



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

London School of Economics and Political Science

LSE REF 2021 Code of Practice

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London School of Economics and Political Science

REF 2021 Code of Practice

Part 1: Introduction

This Code of Practice (Code) describes the principles and procedures that the School will follow when selecting staff and outputs for submission to the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF 2021). It is relevant both to staff involved in preparing our REF2021 submission and to staff eligible for submission. The Code has been prepared in accordance with the REF 2021 Guidance on Codes of Practice¹, the REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions² and the REF 2021 Guidance on revisions³.

In accordance with the requirements of REF 2021, this Code will be submitted to the REF 2021 Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP)⁴ and is subject to approval by Research England, following which will be published on the School's REF 2021 website.

The Code addresses various aspects of the School's selection and decision making processes, to seek to ensure that decisions in relation to REF 2021 are framed in the context of the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion and all relevant legislation. The Code also describes the procedures that the School will follow in making selection decisions, including the individuals and committees involved in the decision-making process.

The School's strategic target for REF 2021 is to be in the top 3 for all core social science disciplines. To that end, we will seek to ensure that the maximum number of 4* (world-leading) research outputs which are eligible for submission are included. With respect to outputs which are not considered to be 4*, each UOA should aim for a balance between maximising the grade point average of remaining outputs submitted and having a broad and balanced submission. Where multiple outputs are estimated to be of equal value, the School will aim for a portfolio which is balanced in terms of outputs per author, and taking into account the protected characteristics of submitted staff where possible, including with respect to career stage, and in line with the School's 2030 strategy⁵. Final decisions on the output portfolio will be made by the REF Strategy Committee (REFSC).

The Code was developed by Research and Innovation in consultation with the REF Strategy Committee, the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Office, the University and College Union and the School's solicitors (Pinsent Masons). The Code was considered by the Research Committee on 20 November 2018, Department Heads Forum on 30 January 2019, Departmental REF Coordinators on 6 February 2019, Research Centre Directors Forum on 21 February 2019, School Management Committee on 7 May 2019, the Gender Equality Forum on 7 May 2019, Academic Board on 8 May 2019 and the Research Staff Committee on 22 May 2019. Comments and feedback provided by each of the above groups were incorporated into each revised draft of this Code as it was developed.

¹ <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/guidance-on-codes-of-practice-201903/>

² <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/guidance-on-submissions-201901/>

³ <https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1417/guidance-on-revisions-to-ref-2021-final.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.ref.ac.uk/panels/equality-and-diversity-advisory-panel/>

⁵ <http://www.lse.ac.uk/2030>

1.1 How the code relates to broader School policies/ strategies that promote and support EDI

The Code has been drawn up in consultation with the EDI Office and in accordance with the School's EDI objectives, strategy and policy statement⁶. Further, this Code reflects the School's drive to strengthen its commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion and take relevant action throughout the institution, as set out in the LSE Strategy 2030. The underpinning framework of the School's Ethics Code⁷ also applies to this Code.

1.2 Actions taken since REF 2014

Following REF 2014, the School's Equality and Diversity action plan 2014-2017 sets out ambitious objectives to facilitate a culture that embeds the principles of equality and diversity in all aspects of the School's activities. Actions taken since REF 2014 include the following:

- The Academic Registrar's Division has carried out work in collaboration with the Disability and Wellbeing Service to ensure that disabled students are aware of the routes for disclosing disability and are not deterred from doing so. Further, the Student Services Centre has rewritten rules on 'mitigating circumstances' for disabled students to make them clearer, and has determined that the adjustments the School makes for students are broadly comparable to peer universities.
- The Equal Pay Review has been completed and specific areas have been identified for further rigorous statistical analysis.
- A pilot Action Learning Set for senior women (academic and support staff) was launched. Following the subsequent launch of the LSE Leadership Development Programme (LDP), most attendees transferred onto the LDP. Other tailored training programmes are also being offered to women and ethnic minority staff including Aurora.
- The School has been, for three years' running, listed in the Top 30 Employers for Working Families and also won the Best for Fathers award. The School has also received accreditation for the Disability Two Ticks scheme.
- Estates have carried out work to consult with disabled people routinely through regular meetings of the Network of Disabled Staff and Students (NODSS) and the national register of access consultants when necessary prior to the start of all estates projects for the purpose of impact assessment.
- The Equality and Diversity at LSE blog was launched and has developed into a platform for raising awareness of and promoting dialogue about equality and diversity. Other means of communication include a termly flyer of events and a film produced by the Disability and Wellbeing Service.
- The proportion of ethnic minority members of Court of Governors has increased.
- Launch of the New Academic Career (NAC) to create an expectation of advancement from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor within eight years, and the New Research Staff Career (NRSC) to provide a more stable and sustainable career track with a greater focus on high quality research outputs.

⁶ <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/services/Policies-and-procedures/Assets/Documents/EDIStra.pdf>

⁷ <https://info.lse.ac.uk/Staff/Divisions/Governance-Legal-and-Policy/Ethics/Ethics-Code>

- Creation of an overarching Ethics Code⁸ setting out six core principles underpinning life at LSE. All members of the LSE community, including students, staff and governors, are expected to behave in line with the Ethics Code principles. The Ethics Code sets out how the School upholds the commitments and details the policies which support this. The Ethics Code builds upon and supersedes the School's Equality and Diversity Action Plan (2014-2017) and aims to address the EDI issues and objectives identified in the 2014-17 plan as articulated in the School's REF 2014 Equality Impact Assessment.
- Significant strengthening of guidance, policies and strategy on equity, diversity and inclusion which seek to enable all members of the School community to achieve their full potential in an environment characterised by equality of respect and opportunity.
- Purchase and implementation of a Current Research Information System (CRIS) to support the School's REF planning and submission.
- Embedding improved departmental support for REF planning by the creation of REF Coordinators and REF Impact Coordinators across all Departments. Coordinators also work closely with relevant Centre Directors to seek to ensure that eligible research staff in Centres are treated equitably in relation to REF 2021 planning and submission.
- Allocation of substantial resources for a new EDI team (including a new senior strategic role of Head of EDI) and Office to take forward the School's EDI Strategy.
- Creation of an EDI Advisory Board chaired by the Director of the School, and an EDI Representatives Network comprising representation from all Academic Departments and Professional Service Divisions to provide a mechanism for connecting EDI locally.
- LSE was awarded its institutional Athena SWAN bronze award in April 2020.

Additional information can be obtained from the EDI Office⁹ including data on the gender pay gap¹⁰, Public Sector Equality Duty¹¹ and LSE Staff Networks¹².

1.3 How the School is addressing the principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity in demonstrating fairness

The School will ensure fairness in its REF 2021 planning and submission by consistently applying the following over-arching principles at all stages:

Transparency

The School will operate a transparent process for identifying staff and outputs for inclusion. Information will be made available on the School's intranet about the procedures for making decisions. See also section 1.4 for details of how this Code will be disseminated.

Consistency and accountability

⁸ <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Secretarys-Division/Archive/Assets/Documents/Ethics/Ethics-Code-booklet-V2-withlinks.pdf>

⁹ <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/EDI-at-LSE/EDI-Office>

¹⁰ <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/EDI-objectives-data-and-research/Gender-pay-gap>

¹¹ <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/EDI-objectives-data-and-research/Equality-data>

¹² <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/Staff-networks>

All decisions will be based upon research excellence, as evidenced by research materials eligible for inclusion in the School's REF 2021 submission. A robust decision-making process is in place which will ensure that decisions relating to identification of eligible staff and the selection of outputs are based on accurate data which have been systematically checked and confirmed before being acted upon. Further details of the decision making process are set out in Parts 2 to 4 of this Code.

Inclusivity

Eligibility for submission is based on REF 2021 definitions of Category A eligible staff (see REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions paragraphs 117-150). All eligible staff will be included in the School's submission with between one and five outputs. The number of outputs per member of staff may be reduced (including the removal of the minimum requirement of one output) if there are staff circumstances (as outlined in Section 4.3.1) justifiably affecting the volume of their research output.

1.4 How the code is being communicated to staff across the School (including those on leave of absence), through various mechanisms and channels, including the intranet

Departmental REF Coordinators and Centre Directors were alerted to the existence of the draft Code during Lent Term 2019 as part of the consultation process.

This Code will be available to all staff via the School's website¹³ by the end of the Summer Term 2019, with all staff being notified of its publication via Staff News. Academic and research staff will also be notified of this Code via email in Summer Term 2019 and will be asked to volunteer any exceptional circumstances (as outlined in section 4.3.1) which have affected their ability to contribute to the output pool of their unit of assessment.

Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

The School intends to submit 100% of its Category A eligible staff. The School has determined, based on HR data, that 100% of the School's Category A eligible staff have significant responsibility for research in accordance with the REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions.

Category A eligible staff are identified from the School's HR records as those on 'teaching and research' contracts (classified in School HR records as 'SRT') as well as those on 'research only' contracts (classified in School HR records as 'SRO') but only if they fulfil the requirement of 'research independence' (see Part 3) and are on a minimum of 0.2 FTE on the REF census date (31 July 2020), in accordance with the REF 2021 requirements. Staff on the Policy Fellow Career track¹⁴ and all other staff do not have significant responsibility for research and are therefore not eligible for submission to REF 2021.

For the purposes of clarity, a full list of LSE job types and whether these are eligible for REF 2021 is attached at [Annex A](#).

¹³ <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/research-division/research-policy/research-excellence-framework>

¹⁴ <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Human-Resources/HR-policies/Policy-Fellow-Career-Track>

Part 3: Determining research independence

Whilst the School has determined that 100% of its Category A eligible staff have significant responsibility for research, staff employed on research-only contracts must also meet the REF 2021 definition of an 'independent researcher' in order to be eligible for submission to REF 2021. In accordance with the REF 2021 Guidance on Codes of Practice, this Part 3 sets out the policies and decision making procedures, training and governance that the School has put in place to enable determination of research independence, including the process for appealing any such determination.

3.1 Policies and procedures

3.1.1 Criteria for determining staff who meet the definition of an independent researcher

The School will include as Category A eligible staff those on research-only contracts that are determined to be independent researchers, as defined in the REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions. Paragraph 131 of that guidance defines an independent researcher as 'an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme'.

The School wishes to support its research staff with their career development and on 1 August 2015, LSE therefore created the New Research Staff Career (NRSC) track with new titles, higher minimum salaries and new role profiles to provide a more stable and sustainable career track for research staff who are independent researchers and therefore required to produce research outputs for the REF.

An optional migration and promotion process took place for existing research staff on the old career track to voluntarily move to the NRSC. Since the introduction of the NRSC, recruitment above band 7 is exclusively to the NRSC and both promotion to and recruitment to non-NRSC posts ceased to exist. Existing research staff on non-NRSC contracts who did not migrate to NRSC were allowed to remain in their roles as long as their posts receive funding.

The School considers that all NRSC staff are independent researchers for the purposes of paragraph 131 of the REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions and will be submitted to REF 2021 as Category A eligible staff.

The operation of the NRSC track means that research staff who are not on NRSC contracts would not normally be considered to be independent researchers for the purpose of REF 2021. However, non-NRSC research staff will be considered to be Category A eligible staff where, exceptionally, they are holders of an independently won, competitively awarded research fellowship where research independence is a requirement of the fellowship, as set out in [Annex B](#).

3.1.2 How decisions are being made and communicated to staff

Initial lists of staff considered to be Category A eligible staff and determined to be independent researchers will be drawn up by Research and Innovation from HR data. Those lists will be provided to Departmental REF Coordinators via the School's Current Research Information System (CRIS) to which REF Coordinators have access for their UOA(s).

Departmental REF Coordinators are tasked with:

- verifying the list of Category A eligible staff provided to them by Research and Innovation from HR data;

- notifying Category A eligible staff on teaching-and-research contracts that they are to be included in the submission to their UOA;
- overseeing the REF 2021 submission for staff in their Department, any associated Research Centre(s) and for other staff who may be submitted from other units at the School to the relevant REF 2021 unit of assessment.

Research and Innovation are responsible for confirming REF 2021 eligibility of all staff and for notifying research-only staff of their REF 2021-eligibility: see section 3.1.3.

HR data will be used to populate the CRIS which will in turn be used to prepare the School's REF 2021 submission. Departmental REF Coordinators will have access to non-sensitive data only in the CRIS for REF 2021 planning purposes.

3.1.3 Stages of approval for determining research independence

1. Research and Innovation will identify all staff on teaching-and-research (SRT) from HR records. All SRT staff on a minimum of 0.2 FTE on the REF census date of 31 July 2020 are automatically deemed to be eligible researchers with research independence in accordance with their contracts of employment.
2. Research and Innovation will identify all NRSC research staff (SRO) from HR records. All NRSC staff on a minimum of 0.2 FTE on the REF census date of 31 July 2020 are automatically deemed to be independent researchers in accordance with their contracts of employment. NRSC staff will be notified of their eligibility for REF 2021 by Research and Innovation. Research and Innovation will also notify Departmental REF Coordinators of NRSC staff in their Department and/or associated Centre(s).
3. Research and Innovation will identify all non-NRSC research staff (SRO) from HR records. This list will not include staff on the Policy Fellow Career track and all other staff who are not eligible for REF submission. Non-NRSC research staff are not, in general terms, considered to be independent researchers unless they are holders of independently won, competitively awarded fellowships where research independence is a requirement of the fellowship.
4. Research and Innovation will identify all non-NRSC research staff who are holders of independently won, competitively awarded fellowships where research independence is a requirement of the fellowship, as set out in [Annex B](#). All holders of independently won, competitively awarded research fellowships where research independence is a requirement of the fellowship are deemed to be independent researchers and will be notified of their eligibility for REF 2021 by Research and Innovation. Research and Innovation will also notify Departmental REF Coordinators of non-NRSC staff in their Department and/or associated Centre(s) who are deemed to be independent researchers.
5. Departmental REF Coordinators will be notified of all staff deemed to be independent researchers via the REF 2021 module in the School's Current Research Information System.

3.2 Staff, committees and training

3.2.1 Procedures for identifying designated staff and committees/ panels responsible for determining research independence

In reaching decisions, including in relation to determining research independence, the School draws on its existing committee structures for the management of School and Departmental research,

together with REF 2021-specific committees, and individuals appointed to have particular responsibilities for REF 2021-related matters. School and Departmental committees have been set up in a manner appropriate to the management of the REF 2021 exercise within the School.

All committees at the School, including those tasked with REF 2021 preparations, such as REFSC and Departmental REF Panels, are required to abide by the School's Committee Effective Behaviours guidelines (attached at [Annex C](#)).

REF Strategy Committee

The School's REF Strategy Committee (REFSC) has overall responsibility for oversight of the School's REF submission. This includes final decisions on the portfolio of outputs. It is chaired by the Pro-Director for Research. REFSC is a sub-group of the School's Research Committee, which is a sub-committee of the School's Academic Board. The REFSC's members are selected on the basis of their knowledge and experience, as well as their disciplinary background and aim to ensure a balance of members in terms of their protected characteristics where possible. In particular, all School-level committees must also comply with the School's norm on gender balance (at least 30% of their membership has to be male and at least 30% female).

The membership and terms of reference for the REFSC is attached at [Annex D](#).

Members of the REFSC work on behalf of the School, acting in good faith, and do not represent REF decision-making or dispute arbitration of their own Department(s) at REFSC discussions. While REFSC members will not normally also be a Departmental REF Coordinator, they may be part of their Departmental REF Panel, noting that all REFSC business noted in any REFSC agenda, minutes and papers as being confidential stays confidential. Members of the REFSC are not expected to disseminate REF 2021 information that they obtain by virtue of their membership of REFSC to their own Departments; such dissemination will be carried out by Research and Innovation. REFSC retains links to the EDI Advisory Board (the Pro-Director Faculty Development and the Head of EDI sit on both REFSC and the EDI Advisory Board), and there is also representation from the EDI Representatives' Network on REFSC.

Departmental REF Panels

Each Department has its own group responsible for its REF 2021 submission. This may be the Departmental Research Committee or a specific committee designated to perform this role. For ease of reference, in this Code the nominated Departmental body will be referred to as 'the Departmental REF Panel'. Members of the Departmental REF Panel are also selected on the basis of their relevant knowledge and experience and aiming to ensure a balance of members in terms of their protected characteristics where possible. Departmental REF Panels may use their professional judgment in choosing to seek advice from others, both internal and external to the School. All individuals taking on REF-specific responsibilities are asked by the School to do so on the basis of their relevant knowledge and experience and respecting duties of confidentiality.

For each UOA, the development of the School's final submission will be determined by REFSC, based in part upon advice and information provided by the appropriate Departmental REF Panel(s).

A generic Terms of Reference on which Departmental REF Panels are recommended to base their own terms of reference is attached at [Annex E](#).

External Assessors

Where appointed, external assessors have been asked to advise Departmental REF Panels of their judgement of the likely REF 2021 grades of a selection of potential REF 2021 outputs. External assessors are not given information relating to individual staff circumstances.

Departmental REF Coordinator and Departmental REF Impact Coordinator

Each Department is required to appoint a Departmental REF Coordinator and a Departmental REF Impact Coordinator to manage their REF 2021 submission and provide information and advice to the REFSC, liaising with their Departmental REF Panel. Departmental REF and REF Impact Coordinators are tasked with disseminating REF and REF impact information to their Departments and for coordinating departmental REF and REF impact submissions. A role description for Departmental REF Coordinators is attached at [Annex F](#). A role description for Departmental REF Impact Coordinators is attached at [Annex G](#).

For each UOA, the development of the School's final submission will be determined by REFSC, based in part upon advice and information provided by the appropriate Departmental REF Panel(s).

3.2.2 Governance of REF 2021 Decision Making

Role Descriptions: Individuals

Role descriptions for individuals and terms of reference for committees are attached at [Annexes D to G](#).

Departmental REF Coordinators and Departmental REF Impact Coordinators report to their Head of Department or their delegate such as the Deputy Head for Research and are invited to a termly meeting with the Pro-Director for Research to discuss relevant REF 2021 matters, to which Research Centre Directors are also invited to attend.

Departmental REF Panels

Departmental REF Panels are required to coordinate with the relevant Departmental Research Committee. Departmental REF Panels report to the relevant Head of Department and to the REFSC. Departmental REF Panels' record keeping is undertaken at Departmental level and may be provided to REFSC upon request. Further information relating to the Departmental REF Panels is set out at section 3.2.1 above. A generic Terms of Reference on which Departmental REF Panels are recommended to base their own terms of reference is attached at [Annex E](#).

REF Strategy Committee

REFSC is a sub-committee of the School's Research Committee and provides reports to Research Committee at least annually. Records of REFSC business are maintained by Research and Innovation but due to the confidential nature of meetings are not made available beyond the REFSC membership. The School's Research Committee in turn is a sub-committee of Academic Board and provides an annual report to Academic Board which includes non-confidential details of the workings of the REFSC.

3.2.3 Training provided to individuals and committees involved in identifying staff, timescales for delivery and content (including how it has been tailored to REF)

Training will be provided to all members of staff responsible for the implementation of this Code. Research and Innovation staff have received training in the School's CRIS, including training on the

REF 2021 module, and equality and diversity training and awareness of data protection requirements. In addition, Research and Innovation staff have attended information sessions given by the REF Team at Research England on all aspects of REF 2021 and specific training on REF 2021 codes of practice. During 2019, members of REFSC and those responsible for making an initial assessment of research independence and individual staff circumstances will receive equality and diversity training plus training specific to REF 2021 which will be based on case studies.

Training will be designed to:

- i) ensure that those responsible for implementing this Code are well informed about their own and the School's legal obligations regarding EDI; and
- ii) enable them to attain a sufficient understanding of EDI issues in order to implement this Code fairly and effectively;
- iii) utilise any guidance from the REF 2021 Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel and (EDAP)/or Advance HE.

The School anticipates that equality and diversity training will be provided by the EDI Office, in the form of interactive workshops tailored to REF 2021 and utilising any training specific materials provided by Advance HE where these are provided in advance of the training.

Members of the REF Strategy Committee and REF Coordinators are also mandated to complete an online, interactive EDI training module¹⁵ developed in-house which covers understanding equality and diversity, the legislative context, advancing equality and diversity, unconscious bias and LSE policies and guidelines.

3.3 Appeals relating to determination of research independence

3.3.1 Communication of appeal process to staff

Please refer to the School's communications strategy as set out in section 1.4, which also applies in relation to the communication of the research independence appeals process as set out in this Code.

3.3.2 Appeal process, submission of appeals and eligible grounds for appeal

The School will submit 100% of its Category A eligible staff to REF 2021 and has set out clear criteria for determining research independence by job category and not by individual contracts and expectations.

However, all staff have the right to appeal against a determination under this Code that they do not have significant responsibility for research and/ or are not an independent-researcher for the purposes of REF 2021 where they believe that this decision is in contravention of either this Code or the eligibility criteria as set out in the Guidance on Submissions. All appeals should be made in writing as set out in section 3.3.3.

For the avoidance of doubt, this section relates to eligibility of a member of staff to be submitted to REF 2021 and does not apply in respect of any decision by REFSC on inclusion or exclusion of any outputs in the School's REF 2021 submission, for which there is no right for an individual member of staff to appeal.

¹⁵ <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Human-Resources/Organisational-learning/online-training>

3.3.3 Details of those involved in hearing any appeals (demonstrating their independence from earlier decision-making processes), timescales and how decisions are being communicated to staff

Decisions on determining significant responsibility for research and research independence are made by Research and Innovation. The first course of action for a staff member who feels that they have been erroneously classified should be to raise the issue in writing initially to the Pro-Director (Research), by 1 October 2019 for staff in post at that time. Appeals will be chaired by a member of REFSC with no conflict of interests (that is, a member who has no connection to the appellant's home department).

The School recognises that research contracts and funding of research staff can change; a rolling deadline will operate for those who were not in post before 1 October 2019 and who wish to appeal against a classification that they are not independent researchers, but all such appeals must be made by 31 January 2020 at the latest in order for the School to be able to request any reductions in outputs by the deadline of March 2020.

Appeals may be considered on the grounds that:

- criteria for determining significant responsibility for research or independent research were not applied in accordance with this Code, or
- there was a material error in the data used by Research and Innovation in applying the criteria.

An appeal must be made in writing and should contain sufficient information, including all relevant evidence, to allow the circumstances to be understood and should demonstrate clearly the issues that form the basis of the appeal. The Chair will consider the reasons stated in the appeal and determine whether the appellant has demonstrated grounds for appeal.

If the Chair determines, based on the information provided in the appeal, that there are insufficient grounds for appeal, the Chair will respond in writing accordingly to the person concerned and their Head of Department, on behalf of the REFSC, stating the reasons, within two weeks of receipt of the letter, wherever possible.

If the Chair determines, based on the information provided in the appeal, that there are grounds for appeal, then the appeal will be considered by the REFSC. REFSC will consider the case as written and provide a written response to the appellant within four weeks of receiving the appeal, wherever possible. There is no further appeal.

Staff will be given enough time in advance of the final REF 2021 submission date to make the appeal and, where grounds for appeal are established, for it to be promptly and properly considered by REFSC.

3.4 Equality impact assessment

3.4.1 How an equality impact assessment has been used to inform the identification of staff and make final decisions

In drawing up this Code, the School has considered whether its proposed staff selection policy and procedures may have an adverse effect on those staff with protected characteristics or those with

personal circumstances. Annex H¹⁶ sets out a summary of equality legislation and an explanation of the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010.

During 2019, the School will undertake an equality impact assessment process in relation to the protected characteristics and career stage of Category A staff as identified by HR records. The School will continue the equality impact assessment process on its policy and procedures for identifying the spread of outputs across staff (in relation to their protected characteristics). Following the initial grading exercises at Departmental level, the School will prepare an equality profile of the spread of outputs proposed for submission to check for any equality bias with regard to all those protected characteristics and career stage for which data are available.

Equality impact assessment will consider data on:

- the protected characteristics of staff considered to meet the criteria for having significant responsibility for research;
- the protected characteristics of staff determined to meet the definition of independent researcher;
- the distribution of selected outputs across staff by protected characteristics in the context of the entire Category A staff pool.

Appropriate reporting of this information will be developed and reviewed by the REFSC, which will monitor for consistency of approach. The equality impact assessment may include monitoring at Department and/or Unit of Assessment level and will be in line with the monitoring obligations placed on the School under equalities legislation. In the event of significant biases being revealed in the pool of staff identified as having significant responsibility for research or staff meeting the independent researcher definition in terms of their protected characteristics, REFSC will consider what recommendations to make to the School to address these imbalances in the future. In the event of significant biases being revealed in the outputs portfolio, Departmental REF Panels will be asked to review their assessment data and justify their recommendations.

The School will conduct equality impact assessments to continue to monitor for any equality bias at the following points and in accordance with the School's internal REF 2021 timeline:

- Following the initial identification of eligible staff
- Following the initial internal and external grading exercise
- Following the second internal and external grading exercise
- Following the final selection of outputs

The Funding Councils expect all HEIs to publish their equality impact assessments after the submissions have been made, as a matter of good practice. The School will therefore publish the results of its equality impact assessments after making its submission.

¹⁶ Extracted from Table 1 of the REF 2021 Guidance on codes of practice:
<https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/guidance-on-codes-of-practice-201903/>

Part 4: Selection of outputs

4.1 Policies and procedures

4.1.1 Details of procedures that have been developed to ensure the fair and transparent selection of outputs including the School's approach to submitting outputs by former staff including those made redundant

LSE statement of principles with regard to the selection of outputs

The principles are in line with those that govern REF 2021, as set out in the REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions:

- Equity – the fair and equal assessment of all types of research and forms of research output.
- Equality – promoting equality and diversity in all aspects of the assessment.
- Transparency – the clear and open process through which decisions are made and information about the assessment process is shared.

The School's strategy for REF 2021 is set out in Part 1: Introduction. The strategy sets out the guiding principles for the selection of outputs.

In accordance with the REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions, each Category A eligible member of staff is required to submit a minimum of one and up to a maximum of five research outputs which meet the REF 2021 definition of research output. Eligible staff may be returned without the requirement to submit one output where certain exceptional individual circumstances have affected their ability to meet the requirement in line with the REF Guidance on Submissions and Panel Criteria and Working Methods. See section 4.3.1 for further details.

In recognition of the cumulative effect on the output pool available to submitting units that have higher proportions of staff who have not been able to research productively throughout the period because of individual circumstances, even though they may meet the requirement for the minimum of one output, an optional reduction in the number of outputs may be applied to the submitting unit overall, in relation to the proportion of staff in the unit with circumstances meeting set criteria.

In addition, outputs of extended scale and scope may be double-weighted (counted as two outputs) in accordance with the REF Guidance on Submissions and Panel criteria and working methods.

Use of citations data and journal rankings

Departmental REF Panels should normally use peer review as the primary basis to assess proposed outputs. In line with the REF Guidance on Submissions, Departmental REF Panels should assess all forms of output on an equal basis, with no preconception of quality attached to the form or medium of an output. While metrics and journal rankings alone are not normally considered a sufficient basis upon which to make decisions on output submissions to REF 2021, citation metrics and/or journal rankings may be used in place of peer review to give a provisional assessment of outputs where these are considered to be sufficiently robust and bearing in mind disciplinary norms. Any use of citation metrics should be undertaken responsibly in line with the principles of the LSE Statement on

the Use of Responsible Metrics¹⁷ which are informed by the Leiden Manifesto¹⁸ and the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)¹⁹.

Process for ensuring a fair approach to selecting outputs

Assessment and selection of outputs will be determined initially at Departmental level. Periodic assessment exercises will take place prior to the final submission date. In some cases, Departments will submit singly to one UOA. However, in other cases, more than one Department is making a joint submission to a single UOA. There are also Departments which are not being submitted as units to any UOA and whose staff will be submitted to separate UOAs. In addition, research staff in Research Centres and Institutes will need to be assigned to a Department and/or UOA. REFSC will make an initial assignment of eligible staff in Research Centres and Institutes based on the 'parent department' of the Centre or the disciplines of eligible staff in Research Centres/Institutes, and the relevant Departmental REF Panel will review eligible outputs. Those receiving staff from other Departments/ Centres/ Institutes are referred to herein as 'host Departments'. Where there is uncertainty regarding academic fit, REFSC will ask alternative Departmental REF Panels to review outputs.

In all cases, Departmental REF coordinators of host Departments will need to clarify with individuals and their home Department/Centre/Institute which Departments and UOAs those individuals will be submitted to. It is recognised that at the start of the assessment exercise this decision may not be clear, but it should be clarified during and as part of review exercises. As far as possible, the assignment of individuals to UOAs will be confirmed and communicated to individuals by Departments and REFSC by the end of the 2018-19 academic year, with the REF Strategy Committee acting as final arbiter.

The processes set out below refer to Departments but appropriate adjustments will need to be made in interpreting this Code to capture the particular issues relating to those making joint submissions or to those who are exporting staff to host Departments for submission.

Departments who will be receiving staff members from other Departments/Centres/Institutes for inclusion in their UOA host Departments will need to agree with the home Department/ Centre/ Institute of that staff member how the assessment will be performed.

Evaluation of outputs by research staff should be treated in the same way as those by teaching-and-research staff.

Departments/Centres/Institutes are to engage with individual eligible members of staff to identify up to 5 outputs per person for consideration for the REF.

Departments will conduct output assessments for their own staff members and those for whom they are acting as host Department. This may include assessment of interdisciplinary outputs by multiple Departments as set out in the interdisciplinary research section below. Departments submitting to the same UOA are required to coordinate closely in determining the final portfolio of outputs for inclusion. REFSC will inform Departments that are submitting jointly to the same UOA of the nature of the UOA's output profile after the initial output assessment exercise and periodically until the submission date.

¹⁷ <https://lse.ac.uk/library/assets/documents/ref-responsible-metrics-statement-for-cop.docx>

¹⁸ <http://www.leidenmanifesto.org/>

¹⁹ <https://sfdora.org/>

Departments are required to set up internal peer-reviewing panels. As set out in section 3.2.2, Departmental REF Panels may comprise the existing Departmental Research Committee or a different group set up specifically for REF 2021 reviewing purposes. Previous best practice would indicate that Departmental REF Panels comprise Professoriate members. However, bearing in mind subject specialisms, Departmental REF Panels may also include Associate Professors/Readers. See section 3.2 for further details on Departmental REF Panels.

Each output should ideally be independently graded by at least two internal assessors, with those outputs at the borderline also being reviewed by an external assessor. Self-grading (i.e. individuals grading their own outputs) alone is not sufficient for REF purposes. Departmental panels should then agree a consensus grade for each output. REFSC is the final arbiter of all estimated grades.

In accordance with the REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions, outputs may also be included by staff formerly employed as Category A eligible where the output was first made publicly available while the staff member was employed by the School as a Category A eligible member of staff. This includes currently employed staff who are no longer Category A eligible. The outputs of former staff will be assessed on the same basis and using the same processes as those of current staff, as set out above and below. LSE will not submit sole-authored research outputs by staff who have been made redundant by LSE. However, LSE reserves the right to submit research outputs by staff who have been made redundant by LSE if these outputs are co-authored with other LSE staff who have not been made redundant. All outputs to be considered for submission to REF 2021 must adhere to the full eligibility criteria as set out in the REF Guidance on Submissions, including open access compliance.

Departmental REF Panels will need to agree and document their own processes for the internal review and grading of proposed outputs for all their staff and the staff for which they are acting as host Department, bearing in mind the contents of this Code and the REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions.

A Departmental statement should be prepared and disseminated to all REF-eligible staff (including the staff for which they are acting as host Department), which sets out how the Department will assess outputs and who will undertake the assessments (including the pool of potential external reviewers but not necessarily identifying which external assessors from the pool of potential external reviewers will assess outputs and not identifying which internal or external reviewers will assess which outputs), and the selection process governing the choice of external reviewers. For those Departments that are required to work together as a UOA, REFSC would also recommend that they have arrangements in place to cross-read: while this is not a requirement for the first assessment exercise, it is recommended as best practice for subsequent assessment exercises. It is recommended that all proposed outputs are reviewed and an estimated REF grade assigned to each, based on the following definitions (Guidance on Submissions Annex A):

| | |
|---|--|
| The criteria for assessing the quality of outputs are ‘originality, significance and rigour’. | |
| Four star | Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour. |
| Three star | Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence. |

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Two star | Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour. |
| One star | Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour. |
| Unclassified | Quality that falls below the standard of nationally recognised work. Or work which does not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of this assessment. |

In the interests of equity and transparency, all eligible members of staff should be informed of the consensus grades given to their proposed outputs but Departments can hold back provisional grades until confirmed consensus grades have been reached.

Staff should have the opportunity to discuss their REF-able outputs with a suitable senior member of their own Department/Centre/Institute and/or their host Department, such as the Departmental REF Coordinator, HOD/Director or a mentor.

Eligible members of staff will not be given confirmation as to which outputs will be submitted to REF 2021 prior to the final REF submission, as the final submission will comprise a portfolio of outputs across the UOA which will be subject to change up until the final submission date of 31 March 2021. Eligible members of staff will be informed of which of their outputs were submitted following the submission date.

The final selection of outputs for REF 2021 will be made in the interests of the School, taking into account EDI considerations and maintaining consistency with REF environment statements. REF 2021 is a self-contained exercise which does not affect other School processes. Decisions on the number of outputs between 1 and 5 submitted to the REF have, in themselves, no bearing on individual career development and/or promotion within the School.

REFSC will ultimately be responsible for making final decisions on the portfolio of outputs to be submitted. REFSC will review the pool of outputs in relation to equality and diversity. Where a Department's/UOA's portfolio appears skewed on one or more of the protected characteristics for which we have sufficiently reliable data, or in relation to career stage of staff, the Department/ UOA will be required to either propose an amendment to the output pool or provide a justification of why no amendment should or need be undertaken.

Departments are reminded that under the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018, an individual has the right to request details of their personal data held by the School, including all information written regarding REF 2021 assessments (grades and written comments). This includes emails.

Staff are reminded of the need to comply with the School's Ethics Code in all matters, including REF 2021 processes.

All estimated grades will be subject to review by REFSC. REFSC members will have access to all the REF module data in the School's CRIS. REFSC will be able to see an overview by UOA of the grade profiles.

It is the responsibility of REFSC to evaluate the estimated grade profiles of each UOA and make the final decisions on which outputs may be submitted by which staff.

Interdisciplinary research

As set out in paragraph 273 of the Guidance on Submissions, for the purposes of the REF 2021, interdisciplinary research is understood to achieve outcomes (including new approaches) that could not be achieved within the framework of a single discipline. Interdisciplinary research features significant interaction between two or more disciplines and/or moves beyond established disciplinary foundations in applying or integrating research approaches from other disciplines.

The School recognises and values all forms of excellent research including interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and collaborative research and has mechanisms in place to support all such research. The School will endeavour to meet its strategic REF 2021 target within the discipline-driven REF 2021 processes imposed upon it and noting the additional mechanisms introduced by the funding bodies to support the equitable submission and assessment of such research as set out in paragraphs 101 - 104 of the Guidance on Submissions.

Interdisciplinary research can be flagged as such in the School's REF 2021 submission (see paragraphs 273-274 of the Guidance on Submissions) and/or the School can request cross-referral of outputs to another sub-panel (see 399 – 404 of the Panel Criteria and Working Methods²⁰). Where outputs that meet the definition of interdisciplinary research as set out above are flagged as interdisciplinary, REF 2021 sub-panels will consider this information in determining the most appropriate means of assessing the output, with advice from interdisciplinary advisers in each sub-panel. This process is distinct from a request for cross-referral of outputs to another sub-panel.

Within the School, Departmental REF Panels are responsible for identifying interdisciplinary research. Category A eligible members of staff are invited to identify to their REF Coordinator any of their outputs proposed for REF 2021 which they consider to meet the REF definition of interdisciplinary, where they wish an output to be considered for cross-referral and/or to be flagged as interdisciplinary, and must provide an explanation of how the output meets the specific criteria. Departmental REF Panels are required to provide a justification for all requests for cross-referral and/or use of the interdisciplinary identifier flag. Interdisciplinary research outputs may be assessed by multiple Departmental REF Panels as appropriate to the research and may be assessed by external assessors in addition. All assessments will be provided to REFSC. These Departmental assessments should be carried out simultaneously by each Department concerned, rather than sequentially, wherever possible. REFSC will determine the optimum Unit of Assessment for the authors of interdisciplinary research, and will make the final decision on whether outputs are flagged as interdisciplinary and/or a request is made for cross-referral.

4.1.2 Procedure development process and the rationale for adopted methods

The procedure was developed by REFSC based on knowledge and experience gained from REF 2014 and taking into account the School's strategic aims for REF 2021, research quality and aiming to ensure a balanced portfolio taking into account the protective characteristics of submitted staff where possible and in line with the School's stated REF 2021 strategy.

²⁰ <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/panel-criteria-and-working-methods-201902/>

4.1.3 Stages of approval (may include diagrams, schematics and timelines)

Departmental REF Panels will identify and review the research outputs of all Category A eligible staff within their specific disciplines and use the relevant REF panel-specific criteria to direct and guide their discussions. Guidance may also be sought from independent external assessors as appropriate.

Departmental REF Panels will then provide information to REFSC on the assessment of outputs of all eligible members of staff, based on the outcomes of these review processes, to enable REFSC to make informed decisions, ensure consistency of approach, and to conduct an appropriate equality impact assessment as set out in section 3.4.

A generic Terms of Reference on which Departmental REF Panels are recommended to base their own terms of reference is attached at [Annex E](#).

REFSC will consider recommendations from Departmental REF Panels in relation to the portfolio of outputs of all eligible staff, and will also monitor all recommendations put forward by Departmental REF Panels for consistency of approach. The overall responsibility for decisions about selection of outputs for each Unit of Assessment rests with REFSC. In accordance with its Terms of Reference, attached at [Annex D](#), REFSC aims to optimise the submission that the School makes to REF 2021 and will make its decisions in relation to the selection of outputs accordingly and aiming to ensure a balanced portfolio taking into account the protected characteristics of submitted staff where possible and in line with the School's stated REF strategy.

4.2 Staff, committees and training

4.2.1 Procedures for identifying designated staff and committees/ panels responsible for selecting outputs

See section 3.2.1, which applies in respect of the selection of outputs as well as in respect of determination of research independence.

4.2.2 Role descriptions for individuals and terms of reference for committees/ panels, modes of operation and record-keeping procedures and where these roles/ committees/ panels fit into the wider School management structure

Departmental REF Panels

Each Department has its own group responsible for its REF 2021 submission. This may be the Departmental Research Committee or a specific committee designated to perform this role. For ease of reference, in this Code the nominated Departmental body will be referred to as 'the Departmental REF Panel'. Members of the Departmental REF Panel are also selected on the basis of their relevant knowledge and experience and aiming to ensure a balance of members in terms of their protected characteristics where possible. Departmental REF Panels may use their professional judgment in choosing to seek advice from others, both internal and external to the School. All individuals taking on REF-specific responsibilities are asked by the School to do so on the basis of their relevant knowledge and experience and respecting duties of confidentiality.

Departmental REF Panels will identify and review the research outputs of all Category A eligible staff within their specific disciplines and use the relevant REF panel-specific criteria to direct and guide their discussions. Guidance may also be sought from independent external assessors as appropriate.

Departmental REF Panels will then provide information to REFSC on the assessment of outputs of all eligible members of staff, based on the outcomes of these review processes, to enable REFSC to

make informed decisions, ensure consistency of approach, and to conduct appropriate equality impact assessment as set out in section 3.4.

A generic Terms of Reference on which Departmental REF Panels are recommended to base their own terms of reference is attached at [Annex E](#).

External Assessors

Where appointed, external assessors have been asked to advise Departmental REF Panels of their judgement of the likely REF 2021 grades of a selection of potential REF 2021 outputs. External assessors are not given information relating to individual staff circumstances.

Departmental REF Coordinator and Departmental REF Impact Coordinator

Each Department is required to appoint a Departmental REF Coordinator and a Departmental REF Impact Coordinator to manage their REF 2021 submission and provide information and advice to the REFSC, liaising with their Departmental REF Panel. Departmental REF and REF Impact Coordinators are tasked with disseminating REF and REF impact information to their Departments and for coordinating departmental REF and REF impact submissions. A role description for Departmental REF Coordinators is attached at [Annex F](#). A role description for Departmental REF Impact Coordinators is attached at [Annex G](#).

4.2.3 Training provided to individuals and committees involved in the output selection process

Training will be provided to all members of staff responsible for the implementation of this Code during 2019. Members of REFSC and those responsible for making an initial assessment of individual staff circumstances will receive equality and diversity training plus training specific to REF 2021 which will be based on case studies. Academic colleagues in Departments tasked with reviewing REF 2021 outputs will receive equality and diversity training and will be briefed on the contents of this Code and on their responsibilities. REF Coordinators and Centre Directors attend termly meetings chaired by the Pro-Director for Research and Chair of REFSC to brief them on all pertinent REF issues, discuss the School's REF 2021 planning and provide a forum for sharing best practice.

Details of training are provided in Section 3.2.3.

4.3 Staff circumstances

4.3.1 Procedures for taking into account staff whose circumstances have affected their ability to research productively throughout the period in relation to the unit's total output requirement

In accordance with the REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions, each Category A eligible member of staff is required to submit a minimum of one and up to a maximum of five research outputs which meet the REF 2021 definition of research output. The total number of outputs required by each Unit of Assessment (the 'output pool') is calculated as total FTE x 2.5. There is no expectation that each eligible member of staff is required to submit the same number of outputs. The School fully recognises that individuals produce research outputs at different rates and that individual circumstance can have an impact upon a researcher's productivity.

All eligible members of staff will be invited to voluntarily disclose circumstances which have adversely affected their ability to undertake research during the REF 2021 period and therefore affected their ability to contribute to the output pool of their Unit of Assessment. In accordance with the Guidance on Submissions, submitting units may *optionally* request a reduction, without

penalty, in the total number of outputs required for a submission, taking into account individuals' circumstances in line with the tariffs set out in Tables 1 to 3 below, where REFSC considers that a submitting UOA has been disproportionately affected by the number of staff with exceptional circumstances. In addition, an individual may be returned without the required minimum of one output without penalty in the assessment, where the nature of the individual's circumstances has had an exceptional effect on their ability to work productively throughout the period, so that the staff member has not been able to produce the required minimum of one output. Further details are set out in section 4.3.2 below.

REFSC will determine whether the cumulative effect of all the declared circumstances within a Unit of Assessment warrants a request for a unit reduction in line with the REF tariff and whether a request will be made to the REF Team at Research England for a unit reduction. These decisions will be made by REFSC on a UOA by UOA basis, depending on the size of the UOA and the cumulative effect on the total pool of outputs. Note that any discounts approved by the REF Team at Research England will be **at the level of the UOA**, not the individual.

REF Coordinators will be informed of any unit reductions being sought by REFSC but will not be informed as to the nature of any individual circumstances. Where individual circumstances have been disclosed and accepted by REFSC, REF Coordinators will be informed that exceptional circumstances have affected an individual's ability to contribute to the output pool at the same rate as other staff and the Department should take this into account. Individuals are invited to voluntarily speak to their HR partner regarding their circumstances. HR partners can then advise on the individual's next steps and options. Where individuals grant permission for the details of their circumstances to be passed on to the relevant contact (normally the Head in the first instance) within their department/institute/centre, their department/institute/centre may be able to put in place appropriate support for them. Where an individual who has voluntarily declared exceptional circumstances and these exceptional circumstances are found, in line with the REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions, to be such that the individual has not been able to produce an eligible output during the REF 2021 period, the School will request, also in line with the REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions, the removal of the minimum of one output.

Individuals should disclose relevant circumstances using the form attached as [Annex I](#) and submit this to Research.REFdisclosures@lse.ac.uk by **31 August 2020**. All such disclosures should be made voluntarily and not under duress or following coercion from colleagues: staff should refer to the School's anti-bullying and anti-harassment policy ²¹:if necessary.

Fixed term and part time staff

The School's Concordat Action Plan²² sets out LSE's commitment to supporting the career development of all researchers. This means recognising the importance of personal and career development at all stages of their career irrespective of type of contract. In practice, this ensures that part-time and fixed term staff receive the same support as their research colleagues, including ensuring regular supervision, career development reviews, mentoring and access to learning and development opportunities.

²¹ <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/services/Policies-and-procedures/Assets/Documents/harPol.pdf>

²² <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Human-Resources/Review-reward-and-promotion/The-Concordat-and-Action-Plan>

Early Career Researchers

For the purposes of REF 2021 Early Career Researchers (ECRs) are members of staff who meet the definition of Category A eligible staff on the census date (31 July 2020) **and** who started their careers as independent researchers on or after 1 August 2016 (see Guidance on Submissions paragraphs 146 - 149 for further details). The School is keen to support the development of ECRs and to ensure that they are able to produce excellent research whilst not being unduly pressured to maximise the number of outputs they produce at the expense of quality. As such, the School wishes to support ECRs to voluntarily seek a reduction in the number of outputs they can contribute to the output pool of their unit of assessment without penalty. Individuals seeking guidance or support to identify whether they are an ECR for the purposes of REF 2021 can contact the [Head of Research Policy](#) or [REF Support Manager](#).

In line with Annex L of the Guidance on Submissions, each ECR may voluntarily seek a reduction in the number of outputs which they can contribute to the output pool of their REF 2021 Unit of Assessment in line with the tariff in Table 1 below:

Table 1

| Date at which the individual first met the REF definition of an ECR: | Reduction in the number of outputs being contributed: |
|---|--|
| On or before 31 July 2016 | 0 |
| Between 1 August 2016 and 31 July 2017 inclusive | 0.5 |
| Between 1 August 2017 and 31 July 2018 inclusive | 1 |
| On or after 1 August 2018 | 1.5 |

Absence from work due to secondments away from the HE sector or career breaks

In line with Annex L of the Guidance on Submissions, any individual who did not undertake academic research due to secondment or career breaks outside of the HE sector may voluntarily seek a reduction without penalty in the number of outputs they can contribute to the output pool of their Unit of Assessment in line with the tariff in Table 2 below:

Table 2

| Total months absent between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2020 due to a staff member's secondment or career break: | Reduction in the number of outputs being contributed: |
|--|--|
| Fewer than 12 calendar months | 0 |
| At least 12 calendar months but less than 28 | 0.5 |
| At least 28 calendar months but less than 46 | 1 |
| 46 calendar months or more | 1.5 |

Qualifying periods of family-related leave

The School is keen to support individuals who have taken family-related leave to ensure that they are not being unduly pressured to maximise the number of outputs they produce at the expense of quality. As such, the School wishes to support such individuals to voluntarily seek a reduction in the number of outputs they can contribute to the output pool of their Unit of Assessment in line with the tariff in Table 3 below:

Table 3

| Type of family-related leave | Reduction in the number of outputs being contributed |
|---|--|
| Statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave taken substantially within the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020, regardless of the length of the leave | 0.5 |
| Additional paternity or adoption leave or shared parental leave lasting for four months or more, taken substantially within the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020 | 0.5 |

Other circumstances equivalent to absence will require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs. These are:

- Disability
- Ill health, injury or mental health conditions
- Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of – or justify the reduction of further outputs in addition to – the allowances made in the qualifying periods of family-related leave above
- Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member)
- Gender reassignment
- Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed in Annex H, or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

The total reduction which can be requested will be calculated in accordance with Table 2 above. In these cases, the School is required to make a judgment on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs to be contributed and provide a rationale for this judgment.

In all cases set out above, any reduction in the number of outputs to be submitted to REF 2021 will be made **at the level of the submitting Unit of Assessment** and only where REFSC considers that for its very small units or where there are high proportions of staff with circumstances and the total available outputs pool has been disproportionately disadvantaged. In these cases, a request will be made for a unit reduction without penalty. These decisions will be made on a UOA by UOA basis, depending on the size of the UOA and the cumulative effect on the total pool of outputs. The reductions will be calculated using the tariffs set out in Tables 1 to 3 above.

4.3.2 Procedures for taking into account the effect of circumstances that have had an exceptional impact on the ability of an individual staff member to research productively throughout the period so that they do not have the required minimum of one output

All 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 has had an exceptional effect on their ability to work productively throughout the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020, so that the individual has not been able to produce a single eligible output, a request may be made for the minimum requirement of one to be removed without penalty. 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.

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, due to one of more of the circumstances set out in section 4.3.1 (such as an ECR who has only been employed as an eligible staff member for part of the assessment period)
- b. circumstances equivalent to 46 months or more absence from research, where circumstances set out in section 4.3.1 apply (such as mental health issues, caring responsibility, long-term health conditions) or
- c. two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave.

In such cases, requests 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 by Research England during the request process.

Where a request is agreed by the REF Team at Research England, one output will be removed from the total output pool required for the submitting units. This will be in addition to any reduction (of up to 1.5 outputs) applied, according to the guidance set out above. 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.

4.3.3 For both of the above cases, procedures for staff to declare voluntarily circumstances in a confidential manner and how units will adjust expectations about staff contribution to the output pool

It is the responsibility of individuals to notify REFSC of any eligible factors which may have adversely affected their contribution to the REF 2021 submission during the assessment period. To ensure that all eligible staff are given the opportunity to do this, a questionnaire will be sent to staff inviting them to identify any relevant circumstances if they wish. The questionnaire is attached as [Annex I](#). Guidance on completing the form can be obtained from the [Head of Research Policy](#), [REF Support Manager](#), the Department's HR partner²³ or the [Head of EDI](#). Completed questionnaires should be returned to Research.REFdisclosures@lse.ac.uk by **31 August 2020**. Completion of the questionnaire will also assist the monitoring/equality impact assessment described in section 3.4 and will form part of the School's Staff Circumstances Report as set out below.

Staff who do not return a completed questionnaire to Research and Innovation will be assumed to have no individual circumstances which have affected their research outputs for REF 2021. The School will aim to corroborate individual staff circumstances reported under this Code with its Human Resources records where these exist.

Staff should note that all information related to equality will be treated in confidence and in accordance with data protection legislation and will not be used for any other purposes other than considering reduction in outputs in accordance with this Code. Where the School is seeking a unit reduction, information describing the circumstances of individuals in that UOA whose outputs have been limited (as per the guidelines of individual panels) will be submitted to the REF Team at Research England and the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) in line with the requirements set out in the REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions. Only sufficient detail to enable the REF Team and EDAP to assess the impact of the circumstances on the person's research capability will be provided.

²³ <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Human-Resources/HR-people>

No details will be given on matters such as medical diagnosis or the prognosis of a long-term illness. Involvement in the completion of this section will be restricted to as few people as possible within the School (as set out below), and all information will be handled sensitively and in line with confidentiality guidelines and data protection legislation. To protect individuals' confidentiality and privacy, those details of individual staff circumstances which will need to be recorded by the School will be held in a separate system which will not identify individuals. Completed questionnaires will only be seen by those responsible for making the assessment of the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs required (see paragraph immediately below). Individuals' names, Departments and units of assessment will be removed from the completed questionnaires prior to being reviewed by the individuals identified below.

The initial assessment of the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs to be contributed will be made by a review group comprising the Head of Research Policy, REF Support Manager, Head of EDI, Head of HR Policy and Employee Relations and one member of REFSC. For some complex circumstances, it may be necessary to consult with the Chair of REFSC, or one other member of REFSC if the Chair has a conflict of interest. All members of the review group will be invited to declare any conflicts of interest that they believe they have, in so far as staff may be deduced from the anonymised forms, before an assessment is undertaken. Conflicts of interest may include where panel members recognise the individual from the details, and/or if they have had some dealings with the individuals on the matter and/or if they have a personal relationship with them.

Once the review group has determined that a request for a reduction meets the criteria set out in section 4.3.2 above and has agreed the appropriate reduction being sought, the relevant REF Coordinator(s) will be notified of the reduction being sought by the individual, but will not be informed of the nature of the individual circumstances.

Staff circumstances report

In line with the Guidance on Codes of Practice 24 paragraphs 73 – 74, following the REF submission deadline in March 2021, the School will be required to submit a report reflecting on its experience of supporting staff with individual circumstances. This should include a breakdown of the circumstances declared, using the categories in the REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions Annex L (ECRs, secondments or career breaks, family-related leave, junior clinical academics, and circumstances requiring a judgement), and the number of requests for the removal of the minimum of one requirement. The School's report should reflect on how the circumstances declared fed into decisions on whether to request a reduction in outputs required for submitting units, indicating how often reductions were/were not requested and how the expectations made of individuals were managed in both cases.

The reports will be collected by the REF Team at Research England primarily for analysis purposes but may be taken into account when auditing the School's compliance with this Code.

4.4 Equality impact assessment

4.4.1 How an equality impact assessment on the spread of outputs across staff (in relation to their protected characteristics) has been used to inform the final selection of outputs to be submitted.

See section 3.4.1.

²⁴ <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/guidance-on-codes-of-practice-201903/>

Details of LSE academic job types and REF-eligibility

| LSE Job type | Details | REF-eligible? |
|---|---|---|
| Academic staff (research and teaching) | NAC and pre-NAC. Salary bands SBA1-SBA3 and SB07-SB10 | Yes |
| Centennial Professor | Salary band SB10 | Yes, if on minimum 0.2 FTE on census date (31/07/20) |
| Professor in Practice | Salary band SB10 | No (appointed on tutorial fellow terms & conditions) |
| NRSC Research Staff | Salary bands SBA1-SBA3 | Yes |
| Non-NRSC Research Staff | Non-NSRC. Salary bands SB08 - SB10 | No, unless also a holder of an externally funded research fellowship* |
| Research Fellow | Salary band SB07 | No, unless also a holder of an externally funded research fellowship* |
| Research Officer | Salary band SB06 | No, unless also a holder of an externally funded research fellowship |
| Research Assistant | Salary band SB05 | No (appointed on professional services terms & conditions) |
| LSE Fellow | Salary bands SB05-SB06 | No (appointed on teaching-only terms & conditions) |
| Teaching Fellow | Salary bands SB05-SB06 | No (appointed on teaching-only terms & conditions) |
| Educational career track staff | Salary bands SBA1-SBA3 | No |
| Course tutor | Salary band SB07 | No |
| Casual Teaching Staff (e.g. GTAs, Guest Teachers) | All bands | No |
| Casual Research Staff | All bands | No |
| Visiting Appointment | Non-remunerated | No |
| Professional Services Staff | All bands | No |
| Summer School and Executive Programme Staff | All bands | No |
| Policy officer | Salary band SB06 | No: appointed on separate policy fellow terms & conditions |
| Policy fellow | Salary band SB07 | No: appointed on separate policy fellow terms & conditions |
| Senior Policy fellow | Salary band SB08 | No: appointed on separate policy fellow terms & conditions |
| Distinguished Policy fellow | Salary band SB09 | No: appointed on separate policy fellow terms & conditions |

Notes:

- * In accordance with the Guidance on Submissions, holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement is an indicator of research independence. An illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of independent fellowships as identified by the funding bodies is attached at [Annex B](#).

Research Fellowships

1. Table 1 provides a list of competitive research fellowships, presented in alphabetical order by funder, that have been confirmed by the funder to require research independence. This list is intended to guide institutions when developing their criteria to identify independent researchers. **It should not be taken to be exhaustive** and the funding bodies recognise that many relevant fellowship schemes are not captured, including research fellowships funded by HEIs, which may require research independence.

Table 1

| Funder | Fellowship scheme |
|--------------------------|--|
| AHRC | AHRC Leadership Fellowships - Early Career Researchers |
| AHRC | AHRC Leadership Fellowships |
| | |
| BBSRC | BBSRC David Phillips Fellowships |
| BBSRC | BBSRC Future Leader Fellowships (from 2018 known as BBSRC Discovery Fellowships) |
| | |
| British Academy | BA/Leverhulme Senior Research Fellowships |
| British Academy | British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships |
| British Academy | JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowships |
| British Academy | Mid-Career Fellowships |
| British Academy | Newton Advanced Fellowships |
| British Academy | Newton International Fellowships |
| British Academy | Wolfson Research Professorships |
| | |
| British Heart Foundation | Career Re-entry Research Fellowships |
| British Heart Foundation | Clinical Research Leave Fellowships |
| British Heart Foundation | BHF-Fulbright Commission Scholar Awards |
| British Heart Foundation | Intermediate Basic Science Research Fellowships |
| British Heart Foundation | Intermediate Clinical Research Fellowships |
| British Heart Foundation | Senior Basic Science Research Fellowships |
| British Heart Foundation | Senior Clinical Research Fellowships |
| British Heart Foundation | Springboard Award for Biomedical Researchers |
| British Heart Foundation | Starter Grants for Clinical Lecturers |
| | |
| Cancer Research UK | Advanced Clinician Scientist Fellowship |
| Cancer Research UK | Career Development Fellowship |
| Cancer Research UK | Career Establishment Award |
| Cancer Research UK | Senior Cancer Research Fellowship |
| | |
| EPSRC | EPSRC Early Career Fellowship |
| EPSRC | EPSRC Established Career Fellowship |

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| EPSRC | EPSRC Postdoctoral Fellowship* ¹ |
| | |
| ESRC | ESRC Future Cities Catapult Fellowship |
| ESRC | ESRC Future Leaders Grant |
| ESRC | ESRC/Turing Fellowships |
| ESRC/URKI | Early Career Researcher Innovation Fellowships |
| | |
| European Research Council | ERC Advanced Grants |
| European Research Council | ERC Consolidator Grants |
| European Research Council | ERC Starting Grants |
| | |
| Health Education England | ICA Clinical Lectureship |
| Health Education England | ICA Senior Clinical Lectureship |
| | |
| Leverhulme Trust | Early Career Fellowship |
| Leverhulme Trust | Research Fellowship |
| Leverhulme Trust | Emeritus Fellowship |
| Leverhulme Trust | Major Research Fellowship |
| Leverhulme Trust | International Academic Fellowship |
| | |
| MRC | MRC Career Development Awards* |
| MRC | MRC New Investigator Research Grants (Non-clinical)* |
| MRC | MRC New Investigator Research Grants (Clinical)* |
| MRC | MRC Clinician Scientist Fellowships* |
| MRC | Senior Non-Clinical Fellowships |
| MRC | Senior Clinical Fellowships |
| | |
| NC3R | David Sainsbury Fellowship |
| NC3R | Training fellowship |
| | |
| NERC | Independent Research Fellowships |
| NERC/UKRI | Industrial Innovation Fellowships |
| NERC/UKRI | Industrial Mobility Fellowships |
| | |
| NIHR | Advanced Fellowship |
| NIHR | Career Development Fellowship |
| NIHR | Clinical Lectureships |
| NIHR | Clinical Trials Fellowship |
| NIHR | Clinician Scientist |
| NIHR | Development and Skills Enhancement Award |
| NIHR | Knowledge Mobilisation Research Fellowship |
| NIHR | Post-Doctoral Fellowship |

¹ Those asterisked support the transition to independence. Applicants should demonstrate readiness to become independent and the award enables them to become so. It could be argued those at the start of an award are not 'independent' yet, but those well in the award may be.

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| NIHR | Research Professorship |
| NIHR | School for Primary Care Post-Doctoral Fellowships |
| NIHR | Senior Research Fellowship |
| | |
| Royal Academy of Engineering | RAEng Engineering for Development Research Fellowship |
| Royal Academy of Engineering | Industrial Fellowships |
| Royal Academy of Engineering | RAEng Research Fellowship |
| Royal Academy of Engineering | RAEng Senior Research Fellowship |
| Royal Academy of Engineering | UK Intelligence Community (IC) Postdoctoral Research Fellowship |
| | |
| Royal Society of Edinburgh | RSE Arts & Humanities Awards (for permanent staff) |
| Royal Society of Edinburgh | RSE Personal Research Fellowship |
| Royal Society of Edinburgh | RSE Sabbatical Research Grants (for permanent staff) |
| | |
| STFC | CERN Fellowships |
| STFC | Ernest Rutherford Fellowship |
| STFC | ESA Fellowships |
| STFC | Innovations Partnership Scheme Fellowships |
| STFC | Returner Fellowships |
| STFC | RSE/STFC Enterprise Fellowships |
| STFC | Rutherford International Fellowship Programme |
| | |
| UKRI | UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships |
| UKRI | UKRI Innovation Fellowships |
| | |
| Wellcome Trust | Intermediate Fellowship in Public Health and Tropical Medicine |
| Wellcome Trust | Principal Research Fellowships |
| Wellcome Trust | Research Award for Health Professionals |
| Wellcome Trust | Research Career Development Fellowship |
| Wellcome Trust | Research Fellowship in Humanities and Social Science |
| Wellcome Trust | Senior Research Fellowship |
| Wellcome Trust | Sir Henry Dale Fellowship |

We are awaiting information from the funder on the following fellowships:

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Royal Society | Sir Henry Dale Fellowship |
| Royal Society | Royal Society Wolfson Fellowship |
| Royal Society | Dorothy Hodgkin Fellowship |
| Royal Society | JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship |
| Royal Society | Newton Advanced Fellowship |
| Royal Society | Newton International Fellowship |
| Royal Society | Royal Society/Leverhulme Trust Senior Research Fellowship |
| Royal Society | University Research Fellowship |

Committees Effective Behaviours

The School expects the highest ethical standards and seeks to foster an inclusive environment. As a community we value equality of opportunity, respect and diversity in acknowledging and respecting a broad range of social, cultural and personal beliefs, and we expect everyone to demonstrate mutual respect, open-mindedness and transparency. This extends to all School committees including within Departments and Service Divisions.

All committee members, whether academic, professional services, student and external members, are collectively responsible for the decisions of the committee. Debate and disagreement are expected within discussions, however all members should be seen as equal and their views and opinions should be treated with respect.

Committee Chairs will challenge any inappropriate attitudes, language and behaviour which do not meet these standards. For example, being rude, overbearing, talking over others, making inappropriate remarks or gestures (including sexist or racist comments) and belittling others' opinions, abilities and experiences.

This statement supports five of the six [Ethics Code](#) principles: Responsibility and Accountability, Integrity, Intellectual Freedom, Collegiality and Equality of Respect and Opportunity.

What to do if members have concerns about any behaviour which contravenes the Committee Effective Behaviour Statement

Committee Chairs will consider how to respectfully address any inappropriate attitudes, language and behaviour. Within the meeting this might be done by reminding members of this Committee Effective Behaviours statement and the wider [Effective Behaviours Framework](#). It may be necessary for the Chair to follow up outside of the meeting with both parties. In serious cases, such as those that have been the subject of persistent and / or highly inappropriate behaviour from another committee member should contact the School's Ethics Manager for further advice: ethics@lse.ac.uk

Research Excellence Framework Strategy Committee (REFSC) Membership and Terms of Reference

Membership

| | | |
|--|--------------|-------------|
| Pro-Director Professor Simon Hix (Chair) | (ex officio) | |
| Pro-Director Professor Eric Neumayer | (ex officio) | |
| Pro-Director Professor Charles Stafford | (ex officio) | |
| Professor Wim Van der Stede (Deputy Chair) | Group I | to 02.04.21 |
| Professor Kathy Yuan | Group I | to 02.04.21 |
| Professor Martin Lodge | Group II | to 02.04.21 |
| Professor Alessandro Gavazza | Group III | to 02.04.21 |
| Professor Irini Moustaki | Group III | to 02.04.21 |
| Professor Sir John Hills | Group IV | to 02.04.21 |
| Professor Tim Newburn | Group IV | to 31.12.20 |
| Professor Sonia Livingstone | Group IV | to 02.04.21 |
| Professor Neil Duxbury | Group V | to 02.04.21 |

In attendance

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Professor Nick Barr | REF Coordinator | to 02.04.21 |
| Sofia Jabeen | Head of EDI | ex officio |

REFSC members will not normally be Departmental REF Coordinators.

Terms of Reference

The Research Excellence Framework Strategy Committee (REFSC) is responsible for overseeing the School's preparations for, and submission to, the Research Excellence Framework (REF). In particular, it aims to optimise the submission that the School makes to the REF.

In pursuance of its aims, the REFSC has the following rights and responsibilities:

- (i) To maximise the benefit of the REF to the School.
- (ii) To make the final decision on the content of the submission that the School makes to the REF.
- (iii) To make financial decisions when allocating funds for targeted assistance (e.g. extension of sabbatical leave/teaching assistance), providing assistance for external reviews of research outputs and supporting the production of high quality impact case studies.
- (iv) To make strategic decisions when assigning members of staff to particular units of assessment and on the compilation of the portfolio of outputs to the Research Excellence Framework, consistent with the REF rules, to maximise the benefit of the REF to the School and aim for a broad and balanced submission.
- (v) To ensure that information relevant to the exercise is disseminated to academic and research staff.
- (vi) To request information that will identify strengths and weaknesses in the submission and having identified weaknesses to provide solutions to improve the School's submission in the areas identified.
- (vii) To seek guidance from relevant individuals/institutions to ensure that the committee remains informed – to the best of its ability – of REF guidance, criteria and initiatives.
- (viii) To oversee and guide the School's submission of data to the funding bodies, which will involve interaction with relevant professional services divisions at the School.

- (ix) To develop and approve the REF Code of Practice in consultation with relevant committees, groups and individuals, in line with the requirements of the funding bodies and ensure REF planning is undertaken according to this Code.
- (x) To comply with all equal opportunities legislation in its decision making capacity and to operate under the terms of the School's EDI Policy for the preparation of the REF 2021 submission at all times.
- (xi) To comply with the School's Ethics Code and the Effective Behaviour for Committees Statement.

Mode of Operation

The REFSC is a working group of the Research Committee. It reports to Academic Board via the Research Committee.

The Committee meets at least twice per term.

Committee members are appointed by the Chair using the established School groupings. Appointed members will usually be expected to remain on the Committee until after the submission deadline (31 March 2021).

Last updated: 4 August 2020

Departmental REF Panels: Generic Membership and Terms of Reference

All academic Departments at the School are normally expected to have a Departmental REF Panel for managing the Department's REF planning and coordination. While all Departmental REF Panels will be slightly different, the following generic terms of reference and membership should be common to all:

Terms of Reference

Departmental REF Panels should:

Assist the Department and related Centres with planning for government research assessment exercises, including preparations for the impact elements of any such exercise. This will include:

- Providing a consensus of opinion on the quality of colleagues' research outputs.
- When requested by the School's Research Committee and / or REF Strategy Committee, undertaking reviews of the published outputs and publishing plans of all academic and research staff within their unit in order to establish accurate data for the purposes of meeting the requirements of any UK government research assessment exercise.
- Overseeing the selection, development and coordination of case studies to demonstrate impact as may be required by any UK government research assessment exercise, under the guidance or direction of the School's Research Committee and / or REF Strategy Committee.

Mode of operation

While there is no stipulation as to the frequency with which Departmental REF Panels should meet, the implication is that they need to meet sufficiently frequently to achieve their purposes and to meet the School's REF deadlines.

Departmental REF Panels will comply with the LSE REF Code of Practice and the EDI considerations therein.

Departmental REF Panels report to the relevant Head of Department (HOD) and to the School's REF Strategy Committee.

Membership

Departments may decide for themselves the appropriate membership of the Departmental REF Panel according to their own procedures, which should be fair and transparent.

Departmental REF Panels should comprise academic staff that are capable of making informed judgments on research quality.

The HOD is responsible for appointing the members in line with HODs' normal responsibilities within departments.

December 2018

Departmental REF Coordinators: role description

Each Department is asked to identify a REF Coordinator to manage the process of supporting the REF 2021 submission for their Unit of Assessment (UOA). The REF Coordinator role may be filled by the unit's REF Impact Coordinator or may be a separate member of staff; in either case, the REF Coordinator should be a REF-eligible 'Category A' staff member.

REF coordinators are responsible for:

- overseeing the Department and any associated Research Centres' or Institutes' REF 2021 preparations as required, in liaison with their Departmental Research Committee;
- working with REF coordinators in other Departments which will form part of the same UOA as theirs on the UOA's REF preparations and REF submission;
- coordinating with Heads of Department, Centre Directors and Institute Directors to identify any REF eligible Category A staff members who will be submitted to their UOA and ensure that their outputs are assessed and included in the UOA's submission, and that their contributions to Impact Case Studies (ICSs) and the environment element of the UOA submission are fully recognised
- ensuring that the UOA meets the School's REF deadlines set by REFSC.

REF Coordinators should not also be the Head of Department but may be a Research Director and/or Chair of the Departmental Research Committee.

Where the Department will be submitted jointly with other Departments, the Departments concerned may decide to appoint UOA REF Coordinator to oversee the REF submission across the whole UOA, including the selection the REF outputs and impact case studies and the production of the REF environment template.

Departmental REF Impact Coordinators: role description

Each department is asked to identify a REF Impact Coordinator to manage the process of developing and editing of Impact Case Studies (ICSs) developed within their unit. The REF Impact Coordinator role may be filled by the unit's REF Coordinator or may be a separate member of staff; in either case, the Impact Coordinator should be a REF-eligible 'Category A' staff member.

Impact Coordinators are responsible for:

- facilitating feedback between all interested parties;
- working with REF Impact Coordinators in other Departments which will be submitted to the same UOA
- ensuring that ICSs are submitted for formal review by REFSC by the required deadlines;
- working with the School's Research Impact Manager to identify and work to developmental priorities to improve the UOA's ICS portfolio. This may include conducting informal, interim reviews at the UOA level;
- coordinating any local review groups of 'impact experts' that the Department or UOA may choose to set up to advise its ICS authors.

These responsibilities are distinct from those of individual ICS authors, who are responsible for:

- writing the initial ICS;
- collecting the evidence of their impact;
- responding to feedback provided and editing their ICS as appropriate and in accordance with the review dates set by REFSC;
- identifying any support required for producing an ICS, such as training or additional resources, and alerting the Impact Coordinator and/or REF Coordinator to these needs.
- Providing drafts and final versions of their ICSs to their REF Impact Coordinators in accordance with timelines set by the REF Impact Coordinator and REFSC.

Protected characteristics: summary of equality legislation

The Equality Act 2010 harmonised and consolidated previous anti-discrimination legislation. A summary of the protected characteristics covered by the Act, and HEIs' responsibilities in relation to these are set out below, which has been taken from the REF 2021 Guidance on Codes of Practice²⁵.

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

²⁵ <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/guidance-on-codes-of-practice-201903/>

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| | <p>medical treatment, but which would have had a substantial and long-term adverse effect if not so managed, is also a disability.</p> <p>The definition of disability is different in Northern Ireland in that a list of day-to-day activities is referred to.</p> <p>There is no list of day-to-day activities for England, Scotland and Wales but day-to-day activities are taken to mean activities that people generally, not a specific individual, carry out on a daily or frequent basis.</p> <p>While there is no definitive list of what is considered a disability, it covers a wide range of impairments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sensory impairments • impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as rheumatoid arthritis, depression and epilepsy • progressive impairments, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, HIV and cancer • organ specific impairments, including respiratory conditions and cardiovascular diseases • developmental impairments, such as autistic spectrum disorders and dyslexia • mental health conditions such as depression and eating disorders • impairments caused by injury to the body or brain. <p>It is important for HEIs to note that people who have had a past disability are also protected from discrimination, victimisation and harassment because of disability.</p> <p>Equality law requires HEIs to anticipate the needs of people with disabilities and make reasonable adjustments for them. Failure to make a reasonable adjustment constitutes discrimination. If a researcher's impairment has affected the quantity of their research outputs, the submitting unit may return a reduced number of outputs (see 'Guidance on Submissions', Part 3, Section 1, 'Staff circumstances').</p> |
| <p>Gender reassignment</p> | <p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 protect from discrimination, harassment and victimisation of trans people who have proposed, started or completed a process to change their sex. Staff in HE do not have to be under medical supervision to be afforded protection because they are trans and staff are protected if they are perceived to be undergoing or have undergone related procedures. They are also protected if they are associated with someone who has proposed, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment.</p> <p>Trans people who undergo gender reassignment will need to take time off for appointments and, in some cases, for medical assistance. The transition process is lengthy, often taking several years, and it is likely to be a difficult period for the trans person as they seek recognition of their new gender from their family, friends, employer and society as a whole.</p> <p>The Gender Recognition Act 2004 gave enhanced privacy rights to trans people who undergo gender reassignment. A person acting in an official capacity who acquires</p> |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| | <p>information about a person's status as a transsexual may commit a criminal offence if they pass the information to a third party without consent.</p> <p>Consequently, staff within HEIs with responsibility for REF submissions must ensure that the information they receive about gender reassignment is treated with particular care.</p> <p>If a staff member's ability to work productively throughout the REF assessment period has been constrained due to gender reassignment, the unit may return a reduced number of research outputs (see 'Guidance on submissions', Part 3, Section 1, 'Staff circumstances'). Information about the member of staff will be kept confidential as described in 'Guidance on submissions', paragraph 195.</p> <p>HEIs should note that the Scottish government recently consulted on, and the UK government is currently consulting on, reform of the Gender Recognition Act 2004, which may include streamlining the procedure to legally change gender.</p> |
| Marriage and civil partnership | <p>Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 as amended, individuals are protected from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of marriage and civil partnership status. The protection from discrimination is to ensure that people who are married or in a civil partnership receive the same benefits and treatment in employment. The protection from discrimination does not apply to single people.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not inadvertently discriminate against staff who are married or in civil partnerships.</p> |
| Political opinion | <p>The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 protects staff from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of political opinion.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not inadvertently discriminate against staff based on their political opinion.</p> |
| Pregnancy and maternity | <p>Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 women are protected from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p>Consequently, where researchers have taken time out of work, or their ability to work productively throughout the assessment period has been affected, because of pregnancy and/or maternity, the submitting unit may return a reduced number of research outputs, as set out in 'Guidance on Submissions', paragraphs 169 to 172.</p> <p>In addition, HEIs should ensure that female researchers who are pregnant or on maternity leave are kept informed about and included in their submissions process.</p> <p>For the purposes of this summary it is important to note that primary adopters have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave.</p> |
| Race | <p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation connected to race. The definition of race includes colour, ethnic or national origins or nationality.</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <p>Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular race.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not discriminate against staff based on their race or assumed race (for example, based on their name).</p> |
| <p>Sex (including breastfeeding and additional paternity and adoption leave)</p> | <p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to sex. Employees are also protected because of their perceived sex or because of their association with someone of a particular sex.</p> <p>The sex discrimination provisions of the Equality Act explicitly protect women from less favourable treatment because they are breastfeeding. Consequently, the impact of breastfeeding on a woman's ability to work productively will be taken into account, as set out in 'Guidance on Submissions', Part 3, Section 1, 'Staff circumstances'.</p> <p>If a mother who meets the continuity of employment test wishes to return to work early or shorten her maternity leave/pay, she will be entitled to shared parental leave with the father or her partner within the first year of the baby's birth. Partners may also be eligible for shared parental leave or pay. Fathers/partners who take additional paternity or adoption leave will have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave and barriers that exist to taking the leave, or as a result of having taken it, could constitute unlawful sex discrimination. Consequently, where researchers have taken additional paternity and adoption leave, the submitting unit may return a reduced number of outputs, as set out in 'Guidance on Submissions', Annex L.</p> <p>HEIs need to be wary of implementing procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 that would be easier for men to comply with than women, or vice versa. There are many cases where a requirement to work full-time (or less favourable treatment of people working part-time or flexibly) has been held to discriminate unlawfully against women.</p> <p>HEIs should note that there are now requirements under UK and Scottish legislation for public authorities (including HEIs) to report information on the percentage difference amongst employees between men and women's average hourly pay (excluding overtime).</p> |
| <p>Sexual orientation</p> | <p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to sexual orientation. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person who is of a particular sexual orientation.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not discriminate against staff based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation.</p> |

Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances template

This document is being sent to all Category A staff whose outputs are eligible for submission to REF2021 (see [Guidance on Submissions](#), paragraphs 117-122). All eligible staff will be submitted to REF 2021 with a minimum of one output, and up to a maximum of five outputs, which first became publicly available between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2020. Each Unit of Assessment is required to submit a total number of outputs (the 'output pool') calculated as the total of submitted staff multiplied by 2.5.

Where eligible staff have not been able to produce an eligible research output during the assessment period due to one of the circumstances set out in 1a to 1c below, the School can request the removal of the minimum requirement of one output, and the unit's output pool will be reduced by one without penalty. In addition, where an individual's ability to contribute to the output pool at the same rate as other staff has been affected by equality-related circumstances, the unit may take these into account. The School may also request a reduction to a unit's output pool where the declared equality-related circumstances have disproportionately affected the available output pool. Requests for the removal of the minimum requirement of one output and any requests for unit reductions will be made by the School to the REF Team at Research England in line with the REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions. In all cases, the reduction in the number of outputs will be made **at the level of the submitting Unit of Assessment**.

As part of the School's commitment to supporting equality and diversity in REF 2021, we have put in place supportive structures for staff to declare information confidentially about any equality-related circumstances that may have affected their ability to research productively during the assessment period, 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 entered into REF where they have any of the following:
 - a. an overall period of 46 months or more absence from research during the assessment period, due to equality-related circumstances (see below)
 - b. *equivalent* to 46 months or more absence from research due to equality-related circumstances
 - c. 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 an individual's ability to contribute research outputs to the output pool of their unit.
3. To establish whether there are any Units of Assessment where the available output pool has been disproportionately affected by declared equality-related circumstances which warrant a request to the higher education funding bodies for a reduction in the required total number of outputs to be submitted by the Unit of Assessment.

Individual circumstances

- Qualifying as an Early Career Researcher (ECR: defined as started career as an independent researcher²⁶ on or after 1 August 2016)
- Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the higher education (HE) sector
- Qualifying periods of family-related leave
- 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
- COVID-19 related circumstances (REF 6a only)²⁷

If your ability to research productively during the assessment period has been constrained due to one or more of the circumstances listed above, you are invited to complete the attached form. Further information can be found in paragraph 160 of the [Guidance on Submissions](#) (REF 2019/01). Completion and return of the form is voluntary, and individuals who choose not to return it will not be put under any pressure to declare information.

This form is the only means by which the School will be gathering this information; we will only consult HR records, contract start dates, etc. for the purposes of verifying data provided on the form. You should therefore complete and return the form if any of the above circumstances apply and you are willing to provide the relevant information.

Confidentiality of individual disclosures

Individuals are invited to voluntarily disclose any individual circumstances which have constrained their ability to undertake research during the assessment period using the form below. All information related to individual staff circumstances will be treated in confidence and in accordance with data protection legislation and will not be used for any other purposes. To protect individuals' confidentiality and privacy, details of staff circumstances recorded by the School for the purposes of REF 2021 will be held in a separate system which will not identify individuals.

Completed forms should be emailed to Research.REFdisclosures@lse.ac.uk, where they will be anonymised. Individuals' names, Departments and units of assessment will be removed from the completed questionnaires prior to being reviewed by the individuals identified below. Completed

²⁶ For the purposes of REF 2021, an independent researcher is defined as an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme. A member of staff is not deemed to be an independent researcher purely on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs. For example, a staff member who became a Lecturer/Assistant Professor after 1 August 2016 may be an early career researcher, as may research staff who became appointed to the New Research Staff Career (NRSC) or who are the holder of a named research fellowship, e.g. a Leverhulme fellowship, after 1 August 2016. Further advice can be obtained from the [Head of Research Policy](#).

²⁷ As well as effects due to applicable circumstances (such as ill health, caring responsibilities), this includes other personal circumstances related to COVID-19 (such as furloughed staff, health-related or clinical staff diverted to frontline services, staff resource diverted to other priority areas within the School in response to COVID-19); and / or external factors related to COVID-19 (for example, restricted access to research facilities).

questionnaires will only be seen by those responsible for making assessment as to appropriate reductions in the number of outputs.

The initial assessment of the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs required will be made by a review group comprising the Head of Research Policy, REF Support Manager, Head of EDI, the Head of HR Policy and Employee Relations and one member of the REF Strategy Committee (REFSC). For some complex circumstances, it may be necessary to consult with the Chair of REFSC, or one other member of REFSC if the Chair has a conflict of interest. All members of the review group will be invited to declare any conflicts of interest that they believe they have, in so far as staff may be deduced from the anonymised forms, before an assessment is undertaken. Once the review group has determined that a request for a reduction meets the criteria set out above and has agreed the appropriate reduction being sought, the relevant REF Coordinator(s) will be notified of the reduction being sought by the individual, but will not be informed of the nature of the individual circumstances.

Staff who do not return a completed questionnaire to Research.REFdisclosures@lse.ac.uk will be assumed to have no individual circumstances which have affected their research outputs for REF 2021.

If the School decides to apply to the funding bodies for either form of reduction of outputs (removal of 'minimum of one' requirement or reduction in Unit of Assessment total outputs required due to unit circumstances) we will need to provide the REF Team at Research England 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.

Data submitted by the School to the REF team at Research England will be kept confidential to the REF team, the [REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel](#), and the main panel chairs. All these bodies are subject to confidentiality arrangements. The REF team at Research England will destroy the submitted data about individuals' circumstances on completion of the assessment phase.

Changes in circumstances

The School recognises that staff circumstances may change between completion of the declaration form and the REF census date (31 July 2020). If this is the case, then staff should contact Research.REFdisclosures@lse.ac.uk to provide the updated information.

To submit this form you should email it to Research.REFdisclosures@lse.ac.uk

Name:

Department/Centre/Institute:

Do you have a research 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 wish to declare. Please provide requested information in relevant box(es).

| Circumstance | Time period affected and any supporting comments/ explanation |
|---|---|
| <p>Early Career Researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016).</p> <p><i>Date you became an early career researcher: see footnote 1 on page 2 of this form for details.</i></p> <p><i>Note that Research and Innovation may need to contact you to verify this. Correspondence regarding this will only be seen by those responsible for making the assessment of the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs.</i></p> | |
| <p>Career break or secondment outside of the HE sector.</p> <p><i>Dates and durations in months.</i></p> | |
| <p>Family-related leave;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • statutory maternity leave • statutory adoption leave • Additional paternity or adoption leave or shared parental leave lasting for four months or more. <p><i>For each period of leave, state the nature of the leave taken and the dates and durations in months.</i></p> | |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Disability (including chronic conditions)</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>Mental health condition</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>Ill health or injury</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>Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of standard allowance</p> <p><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> | |
| <p>Caring responsibilities</p> <p><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> | |
| <p>Gender reassignment</p> <p><i>To include: Periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p> | |
| <p>COVID-19 (Applicable only where requests are being made for the removal of the minimum of one requirement)</p> <p><i>To include: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p> | |

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|--|--|
| <p><i>The overall impact of the COVID-19 effects should be considered in combination with other applicable circumstances affecting the staff member's ability to research productively throughout the period.</i></p> | |
| <p>Any other exceptional reasons e.g. bereavement.</p> <p><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> | |

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 2021 purposes only and will be seen by the review group as set out above, but that they will not see my name, Department or Unit of Assessment.
- 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, subject to the confidentiality arrangements set out above.

I agree

Name: Print name here

Signed: Sign or initial here

Date: Insert date here

I give my permission for an HR Partner to contact me in the first instance to discuss my circumstances in order to provide them with information regarding options for support where appropriate.

I give my permission for the details on this form to be passed on to the Head of my Department/ Institute/ Centre. (Please note, if you do not give permission your Department/ Institute/ Centre 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