



**Research Excellence Framework 2021**

**Code of Practice**



## **Part 1: Introduction**

1. Newman University will conduct its preparation for REF 2021 in a transparent, clearly defined, inclusive, and consistent manner and in accordance with its values, existing policies and codes of practice, including equality and diversity policies.
2. This Code of Practice (CoP) builds on the Newman University CoP for REF 2014 and on the Unit of Assessment planning and support that has been conducted consistently for Units submitting to research exercises. It addresses specific matters concerned with the preparation of the University's submission to REF 2021, including the selection of research outputs for inclusion in the submission.
3. This Code of Practice applies to all members of Newman University staff involved in REF processes and to any external advisors engaged by the University.
4. This Code of Practice does not replace any of Newman University's existing policies or codes of practice other than that for REF 2014.

### *Legal responsibilities*

5. Newman University has legal responsibilities as an employer and as a public sector organisation under equality law. As an employer, the University needs to ensure that its policies do not directly or indirectly discriminate against its employees on the grounds of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or if they are pregnant or have recently given birth. These obligations apply to REF procedures.
6. Under the Equality Act 2010 Newman University has a duty to have due regard for the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a relevant characteristic and people who do not. There is also a need to ensure that the REF processes are assessed for their impact on different protected characteristics by gathering data on staff in relation to protected characteristics.
7. Newman University also recognises that under the fixed-term employee and part-time workers regulations, fixed-term employees and part-time workers have the right not to be treated by the University any less favourably than it treats a comparable 'permanent' employee. The relevant regulations are:
  - Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
  - Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002.

### *External advisors*

8. In developing submissions, coordinators of Units of Assessment or the Steering Group may wish to seek the opinions of external advisors with the appropriate knowledge and experience of research assessment or impact. After consultation with Unit of Assessment Coordinators, the Deputy Vice Chancellor will approve the commissioning of external advisors. External advisors will be considered on the basis of their subject expertise and their familiarity with excellent research in their field. External advisors will be invited to provide their views on the quality of the research outputs, the environment and impact case studies in the submissions, or parts of submissions, on the basis of the published REF criteria. They may be invited to assign ratings to individual outputs and make recommendations about the inclusion of outputs or case studies.

### *Communication and Consultation*

9. Coordinators of Units of Assessment, nominated on the Expression of Interest form and agreed by the relevant Dean of Faculty, will be responsible for communicating with the eligible staff within their Unit of Assessment. Meetings of Units of Assessment, open to all eligible staff, will continue to be held, in order to provide updates on progress and a forum for questions and discussion relating to the submission. An item on the preparation for the submission will be placed on the agenda for meetings of the Research Committee, whose minutes are published. The Code of Practice, which includes information on the processes for developing the submission and for appeals, will be placed on the University's intranet for consultation and be available in hard copy format. Information about the Code of Practice and the consultation process will be included on a regular basis in the weekly internal news Bulletin that is emailed to all staff. Human Resources will communicate by post with members of staff who, through absence or any other reason, do not have access to the Bulletin or intranet. Comments concerning the Code of Practice can be sent to the Research Office: [research@newman.ac.uk](mailto:research@newman.ac.uk). The final Code of Practice will be published on the Newman website in December 2019 along with the REF Data Collection Statement.
10. Equality, diversity and inclusion at Newman is overseen by the Equality and Diversity Committee, Chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, which reports to Senate. The development of this Code in draft format will be reviewed by the Equality and Diversity Committee in April 2019, and any recommendations for modification incorporated prior to submission. Consultation is also being undertaken in 2019 with Units of Assessment, Human Resources, UCU, and members of the Research Committee, leading to revisions and iterations of the Code. Sign off of the Code and its processes, including evidence of consultation, will be made by Senate.
11. Newman University adheres to the principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity. The Code of Practice and the selection criteria have been developed through the senior committee with responsibility for research, which reports to Senate. All staff are to be consulted through notification of the Code on the intranet in the weekly Bulletin and the invitation to comment to a bespoke email address. Communication about the Code will be made through the

weekly Bulletin. The principles governing the Code are consistent across the University, with no exceptions and no variations across Units of Assessment. Ultimate responsibility for the REF process sits with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, while key responsibilities also sit with designated Unit of Assessment Coordinators, the Research Committee, the appeals panel, and staff identified in this Code. The processes in the Code promote inclusivity and the University takes an inclusive approach to the REF, seeking to ensure all Category A eligible staff with a significant responsibility for research are included wherever possible. The University will seek, where possible, to include staff whose outputs would most obviously fall within a Unit of Assessment that is not viable at Newman University within an alternative Unit that is viable. Decisions will be communicated via Unit of Assessment Coordinators and made in line with the timetable at the end of this Code.

## **Part 2: Identifying Staff with Significant Responsibility for Research**

### **Criteria for inclusion**

12. The core eligibility criteria in the REF 2021 Decisions on Staff and Outputs (REF 2017/04) are defined as "academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 full-time equivalent (FTE) or greater, on the payroll of the submitting institution on the census date, whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'teaching and research', which is further defined as those staff returned to the Higher Education Statistics Agency Staff Collection with an academic employment function of either 'Academic contract that is research only' or 'Academic contract that is both teaching and research'."
13. The Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions further defines staff to be included as those with 'significant responsibility for research'. The Census date for staff is 31 July 2020.

At Newman University, all staff on a teaching and research contract have a responsibility to undertake research or scholarly activity, which includes activities variously understood as research, scholarship, practice, knowledge exchange, and/or other non-teaching duties. For the purposes of the REF, staff with 'significant' responsibility for research are those who have been allocated both time and resources 'to engage actively in independent research, and that it is an expectation of their job role.' (REF 2017/04: 'REF 2021 Decisions on staff and outputs' p.3) The REF definition of research is as follows (Annex C REF2021 Guidance on Submissions):

1. For the purposes of the REF, research is defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared.
2. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, culture, society, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts

including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction. It excludes routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes such as for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques. It also excludes the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research.

3. It includes research that is published, disseminated or made publicly available in the form of assessable research outputs, and confidential reports.

14. At Newman, staff with 'significant responsibility for research' are members of staff who meet at least two of the following three criteria:

1. Contractually allocated time for research and scholarship;
2. Eligible to apply for financial resources devolved from the research committee to support individual research as defined by the REF;
3. Approved as eligible to be a Supervisor or Director of Studies on a supervisory team for research degrees.

15. The stages of approval of 'significant responsibility for research' status are as follows:

1. The Unit of Assessment Coordinator will identify which members of staff meet the criteria above for inclusion, checking against the lists held by the Graduate School Office for criteria 2 and 3. For all members of staff, factual accuracy of the identification made by Unit of Assessment Coordinators will be checked by the Graduate School Office and, for criterion 1, Human Resources, for final verification. Staff will be informed by the end of October 2019 via Unit of Assessment Coordinators.
2. Any staff member who is not identified as having significant responsibility for research may use the appeal process to claim that they meet the core eligibility criteria (paragraph 12 above) and are research active (they have been allocated both time and resources 'to engage actively in independent research, and that it is an expectation of their job role.').

## **Governance arrangements**

16. Management and monitoring arrangements build on similar structures agreed and employed for REF 2014 and documented in the REF 2014 Code of Practice.

17. The REF Steering Group will determine Newman University's submission strategy and approve the contents of the final submission to REF 2021. The REF Steering Group is composed of the Unit of Assessment Coordinators and the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Chair).

18. Unit of Assessment Coordinators, supported by line managers, are responsible for overseeing the development of the draft submission in their Unit of Assessment.
19. The Research Committee will advise on strategy and policy.

### **Equality impact assessment (EIA)**

20. This Code of Practice has been developed after examination of the Equality Impact Assessments carried out for REF 2014. These in turn considered data gathered by the RAE 2008 Code of Practice report on Newman University College submission and data gathered by Workforce Monitoring Reports (December 2013 Workforce Profile, Newman University).
21. Three Equality Impact Assessments for REF 2021 will be carried out at key points in the process of identification of independent researchers, staff with significant responsibility for research, and outputs for submission, in order to ensure there is no differential impact on particular groups. The Equality Impact Assessments will be informed by the data (at summary level) on protected characteristics provided by Human Resources. The Code and the submission will be reviewed in the light of the outcomes from equality impact assessments and if the assessments raise concerns over differential impact on particular groups, revisions to the Code of Practice and/or the submission may be made as a result.

Equality Impact Assessments will take place at the following key points:

- After first draft of submissions;
- After second draft of submissions;
- Following use of the right to appeal.

The results of the Equality Impact Assessments will be used to assess, inform, and if appropriate change the final form of this Code of Practice and also the decisions made with regard to determining the identification of staff and the spread of outputs across staff (in relation to their protected characteristics). Newman University will use information gained through consultation with or involvement of staff from protected groups to inform its equality impact assessments during the process of preparing its submission to REF.

22. For processes related to identifying staff, the assessment will consider data on the characteristics of staff considered to meet the criteria for having significant responsibility for research in the context of all staff who are eligible for submission, and all academic staff. This will be published in the Equality Impact Assessment.
23. For policy and procedures relating to the identification of independent researchers, the assessment will consider data on the characteristics of staff

determined to meet the definition, in the context of an appropriate comparator pool for junior academic staff (as appropriate to the institution's context).

24. For policy and procedures relating to output selection, the assessment will consider data on the distribution of selected outputs across staff, by protected characteristic, in the context of the characteristics of the submitted staff pool.

## **Complaints**

25. The University will attempt to resolve any complaints as quickly as possible. Any member of staff who wishes to complain of potential discrimination or who feels that they have not been dealt with in accordance with this Code of Practice should in the first instance raise the issue informally with the Deputy Vice Chancellor, who will investigate and attempt to resolve it. After this, the appeals process below may be used.

## **Appeals**

26. The appeals process is part of the Code of Practice and has been communicated via the intranet and the weekly Bulletin sent to all members of staff.
27. Members of staff have the right to appeal the decision with regard to any part of the University's REF submission. In the first instance, this should be an informal appeal to the Deputy Vice Chancellor, who will attempt to resolve it, or to the Vice Chancellor if it concerns the role and responsibilities of the Deputy Vice Chancellor.
28. Formal appeals will normally be considered by an Appeals Panel within two months of being received, and in any case before the final submission is made. Formal appeals should be made in writing to the University Registrar by the end of May 2020.
29. The Appeals Panel will not include anyone who has been otherwise involved in the selection processes. The Appeals Panel will be chaired by the University Registrar and comprise one member each of the Equality and Diversity Committee (who shall not be a member of any of the University's Units of Assessment) and one member of Human Resources.
30. The purpose of the Appeals Panel is to consider appeals and to make judgements based on its assessment of each case taking into account the grounds stated.
31. The Appeals Panel will refer to the criteria and processes established by the REF 2021 team and the Guidance on Codes of Practice (REF 2019/03), as well as the Guidance on Submissions (REF 2019/01).
32. The UK funding bodies will offer a robust and independent process that will duly consider complaints against the university's implementation of the Code of Practice that cannot be resolved by the appeals process.



## **Equality and diversity training**

33. All members of the REF Steering Group, and Coordinators of Units of Assessment, will be trained on the equality and diversity implications of the submission to REF 2021.

34. The development of this Code of Practice, and subsequent training will draw on the following resources:

The AdvanceHE / Equality Challenge Unit's REF 2021 guidance:

<https://www.ecu.ac.uk/guidance-resources/research-excellence-framework-ref-equality/>

The guidance from the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP):

<https://www.ref.ac.uk/about/edap/>

The final EDAP report on Equality and Diversity in REF2014:

<https://www.ref.ac.uk/2014/equality/edapreport/>

Advice and training materials for Equality Impact Assessments from Advance HE / the Equality Challenge Unit: <https://www.ecu.ac.uk/guidance-resources/governance-and-policies/equality-impact-assessment/>

Guidance from REF 2021 Code of Practice Webinars and workshops:

<https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/training-and-events-materials/>

35. The training will focus on relevant legislation and this Code of Practice and will be in addition to any training members of staff may have received in relation to other roles (for example recruitment and selection). It will draw on the AdvanceHE training on 'Embedding Equality and Diversity in REF 2021' provided to GuildHe Research members at a dedicated all-day workshop on 1 May 2019.

36. The training will be completed by September 2019.

## **Part 3: Determining Research Independence**

37. Independent researchers are those who conduct self-directed research by having a significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme.

38. Staff on 'teaching and research' contracts are considered to be independent researchers.

39. Newman University does not employ staff on 'research only' contracts.

*Training, Appeals, Equality Impact Assessment*

40. Please see Part 2 above.

#### **Part 4: Selection of Outputs**

41. REF 2021 requires an average of 2.5 outputs per FTE returned in a Unit of Assessment. Subject to the minimum/maximum requirements, Coordinators of Units of Assessment will assess the outputs that are eligible for submission to the REF, including those of staff previously employed where the output was first made publicly available during the period of eligible employment, after consultation with the staff within the Unit of Assessment. Coordinators of Units of Assessment will recommend those outputs for selection, with reserves, based solely on their overall quality in terms of originality, significance and rigour as judged by internal and external peer review.
42. In agreement with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, each Unit of Assessment will draw on the expertise of one or more formally engaged external critical advisors in arriving at recommendations.
43. Decisions on research outputs to be included will be taken by the REF Steering Group following discussion with Coordinators of Units of Assessment. The University will not submit, unless it is with their written agreement, outputs authored by previous members of staff whose contracts were terminated.
44. The REF Steering Group will review the combination of selected outputs for the Unit of Assessment to assess whether a different combination may be more representative of the breadth and diversity of the UoA without reducing the overall quality of the submission. This will be undertaken in the light of EIAs such that adjustments to the submission, and to this Code, may be made as a consequence.
45. Outputs that meet the definition of an 'in-scope' output for the REF are expected to meet the open access requirements for REF 2021.
46. The final decision on the case studies to be included will also be taken by the REF Steering Group on the advice of Coordinators of Units of Assessment. In this process, the REF Steering Group will base its decisions on the quality of proposed case studies, as defined by the REF guidance, while aiming for a submission of case studies that are representative of the breadth and diversity of the UoA.

#### *Viewing of data*

47. Data required for the submission will only be viewable by the submitting member of staff. Staff will be asked to ensure that this data is accurate. All data handling is subject to the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

#### *Compliance*

48. The REF Steering Group will be responsible for checking that submissions are developed in line with the declared selection procedures and criteria.

*Declaration of circumstances*

49. Details of any personal circumstances which may have affected their research output can be confidentially shared by eligible staff using the REF 2021 Staff Disclosure Form.

50. All eligible staff will be made aware of the applicable equality-related circumstances and the adjustments to which they may be entitled when invited to submit a voluntary Staff Disclosure Form in the second half of 2019. The choice of whether to make a disclosure rests entirely with the individual member of staff. For those staff who choose to make a disclosure, this will enable the due consideration of circumstances that allow a reduction in outputs.

51. Details of personal circumstances to be cited in the submission will remain confidential to a Panel, comprising the Director of Human Resources and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, which will be set up to review any declarations of equality-related circumstances.

52. Human Resources will make known to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor disclosures only where staff are seeking a reduction in outputs. Decisions on the adjustment of expectations, the need, following a request from a member of the submission to apply for an exemption due to exceptional circumstances that mean a staff member does not have the required minimum of one output, and any reduction of outputs associated with the REF's guidance will be taken by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on advice from Human Resources and will be made within two months of submission and communicated by HR. Evidence of decisions will be maintained by Human Resources. A reduction in the total number of outputs will only be sought in a submitting unit if more than 20% of the submitting staff are seeking reductions.

*Training, Appeals, Equality Impact Assessment*

53. Please see Part 2 above.

**54. Review of the Code of Practice**

This Code of Practice will be kept under review. Comments concerning the Code of Practice can be sent to the Research Office: [research@newman.ac.uk](mailto:research@newman.ac.uk).

*Version 3.5 May 2019 - Revised September 2020 (timetable only)*

## **Part 5: Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Committees and working groups involved in the REF submission process**

#### **1. Research Committee**

##### *Purpose and Scope*

The Research Committee advises Senate on matters of policy and practice related to research, scholarship, and consultancy. The Committee is responsible for advising on the allocation of University resources for research.

##### *Terms of Reference*

- To advise Senate on research strategy and associated forward planning
- To monitor, develop and implement the University Research Strategy
- To consider and advise on organisational arrangements for the management and promotion of research and its impact
- To publicize, promote and monitor the research and scholarly activities of the University, internally and externally
- To publicise and promote the research activities of the University to the relevant external bodies
- To formulate policies and procedures for the fostering of research, scholarship, and consultancy work
- To manage the allocation of funds and bidding processes for funding from the Research Budget
- To advise on the level of resources allocated centrally and on the distribution of such assigned resources for the stimulation of research, including support for early career researchers and staff development
- To exercise delegated responsibility from Senate for the oversight of Research Degrees Subcommittee in relation to academic standards in programmes leading to research degrees
- In conjunction with Library & Learning Services, to advise on policies and procedures for the protection of intellectual property rights and licensing agreements
- To coordinate the formulation of returns to outside bodies related to research
- To receive and consider the minutes and any recommendations of the Research Degrees Subcommittee and the Research Ethics Subcommittee
- To monitor the effectiveness of the Research Ethics Subcommittee.

##### *Reporting line*

Senate

##### *Quoracy*

The Research Committee is considered quorate where there are at least 50% plus one members present. Attendance of members will be monitored on an annual basis.

### *Frequency of Meetings*

No fewer than three meetings and no more than five meetings in any academic year.

### *Membership*

Ex officio:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair)

Director of Graduate School (Vice Chair)

Executive Deans of Faculty (or nominee)

Postgraduate Research Student Coordinator

Chair of the Research Ethics Subcommittee

Director of Learning, Teaching and Scholarship

Nominated/ elected for a three-year term:

Up to three research active members of staff from each Faculty, including at least one early

career research staff member and

Up to two readers / professors representing the constituent areas of research within the University

### *Tenure*

For elected/nominated members: 3 years, with the possibility of nomination for a further 3 years (6 in total)

### *Servicing & Arrangements for Papers*

Research Office Administrator (Graduate School)

## **2. REF Steering Group**

### *Terms of reference*

To receive and consider in full the criteria and working methods for REF 2021 and identify their strategic implications for the University's submission including any equality and ethical issues

To advise the Research Committee on strategic decisions in relation to the REF submission

To oversee audits of staff research outputs

To identify and select impact case studies

To assess and describe the University's research environment

To report its decisions to the Research Committee

To ensure that all decisions made in relation to submissions for REF are consistent with the University's Research Strategy and the institution's Strategic Plan

To maintain effective communication with all members of staff regarding the requirements, strategic decisions and process for REF

To prepare documents for the University's submission to REF.

### *Membership*

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair)  
Unit of Assessment Coordinators

## **3. Equality and Diversity Committee**

### Purpose and Scope

To advise Council, Senate, the University Operations Team (UOT) and the University as a whole on issues of equality and diversity.

In line with Newman University's Catholic ethos, to support the development of a culture which values all individuals and fosters an inclusive learning environment. To positively promote equal opportunities through the dissemination of effective practice.

### Terms of Reference

2.1 To advise the University on the fulfilment of statutory requirements related to equality and diversity

2.2 To ensure that the principles of equality and diversity are embedded in University culture, documentation and practice

2.3 To support the development of a fully inclusive and non discriminatory learning and working environment

2.4 To monitor the implementation of equality and diversity

2.5 To ensure that a regular review is undertaken in relation to all University policies and processes and that any actions arising are followed through

2.6 To monitor annual statistics with reference to equality and diversity issues; to receive and action any formal recommendations resulting from any incidence of discrimination, victimisation or harassment and make recommendations for subsequent action

2.7 To monitor recruitment and employment practice in relation to equality and diversity

2.8 To discuss any issues arising from annual monitoring reports and the Staff Survey make recommendations

2.9 To ensure that appropriate staff development and training opportunities are developed and accessed and to monitor mandatory training

2.10 To liaise with other committees or set up working parties to address specific issues as necessary

2.11 To provide an annual report to UOT, Senate and Council.

2.12 To publish annually results of monitoring carried out in line with the Public

## Sector Equality Duty

2.13 To receive, review and respond to submissions from students and staff pertaining to importance and/or unresolved matters relating to equality and diversity.

## Reporting line

Equality and Diversity Committee reports to Senate, Council and the University Operations Team as necessary.

## Quoracy

The Equality and Diversity Committee is considered quorate where there are at least 50% +1 members present.

## Frequency of meetings

Four per year

## Constitution

The Vice-Chancellor will chair the Committee. In his absence a nominee of the Vice-Chancellor will chair.

## Membership

Membership should reflect the diversity of the University workforce and include a student representative.

Vice Chancellor (Chair)

University Secretary and Registrar

Director of Academic Quality/Deputy Registrar

Director of Human Resources

Director of Student Services

Director of Corporate Marketing

Head of Academic Practice

University Chaplain

Union representatives (two)

Inclusion Coordinator

Student Representative

Academic staff members – Faculty of Education (two)

Academic staff members – Faculty of Arts, Society and Professional Studies (two)

Professional and Support staff members (two)

IT Services Representative

Representative of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee

Estates Representative

## Appendix B

### Timetable Revised

January 2019		Publication of final guidance and panel criteria
January and April 2019		Institutional consideration at research committee meetings of the REF code of practice on the selection of staff
February 2019		Steering Group approval of UOA processes for REF 2021
April 2019		Collation of provisional UOAs. First EIA initiated.
May 2019		Institutional signoff at Senate of the REF code of practice on the selection of staff
7 June 2019		Institutions intending to make submissions to the REF submit their codes of practice on the selection of staff
Spring/summer 2019		Invitation to HEIs to make submissions; invitation to request multiple submissions; and start of survey of submissions intentions
September 2019		Equality and diversity training complete. Initial assessment of declarations of individual staff circumstances complete
October 2019		UOAs submit first draft submission to DVC. Decisions on significant responsibility for research, independence, and selection of outputs communicated to staff. First EIA completed.
30 November 2019		Deadline for any appeals arising from first draft submissions
December 2019		Feedback to UOAs on first draft submissions and report to Steering Group
December 2019		Outcome of appeals (if any)
December 2019		Survey of submissions intentions complete and deadline for requests for multiple submissions as well as submission exceptions for UoAs not previously submitted
January 2020		Final version of submission system made available to HEIs
March 2020		UOAs submit revised drafts. Second EIA completed. Any revised decisions on significant responsibility for research, independence, and selection of outputs communicated to staff.
March 2020		Deadline for submission of individual staff circumstances
March 2020		Deadline for submitting reduction requests to REF team
May 2020	September 2020	Feedback to all UOAs on second draft



31 May 2020	30 September 2020	Final deadline for any appeals arising from second draft submissions
July 2020		Data finalised for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• research impacts</li> <li>• research environment</li> <li>• research income</li> <li>• research doctoral degrees awarded</li> </ul>
31 July 2020		Census date for staff eligible for selection
November 2020	March 2021	Steering Group approves final text of submission. Third EIA completed.
27 November 2020	27 March 2021	Closing date for submissions
31 December 2020		End of publication period for outputs