circumstances summary data in combination with the UOA contextual statements in <u>February 2020</u>
Notification to Colleges and UOAs	Relevant Dean of Research / REF; College REF Officer; UOA Coordinator; UOA Administrator	For <i>all circumstances</i> , staff member names and associated indicative output reduction values (including minimum of 1 waivers) will be provided.	<u>July 2020</u>



Stage	Who?	Which data?	When?
Data submitted to REF⁷⁸	REF team; REF 2021 Equality & Diversity Advisory Panel ; and the Main Panel Chairs	<p>REF data requirements (for forms REF6a/b):</p> <p>REF6a, where a <i>minimum of 1 waiver</i> has been approved by the University the following information must be provided:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Information to enable REF to identify the staff member within the submission Details about which eligible circumstances apply A brief statement (<200 words) describing the effects of those circumstances on the staff member’s ability to produce an eligible output. <p>In the event REF Board make a request for any <i>UOA output reductions</i> (REF6b), the following data for that/those UOAs will also be provided alongside the <300 word contextual statement for the UOA:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Details about the number of staff in the UOA with each of the defined circumstances and information that will enable the REF team to identify these staff members within the submission (including HESA ID) For each staff member with circumstances requiring a judgement, information to enable REF to identify the staff member within the submission, a brief (<200 words) of the nature of the circumstances and how the University determined an appropriate reduction, and the reduction proposed 	<u>March 2020</u>
Data destroyed		All data will be held centrally by the University until the REF audit window ends (in late 2021), after which it will be destroyed.	As soon as possible, but no later than <u>end 2022</u>

⁷ Refer to REF Guidance on submissions (paragraphs 192-197)

Appendix J: Voluntary declaration of staff circumstances flowchart



Appendix K: Protected characteristics table

Characteristic	
Age	<p>All employees within the HE sector are protected from unlawful age discrimination, harassment and victimisation in employment under the Equality Act 2010 and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or if they are associated with a person of a particular age group.</p> <p>Age discrimination can occur when people of a particular age group are treated less favourably than people in other age groups. An age group could be, for example, people of the same age, the under 30s or people aged 45-50. A person can belong to a number of different age groups.</p> <p>Age discrimination will not be unlawful if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. However, in the context of the REF, the view of the funding bodies is that if a researcher produces excellent research an HEI will not be able to justify not selecting their outputs because of their age group.</p> <p>It is important to note that ECRs are likely to come from a range of age groups. The definition of ECR used in the REF (GoS paragraphs 148 to 149) is not limited to young people.</p> <p>HEIs should also note that, given developments in equalities law in the UK and Europe, the default retirement age has been abolished from 1 October 2011 in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.</p>
Disability	<p>The Equality Act 2010, the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) (Northern Ireland only) and the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 prevent unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment relating to disability. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to have a disability or if they are associated with a person who has a disability (for example, if they are responsible for caring for a family member with a disability).</p> <p>A person is considered to have a disability if they have or have had a physical and/or mental impairment which has 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. Long-term impairments include those that last or are likely to last for at least 12 months.</p>

	<p>Cancer, HIV, multiple sclerosis and progressive/degenerative conditions are disabilities too, even if they do not currently have an adverse effect on the carrying out of day-to-day activities. An impairment which is managed by medication or medical treatment, but which would have had a substantial and long-term adverse effect if not so managed, is also a disability.</p> <p>The definition of disability is different in Northern Ireland in that a list of day-to-day activities is referred to.</p> <p>There is no list of day-to-day activities for England, Scotland and Wales but day-to-day activities are taken to mean activities that people generally, not a specific individual, carry out on a daily or frequent basis.</p> <p>While there is no definitive list of what is considered a disability, it covers a wide range of impairments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sensory impairments; - impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as rheumatoid arthritis, depression and epilepsy; - progressive impairments, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, HIV and cancer; - organ specific impairments, including respiratory conditions and cardiovascular diseases; - developmental impairments, such as autistic spectrum disorders and dyslexia; - mental health conditions such as depression and eating disorders; - impairments caused by injury to the body or brain. <p>It is important for HEIs to note that people who have had a past disability are also protected from discrimination, victimisation and harassment because of disability.</p> <p>Equality law requires HEIs to anticipate the needs of people with disabilities and make reasonable adjustments for them. Failure to make a reasonable adjustment constitutes discrimination. If a researcher's impairment has affected the quantity of their research outputs, the submitting unit may return a reduced number of outputs (GoS Part 3, Section 1).</p>
<p>Gender Reassignment</p>	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 protect from discrimination, harassment and victimisation of trans people who have proposed, started or completed a process to change their sex. Staff in HE do not have to be under medical supervision to be afforded protection because they are trans and staff are protected if they are perceived to be undergoing or have undergone related procedures. They are also protected if they are associated with someone who has proposed, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment.</p> <p>Trans people who undergo gender reassignment will need to take time off for appointments and, in some cases, for medical assistance. The transition process is lengthy, often taking several years, and it is likely to be a difficult period for the trans person as they seek recognition of their new gender from their family, friends, employer and society as a whole.</p> <p>The Gender Recognition Act 2004 gave enhanced privacy rights to trans people who undergo gender reassignment. A person acting in an official capacity who acquires information about a person's status as a transsexual may commit a criminal offence if they pass the information to a third party without consent. Consequently, staff within HEIs with responsibility for REF submissions must ensure that the information they receive about gender reassignment is treated with particular care.</p>



	<p>If a staff member's ability to work productively throughout the REF assessment period has been constrained due to gender reassignment, the unit may return a reduced number of research outputs (GoS Part 3, Section 1). Information about the member of staff will be kept confidential as described in GoS paragraph 195. HEIs should note that the Scottish government recently consulted on, and the UK government is currently consulting on, reform of the Gender Recognition Act 2004, which may include streamlining the procedure to legally change gender.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 as amended, individuals are protected from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of marriage and civil partnership status. The protection from discrimination is to ensure that people who are married or in a civil partnership receive the same benefits and treatment in employment. The protection from discrimination does not apply to single people.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not inadvertently discriminate against staff who are married or in civil partnerships.</p>
Political opinion	<p>The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 protects staff from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of political opinion.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not inadvertently discriminate against staff based on their political opinion.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 women are protected from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p>Consequently, where researchers have taken time out of work, or their ability to work productively throughout the assessment period has been affected, because of pregnancy and/or maternity, the submitting unit may return a reduced number of research outputs, as set out in GoS paragraphs 169 to 172.</p> <p>In addition, HEIs should ensure that female researchers who are pregnant or on maternity leave are kept informed about and included in their submissions process.</p> <p>For the purposes of this summary it is important to note that primary adopters have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave.</p>
Race	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation connected to race. The definition of race includes colour, ethnic or national origins or nationality. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular race.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not discriminate against staff based on their race or assumed race (for example, based on their name).</p>
Religion and belief including non-belief	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to religion or belief. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular religion or belief.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not discriminate against staff based on their actual or perceived religion or belief, including non-belief. 'Belief' includes any structured</p>



	<p>philosophical belief with clear values that has an effect on how its adherents conduct their lives.</p>
<p>Sex (including breastfeeding and additional paternity and adoption leave)</p>	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to sex. Employees are also protected because of their perceived sex or because of their association with someone of a particular sex.</p> <p>The sex discrimination provisions of the Equality Act explicitly protect women from less favourable treatment because they are breastfeeding. Consequently, the impact of breastfeeding on a woman's ability to work productively will be taken into account, as set out in GoS Part 3, Section 1.</p> <p>If a mother who meets the continuity of employment test wishes to return to work early or shorten her maternity leave/pay, she will be entitled to shared parental leave with the father or her partner within the first year of the baby's birth. Partners may also be eligible for shared parental leave or pay.</p> <p>Fathers/partners who take additional paternity or adoption leave will have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave and barriers that exist to taking the leave, or as a result of having taken it, could constitute unlawful sex discrimination. Consequently, where researchers have taken additional paternity and adoption leave, the submitting unit may return a reduced number of outputs, as set out in GoS Annex L.</p> <p>HEIs need to be wary of implementing procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 that would be easier for men to comply with than women, or vice versa. There are many cases where a requirement to work full-time (or less favourable treatment of people working part-time or flexibly) has been held to discriminate unlawfully against women.</p> <p>HEIs should note that there are now requirements under UK and Scottish legislation for public authorities (including HEIs) to report information on the percentage difference amongst employees between men and women's average hourly pay (excluding overtime).</p>
<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to sexual orientation.</p> <p>Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person who is of a particular sexual orientation.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not discriminate against staff based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation.</p>
<p>Welsh language</p>	<p>The Welsh Language Act 1993 places a duty on public bodies in Wales to treat Welsh and English on an equal basis. This is reinforced by the provisions of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards (No 6) Regulations 2017.</p> <p>The arrangements for the assessment of outputs in the medium of Welsh by the REF panels are set out in GoS paragraphs 284 and 285.</p>



Appendix L: Equality impact assessments

Further completed EIAs will be added when available.



REF2021 Preparation Equality Impact Assessment

‘Mock REF’ carried out in Spring–Summer 2018

A Introduction

Equality impact assessments (EqIA) are being carried out at key points during the University of Edinburgh’s preparations for its submission to the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF2021). They are important for two reasons:

1. The University’s REF preparations involve the overwhelming majority of its academic staff
2. Carrying out EqIAs at key points during the REF2021 preparation ensures that the internal selection processes are reviewed with regard to equality and diversity; and lessons learnt inform later stages in the process, as well as being incorporated into research policy that extends beyond the REF2021 preparation.

The University is also required carry out EqIAs as part of the REF2021 Code of Practice (CoP). Approval of the Code of Practice by the UK HE funding bodies is mandatory for HEIs that wish to take make a submission to REF2021.

B. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: Pauline Jones

Job title: Head of Strategic Performance and Research Policy and University REF manager

School/service/unit: Governance and Strategic Planning, University Secretary’s Group

C. Mock REF EqIA scope and methodology

C1 Mock REF Scope

The Mock REF was carried out in late Spring-Summer 2018. It represents a snapshot of the University’s REF readiness at that point in time. The scope of the exercise was determined by the draft REF2021 rules. The outputs eligible for inclusion in Mock REF were those published or expected to be published within the REF2021 period (1 January 2014 – 31 December 2020) and associated with:

- Current University Teaching and Research⁹ staff and Current Research Only staff who were expected to be Independent Researchers. At the time it was expected that Research Only staff were not likely to be Independent unless at Grade 8 or equivalent or above;
- Former Teaching and Research or Research Only staff who had left during the REF2021 period

C2 Methodology

Analysis of the staff included in the Mock REF has two elements.

⁹ For the sake of simplicity, staff whose HR record shows that they are employed on assignments that are associated with the HESA Academic Employment Function ‘Teaching and Research’ are referred to as ‘Teaching and Research’ staff and those employed on assignments that are similarly defined as ‘Research Only’ will be referred to as ‘Research Only’.



1 Comparison of the protected characteristics of current and former staff whose outputs were included in the Mock REF vs the relevant overall population.

- Current Teaching and Research staff in the Mock REF vs the total population of Teaching and Research staff.
- Current Research Only staff vs the total population of Research Only staff.
The EqIA considers these two groups separately because the University will submit all current Teaching and Research staff, but only those Research Only staff who are shown to be Independent Researchers following a review in accordance with the REF CoP.
- The characteristics of former staff whose outputs were included in the Mock REF were studied separately from current staff. The University is not required to submit outputs from all former Research and Teaching or Independent Research Only staff. The expectation is that the majority of submitted outputs will have been produced by current staff and outputs from former staff will only be included if they enhance the quality of the output profile of the relevant UoA.

2 An assessment of the number of outputs associated with each member of staff included in the Mock REF and the specific characteristics of these staff.

The analysis takes account not only the distribution of the Protected Characteristics listed in the relevant legislation but also certain employment characteristics that may be likely to be associated with certain equality groups.

D Results & Analysis: Mock REF Academic Populations vs Total relevant academic populations

D1 Current Teaching and Research staff included in the Mock REF

The comparison between the Mock REF population and the total current population of staff showed the distribution of both the protected characteristics and employment characteristics between the two groups was far too small to be statistically significant.

D2 Current Research Only staff included in the Mock REF

For each of the protected and employment characteristics the difference between the populations of staff in the Mock REF and the Overall population was unlikely to be statistically significant.

D3 Former Teaching and Research staff included in the Mock REF

The Former population included in the Mock REF was tenfold smaller than the current population. The differences in the percent of total for each protected and employment characteristic were probably due to this difference in population size. At the time of the Mock REF the focus was on the inclusion of outputs from current staff. This approach is consistent with subsequently drafted REF2021 CoP (page 11, Paragraph 54).

D4 Former Research Only staff included in the Mock REF

Both above-mentioned points relating to Former Teaching and Research staff also apply to Former Research Only staff. Outputs associated with former Research Only staff may only be included in the University's REF2021 submissions if it can be determined that they were Independent Researchers when employed by the University

E Results & Analysis: Outputs contributed to the Mock REF per person included in the exercise

Studying the protected and employment characteristics patterns for each output count produced results at a more granular level than the first analysis.

E1 Age

Staff aged 30-39 were more likely to submit zero outputs than those aged 66+, while staff aged 66+ were more likely to submit 6 outputs relative to those aged 30-39. This possible age effect is magnified by the fact that in the Overall Academic population the number of staff aged 30-39 exceeds the number aged 66+. Staff aged 30-39 are more likely to be Early Career Researchers (ECRs) than other groups. ECRs will be able to make a voluntary declaration of circumstances to reduce the number of outputs they are expected to contribute to the output pool. The effect of this on age distribution of outputs should be monitored through subsequent EIAs.



E2 Gender

Men included in the Mock REF had a slight tendency to be associated with higher individual output count than women. However it is doubtful that the difference is large enough to be statistically significant. Nonetheless, the effect of gender on output selection will have to be monitored. It is possible that the lower output count of women included in the Mock REF is because they are overrepresented in other equality groups and additional characteristics groups that are associated with lower output counts.

E3 Gender reassignment

The number of individuals who chose to declare that they had had a gender reassignment was very low. The REF guidance acknowledges that the process of gender reassignment can have a major impact on an individual's ability to be a productive researcher. Any staff who have gone through this process in the REF2021 can make a voluntary declaration so that their individual output contribution is reduced. The effect of gender reassignment and intersection with declaration of circumstances on the output pool and selection will need to be monitored.

E4 Relationship Status, Ethnicity and Nationality

There was no evidence to suggest that the nationality, self-declared ethnicity or relationship status had any effect on output count.

E5 Disability, Religion, Sexual Orientation

In respect of each these protected characteristics, the vast majority of those in the populations considered chose not to disclose any information. That being said, those who made a self-declaration were as likely to contribute a low or high number of outputs as those who had declined to make a disclosure.

Employment Characteristics

E6 Part-time vs Full-time

Part-time staff were far more likely to be associated with zero outputs in the Mock REF than Full-time staff. Full-time staff tended to be associated with six outputs to a greater extent than Part-time staff, but the difference is unlikely to be statistically significant. As number of outputs that a UoA is required to submit is determined by FTE rather than headcount, Part-time staff have the potential to contribute to their UoA's REF submission in proportion to their hours worked. Furthermore, a staff member whose FTE changes substantially toward the end of the REF2021 period can make a voluntary declaration that would reduce the output volume that they are expected to contribute. Nonetheless, it will be necessary to monitor the output selection process with regard the treatment of part-time and full-time staff.

E7 Grade

Grade 7 staff were far more likely to be associated with zero outputs than other grades. It is possible that a number of these staff had only recently been appointed into roles which are REF eligible and were not aware that outputs produced before they became eligible can be submitted to the REF. It is also possible that some of these staff didn't engage with the Mock REF because they were unaware they were within scope. Improved communications to staff at grade 7 and below will be put in place through the COP to ensure that there is full engagement and clarity on the criteria for output inclusion and the effect of this on output distribution will need to be monitored.

E8 HESA Employment Function

Research only staff were far more likely to submit zero outputs than Teaching and Research staff. This may be because of intersections between grade, HESA employment function and age. All Research Only staff will be assessed to determine whether they are Independent Researchers in accordance with the REF CoP. Improved communications to Research Only staff on individual eligibility and output eligibility will be implemented to improve engagement.

E9 Flexible Working arrangement

There is no evidence to suggest that having a flexible working arrangement impacts on output count.



F Lessons learnt

F1 Could the application of this policy/practice lead to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation or less favourable treatment for particular equality groups?

There is the potential for an indirect discrimination effect in some areas. This is explicitly acknowledged in the REF Guidance on Submission through the facility for individual staff to voluntarily declare circumstances that have impacted on their ability to carry out research and publish the outcomes of that research. The REF CoP details the University processes to facilitate such voluntary declarations (paragraphs 64 - 77).

All staff involved with the compilation of the University's RE2021 submission will be offered REF-focussed training and development opportunities. This training will be mandatory for all individuals involved the REF decision making process – whether at the level of the UoA or with overall REF oversight. Part 1 Section 6 of the CoP describes the training planned.

F2 Does the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity¹⁰?

Implementing the REF CoP in the light of the lessons learnt from this and previous EqIAs has the potential to promote good practice in REF preparation. Data gathered through REF EqIAs will be fed into University policies and processes, such as the implementation of the University statement on responsible use of Research Metrics, and ensuring adequate support for early career researchers or those with caring responsibilities.

F3 Is there is an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations?

The REF CoP outlines the principles that underpin the University's our REF submission. These include transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity. Following these principles will allow the University to demonstrate that decisions made about our submission allow the work of all researchers to be considered on equal terms and to ensure that practices which discriminate are being discouraged. In doing so, we have the opportunity to reach out to specific groups and highlight what we are doing, and to demonstrate this in our environment statements for REF.

F4 Does the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups?

None identified.

F5 How will the communication of the policy be made accessible to all groups, if relevant?

The CoP describes the communication strategy for the processes of determining researcher independence and the selection of outputs (Part 1 Section 4).

F6 How are equality groups or communities are involved in the development, review and/or monitoring of the policy or practice?

The measures taken to involve the academic community in the development of the COP are stated in COP paragraph 12.

F7 Are there any potential or actual impact of applying the policy or practice, with regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and promote good relations?

There is potential for an indirectly discriminatory effect in some areas. This risk is acknowledged in the CoP. The process of declaring voluntary circumstances will be managed centrally by the Governance and Strategic Planning REF team to limit the number of staff who will be party to the confidential information disclosed. This arrangement is intended to guard against undue pressure being placed on staff to make a disclosure. The information circulated to all academic staff about the voluntary disclosure process will stress that the information supplied will be used for the assessment exercise only. Staff who make such declarations will made aware of the facility to self-refer to the University's Occupational Health service and other university support where relevant.

¹⁰ This question does not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage or civil partnership



G Action and Monitoring

G1 Specify the actions required for implementing findings of this EqlA and how the policy or practice will be monitored in relation to its equality impact (or note where this is specified above).

The areas for close monitoring in the next REF2021 EqlAs as stated in Section E are:

- The effect of declaration of ECR status on age distribution of outputs
- The effect of gender on output selection
- The effect of gender reassignment and intersection with declaration of circumstances on the output pool and selection

In addition, improved communications with Research only staff and staff at grade 7 and below regarding eligibility for inclusion will be put in place through the COP processes and the effect of this on output inclusion for these groups will be monitored.

The actions from this and following REF2021 EqlAs will be brought to the attention of relevant University and College level committees, highlighting potential areas of discrimination and areas of good practice. It is recognised that some of issues warranting action or areas of good practice will have a relevance beyond REF2021.

G2 When will the policy/practice next be reviewed?

Further EqlAs are scheduled to facilitate the monitoring of the REF2021 preparation process to ensure it is in accordance with the University's REF2021 Code of Practice. The timing of these EqlAs is given in the Code of Practice Appendix F.

H. Sign-off

EqlA undertaken by Dr Susan Cooper (Senior Strategic Planner and Deputy REF Manager)

Accepted by Pauline Jones, Head of Strategic Performance and Research Policy and University REF Manager

Date: 3 June 2019



Appendix M: References, links and glossary of terms

- REF 2021 Guidance on submissions REF 2019/01:
<https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/guidance-on-submissions-201901/>
- REF 2021 Panel criteria & working methods REF 2019/02:
<https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/panel-criteria-and-working-methods-201902/> UoE E&D:
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/about/outcomes>
- UoE Privacy Notice: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/privacy-information-notice>
- UoE REF 2021 Privacy Notice:
https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20190712_uoe_ref_2021_privacy_notice_v1.5_2.pdf
- Stern Review: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-excellence-framework-review>
- UoE Equality & Diversity Monitoring & Research Committee: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/monitoring-statistics/edmarc>
- Current list of UOA coordinators, administrators, and other REF-related staff:
<https://uoesharepoint.com/sites/REF2021/SitePages/REF-Contacts---University,-College-and-UoA.aspx>

Term	Definition	More information
Category A eligible staff	Academic staff members who are eligible for submission to REF. Category A eligible staff are defined as academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, on the payroll of the submitting institution on the census date, whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'teaching and research'. Staff should have a substantive research connection with the submitting unit (GoS 123 to 127). Staff on 'research only' contracts should meet the definition of an independent researcher (GoS 128 to 134).	Guidance on submissions (GoS) part 3 section 1, especially para 117
ECR	Early Career Researcher: academic member of staff who meets the definition of Category A eligible on the census date, and who started their careers as independent researchers on or after 1 August 2016. For the purposes of the REF, an individual is deemed to have started their career as an independent researcher from the point at	REF-specific definition provided in GoS 146-149



	which: a. they held a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, which included a primary employment function of undertaking 'research' or 'teaching and research', with any HEI or other organisation, whether in the UK or overseas, and b. they first met the definition of an independent researcher	
EDRG	Equality & Diversity Review Group	
EIA	Equality Impact Assessment	https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/about/reports/impact-assessment
GaSP	Governance & Strategic Planning	www.ed.ac.uk/governance-strategic-planning
GoS	Guidance on Submissions	www.ref.ac.uk/publications/
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency	www.hesa.ac.uk
JCA	Junior Clinical Academic - Clinically qualified academics who have not gained a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) or equivalent prior to the 31 July 2020	REF-specific definition provided in GoS 162-163
REF	Research Excellence Framework	www.ref.ac.uk
RPG	Research Policy Group	
UCU	University & College Union	
UE	University Executive	www.ed.ac.uk/governance-strategic-planning/governance/university-committees/othercommitteesandgroups/university-executive
UOA	Unit of Assessment	
UoE	University of Edinburgh	