



# Code of Practice on the Identification of Staff and Selection of Outputs for REF2021

**Research & Impact**  
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**REF2021** Research  
Excellence  
Framework

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## FOREWORD BY THE PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR (RESEARCH & IMPACT)



*This Code of Practice aims to ensure that all members of Ulster University staff are aware of the processes that have been put in place in preparation for our submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the development of our Code of Practice, by actively responding to our various consultations over the last year particularly and by sharing feedback with us from across the university and its staff representative groups. We are very grateful for your continuing engagement.*

*In our Research and Impact Strategy 2017-2022 we made a commitment to empowering our people to undertake interdisciplinary research in a supportive environment to produce internationally excellent and world leading outputs with transformative impact. We have placed our research community at the centre of our strategy and we wish to create a culture in which our researchers can grow and flourish in a supportive environment to enable our people to achieve and exceed their own aspirations and the ambitions in our strategy.*

*Our Code of Practice sets out the positive steps we are taking to ensure the identification of staff and the selection of outputs for inclusion in our REF return is completed in a transparent, consistent, accountable and inclusive manner. We have placed people at the centre of this Code of Practice and aim to ensure that our staff feel supported through the procedures.*

*I am deeply committed to our university's values and I am proud to be Pro-Vice-Chancellor of a university that not only produces world class research which makes a hugely positive contribution to society – both globally and locally, but one that also champions these values as part of its approach to every aspect of our work.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ann Jordan'.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ulster University's Research & Impact Strategy 2017-22 defines our ambitions for our research activities and outcomes. It provides direction and sets out a plan for our research and its impact over a five-year period and builds upon our core strategies to develop our people, our research outputs and our impact. We are extremely proud of Ulster's achievements in REF2014 and our current research and impact strategy seeks to build upon these successes further, by demonstrating the global significance of our work and how it translates into real value and public good through our economic, social, cultural, health care, public policy or services, and environment impacts.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is at the core of our DNA at Ulster University and has underpinned all of our REF and RAE submissions over the last 12 years. We strive to support the career aspirations of all of our staff and we wish to ensure 'barrier free' processes, which help maximise inclusivity and participation in REF. In designing the processes within our REF2021 Code of Practice we have been mindful of the needs of all staff and in particular needs related to protected characteristics. We have aimed to ensure that all of our processes are 'equality proofed' to prevent unjustifiable and discriminatory barriers.

We aim to be a 'value-led' and 'people-centric' University and this has informed the development of our REF2021 Code of Practice. We wish to create a research environment which supports the continuous development and improvement of our research community. Our strategic plan, known as the *five and fifty* plan, recognises that "*....creating the right conditions to let people flourish and ensuring that every member of staff is recognised as playing a central role in achieving our ambitions*". We aim to build a culture in which values-led behaviour is encouraged and modelled by leaders and colleagues alike.

Our REF2021 Code of Practice and the processes therein have been developed through an iterative consultative process. We have aimed to secure the engagement of our entire research community and staff representative bodies in the development of the code through a series of consultations on the code. We have also consulted with members of our REF2021 Steering Committee which has overseen the development of the code and includes representation from every REF2021 Unit of Assessment.

Our Code of Practice covers:

- the fair and transparent identification of staff with significant responsibility for research;
- determining who is an independent researcher; and
- the selection of outputs.

## PART 1: INTRODUCTION

### Background

#### 1.1 Ulster University and REF

Ulster University's Research & Impact Strategy 2017-22 defines our ambitions for our research activities and outcomes. It provides direction and sets out a plan for our research and its impact over a five-year period and builds upon our core strategies to develop our people, our research outputs and our impact. We are extremely proud of Ulster's achievements in REF2014 and our current research and impact strategy seeks to build upon these successes further, by demonstrating the global significance of our work and how it translates into real value and public good through our economic, social, cultural, health care, public policy or services, and environment impacts.

We wish to create a research environment which supports the continuous development and improvement of our research community. Our strategic plan, known as the *five and fifty* plan, recognises that *"...creating the right conditions to let people flourish and ensuring that every member of staff is recognised as playing a central role in achieving our ambitions"*.

#### 1.2 Development of the Code of Practice

Ulster University's Code of Practice and the processes therein have been developed through an iterative consultative process<sup>1</sup>. We have strived to include the entire research community in the development of the code through a series of consultations on key sections of the Code of Practice. We have also consulted with members of our REF2021 Steering Committee which has overseen the development of the Code and includes representation from every REF2021 Unit of Assessment. A REF2021 Code of Practice Working Group<sup>2</sup>, chaired by the Deputy Director of People and Culture - Partnerships and Services, was established to develop and review the Code of Practice and ensure adherence to the processes therein. The membership of the Working Group comprises representation from each Faculty, the People & Culture Directorate (P&C) and the Department for Research & Impact.

#### 1.3 Purpose of the Code of Practice

The purpose of the Code of Practice is to ensure that the processes for identifying staff

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for full details of the University's consultation process

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 5 for Terms of Reference & Membership

and selecting outputs for REF2021 adhere to the principles of Transparency, Consistency, Accountability, and Inclusivity. The overarching principle of the Code of Practice is that each member of staff who is identified as either '*Category A Eligible*' or '*Category A Submitted*'<sup>3</sup> be treated fairly and in accordance with the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

### **1.4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is at the core of our DNA at Ulster University. We aim to embed and mainstream Equality Diversity and Inclusion considerations into our REF2021 Code of Practice.

Ulster University is committed to embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in our institutional REF processes and, as such, our Code of Practice ensures adherence to the University's policies, and to good practice on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion matters more broadly. In developing the Code of Practice and identifying '*Category A Eligible*' and '*Category A Submitted*' staff, the University has had due regard to all relevant equality legislation. Additionally, it should be noted that Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 places a statutory obligation on the University to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependents and persons without.

The University's commitment to equality is articulated in its Equality Scheme and Equal Opportunities Policy. Ulster University is highly committed to the principles that underpin the Athena SWAN Charter, which recognises and celebrates good employment practice for supporting the development and inclusion of women working in higher education, research, and all aspects of University life. All departments are committed to achieving Bronze Awards and subsequent progression to Silver Awards. The University continues to fund staff to participate in the Aurora Leadership Development Programme, a programme specifically designed to encourage women to think of themselves as future

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 2 for definitions of *Category A Eligible* and *Category A Submitted* staff

leaders and actively engage in developing their leadership potential.

The University supports the career development of our contract research staff. In 2012 we were awarded the HR Excellence in Research Award which recognises and supports the implementation of the Research Concordat on the career development of research staff. We successfully retained the award in 2014 and 2017. Our current HR Excellence in Research implementation plan includes a range of measures to support the career development of contract research staff.

### **1.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in REF2014**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is at the core of all of our REF and RAE submissions over the last 12 years. In addition to Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), known in the Northern Ireland legislation as Equality Screening) we also conducted a full EQIA on the outcome from REF 2014. It should be noted that the requirements of an EQIA within the Northern Ireland legislation far exceed the requirements of an EIA within the GB legislation. The EQIA within Northern Ireland legislation includes a requirement for widespread consultation with a broad range of stakeholders and places a range of equality related duties on all public sector employers (Universities are treated as though they are public authorities for the purposes of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act). We have been mindful of the outcome from the 2014 EQIA in developing this Code of Practice and measures taken include:

- diversity and inclusivity continue to be valued, actively promoted and embedded in all research processes and policies;
- progression of the Athena SWAN agenda to encourage and support the involvement and promotion of women in research via the University's 2017 action plan which commits to:
  - developing maternity/parental leave/adoption guidance for line managers to structure support before, during and after leave to raise awareness of paternity and shared parental leave, and Keeping in Touch (KIT) days;
  - the establishment of the Returning Carers' Scheme to offer grants (up to the value of £2.5k) to assist those returning from leave due to caring responsibilities to establish their research profiles and career development. There are two rounds calling for applications per year;
  - in addition to providing financial support through the Returning Carers' Scheme, an adjusted workload is assigned where possible to returning members of staff following leave due to caring responsibilities;

- monitor the equality profile throughout the REF process;
- monitor and encourage gender balance of staff taking Sabbatical Leave;
- hold annual “Preparing for Promotions” workshops, focussing on both the research and academic promotions process within the University;
- promote gender equality of PhD researchers within individual Schools and Depts. reviewing PhD gender balance as part of their Athena SWAN engagement and devising actions to address where relevant;
- the newly formed Ulster University Women’s Network provides a supportive and collegial space for women to focus primarily on specific issues of interest to them, to encourage them in their careers and well-being and to enable them to be their best selves.
- communication to eligible staff of information on the reduction of the REF outputs requirement without penalty and the arrangements for the confidential disclosure of information submitted about individual staff circumstances; and
- developing research potential by putting in place appropriate support for staff members starting their research career or resuming research activities on return from long periods away (e.g. for maternity/adoption leave, secondment, prolonged illness or caring roles).

#### **1.6 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in REF2021**

The Code of Practice actively promotes equality of opportunity in the University’s submission to REF and the processes therein ensure that ALL eligible members of staff are given the opportunity to participate in REF2021. We wish to ensure that equality of opportunity is at the core of everything we do throughout the REF2021 cycle. The processes detailed in this code have been designed to ensure inclusivity and to maximise participation.

Where decision have to be made, we aim to ensure that they are fair and capable of objective non-discriminatory justification. All ‘decision makers’ receive comprehensive equality, diversity and inclusion training.

Where an applicant wishes to appeal a key decision, we ensure that the appeal process is independent of the original decision and the appeal panel includes women and men who have received appropriate training.

## 1.7 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training

We wish to ensure that all of the key 'decision makers' in the REF have the necessary 'people skills' and receive comprehensive training on equality diversity and inclusion skills.

One of the training needs that we identified in regard to 'people skills' is the ability of managers to deal with sensitive people issues. Our People and Culture Department designed and delivered bespoke training to address this particular training need and, to ensure transparency and consistency of approach across the board and the training was accompanied by a guidance document for Research Directors and Heads of School on how to conduct research trilateral meetings.

Further training is being delivered in 2019 to cover the requirements of relevant equality legislation and will use case studies to explore equality issues in the explicit context of the selection of staff and outputs for the REF. The University has engaged AdvanceHE to deliver a number of practitioner workshops on Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and REF2021 for those staff involved in the REF2021 decision-making processes. These workshops will be delivered in September 2019 and will be **mandatory** for all REF2021 decision-makers. The AdvanceHE workshops will enable participants to:

- understand the legislative and policy drivers and context for embedding consideration of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in all aspects of decision-making in REF2021;
- ensure that equality is appropriately considered and embedded in all decisions on REF2021, at the level of individuals, UoAs, and institutionally, including in:
  - the selection of staff
  - the selection of outputs
  - the institutional and UoA environment statements;
- understand the concepts of conscious and unconscious bias and how these can play out in any decision-making around REF 2021;
- create a culture and process in which individuals are able, but not compelled, to disclose circumstances that may entitle them to a reduction in research outputs;
- manage at unit level the effects of individual circumstances on the total output pool;
- begin to develop individual and institutional actions and strategies to minimise the potential for bias in REF decision-making.

Equality training materials will also be made available online for all REF decision-makers.

## **1.8 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

We wish to conduct EIAs not because we are required to but, because we want to. We believe that EIAs will make our processes better and ensure that we protect the need and rights of our diverse community of researchers. As issues emerge from the EIAs we are committed to acting on the findings and, where necessary, adapting or changing our processes to ensure equality of opportunity. At the commencement of our preparations for REF we developed a base template for the EIA on our code of practice. As we progress through the REF cycle we will conduct EIAs at key 'check points' (detailed below). We view an EIA as an iterative process rather than a 'one-off' event. We will take the learning points from the EIAs and make our processes better.

The University will establish a REF2021 Equality Working Group (REF2021 EWG)<sup>4</sup> to monitor the implementation of the Code of Practice through regular EIAs and to determine the extent of any impact upon the Section 75 categories.

The REF2021 EWG will draw up a timetable of EIAs on the identification of staff with SRR, the identification of staff with independence and the selection of outputs up until the final submission. The findings and recommendations from the ongoing EIAs will be used to develop the research profile of any group or groups shown to be underrepresented in the REF submission.

A full EQIA will be conducted on the final submission and the REF2021 EWG will agree the format and parameters of this.

## **Principles of the Code of Practice**

### **1.9 Principles**

Ulster is a 'values-led' university. We aim to build a culture in which we can all flourish, and where values-led behaviour is encouraged and modelled by leaders and colleagues alike.

Our values-led approach has informed the development of our REF2021 Code of Practice and the following principles underpin our Code of Practice:

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 5 for Terms of Reference & Membership

- Transparency
- Consistency
- Accountability
- Inclusivity

#### **1.10 Transparency**

All processes for identifying *Category A Eligible* staff, determining *Category A Submitted staff* (ie: those with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR)), determining research independence, and selecting outputs for inclusion have been developed as the result of a broad and iterative consultation process<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, the research community has full ownership of the agreed processes within the code.

As part of our process all decisions regarding staff eligibility or SRR status are documented. This provides transparency on the evolution of the final submission. Furthermore, each member of staff signs off any changes to their SRR status<sup>6</sup>.

#### **1.11 Consistency**

The process for identifying *Category A Eligible* and *Category A Submitted* is consistently applied throughout the University. To ensure consistency of approach all Research Directors and Heads of School attended training and were provided with a guidance document on how to conduct research trilateral meetings with potential *Category A Eligible* and *Category A Submitted* staff. In determining research independence, all Research Only staff are provided with a briefing document on both REF2021 and the definition of independence.

#### **1.12 Accountability**

The code defines clearly the roles and responsibilities of those staff and groups involved in identifying *Category A Eligible* staff, *Category A Submitted* staff, determining research independence and selecting outputs for REF2021. Details of the roles and responsibilities of the decision makers are detailed in Appendix 4 and the Terms of Reference and Membership of all REF-related committees/groups are detailed in Appendix 5.

#### **1.13 Inclusivity**

We strive to support the career aspirations of all of our staff and we wish to ensure

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 1 for details of the Consultation Process

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 3 for *Category A Eligible* and *Category A Submitted* Pro-Formae

'barrier free' processes which help maximise inclusivity and participation. In designing the processes within our code we have been mindful of the needs of all staff and in particular needs related to protected characteristics. We aim to ensure that all of our processes are 'equality proofed' to prevent unjustifiable and discriminatory barriers.

The SRR status or non-inclusion of an individual will have NO impact on any decisions relating to their future support, promotion, extension of contract or progression within the institution. Commitment is given to support staff who do not have SRR at any stage in the exercise through a number of measures and resources including training, sabbaticals, mentoring and peer-review. Details of these support processes and resources are available to all staff both online and in a Research Support Handbook<sup>7</sup> which details all the support and resources available for researchers.

## Communication

### 1.14 Ulster University's REF2021 Communication Process

All REF2021 related updates and communications are disseminated via ALL staff emails, the staff intranet, INSIGHT (the University's online magazine) and, in the case of staff who are absent from the University, Line Managers are asked to draw these communications to their attention. As part of the communication process the University has developed a timeline for REF2021 detailing the national REF timetable and an internal University timetable. The timeline is available as a poster to all Associate Deans for Research and Impact (ADRI) and Research Directors (RDs) and it is also available online and in a printable poster format. Any additional updates to the timetable will be communicated to all staff via ALL staff emails, the staff intranet and, additionally, at local level updates will be provided through appropriate Faculty, School and UoA meetings or briefings.

Final decisions on any individual's REF status are recorded centrally and clearly communicated and signed off by the individual. It is also made clear to all individuals that final decisions in relation to REF2021 will NOT be taken into account in relation to any promotion, progress, extension of contract or performance management procedures.

The final selection of outputs, and the basis on which the final selection is made, will be clearly communicated to all staff in the relevant Unit of Assessment by the Research Director.

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 10

### **1.15 Communication of the Code of Practice**

The University's Code of Practice has been developed as the result of a university-wide iterative consultation<sup>8</sup> process ensuring both ownership and awareness of the final Code of Practice by both the research community and the staff representative bodies. There will be a programme of activity to ensure the effective dissemination of the code. It will be made available centrally to all staff via INSIGHT, the University's internal REF2021 webpages and an email to all staff and locally via fora such as Faculty School and Research meetings/Away Days. In the case of staff who are absent from the University a physical copy of the Code of Practice will be posted to their home address. Furthermore, if a member of staff requires the code in an alternative format, for example in Braille, staff will be directed to the Research Performance team.

## **Complaints and Appeals**

### **1.16 Complaints and Appeals**

The University is committed to having sound governance of the Code of Practice and robust complaints and appeals procedures.

In Sections 2.9 to 2.10 we have detailed our appeal process in relation to the identification of staff with SRR, in Section 3.3 we have detailed our appeal process in relation to determining Independence and in Section 5.12 we have detailed our appeal procedure in relation to 'Staff Circumstances'.

We have also put in place a procedure for complaints in relation to non-adherence with the code generally. All such complaints should be sent to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education). The PVC (Education) is not involved in either the development or implementation of the code and is therefore deemed to be independent of the process. The PVC (Education) will establish a complaints panel to hear the complaint and the Complaints Panel will include two senior members of staff who have no role in the REF process and will have due regard to gender balance.

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix 1

## PART 2: IDENTIFYING STAFF WITH SIGNIFICANT RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESEARCH (SRR)

### 2.1 Guiding Principles of the Process for the Identification of Staff with SRR

The guiding principles of the University's REF process for the identification of staff with SRR are that:

- no one individual can decide on whether a person is SRR or non-SRR;
- the Research Director (RD) and Head of School (HoS) will ensure clear communication with each individual in relation to their REF status and any changes in status will always be documented and signed off by the individual.

### 2.2 Development of the Process for Identifying Staff with SRR

The University's process for identifying staff with SRR resulted from an iterative university-wide consultation<sup>9</sup>. Consultation commenced while the code was at a formative stage and continued throughout its development.

In addition to the various consultations the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research & Impact (PVC (R&I)) and the Director of People and Culture met with staff representative bodies (ie: University and UCU representatives and Research Directors) to consult with, and seek agreement with them on the proposed processes for making decisions in relation to the identification of staff who have SRR. The Director for People and Culture also accompanied the PVC (R&I) to a number of the UCU meetings. Following each of these meetings UCU issued an update to their members.

### 2.3 Process for Identifying Staff with SRR

Taking account of feedback from a number of University-wide consultations with staff and staff representative bodies the University agreed and implemented a two-stage process for identifying staff with SRR. The process for identifying staff with SRR commenced in 2018.

In implementing the process individual meetings (known as trilaterals because they involved the Research Director, the Head of School and the member of staff) were held with ALL academic/research staff to ensure all were aware of the process and of the requirements for *Category A Eligible* and *Category A Submitted* status. In the case of areas with high numbers of contract research staff, group meetings rather than individual meetings are held. Staff were asked to complete and sign a pro-forma where an outcome was agreed. Where staff were absent at the time of the meetings (eg: on sick leave, maternity leave, etc.) this is followed up

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix 1

by the Research Performance team within the Department for Research & Impact who maintain a master list of absentees together with details of their return date. The Research Performance team also monitors new starts to ensure that no member of staff is overlooked in the SRR process.

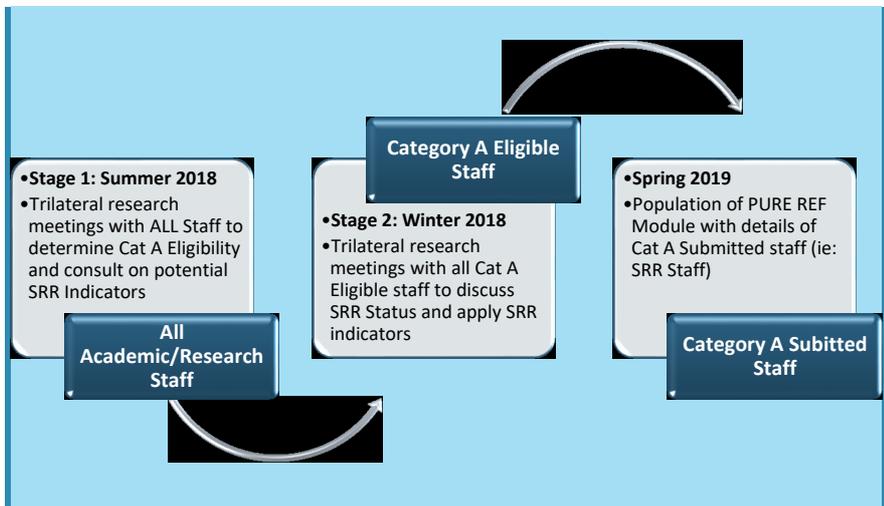
**2.3.1 SRR Identification Stage 1** involved individual meetings with ALL academic/research staff to identify all those who are *Category A Eligible*, ie: on an academic function of *Teaching & Research or Research Only* (excluding Research Assistants). Individual staff members met with their Research Director (RD) and Head of School (HoS) and were asked to complete a pro-forma confirming the agreement reached on their academic function (ie: Teaching & Research, Teaching Only or Research Only) and their REF2021 Unit of Assessment. Additionally, each individual was asked to provide feedback on what they felt were the most appropriate SRR indicators for their discipline. As a result of the feedback a draft list of SRR indicators was compiled and submitted for university-wide consultation<sup>10</sup> before being finalized for application in Stage 2 of the process.

**2.3.2 SRR Identification Stage 2** involved meeting with ALL Category A Eligible staff (as identified in Stage 1) and applying the agreed indicators of SRR in order to determine *Category A Submitted* staff (ie: those with SRR). At the Stage 2 meetings members of staff were asked to complete a pro-forma to record their agreed SRR status and indicating which of the SRR indicators applied to them. Those members of staff who did not have SRR were asked to clearly articulate the reason for this and sign the pro-forma.

**Figure 1** below summarises the process for identifying staff with SRR.

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix 1



**Figure 1: Process for Identifying Staff with SRR**

### 2.3.3 Default Status

In the event of a member of staff who does not engage in the SRR process either by not attending a trilateral meeting or by not completing the SRR paperwork, every possible means is employed to resolve the situation. If the situation still remains unresolved the default status for staff on academic contracts is recorded as non-SRR and this is communicated to the member of staff concerned, along with a copy of the Code of Practice outlining the Appeals Process.

## 2.4 Categories of SRR Staff

Sections 2.4.1 to 2.4.3 below detail the three categories of SRR status (ie: *SRR*, *SRR Pending* and *non-SRR*) and how these are recorded and monitored following the SRR trilateral meetings. Upon receipt of a pro-forma signed by the relevant individual and co-signed by their HoS/RD and/or Line Manager, SRR status is immediately recorded on CoreHR<sup>11</sup>.

The SRR, *SRR Pending* or *Non-SRR* status of an individual will have NO impact on any decisions relating to their future support, promotion, extension of contract or progression within the institution.

<sup>11</sup> The University's Human Resource Database

#### 2.4.1 SRR

SRR status for all individuals is entered in CoreHR and the details of all staff designated as SRR are uploaded to the REF Module in PURE (the University's central research information management system) so that the process of identifying eligible REF outputs can be instigated.

#### 2.4.2 SRR Pending

The University has created an interim status of '*SRR Pending*' for those staff who do not meet a range of SRR indicators appropriate to their discipline at their initial SRR trilateral meeting. For staff identified as *SRR Pending* the RD and HoS will agree a set of clear, identifiable, measurable and manageable research expectations with the individual and discuss the support available to him/her to achieve these expectations. He/she will also be provided with a copy of the University's Research Support handbook<sup>12</sup> which outlines the research support available to all researchers to support them in their REF journey. A review date will be set for all *SRR Pending* staff following their initial SRR meeting and this will be recorded by the Research Performance team who will follow up on any change to status after the review date.

##### 2.4.2.1 Review Meeting for Staff Recorded as SRR Pending

The majority of SRR meetings are expected to take place within the first 6 months of 2019 and all *SRR Pending* staff should have a review meeting as early as possible in 2020 to ensure that any changes in status are notified to the Research Performance team well in advance of the REF census date of 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020. It is expected that the majority of SRR Pending review meetings will take place in early 2020 and, for those whose initial SRR meeting did not take place in early 2019, a review date of no later than May 2020 will be required to ensure time for any changes to be made to the REF submission.

Following the SRR Pending review meeting, the member of staff will be confirmed as one of the following two REF2021 categories: SRR or Non-SRR in line with the REF Guidance on Submission. It is important to note that for REF2021 staff can only be designated as *SRR* or *non-SRR*.

**SRR Pending is a University category rather than a REF status. It is an interim status which is designed to support those staff to achieve full SRR status before the REF census date.**

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix 10

### 2.4.3 Non-SRR

For staff who are designated as *Non-SRR* the evidence of their *Non-SRR* status, which is documented and signed off by the individual, is recorded and stored securely by the Research Performance team. If, at any stage during their career, a *Non-SRR* member of staff takes on more responsibility for research they will become *SRR Pending* and will be provided with appropriate support and resource to help them achieve full SRR status.

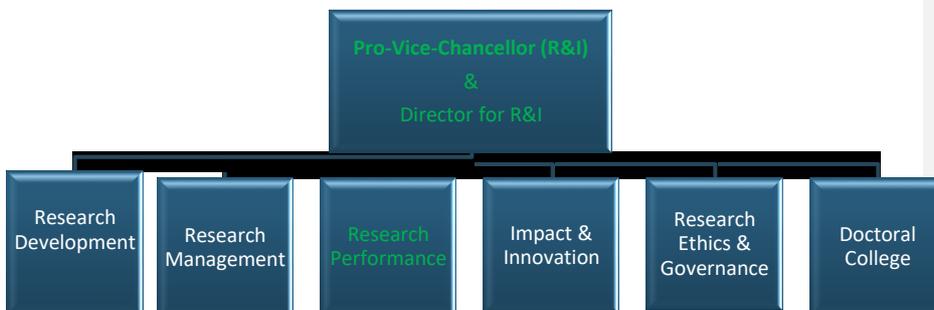
## Staff and Committees

This section of the code and associated appendices give an overview of Ulster University's structures for research and set out the operating criteria and terms of reference for individuals, committees, advisory groups and any other bodies involved in the REF2021 advisory or decision-making processes.

### 2.5 The Operational and Strategic Management of REF

The **operational management** and co-ordination of the REF submission occur through the *Research Performance Team* reporting to the *Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research & Impact (PVC (R&I))* (see Figure 2).

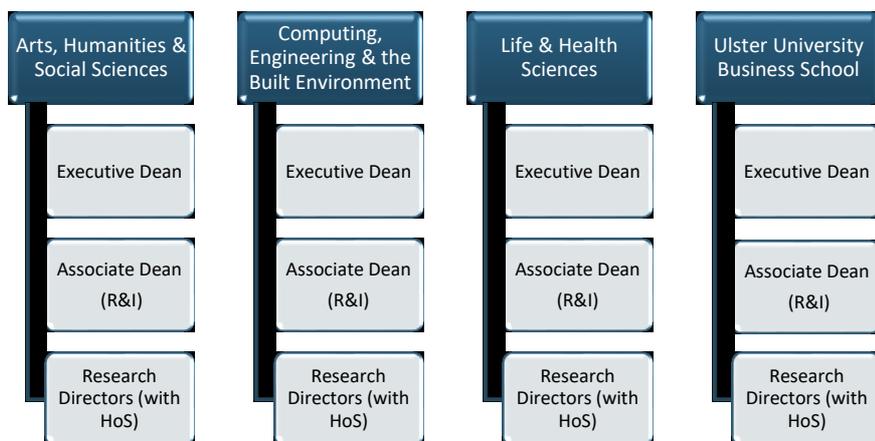
#### The Research and Impact Team



The **strategic management** of research activities relating to REF occurs through *Research Directors (RDs)* reporting to *Associate Deans for Research and Impact (ADRs)* who report in turn to the *PVC (R&I)* and their respective *Executive Dean (ED)*.

Research is managed and led within the four Faculties by an *Associate Dean for Research & Impact* (ADRI) and across a number of REF2021 Units of Assessment (UoAs), each led by a *Research Director (RD)* who works closely with their respective *Head of School (HoS)* (see Figure 3).

### The Faculty Structure



### 2.6 Staff

See Appendix 4 for details of the roles and responsibilities of the REF2021 decision-makers.

### 2.7 Committees

See Appendix 5 for details of the Terms of Reference and Membership of all REF-related committees/groups.

## Training

### 2.8 Training for Staff in Decision-Making Roles

*(See also Section 1.7: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training)*

Additionally, monthly forum meetings with ADRI and RDs are used to focus on various aspects of the REF Guidance, eg: Outputs, Impact, etc. and the forum meetings are also used to deliver REF training and to share best practice in relation to REF activities.

## Appeals

### 2.9 Reasons for Appeal

Appeals can **only** be made where there is non-agreement of an individual's *Category A Eligible* or *Category A Submitted* status.

Appeals **cannot** be made in relation to the final selection of outputs for any individual.

**2.9.1 Academic Staff:** All academic staff who have a mutually agreed SSR status (ie: *SRR*, *Non-SRR* or *SRR Pending*) are expected to have completed a pro-forma agreeing to this designation. Where a member of staff does not agree an SRR status at the trilateral meeting with his/her Research Director and Head of School, a further meeting will be arranged to discuss this; if there is still no consensus on SRR status a meeting will take place with the relevant ADRI and, if required, Executive Dean. If there is still no agreement following the meetings the member of staff's default status will be *Non-SRR* and, at that stage, the member of staff may instigate the formal appeals process (see Section 2.10).

**2.9.2 Research Only Staff:** All Research Only staff are required to meet the 'independence' criterion in order to be *Category A Eligible*. If a member of Research Only staff is deemed to be an independent researcher and is *Category A Eligible* then he/she is automatically SRR as their Research Only academic function denotes significant research activity. Where there is a dispute over independence a meeting will be arranged with the RD/HoS and if there is still no agreement an additional meeting will be arranged with the relevant ADRI and, if required, the Executive Dean. If there is still no agreement following the meetings, the member of staff's default status will be *Ineligible* and, at that stage, the member of staff may instigate the formal appeals process (see Section 2.10).

### 2.10 Appeals Process

The appeals process is intended to be the means by which:

- academic staff can seek a review of the University's decision to default their status to *Non-SRR* as a result of non-agreement on their status; and
- research only staff can seek a review of the University's decision to default their status to *Category A Ineligible* as a result of non-agreement of their independent status.

Appeals should be made in writing to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) by the individual clearly stating the grounds on which they wish to make the appeal. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) will convene an Appeals Panel comprising representation from P&C, R&I and a Research Director from a Faculty other than that of the appellant. In setting up the panel due regard will be paid to gender balance. Members of the Appeals Panel will be independent of the REF decision-making processes and will be trained in equality legislation.

All appeals should normally be lodged within two weeks of the default designation. The Appeals Panel will be convened and the individual will be informed of the decision of the Appeals Panel by letter no later than two weeks from the date of the lodgement of the Appeal. A meeting will also be offered should the individual wish to discuss the matter further with the Appeals Panel. **The decision of the Appeals Panel will be final.**

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

### **2.11 EIA on Identification of Staff with SRR**

This section should be read in conjunction with section 1.8 which details our overall approach and ethos in relation to EIAs.

The EIA on staff identified as having SRR will be informed by an analysis of data in respect of all the protected characteristics of staff considered to meet the criteria for having SRR in the context of all staff who are eligible for submission, and all academic/research staff.

As issues emerge from the EIAs we are committed to acting on the findings of the EIAs and, where necessary, adapting or changing our processes to ensure equality of opportunity. We view an EIA as an iterative process rather than a 'one-off' event. We will learn from EIAs and make our processes better processes.

## PART 3: DETERMINING RESEARCH INDEPENDENCE

### Policies and Procedures

#### 3.1 Process for Determining Research Independence

All Research Only staff will be made aware of the REF2021 definition of independence and the requirement for Research Only staff to be 'independent researchers' in order to be *Category A Eligible* either via an individual research trilateral meeting with their RD and HoS (see Figure 1) or via a research group meeting. To ensure transparency and consistency all Research Only staff will be provided with a briefing document on both REF2021 and the definition of independence<sup>13</sup>. To ensure that all Research Only staff are full briefed, the Research Performance team will provide RDs and HoS with a list of all Research Only Staff (excluding Research Assistants) irrespective of contract end date. The Research Performance team will also monitor all new starts and provide RDs and HoS with details of all new starts on a monthly basis. As part of their local induction all Research Only new starts will be provided with the REF2021 briefing document.

The onus will be on each member of Research Only staff to demonstrate, and provide evidence of, their independence to their RD/HoS and complete a pro-forma<sup>14</sup> confirming which of the independence criteria they meet. If a Research Only member of staff is deemed to be independent and therefore *Category A Eligible* then he/she is automatically *SRR* (ie: *Category A Submitted*) as their combined independence and Research Only academic function demonstrate significant research activity. As per Paragraph 2.4.1 their SRR status is recorded on University systems (CoreHR and in the REF module in PURE). If a member of Research Only staff does not provide evidence of independence, they are deemed to be *Category A Ineligible*.

#### 3.2 Staff, Committees and Training

Please see Part 2, Sections 2.5 to 2.8 for details of Staff, Committees and Training.

#### 3.3 Appeals

The appeal process and the appeal panel on issues of research independence will be identical to that for SRR (see section 2.9 to 2.10 above).

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<sup>13</sup> See Appendix 6

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix 6

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

### **3.4 EIA on the Identification of Independent Researchers**

This section should be read in conjunction with section 1.8 which details our overall approach and ethos in relation to EIAs.

The EIA on staff who meet the definition of an independent researcher will be informed by an analysis of data in respect of all the protected characteristics of staff who meet the definition of an independent researcher in the context of an appropriate comparator pool for all Research Only staff (excluding Research Assistants).

As issues emerge from the EIAs we are committed to acting on the findings of the EIAs and, where necessary, adapting or changing our processes to ensure equality of opportunity. We view an EIA as an iterative process rather than a 'one-off' event. We will learn from EIAs and make our processes better processes.

## PART 4: SELECTION OF OUTPUTS

### Policies and Procedures

#### 4.1 Selection of Outputs for REF2021

The following paragraphs detail the University's process for identifying eligible research outputs and for ensuring a fair approach to the final selection of outputs for inclusion in the REF2021 Submission.

The overriding principle in the selection of outputs is that each Category A Submitted member of staff is submitted with one output and the selection of the remaining outputs is based solely on the quality of the remaining outputs within the total pool of proposed outputs to maximise the REF return for the UoA.

The development of each REF submission and the list of outputs to be included is an incremental process and the final submission evolves through the regular REF Review meetings chaired by the PVC (R&I) and involving the EDs, ADRI, RDs and HoS.

Research outputs are evaluated throughout the REF cycle with decisions made about the final selection of outputs when the actual output profile of the UoA as a whole is clear. Internal peer review of outputs by RDs and relevant discipline experts is routine and the use of additional external peer judgements and metrics is recommended where appropriate. A 13 point rating scale has been implemented in the PURE REF module ranging from -1\*, 1\*, +1\* ... -4\*, 4\*, +4\*) and is used to rate each output. ~~Where there is no distinction in terms of quality between 2 outputs additional metrics will be brought into play where appropriate and these metrics will be provided by the University's Research Support Librarian.~~ Reviewers and advisors are selected on the basis of relevant research expertise and experience in the field. Feedback to researchers regarding the assessment of individual outputs will be concise and constructive. The outcomes of the reviews will be used to inform modelling exercises which will help determine the optimal UoA submission.

#### 4.2 Process for the Identification of Eligible Research Outputs for Category A Submitted Staff

The PURE<sup>15</sup> REF2021 module is used to manage the University's REF submission including the identification, selection and rating of research outputs.

<sup>15</sup> PURE is the University's publication repository and central research information management system.

In the spirit of openness and transparency all staff who have been defined as SRR (ie: *Category A Submitted*) are invited to propose the research outputs they wish to be considered for REF via the PURE REF Module and each member of SRR staff is provided with a step-by-step guide on how to do this. When an SRR member of staff logs in to their PURE profile they see an additional tab called *'Propose Outputs for REF2021'*. This view lists all their REF-eligible research outputs and is automatically limited to the REF2021 publication period (1 January 2014 – 31 December 2020). The member of staff can propose as many outputs as he/she wishes and has the option to rank these and provide additional commentary on each of them.

Once the outputs of all SRR staff are proposed the relevant Research Director is able to see the total pool of outputs proposed for consideration for REF2021. In cases where a member of SRR staff does not propose an eligible output which the RD feels should be considered then the RD can request that the additional output be added to the proposed pool. If a SRR member of staff is absent long-term the Research Performance team can populate the REF module with his/her eligible outputs so that the RD can have access to these and this will be communicated to the absent member of staff.

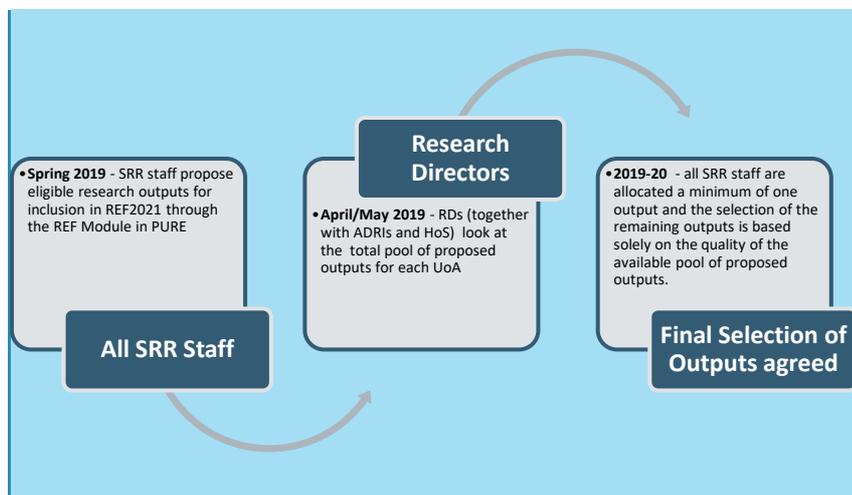


Figure 3: Process for the Identification of Eligible Outputs and the final Selection of REF2021 Outputs

#### 4.3 Process for the Identification of Research Outputs of Former Staff

For REF2021 the guidance allows for outputs in the submitted pool to be attributed to former staff provided that the output was first made publicly available while the staff

member was employed by the institution as a *Category A Eligible* member of staff.

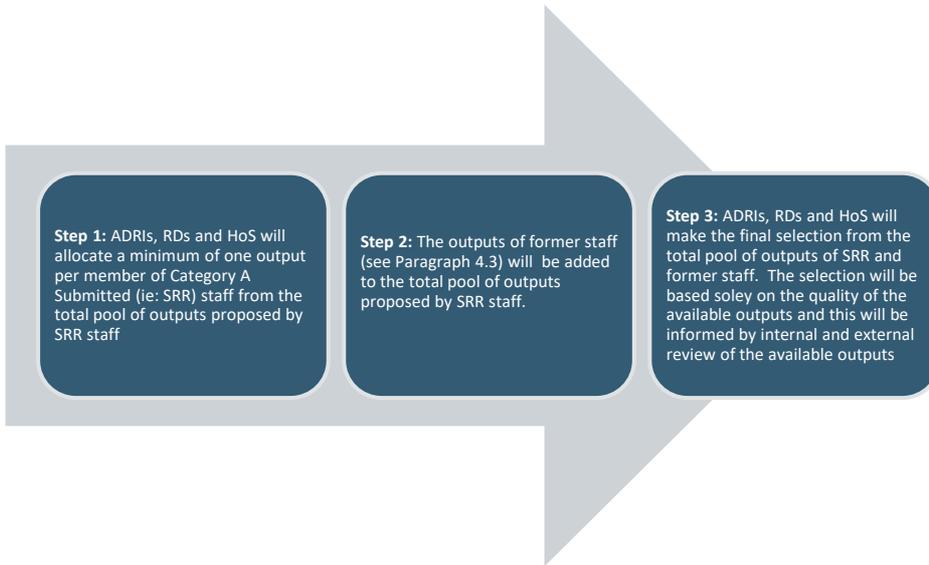
We recognise both the importance and necessity to engage, in an appropriate and sensitive manner, with our former employees on REF2021. There are a number of staff who have left the University by way of redundancy since 1st January 2014 and we have been advised that UCU Congress is strongly opposed to the use of outputs from staff who have been made redundant. We value our relationship with UCU and have decided that we will not seek to use outputs from this category of former staff in REF2021. However, should such former staff contact us requesting the potential inclusion of their outputs, we will do so, and provide evidence of their request.

For those staff who have left the University for reasons other than redundancy and whose outputs are eligible for inclusion the Research Performance team will bring their research outputs into the PURE REF module so that they can be considered for inclusion.

#### **4.4 Process for the Final Selection of Research Outputs for Inclusion in REF2021**

No one person will be responsible for the final selection of the outputs to be submitted to REF2021. Every member of staff with SRR will be allocated a minimum of one research output with the remaining outputs being selected primarily on the basis of their quality as determined by a robust process of internal and external review and using an effective automated algorithm within PURE and, where there are a number of outputs of the same quality, the final selection will also take into account metrics where this is appropriate.

~~At a minimum a group comprising the ADRI, RD and HoS, and paying due regard to equality legislation, will be responsible for the final selection of outputs from the total pool of proposed outputs.~~ The final selection will be informed by the outcomes from a combination of internal and external review to determine the star rating of of the proposed outputs and the application of the PURE algorithm to ensure the optimal submission for each UoA. At a minimum the RDs working with their respective ADRI and the Research Performance team will be responsible for running the algorithm and ensuring the optimal submission for their UoA. ~~and metrics where appropriate. In larger UoAs where there are multiple disciplines or Research Groups senior academics or Research Group leaders may also be asked to inform the decision-making process on the final selection of the outputs within their discipline.~~ Feedback to researchers regarding the assessment of the outputs will be concise and constructive and all members of the UoA will be informed of the final selection.



**Figure 4: Process for the Selection of REF2021 Outputs**

## **Staff, Committees and Training**

### **4.5 Staff, Committees and Training**

Please see Part 2, Sections 2.5 to 2.8 for details of Staff, Committees and Training.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

### **4.6 EIA on the Selection of Outputs**

This section should be read in conjunction with section 1.8 which details our overall approach and ethos in relation to EIAs.

The EIA on the distribution of selected outputs will be informed by an analysis of data on the distribution of selected outputs across staff, by protected characteristic, in the context of the characteristics of the submitted staff pool.

If there is clear under/over representation in any area we will firstly review our process to ensure that the process is not, in itself, discriminatory. If the review suggests that there is an issue of restricted opportunity we will consider appropriate remedial action.

## PART 5: STAFF CIRCUMSTANCES

### 5.1 Ulster University's Commitment to supporting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Ulster University is committed to supporting and promoting Equality Diversity and Inclusion in research careers. As part of this commitment the University has in place measures to recognise the effect that an individual's circumstances may have on their research productivity.

In selecting outputs, the University will be cognisant of any declared circumstances in determining their expectations about an individual's contribution to the overall outputs pool. It should be noted that there is no set expectation in relation to outputs for each member of staff. Research expectations are based on a range of indicators, such as: outputs, income, impact, PhD supervision and expectations are commensurate with an individual's fte, career status (eg, ECR, CRS, etc), long-term absences/illnesses, maternity leave, etc.

### 5.2 Process for Declaring Individual Staff Circumstances (ISC)

All Category A Submitted (ie: SRR) staff will be advised of the University's disclosure process<sup>16</sup> if they wish to **voluntarily** declare any circumstances that may have had an effect on their ability to contribute to the output pool at the same rate as colleagues. Details of the disclosure process and the associated paperwork will be communicated to all Category A Submitted (ie: SRR) via email, INSIGHT<sup>17</sup> and also the internal REF2021 webpages. Staff may voluntarily declare ISC at any stage in the REF cycle but would be encouraged to do so as early as possible and no later than 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020 to ensure that any requests for a reduction in outputs are submitted to the Funding Bodies in March 2020.

All *Category A Submitted* (ie: SRR) staff will also be made aware of the potential to be submitted with zero outputs<sup>18</sup> if applicable circumstances apply. Additionally all Category A Submitted (ie: SRR) staff will be made aware of the definition of Early Career Researchers (ECR) together with the potential to request a reduction in the UoA output if there are exceptional circumstances.

Once the total pool of eligible outputs for *Category A Submitted* staff is available RDs will see which staff do not have the required minimum of one output. Those staff will be invited to **voluntarily** submit a confidential Disclosure Form declaring any circumstances that may have

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<sup>16</sup> See Appendix 7

<sup>17</sup> The University's online magazine

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix 10

had an exceptional effect on their ability to research productively throughout the REF 2021 period to the extent that they do not have the required minimum of one output.

### **5.3 Consideration of Declared ISC**

The REF2021 Equality Working Group will be responsible for developing and overseeing the process for the disclosure of ISC. A *REF2021 Individual Staff Circumstances Sub-Group* (REFISCSG)<sup>19</sup> under the guidance of the REF2021 Equality Working Group will be established to consider any confidential disclosures. The membership of this group will comprise staff who are wholly independent from the REF2021 decision-making processes.

The final agreed process will involve the submission of Disclosure forms to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team who will treat these in strictest confidence and anonymise them before they are submitted to the REFISCSG.

### **5.4 Decisions on Declared ISC**

The *REFISCSG* will meet as and when required to discuss any disclosures and decisions will be notified to individuals in writing within one week of the date of the meeting. Decisions may result in:

- a recommendation that the University applies for either form of reduction (ie: a removal of the 'minimum of one' requirement or a reduction in the overall Unit requirement);
- a recommendation that the individual's declared circumstances warrant an adjustment to the individual's research expectations (in such cases a meeting with the relevant RD and HoS to discuss appropriate adjustments will be facilitated by Occupational Health).

### **5.5 Data on ISC**

All data in relation to ISC will be anonymised, treated in strictest confidence, stored securely and destroyed appropriately once the outcomes of REF2021 are published. The data will only be used internally to :

- identify which staff require a reduction of outputs to zero;
- identify which ISC need to be taken into account in asking for a reduction in the overall output requirement for the UoA; and
- identify those staff who require an adjustment in relation to their research expectations.

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<sup>19</sup> See Appendix 5 for ToR & Membership

## 5.6 Part-time staff

A member of part-time staff will be treated on the same basis as a comparable full-time member of staff, given commensurate time to support their research and the expectation for that member of staff to produce eligible research outputs will be entirely commensurate with his/her part-time status.

## 5.7 Fixed-term staff

The University will not treat a member of fixed-term staff less favourably than a comparable permanent member of staff. All fixed-term member of staff will have access to the same information and resources as a permanent member of staff. Fixed-term staff, whose contract ends before the census date, will be made aware that this renders them ineligible.

## 5.8 Contract Research Staff (CRS)

The University is committed to enhancing the career development of our CRS in line with our European Union HR Excellence in Research Award. The University values the significant contribution made by our CRS and we wish to do all what we can to improve their career progression and line managers are encouraged to meet regularly with CRS to discuss their career planning and developmental needs and to encourage them to become independent researchers.

Since the initial launch of the Research Concordat for Contract Research Staff in 1996, the University has pro-actively sought to improve the terms and conditions of CRS. CRS have access to the same range of research support as permanent members of academic staff. The University has put in place a range of programmes to support researchers on the journey towards research independence. The programmes include RIGOUR (**R**esearch **I**ncome & **G**rant **O**pportunities for **U**lster **R**esearchers (RIGOUR) and SOARING (**S**ignificance and **O**riginality in **A**cademic **R**esearch: **I**nterpreting **N**ew **G**uidance)

RIGOUR is primarily designed to help researchers enhance and improve on the success rate of grant applications to external funding bodies and includes Personal Skills Development. The RIGOUR programme has been designed specifically for Ulster University academics and researchers who are either currently developing proposals, or are simply thinking about future proposals, with the intention of applying for an external, competitive grant. The programme should help give staff a more competitive edge by working with attendees to reflect on the key principles of how to write a successful grant application and to recognise exactly what the different funding panels are looking for when they review applications.

SOARING supports our researchers to further strengthen research outputs. The programme delivers a series of interactive panels, seminars and workshops to provide our researchers with a better understanding of what it means to produce internationally excellent and world-leading outputs. SOARING is not about the dissemination process, but rather is focused on making sure that Ulster University's research outputs are of the highest quality.

The University also operates an appraisal and promotion scheme specifically for CRS enabling the advancement of high-performing individuals and all promotion/advancements are independent of the ability of the external funding to cover the cost of the promotion.

#### **5.8.1 Selection of Members of CRS for Inclusion in REF2021**

See Part 3 above and Appendix 6 for details of the process for determining the research independence of CRS.

### **5.9 Early Career Researchers**

All staff will be made aware of the definition of ECR together with the potential to request a reduction in the UoA output if there are exceptional circumstances. As for CRS our ECRs have full access to a range of developmental and support services<sup>20</sup>.

### **5.10 Support for Staff with Circumstances**

The University believes that staff are its most important asset and that their well-being is essential to the achievement of a high performance culture and the provision of quality services. Whilst the university has no control over external factors, it is committed to identifying sources of stress and will take action to address those causes of stress within its control.

As part of the University's Health and Wellbeing procedures the PVC (R&I), EDs, ADRIs, RDs and HoS are responsible at a strategic level for reducing the risk for their staff to reasonable levels of pressure at work and, in support of meeting this responsibility, they are committed to:

- ensuring there is good communication and close staff involvement in the development and implementation of REF processes, in particular, during times of change;
- encouraging an open attitude towards expressions by staff regarding stress at work, and will treat work-related stress and health issues seriously;
- seeking to ensure that appropriate resources, support and training are available to support staff to meet the expectations placed upon them;

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<sup>20</sup> See Appendix 9

- negotiating modifications where possible to an individual's job or working environment to assist their return to work after illness.

The University has in place a number of support mechanisms for staff who have declared circumstances including, but not limited to:

- Reductions in expectations or additional support commensurate with the type and duration of the declared circumstances, eg: part-time working, illness, etc.
- Part-time working after maternity leave
- Phased returns after illness.

See also our Research Support Services for the range of additional support available to our researchers in Appendix 9.

#### **5.11 Equality Impact Assessment**

See Part 1 - Section 1.8, Part 2 – Section 2.11, Part 3 – Section 3.4.

#### **5.12 Appeals**

Appeals cannot be made in relation to the final selection of outputs for any individual.

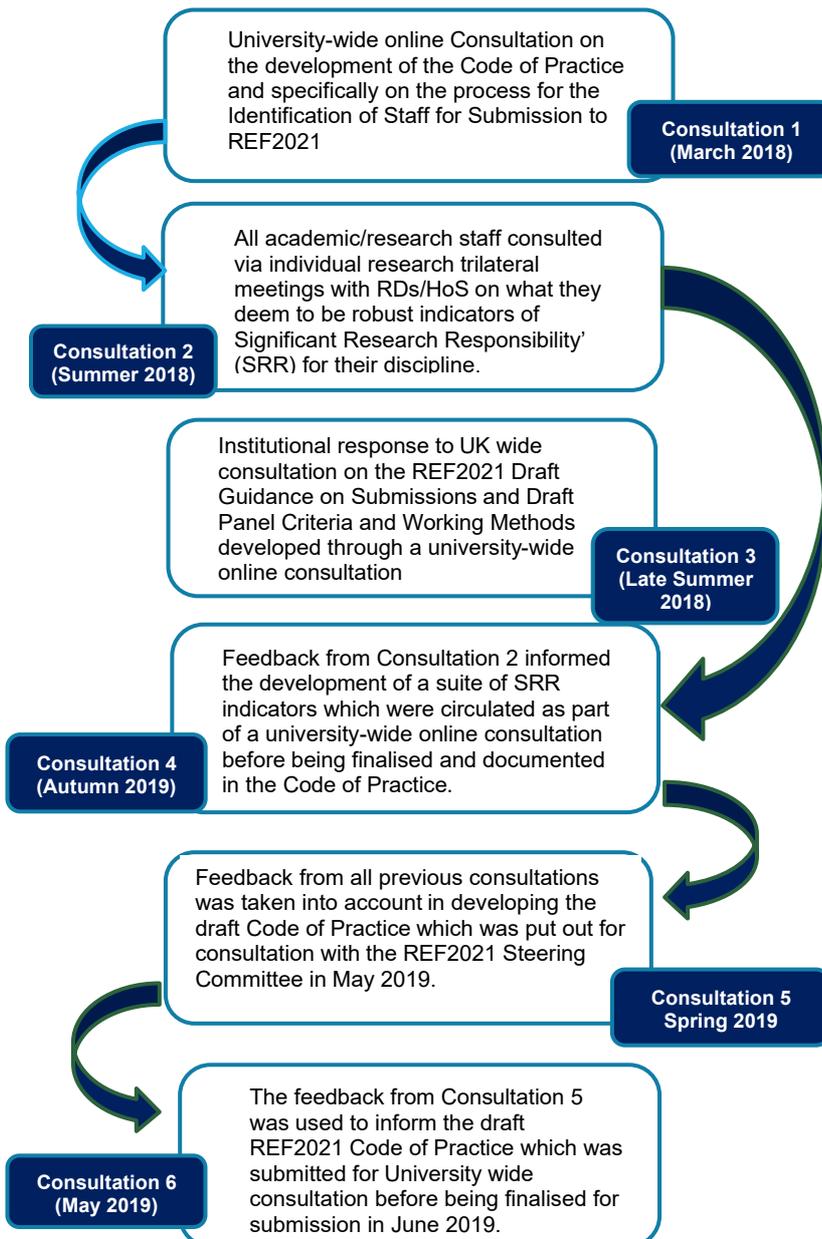
## PART 6: APPENDICES

- Appendix 1:** Ulster University's REF2021 Consultation Process
- Appendix 2:** Definition of Category A Eligible and Category A Submitted
- Appendix 3:** Category A Eligible/Category A Submitted Pro-Formae
- Appendix 4:** Roles and Responsibilities of Decision Makers
- Appendix 5:** REF-Related Committees: Terms of Reference and Membership
- Appendix 6:** Briefing Document on Research Independence
- Appendix 7:** Individual Staff Circumstances Disclosure Process
- Appendix 8:** Guidance on Removing the 'minimum of one' requirement
- Appendix 9:** Research Support Services
- Appendix 10:** Glossary of Abbreviations

## Appendix 1

### Ulster University's REF2021 Consultation Process

Ulster University's REF2021 process is about transparency, consistency and accountability and, as such, colleagues have been consulted on an ongoing basis on all aspects of REF2021. Full details of our consultation process from 2018 onwards are outlined below.



## Ulster University's REF2021 Consultation Process

### Consultation 1 (March 2018)

In March 2018, as a first step towards making our REF2021 submission, a university-wide online 'Consultation on the Development of the University's Code of Practice on the Identification of Staff for Submission to REF2021' was issued. This consultation focused on agreeing a process for identifying *Category A Eligible* staff and a subsequent process for determining and agreeing university-wide SRR indicators.

### Consultation 2 (Summer 2018)

Feedback from Consultation 1 informed the development of a process for identifying *Category A Eligible* and *Category A Submitted* staff (see Part 2: Section 2.3). As part of this agreed process a second consultation was conducted via trilateral meetings with ALL academic/research staff. The purpose of the trilaterals was to meet with all staff to determine their Category A Eligibility status and to consult with each member of staff on what they deemed to be appropriate indicators of 'Significant Research Responsibility' (SRR) for their discipline.

### Consultation 3 (Late Summer 2018)

In preparing the institutional response to the UK wide consultation on the REF2021 [Draft Guidance on Submissions](#) and [Draft Panel Criteria and Working Methods](#) Ulster University issued a University-wide online consultation on the draft documents and sought feedback from all staff with an interest in the conduct, quality, funding or use of research.

### Consultation 4 (Autumn 2018)

Feedback from Consultation 2 (*ie*: the individual trilaterals) on potential SRR indicators informed the development of a suite of SRR indicators that were then circulated as part of a further university-wide online consultation before being finalised and documented in the University's draft REF2021 Code of Practice.

### Consultation 5 (Spring 2019)

Taking into account feedback from all previous consultations a first full draft of the REF2021 Code of Practice was developed and submitted to members of the REF2021 Steering Committee<sup>21</sup> for feedback. Members comprised representation from all REF2021 Units of Assessment.

### Consultation 6 (May 2019)

Taking into account feedback from REF2021 Steering Committee members (Consultation 5), a final draft of the REF2021 Code of Practice was prepared and underwent a university-wide consultation in May 2019 before being finalised and submitted in June 2019. In this consultation respondents were asked to focus specifically on the appeals process, Individual Staff Circumstances and processes for identifying and selecting outputs.

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<sup>21</sup> See Appendix 5

## Appendix 2

### Definition of Category A Eligible and Category A Submitted

#### 1. DEFINITION OF CATEGORY A ELIGIBLE STAFF

*Category A Eligible* staff are those who meet the core eligibility criteria below and form the total pool of eligible staff.

##### **Core Eligibility Criteria**

1. *Academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 fte or greater on the payroll of the submitting institution on the census date.*
2. Academic staff whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'teaching and research'.
3. Academic staff who have a substantive connection with the submitting institution.
4. Academic staff who are independent researchers (for staff on 'research only' contracts) and not research assistants.

See [Guidance on Submissions \(Para 117\)](#)

#### 2. DEFINITION OF CATEGORY A SUBMITTED STAFF

*Category A Submitted* staff are defined as *Category A Eligible* staff who have been identified by the institution as having *significant responsibility for research* (SRR) on the REF2021 census date (31<sup>st</sup> July 2020)

##### **Staff with significant responsibility for research are those for whom:**

- a. **'Explicit time and resources are made available'**. Indicators of this could include (but are not limited to):
  - a specific proportion of time allocated for research, as determined in the context of the institution's practices and applied in a consistent way
  - research allocation in a workload model or equivalent.
- b. **'To engage actively in independent research'**. Indicators of this could include:
  - eligibility to apply for research funding as the lead or co-applicant
  - access to research leave or sabbaticals
  - membership of research centres or institutes within the HEI.

(HEIs are also advised to refer to the indicators of independence outlined in [Guidance on Submissions](#) paragraphs 132 - 133 as additional guidance on this aspect)

- c. **'And that is an expectation of their job role'**. Indicators of this could include:
  - current research responsibilities as indicated in, for example, career pathways or stated objectives
  - expectations of research by role as indicated in, for example, job descriptions and appraisals.

See [Guidance on Submissions \(Paras 135 and 141\)](#)

## Appendix 3

### CATEGORY A ELIGIBLE AND CATEGORY A SUBMITTED PRO-FORMAE

#### REF2021 – CATEGORY A ELIGIBLE

**Academic Function** (Please tick):

**Category A Eligible**    Teaching & Research    Research Only (if independent)

**Category A Ineligible**    Teaching Only    Research Only (Research Assistants)

**REF2021 Unit of Assessment** (Please tick if appropriate):

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3a Nursing                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> 20 Social Work & Social Policy   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3b Biomedical Sciences                        | <input type="checkbox"/> 23 Education   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Psychology, Psychiatry & Neuroscience       | <input type="checkbox"/> 24 Sport & Exercise Sciences, Leisure & Tourism                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11 Computer Science and Informatics           | <input type="checkbox"/> 26 Modern Languages and Linguistics  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12 Engineering                                | <input type="checkbox"/> 27 English Language and Literature   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13 Architecture, Built Environment & Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> 28 History   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 14 Geography and Environmental Studies        | <input type="checkbox"/> 32 Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15 Archaeology                                | <input type="checkbox"/> 33 Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 17 Business and Management Studies            | <input type="checkbox"/> 34 Communication, Cultural & Media Studies, Library & Information Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18 Law  |   |

*I confirm my Academic Function and UoA as ticked above:*

**MEMBER OF STAFF: (Print Name)**

**MEMBER OF STAFF: (Signature)**

**HEAD OF SCHOOL:** .....

**RESEARCH DIRECTOR:** .....

**DATE OF TRILATERAL:** .....

**REF2021 – CATEGORY A SUBMITTED (SRR)**

Name

(Please Print)

**SRR Status** (Please tick):

- SRR     Non-SRR     SRR Pending

**For SRR status please tick the appropriate indicators:**

**Explicit time and resources**

- Significant time allocated for a range of research activity as agreed in annual research plans and/or DAR
- Access to research support in the form of training programmes, sabbaticals, mentoring and peer review (see attached Research Support leaflet and also [Research Support](#) webpages.
- Access to internal Unit of Assessment funds in support of research

**To engage actively in independent research**

For the purposes of the REF, an independent researcher is defined as an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme.

Indicators of 'independent' research include (but are not limited to):

- eligibility to apply for external research funding as the lead or co-applicant
- holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship<sup>22</sup> where research independence is a requirement
- leading a research group or a substantial work package
- significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research
- acting as Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator on a competitively won externally funded research project since 2014
- demonstrating research impact and demonstrating research impact with use of knowledge exchange income
- publication of full peer-reviewed paper or other form of assessable research output (as described in [Annex K](#) of the Draft REF Guidance on Submissions) since 2014
- PhD/Postdoc/Research Assistant supervision/line-management since 2014.

**It is important to note that a single indicator in itself may not individually demonstrate independence and it is expected that staff should be able to demonstrate research activity over a range of indicators commensurate with their discipline, their role, their FTE status and also taking into account individual staff circumstances.**

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<sup>22</sup> An illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of independent fellowships can be found at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk), under Guidance

**Active engagement in independent research is an expectation of their job role**

Indicators of this 'expectation' are:

- time allocated to research as indicated in annual teaching and research planning meetings and/or DAR;
- clear, identifiable, measurable and manageable research targets which have been agreed by the individual with the relevant Research Director on an annual basis;

**For non-SRR status please tick the appropriate indicators (if applicable)**

More significant responsibility for:

- Teaching Activities
- Administration
- Scholarship
- Professional Practice
- Knowledge exchange
- (Other) please specify:

**Please articulate clearly why the individual named above is designated as Non-SRR:**

**For SRR Pending status the following should be agreed at the trilateral (please tick to confirm):**

- clear, identifiable, measurable and manageable research expectations
- a future date for reviewing these expectations and the individual's SRR status

Please confirm that the individual has been given a copy of the Research Support leaflet.

**Member of Staff:** .....

**Head of School:** .....

**Research Director:** .....

**Date of SRR Trilateral:** .....

## Appendix 4

### Roles and Responsibilities of REF Decision-Makers

The roles and responsibilities of the key decision makers and decision making bodies in the University's preparations for REF2021 are outlined below.

1. **Pro-Vice-Chancellor (R&I)**
2. **Research Performance Team**
3. **Impact Team**
4. **Executive Deans (EDs)**
5. **Associate Deans for Research and Impact (ADRIIs)**
6. **Research Directors (RDs)**
7. **Heads of School (HoS)**
8. **Deputy Director of People and Culture - Partnerships and Services**

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1. **Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Impact)**

The PVC (R&I) is responsible for implementing the University's Research & Impact Strategy and is ultimately responsible for the content of the University's REF submission and making key decisions in consultation with relevant staff (eg: EDs, ADRIIs, RDs and HoS).

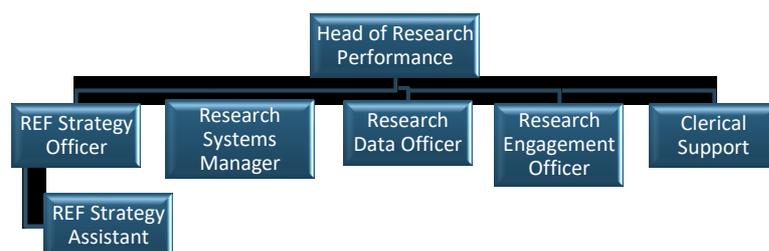
The PVC (R&I) chairs the majority of research-related committees and all performance-monitoring meetings with UoAs and reports on all research and impact activities through the Research & Impact Committee (RIC) which is a sub-committee of Senate. The PVC (R&I) also reports on research performance and research activities to the University's Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

2. **Research Performance Team**

The *Head of Research Performance* together with the *REF Strategy Officer* is responsible for overseeing the co-ordination of the University's REF submission and acting as the institutional contact for REF.

The *Research Performance Team* (see Figure 4) is responsible for all aspects of the REF submission including:

- i) maintaining data in the PURE<sup>23</sup> REF2021 module in relation to academic/research staff, research outputs, research students and research income in a format consistent with the funding councils' requirement for REF2021;
- ii) ensuring that the integrity of the submission process is upheld through careful guidance to all parties involved in the process and by assuring the integrity of data in the submissions through data verification;
- iii) servicing the REF2021 Steering Committee (see Appendix 4) and all REF related meetings so as to monitor progress in relation to the REF submissions;
- iv) advising on the University's overall timetable for preparation of the REF2021 submission;
- v) interpreting REF2021 Guidelines and providing guidance on all REF-related matters to RDs and other relevant staff;
- vi) testing and implementing the REF2021 data collection system, and offering guidance, training and advice on its usage across the University;
- vii) developing and implementing a REF2021 Code of Practice for Ulster University, which meets the requirements of equality and other legislation and promotes an inclusive environment;
- viii) facilitating training on the REF Code of Practice and equality legislation to all staff involved in the REF decision-making process;
- ix) developing a training and development programme, SOARING (**S**ignificance and **O**riginality in **A**cademic **R**esearch: **I**nterpreting **N**ew **G**uidance) focused on increasing the quality and REFability of research outputs and publications;
- x) providing support and systems to enable staff to achieve excellence in their research and the Open Access of their REF outputs.



**Figure 4: Research Performance Team**

<sup>23</sup> PURE is the University's central research information management system

### **3. Impact Team**

The Impact team within the Impact and Innovation section of the Department for R&I (See Figure 2) is responsible for enhancing the institutional support for developing impact pathways, creating value within the economy, society, culture, public policy and services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia. Faculty Impact Officers led by an Impact Manager support Research Directors and researchers in the development of their REF2021 Impact Case Studies and deliver the Impact Development Series suite of training initiatives available to all academic staff.

### **4. Executive Deans**

The Executive Dean is the most senior member of academic staff in the Faculty. S/he has leadership responsibility and executive authority for all matters relating to the functioning of the a faculty. We have an Executive Dean for each of our four faculties'.

### **5. Associate Deans for Research & Impact (ADRs)**

ADRs are research and impact champions responsible for the delivery of research and impact performance targets and metrics within their respective Faculties. They are also responsible for overseeing the REF2021 UoA submissions within their respective Faculty. ADRs are members of the Research & Impact Leadership team (RILT)<sup>24</sup> which meets monthly and is chaired by the PVC (R&I). ADRs report both to their Executive Dean and to the PVC (R&I).

### **6. Research Directors (RDs)**

Each REF2021 UoA is led by a Research Director (RD) who has a strong personal record of research achievements in his/her discipline and a track record of success in the management of research projects.

The key person in driving each of Ulster University's REF2021 submissions is the RD who is responsible for developing, preparing and writing the REF submission. The RD supports the academic/research staff and research within the submission by ensuring colleagues are given the time and resources necessary to support their work and that Early Career Researchers (ECRs) who demonstrate clear research ability are given every opportunity to fulfil their potential.

The day-to-day management of research is the responsibility of the RD who works closely with HoS on matters of research expectations and performance within the UoA/School and with the ADRI on matters of research strategy and REF. All Research

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<sup>24</sup> See Appendix 5 for ToR and Membership

Directors sit on Faculty/School Boards and Heads of School attend REF Review meetings.

The role of the RD is to provide strategic leadership and management on all aspects of the work of the UoA and to work in consultation with HoS to identify *Category A Eligible* and *Category A Submitted* staff and outputs to be returned in REF.

Through annual monitoring meetings chaired by the PVC (R&I), RDs report on how they are working to optimise the development and achievements of the UoA so as to maximise performance in the REF. All RDs are members of the Research Directors' Forum which meets monthly and is chaired by the PVC (R&I). The Research Directors' forum does not have formal Terms of Reference and is an informal forum where Research Directors discuss best practice and share experiences.

#### **7. Heads of School (HoS)**

HoS work closely with RDs on matters of research expectations and performance within the UoA/School). They are involved in meetings with all academic/research staff to discuss their eligibility and SRR status for REF2021 and attend all research monitoring meetings chaired by the PVC (R&I). HoS are responsible for encouraging academic/research staff to engage with the University's Research Development Programme and, as part of the research trilateral meetings with staff HoS activity encourage staff to avail of the Research Support Services<sup>25</sup>.

#### **8. Deputy Director of People and Culture - Partnerships and Services**

The Deputy Director of People and Culture – Partnerships and Services has an advisory role and chairs the REF2021 Code of PracticeWG and REF2021 EWG<sup>26</sup>. The Deputy Director's role is to oversee and advise on the development and subsequent implementation of the processes in the Code of Practice and to oversee the regular equality screening of the Code of Practice and processes therein.

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<sup>25</sup> See Appendix 10

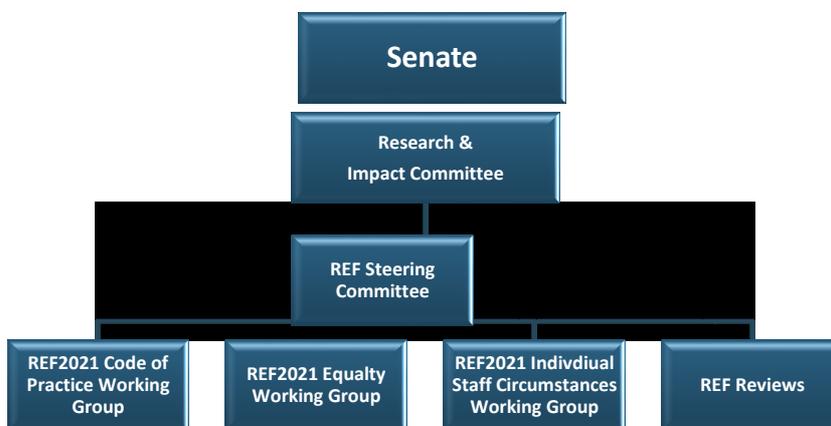
<sup>26</sup> See Appendix 5

## Appendix 5

### REF-Related Committees, Terms of Reference and Membership

#### Committee Structure

Figures 5 and 6 below show the University's committee structure for research and includes any REF2021 related working groups. All research and REF-related committees and working groups are serviced and minuted by the Research Performance team<sup>27</sup> with all agendas, papers and minutes stored on a secure SharePoint site.



**Figure 5: Research Related Committee Structure**



**Figure 6: Monthly Research Meetings Chaired by PVC (R&I)**

<sup>27</sup> See Appendix 4 for details of the Research Performance team

**1. Research and Impact Committee (RIC)**

RIC meets three times a year and reports to the University's Senate. RIC is responsible for the formulation, monitoring, delivery and implementation of the University's strategy for research and impact. Its membership comprises all Pro-Vice-Chancellors, all ADRI, Senate representation and elected representatives from the research community. Where there are perceived gaps in the representation, additional members are co-opted.

**2. REF2021 Steering Committee (REFSC)**

The REFSC is responsible for agreeing the University's strategy and timetable for preparing the REF2021 submission. Whilst the Steering Committee's role is predominantly advisory the membership comprises all those involved in the REF2021 decision-making processes. Membership includes ADRI, RDs, senior academics, representatives from People & Culture (P&C) including the University's Equality and Legal Manager with relevant Department for R&I staff in attendance. The Committee normally meets up to 6 times a year, meeting more frequently as the REF deadline approaches.

**3. REF2021 Code of Practice Working Group (REFCoPWG)**

The purpose of the REFCoPWG is to oversee the development of the University's REF2021 Code of Practice and ensure adherence to the processes and procedures outlined in the Code of Practice.

**4. REF2021 Equality Working Group (REFEWG)**

The purpose of the REF 2021 Equality Working Group is to ensure that the University meets its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion obligations in the development of the University's REF2021 submission and to monitor /the operation of the Code of Practice through regular equality screening at institutional and UoA level. The REFEWG is chaired by the Deputy Director of People and Culture - Partnerships and Services and comprises one ADRI, one RD and representatives from the People and Culture Directorate and the Department for R&I.

**5. Research and Impact Leadership Team (RILT)**

RILT is a sub-group of the University's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and meets on a monthly basis. RILT comprises the PVC (R&I), the Director (R&I), the four ADRI, Dean of Postgraduate Research and Director of the Doctoral College, Deputy Director of People & Culture – Partnerships and Services, Deputy Director of Finance, Chief Digital and Information Officer, Marketing Business Partner (R&I) and the Director of Estates.

RILT leads in the development of research and impact strategies that support the delivery of the Five and Fifty Strategic Plan and oversees the implementation of the Research & Impact Strategy 2017-22 in support of the delivery of the Five and Fifty Strategic plan.

**6. Research Directors' Forum**

Monthly meetings chaired by the PVC (R&I) are held with RDs. These meetings are informal and have no formal Terms of Reference. The meetings cover a variety of research related matters including REF. Since the final Guidance on Submissions has been published the focus of these meetings has been narrowed down to specific aspects of REF and includes sharing of good practice and REF specific training.

**7. REF Reviews and Mock REFs**

The University's organisational structure for research management facilitates the monitoring and evaluation of each UoA's research performance for REF through annual review meetings. A full mock REF2021 is scheduled for May 2019 and more frequent review meetings will take place in the run-up to the REF submission deadline in 2020.

There are no formal Terms of Reference for REF review meetings which are chaired by the PVC (R&I). Each meeting is attended by the relevant Executive Dean, ADRI, RD and HoS and all meetings are serviced by the Research Performance team.

For the review meetings RDs are required to report on the performance of staff in their UoA in terms of the following REF indicators:

- SRR status of staff;
- publications and other research outputs;
- research environment (including external grant income and spend, research student numbers and completion rates);
- research impact.

## Terms of Reference and Membership of REF-Related Committees

### Gender Balance

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Research and Impact Committee (RIC)	13	5
REF2021 Steering Committee (REF2021SC)	22	9
REF2021 Code of Practice Working Group (REF2021CoPWG)	4	3
REF2021 Equality Working Group (REF2021EWG)	3	2
REF2021 Individual Staff Circumstances Working Group (REF2021ISCWG)	2	2
Research and Impact Leadership Team (RILT)	4	4

**RESEARCH AND IMPACT COMMITTEE**  
**(Sub-Committee of Senate)**  
**Terms of Reference 2018/19**

1. To oversee the formulation, monitoring, delivery and implementation of the University's strategy for Research and Impact and to keep it under review.
2. To advise and make recommendations to the Senate on:
  - i) matters relating to the organisation of, and support services for, Research and Impact;
  - ii) both internal and external funding of Research and Impact and related matters,
  - iii) policy in relation to PhD students, intellectual property, including patents and inventions; technology transfer; consultancy and related matters; incubator units and spin-out companies; and the social, economic and cultural impact of research;
  - iv) policy in relation to national/international research collaboration;
  - v) policy in relation to the governance of research, including the promotion of good practice and the principles of research integrity;
  - vi) criteria and procedures for the monitoring and assessment of Research and Impact performance against targets.
3. To consider any other matters relating to Research and Impact policy and practice which the Senate may require.
4. To receive reports:
  - i) on progress against Faculty targets from Associate Deans for R&I;
  - ii) on progress against R&I Strategy targets from R&I Team leaders;
  - iii) and consider recommendations from the Doctoral College Board which will oversee the recruitment, admission, supervision, training, progress and examination of research students; and make recommendations related to Ulster's research degree programme;
  - iv) and consider recommendations from the Research Governance Steering Committee which will oversee the implementation of policies and procedures for the governance of research which involves human participants, animals and other regulatory considerations;
  - v) and receive reports on progress and actions relating to the University's policy in relation to contract research staff and HR Excellence in Research Award.
5. To establish, whether from within its own membership or otherwise, such sub-committees and advisory groups as it may think fit, to advise and report on any of the above matters.
6. To charge the sub-committees or working groups that might be established from time to time, with tasks and initiatives, in pursuit of the University's Research & Impact strategy.
7. In reaching decisions the Committee will have due regard to their impact on, and implications for, the University's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and good relations as outlined in its Equality Scheme, and associated policies, and where possible and practicable the Committee will ensure that its actions are proactive in this respect.

*In reaching decisions the Committee will have due regard to their impact on, and implications for, the University's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and good relations as outlined in its Equality Scheme, and associated policies and, where possible and practicable, the Committee will ensure that its actions are proactive in this respect.*

**RESEARCH AND IMPACT COMMITTEE**  
**(Sub-Committee of Senate)**  
**Membership**

**CHAIR:** Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Impact)

- Pro Vice Chancellors (x 3)
- Associate Deans for Research & Impact (x 4)
- Dean of Postgraduate Research and Director of the Ulster Doctoral College
- Senate Representatives (x 2)
- Members elected by the research constituency (x 6)
- Co-opted members (x 4)
- UUSU President

**In attendance**

- Director for Research & Impact
- Head of Research Governance
- Head of Research Performance
- Head of Research Development
- Head of Innovation & Impact
- Head of Research Management

**Secretariat**

- Head of Research Performance

**REF2021 STEERING COMMITTEE**  
**Sub-Committee of the Research and Innovation Committee**  
**Terms of Reference**

The REF Steering Group will be responsible for:

- i. agreeing the University's strategy and timetable for preparing the REF2021 submission;
- ii. overseeing the development and approval of the University's REF2021 Code of Practice;
- iii. overseeing compliance with the University's Code of Practice on the fair and transparent identification of staff with SRR, determining who is an independent researcher, and the selection of outputs.
- iv. overseeing the work of the various REF2021 Working Groups
- v. the provision of crucial guidance and support at the time of developing the REF submissions;
- vi. defining which UoAs are to be submitted;
- vii. reviewing in detail drafts of submissions as they are developed;
- viii. providing a forum through which good ideas/practice can be shared.

*In reaching decisions the Committee will have due regard to their impact on, and implications for, the University's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and good relations as outlined in its Equality Scheme, and associated policies and, where possible and practicable, the Committee will ensure that its actions are proactive in this respect.*

**REF2021 STEERING COMMITTEE**  
**Sub-Committee of the Research and Innovation Committee**  
**Membership**

**CHAIR:** Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Impact)

- Associate Deans for Research & Impact (1 per Faculty)
- Research Directors (x 20)
- Deputy Director of People & Culture – Partnerships & Services
- Additional representation from the Professoriate Community (7 Professors)
- Representative from Library team
- Equality and Legal Manager

**In attendance**

- Director for Research & Impact
- Head of Research Performance
- Head of Impact & Innovation
- Head of Research Management
- REF Strategy Officer
- Faculty Administrative Staff (1 per Faculty)

**REF CODE OF PRACTICE WORKING GROUP 2018/19**  
**Sub-Committee of the REF2021 Steering Committee**  
**Terms of Reference**

To oversee the development of the University's REF2021 Code of Practice and ensure adherence to the processes and procedures outlined in the Code of Practice.

The Working Group will be responsible for:

- i. overseeing the development of the REF2021 Code of Practice on the Selection of Staff and Outputs;
- ii. to act as the 'scrutiny committee' for the submission and ensure that key deadlines are achieved;
- iii. to ensure that appropriate consultation take place on the Code of Practice.
- iv. to monitor adherence to the Code throughout the REF cycle.

*In reaching decisions the Committee will have due regard to their impact on, and implications for, the University's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and good relations as outlined in its Equality Scheme, and associated policies and, where possible and practicable, the Committee will ensure that its actions are proactive in this respect.*

**REF CODE OF PRACTICE WORKING GROUP 2018/19**  
**Sub-Committee of the REF2021 Steering Committee**  
**Membership**

**CHAIR:** Deputy Director of People and Culture - Partnerships and Services

- Associate Deans for Research & Impact (1 per Faculty)
- Head of Research Performance
- Equality and Legal Manager

**In attendance**

- REF Strategy Officer
- REF Strategy Assistant

**REF2021 EQUALITY WORKING GROUP**  
**(Sub-group of the REF2021 Steering Committee)**  
**Terms of Reference**

The purpose of the REF 2021 Equality Working Group is to monitor the implementation of the processes within the Code of Practice through regular EIAs to ensure that the University meets its obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act and the UK funding bodies. The REF 2021 Equality Working Group will:

1. Equality screen (ie: equality impact assess) the processes for:
  - identifying staff with significant responsibility for research;
  - determining research independence;
  - selecting outputs, including the processes used to assess research quality (ie: metrics).
2. Revise and improve the processes within the CoP as required based on the outcome of screening.
3. Report the outcome of equality seeing to the REF2021 Steering Committee
4. Undertake and publish, after the submission deadline, an equality impact assessment based on the final submission; and to report the findings to Research and Innovation Committee and Senior Leadership Team so as to further develop the research profile of any group or groups shown to be underrepresented in the REF2021 submission; and
5. Provide advice and guidance on issues relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in relation to the preparation of the REF2021 submission.
6. Receive and action reports from the REF2021 Individual Staff Circumstances Working Group.

*In reaching decisions the Committee will have due regard to their impact on, and implications for, the University's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and good relations as outlined in its Equality Scheme, and associated policies and, where possible and practicable, the Committee will ensure that its actions are proactive in this respect.*

**REF 2021 EQUALITY WORKING GROUP**  
**(Sub-group of the REF2021 Steering Committee)**  
**Membership**

**CHAIR:** Executive Dean (Life & Health Sciences)

- Associate Dean for R&I
- Research Director x 2
- Research Performance Team x 1
- People & Culture Directorate x 1

**Secretariat**

- Research Performance Team x 1

**REF2021 INDIVIDUAL STAFF CIRCUMSTANCES SUB-GROUP**  
**(Sub-Group of the REF2021 Equality Working Group)**  
**Terms of Reference**

The purpose of the REF2021 Individual Staff Circumstances Sub-Group is to consider any requests for a removal of the 'minimum of one' requirement

1. To review all '*Disclosure*' forms.
2. To reach decisions in relation to reductions in research outputs and advise the individual members of staff accordingly.
3. To advise the relevant Research Director of any reduction (without disclosing the reasons/individual circumstances).
4. To report to the REF2021 Equality Working Group as appropriate.

*In reaching decisions the Committee will have due regard to their impact on, and implications for, the University's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and good relations as outlined in its Equality Scheme, and associated policies and, where possible and practicable, the Committee will ensure that its actions are proactive in this respect.*

**REF2021 INDIVIDUAL STAFF CIRCUMSTANCES SUB-GROUP**  
**(Sub-Group of the REF Equality Working Group)**  
**Membership**

CHAIR: a member of staff who is independent of the REF decision-making processes.

**Membership**

- Research & Impact Representative
- People & Culture Representative
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Representative
- Research Director

**RESEARCH AND IMPACT LEADERSHIP TEAM (RILT)  
Sub-Group of Senior Leadership Team (SLT)  
2018/19**

The Research & Impact Leadership Team is a sub-group of the University's Senior Leadership Team, established to oversee the implementation of the University's Research Strategy, in support of delivery of the Five and Fifty Strategic Plan

Terms of Reference

1. To lead in the development of research and impact strategies that support the delivery of the Five and Fifty Strategic Plan.
2. To oversee the implementation of the Research & Impact Strategy 2017-22 in support of the delivery of the Five and Fifty Strategic Plan.
3. To monitor and support the development of Ulster's research environment in line with the Research & Impact Strategy 2017-2022.
4. To lead in the development and monitoring of the Key Performance Indicators for research and to agree corrective action, as appropriate.
5. To ensure the University's research ambitions are supported by appropriate professional service focus and resourcing.
6. To consider and provide feedback to SLT on budgetary and other resource allocation policies, to monitor performance against plans and to agree corrective action, as appropriate.
7. To endorse and advise on University responses to external policy consultations relating to research, innovation and their funding.
8. To consider matters referred to it by the University's Senior Leadership Team.
9. To lead in the oversight of the Risk Statement and Risk Register for Research & Impact.
10. To provide an update on key strategic issues and items to meetings of the Senior Leadership Team.

*In reaching decisions the Committee will have due regard to their impact on, and implications for, the University's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and good relations as outlined in its Equality Scheme, and associated policies and, where possible and practicable, the Committee will ensure that its actions are proactive in this respect.*

**RESEARCH AND IMPACT LEADERSHIP TEAM (RILT)  
Sub-Group of Senior Leadership Team (SLT)  
2018/19**

Membership

- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Impact) (Chair)
- Director of Research & Impact
- Dean of Postgraduate Research and Director of the Doctoral College
- Associate Dean (Research & Impact) Faculty of AHSS
- Associate Dean (Research & Impact) Faculty of CEBE
- Associate Dean (Research & Impact) Faculty of LHS
- Associate Dean (Research & Impact) UUBS
- Director of Estates
- Deputy Director of People & Culture – Partnerships & Services
- Deputy Director of Finance
- Chief Digital and Information Officer
- Marketing Business Partner (Research & Impact)

**Secretariat:**

Office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Impact)

## Appendix 6

### BRIEFING DOCUMENT FOR RESEARCH ONLY STAFF

1. **WHAT IS REF2021?**
2. **DEFINITION OF CATEGORY A ELIGIBLE STAFF**
3. **DEFINITION OF AN INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER**
4. **ARE YOU AN INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER?**

#### 1. **WHAT IS REF 2021**

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the UK system for assessing research in UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and determining the allocation of research funding to them. The primary purpose of REF 2021 is therefore to produce assessment outcomes which will be used by the UK funding bodies to inform the selective allocation of research funding to all HEIs with effect from 2022–23. Full details of the REF process can be found at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk).

As part of the exercise all HEIs are expected to submit details of all staff who have a significant responsibility for research (Category A Submitted), a range of research outputs (ie: publications or other assessable forms of output published), details of research spend, research student completions, impact case studies and a narrative describing the research environment.

Whereas, most academic appointments have contracts for teaching and research, others, including Research Assistants, Associates and Fellows are commonly designated 'Research Only'. In order to be eligible for inclusion in REF2021, *Research Only* staff must meet the definition of Category A Eligible staff and must be able to provide evidence of their 'research independence' (see Paras 2 and 3 below), i.e. they must be able to prove that they are independent researchers.

#### 2. **DEFINITION OF CATEGORY A ELIGIBLE STAFF**

*Category A Eligible* staff (See Figure 1) are those who meet the core eligibility criteria below:

##### **Core Eligibility Criteria**

1. Academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 fte or greater on the payroll of the submitting institution on the census date.
2. Academic staff whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'teaching and research'.
3. Academic staff who have a substantive connection with the submitting institution.
4. Academic staff who are **independent researchers** (i.e. for staff on 'research only' contracts) and not research assistants.

### 3. DEFINITION OF INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER

In order to meet the core eligibility criteria outlined above, Research Only staff must be able to provide evidence of their independence and the following paragraphs from the REF2021 Guidance on Submissions explains in detail the definition of independence for REF2021.

#### Independent Researchers

128. Staff employed on 'research only' contracts must be independent researchers (as defined in paragraphs 131 to 133 below) in order to meet the definition of Category A eligible. All staff on 'research only' contracts who are independent researchers will have significant responsibility for research so should be returned as Category A submitted staff.
129. Research assistants (sometimes also described as postdoctoral research assistants, research associates or assistant researchers) (as defined in paragraph 130 below, are not eligible to be returned to the REF unless, exceptionally, they meet the definition of an independent researcher (defined in (as defined in paragraphs 131 to 133 below)) on the census date of 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020 **and** satisfy the definition of *Category A Eligible* staff (see Section 1 above). They must not be listed as *Category A Submitted* staff purely on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs.
130. Research assistants are defined as academic staff whose primary employment function is 'research only', and they are employed to carry out another individual's research programme rather than as independent researchers in their own right (except in the circumstances described in paragraph 129 above). They are usually funded from research grants or contracts from Research Councils, charities, the European Union (EU) or other overseas sources, industry, or other commercial enterprises, but they may also be funded from the institution's own funds.
131. **For the purposes of the REF, an independent researcher is defined as an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme.**
132. Possible indicators of independence are listed below. Institutions should note that each indicator may not individually demonstrate independence and where appropriate multiple factors may need to be considered. The main panels have set out the indicators they consider appropriate for their disciplines. The following indicators are considered appropriate by all main panels
  - leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project
  - holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement. An illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of independent fellowships can be found at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk), under Guidance.

- leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package.

In addition to the generic criteria above Main Panels C & D also consider that the following attributes may generally indicate research independence in their disciplines:

- being named as a Co-Investigator on an externally funded research grant/award;
- having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research.

133. A member of staff is not deemed to have undertaken independent research purely on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs.

*Source: REF2021 Guidance on Submissions*

#### 4. ARE YOU AN INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER

If, as a member of research only staff, you feel that you meet any of the independent researcher criteria noted above, you should complete the pro-forma in Appendix 1 and submit this to your Research Director by no later than 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020.

**It is important to note that a single indicator in itself may not demonstrate independence and it is expected that staff should be able to demonstrate research activity over a range of indicators commensurate with their discipline, their role, their FTE status and also taking into account individual staff circumstances.**

Staff eligibility in REF 2021

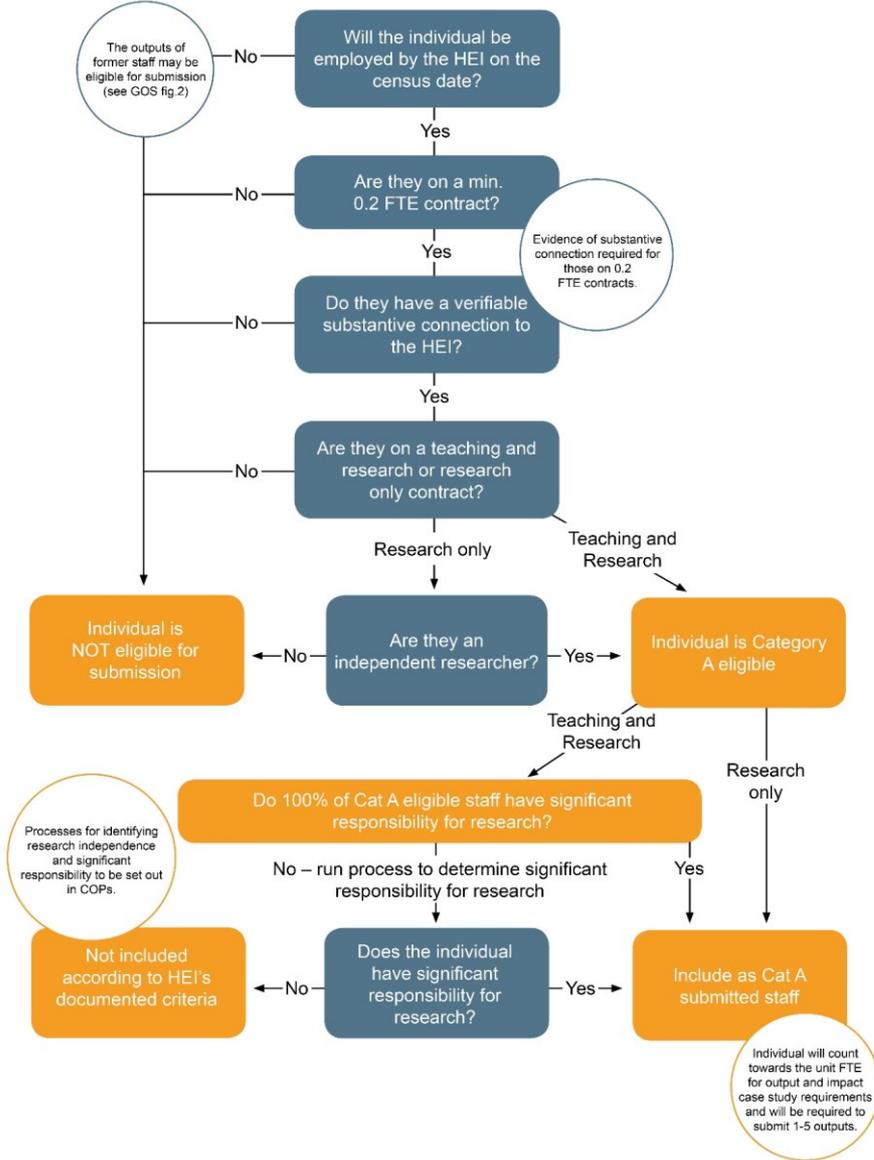


FIGURE 1

## REF2021 – Research Only Staff

If, as a member of Research Only staff, you feel that you will meet the definition of an independent researcher on the REF2021 census date of 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020 AND you will be in post on the census date, you should complete the form below and submit this to your Research Director as soon as possible and by no later than 30<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

If, at the time of the submission of the pro-forma, evidence of your independence is not available then your independent status will be kept as 'pending' until all evidence is available.

NAME (Please Print):

REF2021 Unit of Assessment:

Please identify how and why you meet any of the possible indicators of research independence listed below with a view to determining whether you undertake self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme.

It is important to note that a single indicator in itself may not individually demonstrate independence and it is expected that staff should be able to demonstrate research activity over a range of indicators commensurate with their discipline, their role, their FTE status and also taking into account individual staff circumstances.

Criteria	Comment
Leading or acting as a principal investigator or equivalent on an externally-funded research project	
Holding an independently won competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement. The list in the attached Annex provides some examples of such fellowships but is not exhaustive	
Leading a research group or substantial work package	
Eligibility to apply for external research funding as the lead or co-applicant	
Demonstrating research impact and demonstrating research impact with use of knowledge exchange income	
Publication of full peer-reviewed paper or other form of assessable research output (as described in <a href="#">Annex K</a> of the REF Guidance on Submissions) since 2014	
PhD/Postdoc/Research Assistant supervision/line-management since 2014.	
<b>In the case of UOAs in REF Main Panels C and D, these supplementary indicators should also be considered:</b>	
Being named as a Co-I on an externally funded research grant/award	
Having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research	

### Individual Staff Circumstances Disclosure Process

ULSTER UNIVERSITY



#### Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances

This document is being sent to all Category A staff (ie: SRR staff) whose outputs are eligible for submission to REF2021 (see '[Guidance on submissions](#)', paragraphs 117-122). As part of the University's commitment to supporting equality and diversity in REF2021, we have put in place safe and supportive structures for staff to declare information about any equality-related circumstances that may have affected their ability to research productively during the REF2021 assessment period (1 January 2014 – 31 July 2020), and particularly their ability to produce research outputs at the same rate as staff not affected by circumstances. The purpose of collecting this information is threefold:

1. To enable staff who have not been able to produce a REF-eligible output during the assessment period to be submitted to REF2021 without the minimum requirement of one output where they have:
  - circumstances that have resulted in an overall period of 46 months or more absence from research during the assessment period, due to equality-related circumstances (see below)
  - circumstances *equivalent* to 46 months or more absence from research due to equality-related circumstances
  - two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave.
2. To recognise the effect that equality-related circumstances can have on an individual's ability to research productively, and to adjust expectations in terms of expected workload/ production of research outputs.
3. To establish whether there are any Units of Assessment where the proportion of declared circumstances is sufficiently high to warrant a request to the higher education funding bodies for a reduced required number of outputs to be submitted.

#### Applicable circumstances

If your ability to research productively during the assessment period has been constrained due to one or more of the following circumstances, you are requested to complete the attached form. Further information can be found paragraph 160 of the '[Guidance on submissions](#)'. Completion and return of the form is voluntary, and individuals who do not choose to return it will not be put under any pressure to declare information if they do not wish to do so. This form is the only means by which the University will be gathering this information; we will not be consulting HR records, contract start dates, etc. You should therefore complete and return the form if any of the following circumstances apply and you are willing to provide the associated information.

- Qualifying as an ECR (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016)
- Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector
- Qualifying periods of family-related leave
- Junior clinical academics who have not gained a Certificate of Completion of training by 31 July 2020
- Disability (including chronic conditions)
- Ill health, injury or mental health conditions
- Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of the standard allowances
- Caring responsibilities
- Gender reassignment.

### **Ensuring Confidentiality**

Completed forms should be submitted IN CONFIDENCE to Mrs Angela Getty (Equality, Diversity & Inclusion) ([a.getty@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:a.getty@ulster.ac.uk)) by no later than Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020. Completed forms will be anonymised before being considered by an Individual Staff Circumstances Sub-Group (ISCSG) comprising representation from People & Culture, Occupational Health, Research & Impact and chaired by a member of staff who is wholly independent of the REF processes. Outcomes will be notified to individuals within one week of the meeting of the ISCSG and may result in:

- a recommendation that the University applies for either form of output reduction (ie: removal of 'minimum of one' requirement for an individual or a reduction in the overall Unit requirement);
- a recommendation that the individual's declared circumstances warrant an adjustment to the individual's research expectations (In such cases a meeting with the relevant RD and HoS to discuss appropriate adjustments will be facilitated by Occupational Health).

If the University decides to apply to the funding bodies for either form of reduction of outputs (removal of 'minimum of one' requirement or Unit circumstances), we will need to provide UKRI with data that you have disclosed about your individual circumstances, to show that the criteria have been met for reducing the number of outputs. Please see the '[Guidance on submissions](#)' document (paragraphs 151-201) for more detail about reductions in outputs and what information needs to be submitted.

Submitted data will be kept confidential to the REF team, the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs. All these bodies are subject to confidentiality arrangements. The REF team will destroy the submitted data about individuals' circumstances on completion of the assessment phase.

### **Changes in circumstances**

The University recognises that staff circumstances may change between completion of the declaration form and the REF 2021 census date (31 July 2020). If this is the case, then staff should contact Angela Getty (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) [a.getty@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:a.getty@ulster.ac.uk) to provide the updated information.

**ULSTER UNIVERSITY**  
**CONFIDENTIAL DISCLOSURE FORM**

**Name:** [Click here to insert text.](#)

**Department:** [Click here to insert text.](#)

Do you have a REF-eligible output published between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2020?

Yes

No

Please complete this form if you have one or more applicable equality-related circumstance (see above) which you are willing to declare. Please provide requested information in relevant box(es).

Circumstance	Time period affected
<p><b>Early Career Researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016).</b></p> <p><i>Date you became an early career researcher.</i></p>	<p><a href="#">Click here to enter a date.</a></p>
<p><b>Junior clinical academic who has not gained Certificate of completion of Training by 31 July 2020.</b></p>	<p>Tick here <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>Career break or secondment outside of the HE sector.</b></p> <p><i>Dates and durations in months.</i></p>	<p><a href="#">Click here to enter dates and durations.</a></p>
<p><b>Family-related leave;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>statutory maternity leave</li> <li>statutory adoption leave</li> <li>Additional paternity or adoption leave or shared parental leave lasting for four months or more.</li> </ul> <p><i>For each period of leave, state the nature of the leave taken and the dates and durations in months.</i></p>	<p><a href="#">Click here to enter dates and durations.</a></p>
<p><b>Disability (including chronic conditions)</b></p> <p><i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p><a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a></p>
<p><b>Mental health condition</b></p> <p><i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p><a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a></p>
<p><b>Ill health or injury</b></p> <p><i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p><a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a></p>

<p><b>Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of standard allowance</b>  <i>To include: Type of leave taken and brief description of additional constraints, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months</i></p>	Click here to enter text.
<p><b>Caring responsibilities</b>  <i>To include: Nature of responsibility, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	Click here to enter text.
<p><b>Gender reassignment</b>  <i>To include: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	Click here to enter text.
<p><b>Any other exceptional reasons e.g. bereavement.</b>  <i>To include: brief explanation of reason, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	Click here to enter text.

Please confirm, by ticking the box provided, that:

- The above information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances as of the date below
- I realise that the above information will be used for REF purposes only and will be seen by the REF2021 Institutional Staff Circumstances Sub-Group
- I realise it may be necessary to share the information with the REF team, the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs.

I agree

**Name:** Print name here

**Signed:** Sign or initial here

**Date:** Insert date here

- I give my permission for an Occupational Health colleague to contact me to discuss my circumstances, and my requirements in relation to these.
- I give my permission for the details of this form to be passed on to my Research Director and Head of School in order to facilitate a discussion in relation to the adjustment of expectations. (Please note, if you do not give permission your department may be unable to adjust expectations and put in place appropriate support for you).

I would like to be contacted by:

Email  Insert email address

Phone  Insert contact telephone number

Completed forms should be submitted either by email (marked CONFIDENTIAL) to [a.getty@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:a.getty@ulster.ac.uk) or by post (marked CONFIDENTIAL) to Mrs Angela Getty, Section Leader (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion), Room 02H15A, Shore Road, Newtownabbey, Co Antrim, BT37 0QB. The deadline for submission of completed forms is **Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020**.

## Appendix 8

### Guidance on removing the 'minimum of one' requirement

178. All Category A submitted staff must be returned with a minimum of one output attributed to them in the submission, including staff with individual circumstances. However, where an individual's circumstances have had an exceptional effect on their ability to work productively throughout the assessment period (1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020), so that the individual **has not been able to produce an eligible output**, a request may be made for the minimum of one requirement to be removed (form REF6a). Where the request is accepted, an individual may be returned with no outputs attributed to them in the submission, and the total outputs required by the unit will be reduced by one.
179. Requests may be made for an individual researcher who has not been able to produce an eligible output where any of the following circumstances apply within the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020
- a. an overall period of 46 months or more absence from research during the assessment period, due to one of more of the circumstances set out in paragraphs 160-161 of the see '[Guidance on submissions](#)', (such as an ECR who has only been employed as an eligible staff member for part of the assessment period)<sup>28</sup>
  - b. circumstances equivalent to 46 months or more absence from research, where circumstances set out in paragraphs 160-161 of the see '[Guidance on submissions](#)', apply (such as mental health issues, caring responsibility, long-term health conditions) or
  - c. two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave, as defined in Annex L of the '[Guidance on submissions](#)'.

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<sup>28</sup> This may include absence from work due to working part-time, where this has had an exceptional effect on ability to work productively throughout the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020, so that the individual has not been able to produce an eligible output. For part-time working, the equivalent 'total months absent' should be calculated by multiplying the number of months worked part-time by the full-time equivalent (FTE) not worked during those months. For example, an individual worked part-time for 30 months at 0.6 FTE. The number of equivalent months absent =  $30 \times 0.4 = 12$ .

180. Where the circumstances cases do not apply, but the individual's circumstances are deemed to have resulted in a similar impact (including where there are a combination of circumstances that would not individually meet the thresholds set out), a request may still be made and the institution should clarify this within the request form. Where an individual has a combination of circumstances, all the applicable circumstances should be cited in the request and information provided about the effect of the combined circumstances on the researcher's ability to produce an eligible output in the period.
181. The rationale for including two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave is based on the funding bodies' and EDAP's considered judgement, informed by the REF expert panels, that the impact of two or more periods of such leave may be sufficiently disruptive of an individual's research that they have not been able to produce an eligible output.
182. The request should include a description of how the circumstances have affected the staff member's ability to produce an eligible output in the period. The information provided in the request must be based on verifiable evidence, which may be audited in 2021, following the REF submission deadline.
183. Where a request is agreed, one output will be removed from the total output pool required for the submitting unit. This will be in addition to any reduction (of up to 1.5 outputs) applied for that staff member in REF6b, according to the guidance set out in paragraph.186 – 191, If the staff member concerned moves institution before or on the census date, the removal of the minimum of one requirement may be applied by the newly employing institution.

**Source:** *REF2021 [Guidance on Submissions](#)*



# Research Support Services.

**A short guide to the range of research training and support services available to academic and research staff.**

**We are  
Ulster University**

# Contents

1. Research Support Services
2. Training and Programmes
3. Systems Support
4. Contact us

# 1. Research Support Services

There are a range of support services available for academic and research staff to support your research activities including training, events, systems, and information websites. These include:

- RIGOUR Programme
- SOARING Programme
- IMPACT Development Series
- Citations Strategy
- Sabbatical Leave
- Research Mentoring Programme
- Distinguished Research Awards
- Supervision Development Programme
- Research Governance
- Research Integrity
- Intellectual Property
- REF 2021
- PURE
- Open Access
- Research Data Management
- Researchfish®
- Impact Tracker
- Research Professional

## Find out more

The following pages provide a brief outline of each programme/system. Each area has a designated website and links have been listed under each section. You can also find ALL the links to these websites by visiting the Research Support Website at:

[ulster.ac.uk/researchsupport](http://ulster.ac.uk/researchsupport)

## 2. Training and Programmes

### **RIGOUR/SOARING/IMPACT**

There are three key support programmes (RIGOUR, SOARING and IMPACT) in the portfolio of services designed to support staff through the various stages of the research process and deliver the highest quality of research.

The RIGOUR programme supports research income and grant opportunities; SOARING supports output, originality and significance; and IMPACT supports impact delivery.

- **RIGOUR Programme**

RIGOUR (Research Income & Grant Opportunities for Ulster Researchers) is designed to help academic and research staff enhance and improve on the success rate of grant applications to external funding bodies. The programme provides insights to funding panels; the application review process; funding opportunities; and how to write applications to address funder requirements.

[ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/rigour](http://ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/rigour)

- **SOARING Programme**

SOARING (Significance and Originality in Academic Research: Interpreting New Guidance) focuses on further strengthening Ulster's research outputs by increasing their quality and REFability. Through events, training, online tools and resources, the programme provides support on producing internationally excellent and world-leading outputs; writing a 300 word summary; journal strategies; and networking.

[ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/soaring](http://ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/soaring)

- **IMPACT Development Series**

The Impact Development Series is designed to help academic researchers enhance the impact of their research, track and evidence it, and generate new pathways to impact. The programme includes annual funding calls for impact activity, REF Impact Case Study guidance, resources on pathways to impact and public engagement, training on communicating your research and the Impact Tracker software tool, Impact30 Seminar Series and impact planners.

[ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/researchimpact](https://ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/researchimpact)

- **Citations Strategy/Training**

Citations and referencing are important components of academic practice. Citations help guide other researchers to your work and helps build credibility as an author.

A series of interactive workshops operate throughout the year to support academics and researchers in improving citations.

[ulster.ac.uk/citations](https://ulster.ac.uk/citations)

- **Sabbatical Leave**

A new Ulster University Sabbatical Leave Policy has been launched. Sabbatical leave enables individuals to develop personally, whilst delivering clear research outputs or teaching enhancements that are of benefit to the University, supporting the Five & Fifty Strategic Plan and contributing to the REF or enhancement of taught provision.

[ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/sabbatical](https://ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/sabbatical)

- **Research Mentoring Programme**

The research mentoring programme is a programme to support academic and research staff in building their research capacity and capability. Experienced researchers (professors, readers, senior staff) will provide focussed mentoring support to academic and research staff within their faculty.

[ulster.ac.uk/researchmentoring](http://ulster.ac.uk/researchmentoring)

- **Distinguished Research Awards**

The Distinguished Research Awards are an annual award to recognise outstanding research and scholarly activity and research rising stars. The awards are open to all academic and research staff and categories include Early Career Research Excellence Awards; Distinguished Research Fellowship Awards; and Senior Distinguished Research Fellowship Awards. Awards include overall Champion and Faculty specific awards for each category.

[ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/drfa](http://ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/drfa)

- **Supervision Development Programme**

The Doctoral College PhD Supervision Development Programme offers training sessions for academic staff including 'Introduction to PhD Supervision at Ulster' for our new and aspiring PhD Supervisors and 'Sharing Best Practice in PhD Supervision and An Update' for the more established PhD Supervisors. We also offer themed workshops including 'Supporting PhD Writing', 'Turbocharge Your Writing' and 'Giving Effective Feedback'.

[ulster.ac.uk/doctorscollege/supervisors/training-and-events](http://ulster.ac.uk/doctorscollege/supervisors/training-and-events)

- **Research Governance**

The University has a framework of research governance policies, procedures and guidance. For further information please go to the Research dashboard on your University MyDay portal page.

<https://portal.ulster.ac.uk/dashboard/research>

Select > Research Governance and Ethics

- **Research Integrity**

The University encourages and supports research integrity through a framework of policies, procedures and guidance, summarised and illustrated in the Code of Practice for Professional Integrity in the Conduct of Research.

[ulster.ac.uk/research/our-research/research-integrity](https://ulster.ac.uk/research/our-research/research-integrity)

All research active staff are required to complete the online Research Integrity Course

<https://portal.ulster.ac.uk/dashboard/home>

Select > Blackboard > Mandatory Courses

- **Intellectual Property**

We provide support and advisory services to ensure intellectual property rights generated through the University's research are properly protected, enforced and exploited.

[ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/innovation/ip](https://ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/innovation/ip)

## 3. Systems Support

A number of support systems and information websites are provided to support academic and research staff throughout your research development, these have been detailed below.

- **REF 2021**

The Research Excellence Framework 2021 website has been developed to provide up to date information on the REF 2021 process, including latest guidance and procedures as they become available from REF, latest REF news, as well as helpful guides and videos on the REF process, definitions and timelines.

[ulster.ac.uk/ref](https://ulster.ac.uk/ref)

- **PURE**

PURE is Ulster University's Research Management System. It captures and reports on all our research activity (research outputs, grants, awards and PhD supervision activity) and provides functionality for all academics, researchers and PhD Researchers to manage their individual research profile. PURE makes all of your research more visible and searchable – it is important to ensure your profile is accurate and up to date and that your outputs are captured. Training session information as well as training support videos are available via the PURE support website.

PURE PROFILE Login:

<https://pure.ulster.ac.uk/admin>

PURE SUPPORT:

[ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/puresupport](https://ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/puresupport)

- **Open Access**

Open Access is about sharing research freely and openly for the benefit of the public, researchers and universities. The Government and research funding bodies are committed to ensuring that published research findings should be freely accessible and have therefore mandated Open Access. For REF 2021, to be eligible for submission, papers accepted for publication after 1 April 2016 must be made Open Access.

[ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/openaccess](https://ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/openaccess)

- **Research Data Management**

Research data management is a mixture of systems, methods and processes used in a structured and systematic way to ensure that research is accessible, interoperable, and reusable. The RDM website sets out what the researcher's data responsibilities are throughout the project and how to ensure funder obligations and open access requirements are met.

[ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/rdm](https://ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/rdm)

- **Researchfish®**

Researchfish® is an online reporting system used by funders to collect information on the outcomes and the impact of their research (<https://researchfish.com>). Researchfish® is currently used by the Research Councils UK, Cancer Research UK, NIHR, British Heart Foundation and many other public and charitable research funding agencies. Researchers can add their outputs and outcomes throughout the year and submit their reports during the specific funder submission periods. For further information, submission dates and 'how to' guides visit the Researchfish® website.

[ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/researchfish](https://ulster.ac.uk/internal/research/researchfish)

- **Impact Tracker**

The Impact Tracker, developed by Vertigo Ventures, is a software platform that helps researchers track impact progress and securely store impact evidence. This easy to use tool enables academics and researchers to record, plan and store evidence gathered from impact activities and to report the results.

**Log in:**

[ulster.vvimpacttracker.com/account/login](https://ulster.vvimpacttracker.com/account/login)

**User guide:**

[ulster.ac.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/321390/Impact-Tracker-Brochure-web.pdf](https://ulster.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/321390/Impact-Tracker-Brochure-web.pdf)

- **Research Professional**

Research Professional is an online database of research funding opportunities. Users can browse the site for opportunities or create customised searches and share content with colleagues.

[researchprofessional.com](https://researchprofessional.com)

## 4. Contact us

The team at Research & Impact are available to advise and support staff, the teams include:

- **Research Development:** pre-award support from horizon scanning for appropriate funding opportunities within faculties, to providing advice, expertise and support for submitting high quality applications.
- **Research Management:** post award research contract management; management of research finance; and administration of research grant claims.
- **Research Performance:** management of Research Excellence Framework (REF); research strategy and performance management; and management of PURE, Research Outputs and open access.
- **Research Governance:** management of research regulation, governance and ethics; intellectual property management; and protection and internal research risk and audit management.
- **Innovation and Impact:** support for the development of research impact; management of knowledge exchange, consultancy and KTP projects; and commercialisation.

[ulster.ac.uk/research/people](http://ulster.ac.uk/research/people)

## Appendix 10

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS	
ADRI	Associate Dean for Research & Impact
CoP	Code of Practice
CoreHR	Ulster University's Human Resource Database
CRS	Contract Research Staff
ECR	Early Career Researcher
ED	Executive Dean
EIA	Equality Impact Assessment
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HoS	Head of School
ISC	Individual Staff Circumstances
PURE	Ulster University's Central Research Information System
PVC (R&I)	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Impact)
P&C	People & Culture
QP	Quality Profile
R&I	Research & Impact
RD	Research Director
REF	Research Excellence Framework
REFCoPeWG	REF2021 Code of Practice Working Group
REFEWG	REF2021 Equality Working Group
REFISCSG	REF2021 Individual Staff Circumstances Sub-Group
REFSC	REF2021 Steering Committee
RIC	Research & Impact Committee
RILT	Research & Impact Leadership Team
RP	Research Performance
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SOARING	Significance and Originality in Academic Research: Interpreting New Guidance
SRR	Significant Research Responsibility
UCU	University and College Union
UoA	Unit of Assessment

This Code of Practice has been developed through a process of University wide consultation. It is a living document which will be kept under review and updated if required to incorporate emerging best practice or new guidance on equality and diversity.

If you have any queries relating to the Code of Practice, please email [ref@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:ref@ulster.ac.uk).



[ulster.ac.uk](http://ulster.ac.uk)