

Queen's University Belfast

REF 2021 Code of Practice

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1. Introduction

1.1 **Each institution making a submission to REF 2021 is required to develop, document and apply a Code of Practice** on: the fair and transparent identification of staff with significant responsibility for research; determining who is an independent researcher; and the selection of outputs, including approaches to supporting staff with circumstances. The development of this Code has been informed by the guidance provided to institutions by Research England on behalf of regional funding bodies, which in the case of Northern Ireland is the Department for the Economy NI.¹

1.2 The Code of Practice serves a discrete purpose in the REF process and is not intended to act as a comprehensive outline of the exercise. Queen's staff can access detailed information on REF 2021, including links to the funding body guidance and criteria, via the institution's internal REF mini-site at go.qub.ac.uk/REF2021. Further queries on the Code of Practice, or requests to provide the document in alternative format, should be directed to ref@qub.ac.uk or 028 90 97 2549.

1.2 Staff Eligibility

1.2.1 REF 2021 requires that participating institutions return all eligible staff with 'significant responsibility for research'. **REF eligibility is defined as academic staff:**

- with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater;
- whose primary employment function is 'teaching and research' or 'research only';²
- who have a substantive research connection with the submitting unit;
- who are on the payroll of the submitting institution and employed by that institution on the census date of 31 July 2020.

1.2.2 Where the criteria identify staff who meet the eligibility criteria but are not considered by their institution to have 'significant responsibility for research', REF 2021 provides the option for institutions to adopt a process to identify such individuals. **Queen's will not adopt a policy on identifying eligible staff with significant responsibility for research, as all academic staff meeting the eligibility criteria at the University are considered to have 'significant responsibility for research' and therefore will automatically be submitted to REF 2021.**

1.2.3 Individual staff who are unclear as to their eligibility for REF 2021 should contact the REF Champion in their Unit of Assessment (UoA) or the REF Support Team (ref@qub.ac.uk) to discuss further. A full list of REF Champions for each UoA is included in **Appendix 1**.

1.3 Equality and Diversity

1.3.1 **This Code of Practice takes cognisance of the University's Equality and Diversity Policy and Equality Scheme (2018 – 2023)**. Full details on relevant equality legislation are included in **Appendix 2**.

¹ REF 2021 Guidance (2019/03), <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/guidance-on-codes-of-practice-201903/>

² Specific guidance on staff employed on 'research only' contracts is set out in Section 3; staff employed on 'teaching only' contracts, i.e. Lecturer (Education), are not eligible for submission to REF

- 1.3.2 The University's recently updated Equality Scheme (2018 – 2023), is intended to fulfil and implement the University's Section 75 duties to promote equality and good relations. This was subject to consultation with staff, students, Trade Union representatives and community stakeholders in September 2017 and published in 2018. The associated Equality Action Plan includes staff training on the Equality and Diversity Policy, mandatory staff diversity training, and an Equality and Diversity e-learning programme for staff.
- 1.3.3 Northern Ireland is not directly covered by the Equality Act 2010 (by which all other UK universities are bound), however, the scope of equality and anti-discrimination legislation in Northern Ireland is similar to the Equality Act. In addition, it is unlawful to discriminate against people on the grounds of political opinion. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 also places a statutory obligation on the Department for the Economy NI and universities in Northern Ireland in carrying out their public functions to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:
- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
 - between men and women generally;
 - between persons with a disability with a disability and persons without; and
 - between persons with dependants and persons without.
- 1.3.4 **This Code of Practice has been developed following an Equality Screening exercise, which is used to identify those policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.** This is one of the key tools to enable public authorities such as Queen's to fulfil their statutory obligations and mainstream the Section 75 equality and good relations duties into policy development and service delivery. The completed equality screening document, including mitigating actions to address identified equality impacts, is included in full at **Appendix 3. This Code of Practice has been screened out with mitigation** as per the Equality Commission's guidance on screening with no adverse impact with regard to equality of opportunity and/ or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

1.4 Equality Impact Assessments

- 1.4.1 **The application of this document to the University's REF preparations will be subject to a series of equality impact assessments (EIAs) at key junctures in the planning process.** These key junctures are: (i) following the autumn 2019 REF Planning Meetings; (ii) prior to the staff census date of 31 July 2020; (iii) prior to the final submission in March 2021 and; (iv) following the final submission of the University's REF return.
- 1.4.2 EIAs will include analyses of whether the identification of staff with research independence and selection of outputs policy has a differential impact on particular protected groups. **The final EIA will be published on the Queen's REF 2021 webpages following the final submission, and will include the outcomes of any actions taken to prevent discrimination or advance equality.**

1.5 REF 2021 Core Principles

1.5.1 **This Code of Practice has been developed in line with the core principles of REF 2021 as defined by Research England, namely: transparency, consistency, accountability, and inclusivity.** The University's commitment to these principles, embedded throughout this document, can be summarised as follows:

1.5.2 **Transparency:** All policies and procedures outlined in this Code of Practice are fully transparent and information is readily accessible to all staff. There has been a comprehensive programme of communication with staff on the core principles underpinning the University's approach to REF 2021, followed by a formal consultation on a full draft (see 1.7 and Appendix 3). There has been direct engagement with staff representative groups during the consultation period and the final Code of Practice is subject to approval through formal committee structures. Key documents have been made available through the staff intranet, [internal REF webpages](#) and all-staff e-mails.

1.5.3 **Consistency:** The policies and procedures set out in this Code of Practice are applied consistently to all staff. The decision making processes set out in this document for determining staff who are independent researchers and the selection of outputs are applied identically in each Faculty, School and submitting UoA. All members of staff and UoA leads were asked for specific feedback on whether bespoke unit-level policies would be required for the identification of staff with significant responsibility for research through the consultation process.

1.5.4 **Accountability:** This Code of Practice clearly defines the decision-making process that will be adopted for determining staff who are independent researchers and the selection of outputs, as outlined in sections 3 and 4. This includes the roles and responsibilities of those involved in REF preparations and decision making. Detailed terms of reference for key decision-making bodies is included at **Appendix 4**.

1.5.5 **Inclusivity:** The University is committed to the promotion of an inclusive environment and equality of opportunity in the REF. Building on a highly inclusive approach to REF 2014, the University will submit all eligible staff to the REF exercise and ensure that individuals in all disciplines and at all career stages are supported to produce excellent research for submission to REF 2021.

1.6 Update on Actions Undertaken since REF 2014

1.6.1 The University's REF management approach has remained consistent since 2014 and despite the uncertainty surrounding the final rubric in recent years, the planning process has not changed significantly during the period. The revised REF guidance and criteria for 2021 as published by Research England has been welcomed by Queen's, particularly as they relate to the full submission of all eligible staff.

1.6.2 The institutional approach to REF 2021 preparations has been directly informed by reflections on the 2014 process, including discussions with UoAs through annual meetings of REF Planning Groups, and the University's final REF 2014 Equality Impact Assessment, published in February 2014. The wider changes to the REF rubric, coupled with institutional reflections on REF 2014, have led the University Executive Board to take the following steps in preparation for REF 2021:

- Communication of a clear commitment that assessments and decisions made in preparing the REF submission will have no direct bearing on processes for the performance management of individuals.
- Emphasising, and providing guidance, to submitting UoAs about the need to mentor staff in a positive and supportive manner to enable them to optimise their contribution to REF.
- Implementation of a fine-grained approach to internal and external peer review of outputs, including fractional grading, to enable ranking of outputs to adapt to the flexibility now afforded in the rubric.
- Encouragement of those managing output review to ensure that review processes are fully transparent and that individual staff are provided with clear feedback on their reviewed outputs.

1.6.3 Since 2014 the University has fully implemented a new research information system - Pure. While this system was in place for the 2014 submission, its role as the University's information tool for research has since been fully embedded. This has been an invaluable development in providing those involved in the REF planning process with clear oversight of preparations and consistent 'live' updates all systems. Additionally, academic staff now have greater input to and visibility of the process for proposing their outputs for review.

1.7 Communicating the Code of Practice to Staff

1.7.1 In developing this Code of Practice, the interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise (PVCR) led a programme of communication and consultation with staff. Prior to development of a full draft, **principles underpinning the Code were discussed at the Research Strategy Group on 24 January 2019 and formally approved by the University Executive Board on 31 January 2019. An initial discussion with the President of the local Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) branch was also held on 8 February**, which included advance sight of subsequent communications to all staff. **Three briefing events open to all staff members were held on 12, 19 and 20 February (attended by c. 250 staff in total)** to outline the key changes to the REF rubric, provide context on the Code of Practice process and planned content, and the rationale for the principles approved by UEB. The events were advertised via multiple all-staff e-mails and UoA-level dissemination, and information was made available online for those who could not attend.

1.7.2 **Subsequent to the briefing events, an online survey of all staff took place between 13 March and 29 April 2019 seeking feedback on a draft version of the Code of Practice.** This was made available via all-staff e-mails, UoA-level dissemination, and social media. This provided all staff (academic, research and professional support) with an opportunity to provide confidential and detailed input to a further draft for approval by UEB and submission to Research England. Updates, clarifications and amendments were made to the document in relation to research independence, linkages between REF and performance management processes, the selection of outputs, and the disclosure of staff circumstances.

1.7.3 **The final Code as reviewed by the Research England REF Equality and Diversity Panel (EDAP) and approved by the Department for the Economy NI will be made available via the staff intranet (Queen's Online), internal University webpages,**

and direct e-mail communication to all members of staff. Details will be made available to any individuals absent from the University, where possible, through formal communication.

2. Roles, Responsibilities and Decision Making Processes

2.1 There is a clear and consistent delineation of roles and decision making processes for REF preparations across Queen's. The decision-making process and relevant committee structure is applied identically in the policies for determining research independence and the selection of outputs.

2.2 Roles and Responsibilities

2.2.1 **The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise (PVCR) holds overall responsibility for leading the University's REF preparations and acts on behalf of University Executive Board (UEB), chaired by the Vice-Chancellor.** The PVCR chairs all UoA REF Planning Group meetings and oversees the development and application of the Code of Practice, including decisions on the approach to REF submission in each unit, staff eligibility and the selection of outputs. The PVCR reports at regular intervals to UEB on progress in REF preparations and brings forward recommendations for institutional policy, which is subsequently communicated to UoAs through Heads of School and REF Champions (as defined at 2.2.3).

2.2.2 **The Research Policy Office, within the Research and Enterprise Directorate, is responsible for day-to-day operational management of REF preparations,** working under the direction of the PVCR and Director of Research and Enterprise. The Head of the Research Policy Office acts as the institutional REF Manager and leads a REF Support Team comprised of staff within the Research Policy Office. The REF Support Team is responsible for overall programme management of the REF submission, works directly with REF Champions to support preparations at UoA-level, and acts as a central point of contact for individual staff on all queries relating to the Code of Practice and wider REF preparations.

2.2.3 **Heads of School hold overall responsibility for REF preparations at Unit of Assessment (UoA) level for each submitting unit within their purview.** The UoA structure does not map directly onto Queen's organisational structures, with some Schools making returns to multiple UoAs. Heads of School delegate day-to-day management of REF preparations to a designated lead academic known as the 'REF Champion' for each individual UoA. A full list of Heads of School and REF Champions is included at **Appendix 1**.

2.2.4 Each of the University's Faculties (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Engineering and Physical Sciences; and Medical, Health and Life Sciences) has appointed a Faculty Dean of Research with overall responsibility for research matters within the Faculty. The Faculty Dean of Research chairs a Faculty Research Committee and reports to Faculty Executive Board which is chaired by the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor. **Faculty Deans of Research advise and support the PVCR in their REF leadership responsibilities and, between REF Planning Group meetings, provide leadership within Faculties to ensure agreed actions are implemented.**

2.3 Decision Making Process and Committee Structure

- 2.3.1 **The University Executive Board (UEB), chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, is the ultimate decision-making body for the University's REF 2021 submission.** UEB's membership and terms of reference are detailed at **Appendix 4**.
- 2.3.2 **For each UoA there is a formal REF Planning Group that meets annually to consider progress in REF preparations and agree actions to be implemented over the coming year.** Each meeting is chaired by the PVCr and attended by the Faculty Dean of Research, Head of School, REF Champion, Director of Research and Enterprise, institutional REF Manager, and members of the REF Support Team. Other members of academic and professional support staff, such as Directors of Research, School Managers, and UoA impact leads, attend as appropriate.
- 2.3.3 **Heads of School are responsible for reviewing draft returns for UoAs within their School and recommending these for approval.** REF Planning Groups, which include Faculty representation through Deans of Research, may recommend amendments to draft submissions prior to endorsing them to UEB for final approval.
- 2.3.4 **Within Schools there are UoA Reading Groups composed of internal disciplinary leads/ experts tasked with reviewing proposed REF outputs and agreeing predicted grades to inform the final selection of outputs.** Reading groups vary in their composition across the University on the basis of disciplinary norms and are not normally involved in decisions on the selection of outputs for submission.
- 2.3.5 **A REF Equality and Diversity Group will be established during 2019 and will be chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Internationalisation and Engagement,** who leads institutionally on staff engagement and representation matters and will provide oversight and scrutiny of equality-related matters independent of wider REF preparations. The Group will include senior academic representatives, the Director of Research and Enterprise, the Head of the Diversity and Inclusion Unit, the institutional REF Manager, and Faculty Deans of Research. **The Group is responsible for advising on and monitoring equality and diversity related issues throughout the University's preparations for the REF.** This includes ownership of this Code and undertaking of equality impact assessments at regular milestones during REF preparations. The Group will oversee the process for submission of staff circumstances reduction requests to Research England.
- 2.3.6 **The Research Strategy Group is chaired by the PVCr and includes each Faculty Dean of Research and senior academic staff from each Faculty appointed by the PVCr.** The Group does not have a formal decision making role in the REF process, but advises UEB on the Queen's overall development and implementation of research and innovation strategy, policies and procedures.
- 2.3.7 **All members of staff with specific decision-making or management responsibilities will be required to undertake equality and diversity training,** which will include both standard institutional online training on equality and diversity matters, and bespoke REF training on the final Code of Practice, delivered in collaboration with the Diversity and Inclusion Unit. Training will be provided to UoA Champions, Heads of School, Faculty Deans, the Director of Research and Enterprise, the REF Manager and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise).

3. Determining Research Independence

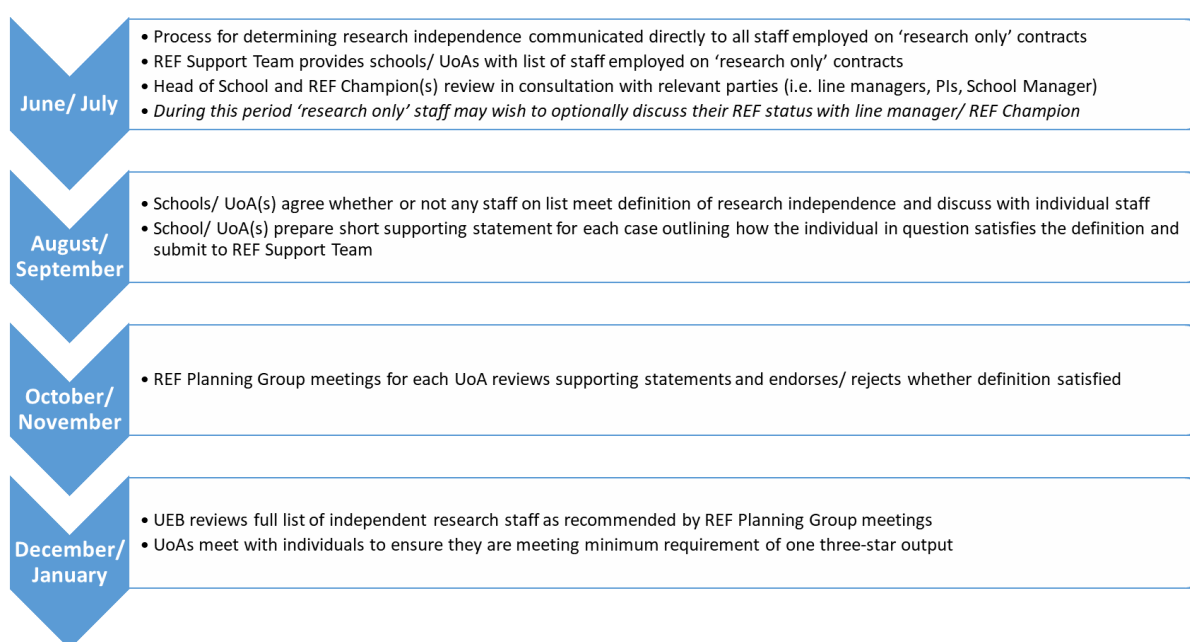
3.1 Policies and procedures

- 3.1.1 For the purposes of the REF, an independent researcher is defined as someone who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme. **Research assistants (or 'Research Fellows' in most cases at Queen's) are not eligible to be returned to the REF unless, exceptionally, they meet the definition of an independent researcher** on the census date and satisfy the definition of eligible staff. Staff employed on fixed-term contracts should not be treated less favourably than colleagues on open contracts and therefore anyone determined to have satisfied the definition of research independence is therefore considered to be eligible and must be returned to REF.
- 3.1.2 Research assistants (or 'Research Fellows' in Queen's employment taxonomy) are defined by Research England as academic staff whose primary employment function is 'research only', and who are employed to carry out another individual's research programme rather than as independent researchers in their own right. They are usually funded from research grants or contracts from UKRI Research Councils, charities, the European Union (EU) or other overseas sources, industry, or other commercial enterprises, but they may also be funded from the institution's own funds.
- 3.1.3 **It is the University's position, aligned to the published REF guidance, that in the majority of cases, staff employed on 'research only' contracts at Queen's do not meet the REF definition of research independence** and are therefore not eligible for submission unless, exceptionally, they meet one or more of the following indicators of research independence:
- leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project
 - holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement³
 - leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package
- 3.1.4 For UoAs in Main Panels C and D (i.e. UoAs 13 – 34) the following criteria may also be taken into consideration:
- being named as Co-I on an externally funded grant
 - having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research
- 3.1.5 Interpretation of these indicators may vary between units on the basis of disciplinary norms and expectations, and this will be taken into consideration through the decision-making process in determining whether or not to endorse the decision that a member of staff employed on a 'research only' contract has satisfied the definition(s).
- 3.1.6 Individuals on 'research only' contracts must not be listed as submitted staff purely on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs.

³ An illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of independent fellowships can be found via the official REF 2021 website at the following link - <https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1030/list-of-independent-research-fellowships.pdf>.

3.2 Decision Making Process and Communication with Staff

- 3.2.1 All staff, including those on 'research only' contracts, are involved in the communication and consultation process outlined above at 1.7. **Formal consultation with staff included a specific question on the definition of research independence.** The final Code of Practice will be formally communicated to all staff on 'research only' contracts and individuals will be made aware of the specific policy stating that they are not eligible for REF submission unless in exceptional cases they meet the definition of research independence. Decisions on determining staff with research independence will be subject to multiple equality impact assessments as set out in section 1.4.
- 3.2.2 **Individual UoAs are responsible for proactively identifying staff on 'research only' contracts who meet the definition of research independence.** Heads of School will be provided with a central list of all staff within their UoA on 'research only' contracts provided by the REF Support Team in collaboration with relevant teams in the People and Culture Directorate. **Heads of School will be expected to communicate formally with any staff who meet the definition of research independence and are being considered for submission.**
- 3.2.3 The process of determining whether staff employed on 'research only' contracts, by exception, meet the definition of research independence will take place in advance of each REF Planning Group's meeting during October and November 2019. At the meeting, each UoA will be expected to report whether or not there are any staff employed on 'research only' contracts within their unit who have been determined to meet the definition and whom they wish to consider for submission, by exception, to REF 2021. **The submission of any of these staff will be subject to the availability of auditable evidence that they meet the definition of research independence, and final approval by UEB.**



3.2.4 Distribution of this Code and consultation on draft versions will include staff employed on 'research only' contracts. The final definition of research independence and clarification on their REF eligibility will also be communicated via e-mail to all staff employed on 'research only' contracts following publication of this Code.

4. Selection of Outputs

4.1 REF assesses the quality of a portfolio of outputs returned by each submitting UoA, comprised of at least one output (and no more than five) from eligible staff on the census date of 31 July 2020 and selected outputs from former members of staff. Queen's aspires to optimise its quality outcomes in REF 2021 and, consequently, its annual quality-related block grant funding (increasingly critical for institutions in NI in the current funding climate) and its position in reputational rankings. **Therefore, the selection of outputs for submission to REF will be primarily informed by their anticipated REF quality grading as determined by a combination of internal and external peer review.**

4.2 The selection of outputs will take place at unit-level, rather than per individual staff member, and is only one of a number of methods for evaluating research quality. **Assessments and decisions made in preparing the REF submission will have no bearing on processes for the management of performance and career progression of individuals.** In particular, the number of outputs attributed to each individual is a relative judgement made for REF purposes only and not an absolute judgement of the value of the research. As such, the University will not consider information relating to the number of outputs tagged to an individual in their UoA's REF submission and/ or the internally projected REF gradings of these outputs as relevant to any process concerning the management of performance or career progression.

4.3 As far as possible REF planning has been incorporated into the annual cycle of business in order to ensure that Schools can factor resource requirements into annual business plans as appropriate for their discrete circumstances. This approach was taken to enable units to spread the burden associated with REF preparations over time and ease pressures in the final year before submission.

4.4 Policies and Procedures

4.4.1 The process for reviewing outputs ahead of REF 2021 has been underway since 2015 and has directly involved all eligible members of staff. **Individual UoAs have undertaken a combination of internal and external review processes and reported outcomes annually at REF Planning Group meetings.** The REF Support Team has prepared subsequent summary reports for consideration by UEB at key junctures in the planning process, which have become more frequent as the submission date approaches, i.e. quarterly reports throughout 2019-2020 and early 2021.

4.4.2 The selection process is administered through the University's current research information system, Pure, which holds live information on all staff and their published outputs. Pure includes a module to manage the University's REF 2021 submission. All REF-eligible members of staff have individual access to their outputs profile on Pure and those with REF management responsibilities (e.g. Heads of School, REF Champions) have access to global data for the unit as a whole. Pure training is offered to all new members of staff and bespoke guidance for those managing REF submissions is made available through internal REF 2021 webpages.

- 4.4.3 **Individual staff are periodically invited by their UoA to ‘propose’ research outputs via Pure** to be considered for submission to REF. In proposing outputs, staff are expected to make an objective critical judgement as to which of their eligible outputs are most likely to achieve the highest quality grading in REF.
- 4.4.4 **In each unit, the REF Champion convenes a Reading Group comprised of internal disciplinary experts** with an excellent understanding, and in some cases previous experience, of the assessment of outputs in REF. It is recommended that each output is reviewed by at least two internal colleagues that are familiar with the research area but not listed as co-authors on the output. REF Champions collate feedback from Reading Groups and produce a composite grade that is recorded on Pure. REF Champions are subsequently expected to compile a sample of outputs across sub-disciplines and predicted quality for **further review by at least one individual external to the University with** excellent understanding, and often previous direct experience, of the assessment of outputs in REF. Feedback from external reviewers allows REF Champions to calibrate assessment from UoA Reading Groups and determine whether further review is required.
- 4.4.5 **Predicted quality grades and anonymised qualitative feedback from reviewers should subsequently be communicated to individual members of staff** in confidential, one-to-one meetings with either their line manager, REF Champion or Director of Research, based on each unit’s discrete managerial structures. Individual members of staff should use this feedback to inform selection of future outputs for submission to Reading Groups.
- 4.4.6 Since 2018, submitting UoA Reading Groups and external reviewers have been asked to adopt a ‘fractional’ approach to assigning predicted grades in line with the scale below. This allows reviewers to indicate their level of confidence that an output will achieve a predicted grade within each category. This information helps UoAs adopt a fine-grained approach to the review process, identification of outputs for external review, and provision of feedback to staff members.

4* +	3*+	2* +	1* +
4*	3*	2*	1*
4* -	3* -	2* -	1* -

- 4.4.7 UoAs may include the outputs of staff that have left the University, but were formerly employed as REF eligible during the census period. Outputs attributable to these staff are eligible for inclusion if the output was first made publicly available while the staff member was employed by the institution and was REF eligible. The inclusion of outputs from former members of staff will not contribute to the unit’s FTE figure or the total outputs required for submission.
- 4.4.8 Where outputs from former members of staff who left the University as the result of redundancy are in-scope for potential submission, the following policy will apply:
- The University **will not** consider or submit outputs from members of staff who have been made **compulsorily redundant**.
 - Where a member of staff has been made redundant through a voluntary process, or through non-renewal of a fixed-term contract, the University will **seek that individual’s consent for their output to be included** through a formal communication.

4.5 Selection of Outputs for Submission

- 4.5.1 **In advance of REF Planning Group meetings held during 2019 and 2020, submitting UoAs will produce a draft of their REF submission**, which will include a full list of outputs listed by predicted quality within the following parameters:
- Every eligible member of staff has at least one output attributed to them.
 - No eligible member of staff has more than five outputs attributed to them.
 - Total required outputs for the unit (calculated as 2.5 * FTE on census date) is met.
 - Each output has been assigned a fractional grade as outlined above at 4.4.6.
 - Where this includes outputs from former staff, that this does not include work from those made compulsorily redundant and, in cases of voluntary redundancy or non-renewal of fixed-term contracts, that consent is sought from the individual author.
- 4.5.2 Based on the trajectory of preparations to date, it is expected that units will have a surplus of outputs by the final submission date, and that decisions on the selection of particular outputs from within one of the fractional grading categories identified above will be required. **Where the quality of individual outputs within that category cannot be differentiated with a high degree of confidence, outputs will be selected in order to reflect the diversity and sustainability of research in the unit**, by ensuring equitable representation of individuals (i.e. minimising the number of staff with only one output attributed to them) and/ or sub-disciplines. This does not refer to equality and diversity characteristics, which will be monitored through multiple equality impact assessments.
- 4.5.3 The draft portfolios of outputs in each UoA will be kept under review throughout 2019 and 2020, with regular progress updates provided to UEB. As new outputs become available, UoAs will consider whether they should take the place of another output within the portfolio to optimise the overall quality of the unit return, within the parameters outlined at 4.5.1 above. **Prior to submission, each UoA's list of outputs will be subject to a final Planning Group review and subsequent approval by UEB as outlined in section 2.**
- 4.5.4 While UoAs, REF Planning Groups and UEB play an important role in collating, recommending and approving the selection of outputs, minimal levels of deliberation are expected given the requirement to select on the basis of predicted quality rankings. Judgements will only be requirement in the circumstances outlined at 4.5.2.

4.6 Staff Circumstances

- 4.6.1 In order to promote equality and diversity in research careers, all institutions submitting to REF 2021 are required to put in place measures to recognise the effect that individuals' circumstances may have had on research productivity.
- 4.6.2 The guidance for REF 2021 affords submitting institutions enhanced flexibility in assembling their portfolio of submitted outputs, i.e. a minimum of one and no more than five outputs per individual within a total number of outputs required per unit. **This flexibility is the primary means by which Queen's will recognise the impact of individual circumstances on research productivity.** In practice this means that UoAs can adapt their submissions to the varied research portfolios of individual staff

in determining the distribution of outputs across the unit. For example, an individual that in REF 2014 had disclosed circumstances eligible for a reduction from four to three outputs required would in REF 2021 be required to contribute a minimum of only one output, whether or not they had disclosed their circumstances.

- 4.6.3 The University recognises that there are many reasons why REF-eligible members of staff might contribute varying numbers of outputs to their unit's submission in a given assessment period and, therefore, **there will be no detriment to individual staff based on the total number of outputs they contribute to the submission.**

4.7 Requests for Reductions to Total Unit Outputs Required

- 4.7.1 Where the available output pool for a submitting unit has been disproportionately affected by a significant volume, or the cumulative effect, of individual staff circumstances, **units may optionally request a reduction, without penalty, in the total number of outputs required for submission.**

- 4.7.2 In utilising this option, units are encouraged to consider the cumulative effect of staff circumstances on the unit's overall output pool and whether a request should be made for a reduction to the total number of outputs required for the submission. In view of the flexibility offered by decoupling of staff and outputs, and the reduction in output requirements since the previous exercise – from four outputs per person in REF 2014 to an average of 2.5 per FTE in REF 2021 – **the funding bodies have stressed that they would not normally expect institutions to request reductions to the number of outputs required by a submitting unit, but rather to manage variation in individuals' output profiles through the flexibility now afforded by the REF rules.**

- 4.7.3 Where a reduction at unit level is requested and agreed, this will be calculated on a tariff-based system which is outlined in detail in **Appendix 5**. The eligible circumstances are, in summary:

- a. Qualifying as an early-career researcher⁴
- b. Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector.
- c. Qualifying periods of family-related leave.
- d. Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1–6⁵
- e. Circumstances with an equivalent effect to absence, that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:
 - (i) Disability or long-term condition
 - (ii) Ill health, injury, or mental health conditions.
 - (iii) 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 set out in **Appendix 5**.
 - (iv) Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for elderly or disabled family).

⁴ In REF 2021, ECRs are defined as members of staff who meet the eligibility criteria on the census date, and who started their careers as independent researchers on or after 1 August 2016.

⁵ In UOAs 1–6, reductions of one output may be made for submitted staff who are junior clinical academics. These are defined as clinically qualified academics who are still completing their clinical training in medicine or dentistry and have not gained a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) or its equivalent prior to 31 July 2020. This does not include staff classified as Academic Clinical Lecturer or Academic Clinical Fellow in the Queen's job taxonomy, which are training posts arising from the Walport Training Scheme and are explicitly engaged in supervised postdoctoral research and will not normally have achieved a PhD.

- (v) Gender reassignment.
- (vi) Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed in **Appendix 2**, or relating to activities protected by employment legislation, including part-time or fixed-term working.

4.7.4 The eligible circumstances do not normally include part-time working which is taken into account within the calculation for the overall number of outputs required for the unit (i.e. by multiplying the unit's FTE by 2.5). Reduction requests on the basis of part-time working hours should only be made exceptionally; for example, where the FTE of a staff member late in the assessment period does not reflect their average FTE over the period as a whole. As set out in **Appendix 2**, the University is required by regulations to ensure that fixed-term and part-time employees are not treated less favourably than colleagues on open contracts or full-time workers. Further clarification on the position of part-time workers is clarified below at 4.8.2 and the unique position of fixed-term workers is included explicitly as an eligible circumstances at 4.7.3.

4.7.5 **Individual staff will be asked to voluntarily disclose their circumstances through the disclosure process outlined below.** Following the deadline for disclosures, the REF Support Team will calculate the total reduction in outputs for which each submitting unit is eligible. Based on this information, Heads of School and REF Champions will decide whether an application for a unit reduction should be made, in which case a written rationale for consideration by the REF Equality and Diversity Group should be prepared in consultation with the REF Support Team to ensure alignment with guidance from the funding bodies. **Submission of unit circumstances requests to REF 2021 is not guaranteed and final decisions on submission will be taken by UEB following advice from the Equality and Diversity Group.**

4.7.6 Any resulting reduction to the total outputs required will be applied to the unit's output pool overall. **Should eligible staff with disclosed circumstances have more than one output available and deemed suitable for submission, the University will not automatically seek to reduce that staff member's overall contribution to the unit's submission in line with the eligible reduction.** Reductions are intended to reflect the cumulative effect of circumstances on the wider unit as a whole and the flexibility in outputs returned per individual will be the primary means of adapting to individual circumstances in the final submission.

4.8 Individual Requests to Remove the Minimum Requirement of One Output

4.8.1 Where an individual's circumstances have had an exceptional effect on their ability to work productively throughout the assessment period (1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020), so that the individual has not been able to produce an eligible output, **a request may be made to remove the requirement to contribute a minimum of one output.** 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.

4.8.2 **The circumstances in which a request to remove the minimum requirement can be made are:**

- a. an overall period of 46 months or more absence from research during the assessment period, due to one of more of the circumstances set out in **Appendix 5** (such as an ECR who has only been employed as an eligible staff member for part of the assessment period)⁶
- b. circumstances equivalent to 46 months or more absence from research, where circumstances set out in section 4.7.3 apply (such as mental health issues, caring responsibility, long-term health conditions)
- c. two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave, as defined in **Appendix 5**.

4.8.3 Where these criteria do not apply, but the individual's circumstances are deemed to have resulted in a similar impact (including where there is a combination of circumstances that would not individually meet the thresholds set out), a request may still be made. **Where an individual has a combination of circumstances, all the applicable circumstances should be cited and information provided about the effect of the combined circumstances on the researcher's ability to produce an eligible output in the period.**

4.8.4 Individual requests to remove the minimum requirement of one output will be made through the disclosure process outlined below.

4.9 Disclosure Process

4.9.1 **The process for disclosing individual circumstances is entirely voluntary and confidential. Responsibility for disclosing circumstances lies solely with individuals and Schools/ UoAs should not place any pressure on individuals to do so.** The disclosure process will be administered by the REF Support Team based centrally in the Research Policy Office, who will collate all disclosure forms confidentially. The detail of individual disclosures will not be visible at Faculty, School or UoA level. Responsibility for reviewing and approving requests for reductions will be managed through the REF Equality and Diversity Group (see section 2 for information). **All individuals with access to disclosure forms will receive appropriate equality and diversity and data protection training, and specific training on the content of this Code of Practice.**

4.9.2 **A disclosure form will be made available to all eligible members of staff (see Appendix 6) in order to voluntarily outline their individual circumstances.** This form is the only means by which the University will be collecting information on individual circumstances and it will not be consulting administrative records. There will be a formal communication to all staff following agreement of the Code of Practice setting out in detail the process and timetable for disclosing circumstances. It is expected that all disclosures should have been received by early 2020 in order to allow sufficient time for the University to prepare the submission of requests to REF 2021.

⁶ This may include absence from work due to working part-time, where this has had an exceptional effect on ability to work productively throughout the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020, so that the individual has not been able to produce an eligible output. For part-time working, the equivalent 'total months absent' should be calculated by multiplying the number of months worked part-time by the full-time equivalent (FTE) not worked during those months. For example, an individual worked part-time for 30 months at 0.6 FTE. The number of equivalent months absent = 30 x 0.4 = 12

- 4.9.3 The REF Support Team will collate information on disclosed circumstances for all UoAs and provide anonymised summary data to Heads of School, REF Champions and the REF Equality and Diversity Group. The REF Equality and Diversity Group will be responsible for taking final decisions on whether a request for a unit reduction is required. Where an individual has indicated in the disclosure form that they do not have a REF-eligible output published in the period, the REF Support Team will collate this information and report directly to the REF Equality and Diversity Group. **UoAs will only be informed when a successful request for a reduction to zero is submitted to the funding bodies and will not be provide with the details of any individual's circumstances.**
- 4.9.4 Completed disclosure forms will be handled by the REF Support Team under the guidance of the REF Manager in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. Completed disclosure forms will be considered by the REF Equality and Diversity Group periodically throughout REF preparations and individuals requesting a removal of the requirement to submit a minimum of one output will be informed of outcomes as soon as possible.
- 4.9.5 All individual staff members are encouraged to complete the disclosure form if any of the circumstances at 4.7.3 or 4.8.2 apply. This will allow the University to obtain a clear picture of equality and diversity related issues across the submission and to ensure that a request for reduction is submitted for any accumulation of circumstances affecting wider productivity in a unit. **As set out above, the detail of circumstances will not be provided to Schools or UoAs at any stage.** Decisions on the selection of outputs and application of the staff circumstances process will be subject to multiple equality impact assessments as set out in section 1.4.

5. Appeals

5.1 **There will be a process by which staff members may appeal decisions taken through any of the policies and procedures outlined in this Code of Practice.**

Appeals may be made on the following grounds:

- (i) Where it is felt that insufficient consideration was given to individual staff circumstances as defined in section 4;
- (ii) Where it can be demonstrated that a procedure or process detailed in this Code of Practice has not been followed;
- (iii) Where a recommendation has been made by a submitting unit or UEB without the availability of full information or evidence.

5.2 **In determining whether to submit an appeal, staff are encouraged to consider the following:**

5.2.1 As all eligible members of staff will automatically be submitted to REF 2021, it is not envisaged that there will be any appeals relating to the eligibility of staff employed on 'research and teaching' contracts, including whether they are considered to have 'significant responsibility for research'.

5.2.2 The majority of individuals employed on 'research only' contracts at Queen's do not meet the REF definition of research independence, as set out in section 3, and are not eligible for REF submission. Where an individual has been determined, by exception, to meet the definition, they may be considered by their unit for submission. Individuals may consider an appeal if they believe that this process has been incorrectly followed.

5.2.3 The primary consideration in selecting outputs for submission will be their anticipated quality grading as determined by UoA review processes. The selection of outputs takes place at unit-level, rather than per individual staff member. The number of outputs attributed to each individual is a relative judgement made for REF purposes only and not an absolute judgement of the value of their research.

5.3 The University's REF Appeal procedure will be available for staff to use from the point of publication of this Code of Practice. Further guidance will be provided at this stage including specific deadlines for the submission of appeals, which will take place prior to final submission. **Appeals should be submitted in writing to the REF Manager, stating the nature and grounds of the appeal.**

5.4 **An independent REF Appeals Panel will be chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students** and will comprise two senior academic staff at professorial level, and the Director of People and Culture. The PVC Education has been chosen to chair the appeals process as they have no other substantive role in REF preparations. The panel will be constituted as far as possible to reflect the diversity of the NI community as informed by statutory requirements. The Panel will be supported by the REF Support Team. The PVC Education will withdraw from UEB during any discussions on decisions relating to staff eligibility or selection of outputs to ensure objectivity as Chair of the Appeals Panel. Terms of Reference can be found at **Appendix 4.**

- 5.5 The REF Appeals Panel will base its judgement on information provided by the appellant, the records of the REF process pertaining to the appellant and main and sub panel criteria and working methods.
- 5.6 A person appealing the decision of UEB or their UoA is entitled to appear in person before the REF Appeals Panel, accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative. The appellant may elaborate upon any key points made in their written submission. Having considered the submission made, including written and/ or verbal representation, the decision of the REF Appeals Panel shall be final and will be communicated to the appellant as soon as possible.

Appendix 1 – REF Champions and Heads of School

Main Panel	UoA	REF Champion	Head of School
A	2: Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care	Professor Augusto Azuara-Blanco	Professor Pascal McKeown
	3: Allied Health Professions	Medicine: Professor Chris Scott / Professor Jose Bengochea	Professor Pascal McKeown
		Pharmacy: Professor Michael Tunney	Professor Colin McCoy
		Nursing: Professor Maria Lohan	Professor Donna Fitzsimons
	4: Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience	Professor Rhiannon Turner	Professor Teresa McCormack
6: Agriculture, Veterinary and Food Science	Professor Nigel Scollan	Professor Geoff McMullan	
B	8: Chemistry	Dr Peter Nockemann	Professor Steven Bell
	9: Physics	Professor Marty Gregg	Professor Mauro Paternostro
	10: Mathematical Sciences	Dr David Barnes	Professor Mauro Paternostro
	12: Engineering	UoA 12 REF Director: Professor Roger Woods	Professor Su Taylor (Faculty Dean)
		• EEECS: Professor Vincent Fusco	Dr Karen Rafferty
• Civil Engineering: Dr Siobhan Cox		Professor Greg Keeffe	
• Chemical Engineering: Dr Peter Nockemann		Professor Steven Bell	
• Mechanical and Aeronautical: Professor Fraser Buchanan	Professor Brian Falzon		
C	13: Architecture, Built Environment and Planning	Professor Geraint Ellis	Professor Greg Keeffe
	14: Geography and Environmental Studies	Professor Helen Roe	Professor Greg Keeffe
	15: Archaeology	Dr Gill Plunkett	Professor Greg Keeffe
	17: Business and Management Studies	Professor Duncan McVicar	Professor John Turner
	18: Law	Professor John Morison	Professor Robin Hickey
	19: Politics and International Studies	Dr Keith Breen	Professor Alister Miskimmon
	20: Social Work and Social Policy	Professor Danielle Turney	Professor Carl Bagley
	22: Anthropology and Development Studies	Professor Fiona Magowan	Professor Alister Miskimmon
23: Education	Professor Tony Gallagher	Professor Carl Bagley	
D	26: Modern Languages and Linguistics	Professor Greg Toner	Dr Kurt Taroff
	27: English Language and Literature	Professor Andrew Pepper	Dr Kurt Taroff
	28: History	Professor Fearghal McGarry	Professor Alister Miskimmon
	30: Philosophy	Dr Joe Morrison	Professor Alister Miskimmon
	33: Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film	Professor Paul Stapleton	Dr Kurt Taroff

Appendix 2 - Summary of Equality Legislation

<p>Age</p>	<p>All employees within the higher education sector are protected from unlawful age discrimination in employment under 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 submitting them because of their age group.</p> <p>It is important to note that early career researchers are likely to come from a range of age groups. The definition of early career researcher used in the REF 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 was abolished from 1 October 2011 in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) (Northern Ireland) and the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 prevent unlawful discrimination relating to disability. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to have a disability or if they are associated with a person who is disabled, for example, if they are responsible for caring for a disabled family member.</p> <p>A person is considered to be disabled 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.</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>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.

APPENDIX 2

	<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 disabled people 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.</p>
<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<p>The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 protects from discrimination, harassment and victimisation of trans people who have proposed, started or completed a process to change their sex. Staff in HE do not have to be under medical supervision to be afforded protection because they are trans and staff are protected if they are perceived to be undergoing or have undergone related procedures. They are also protected if they are associated with someone who has proposed, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment.</p> <p>Trans people who undergo gender reassignment will need to take time off for appointments and in some cases, for medical assistance. The transition process is lengthy, often taking several years and it is likely to be a difficult period for the trans person as they seek recognition of their new gender from their family, friends, employer and society as a whole.</p> <p>The Gender Recognition Act 2004 gave enhanced privacy rights to trans people who undergo gender reassignment. A person acting in an official capacity who acquires information about a person's status as a transsexual may commit a criminal offence if they pass the information to a third party without consent.</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.</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>
<p>Marriage and civil partnership</p>	<p>Under 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>
<p>Political opinion</p>	<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>

<p>Pregnancy and maternity</p>	<p>Under the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 women are protected from unlawful discrimination 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.</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>
<p>Race</p>	<p>The Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 protects HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation connected to race. The definition of race includes colour, ethnic or national origins or nationality. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular race.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not discriminate against staff based on their race or assumed race (for example, based on their name).</p>
<p>Religion and belief including non-belief</p>	<p>The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 protects HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation to do with religion or belief. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular religion or belief.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not discriminate against staff based on their actual or perceived religion or belief, including non-belief. 'Belief' includes any structured philosophical belief with clear values that has an effect on how its adherents conduct their lives.</p>
<p>Sex (including breastfeeding and additional paternity and adoption leave)</p>	<p>The Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 protects HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation to do with sex. Employees are also protected because of their perceived sex or because of their association with someone of a particular sex.</p> <p>From 3 April 2011, partners of new mothers and secondary adopters will be entitled to up to 26 weeks of additional paternity and adoption leave. People 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.</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.</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>

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<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination to do with sexual orientation. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with someone who is of a particular sexual orientation.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not discriminate against staff based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation.</p>
<p>Fixed Term Contracts</p>	<p>The University is mindful that under fixed-term employee and part-time workers regulations, fixed-term employees and part-time workers have the right not to be treated by an employer any less favourably than the employer treats comparable employees on open contracts or full-time workers. The relevant regulations are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 • Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002

Appendix 3 – Section 75 Equality Screening Form

Section 75 Statutory Equality Duties

<http://www.equalityni.org/S75duties>

The promotion of equality of opportunity entails more than the elimination of discrimination. It may also require proactive measures to be taken to maintain and secure equality of opportunity.

Section 75 (1) requires the University in carrying out its functions, powers and duties to have *due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity* between –

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

Without prejudice to the obligations set out above, the University is also required to:

- a) have *regard to the desirability of promoting good relations* between persons of different
 - religious belief
 - political opinion; or
 - racial group
- b) meet legislative obligations under the Disability Discrimination Order.

What is a policy?

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland state in their guidance⁷ that the term 'policy' is used to denote any strategy, policy (proposed/amended/existing) or practice and/or decision, whether written or unwritten.

The University's Equality Scheme reflects the Equality Commission's definition of a policy and this should be applied in determining what needs to be screened.

If you are in doubt, please contact the Diversity and Inclusion Unit for advice. Equality screening guidance is also available at Queen's Online or by contacting the Diversity and Inclusion Unit.

⁷ 'Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, A Guide for Public Authorities' (April 2010), page 30. A policy may include planning decisions, service changes, corporate strategies, policy development, practices, guidelines, procedures and protocols; board papers

APPENDIX 3

Part 1. Policy scoping

The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy under consideration. The purpose of policy scoping is to help prepare the background and context and set out the aims and objectives for the policy being screened. At this stage, scoping the policy will help identify potential constraints as well as opportunities and will help the policy maker work through the screening process on a step by step basis.

It should be remembered that the Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies (relating to people who work for the University), as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the University).

A. Information about the policy

Name of the policy to be screened and description
REF 2021 Code of Practice
Is this an existing, revised or a new policy? (please append policy to the screening form)
New
What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes)
The aim of the policy is to ensure the fair and transparent identification of eligible staff; determining who is an independent researcher; and the selection of outputs in the University's submission to REF 2021. The policy should ensure individual staff have a clear understanding of, and confidence in, the University's approach to preparing its submission to REF 2021.
Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the policy? If so, explain how.
The emphasis on equality and diversity in previous REF exercises has broadly been considered to have had a positive impact on the equality and diversity agenda in research careers. The Equality Challenge Unit has publicly stated that REF 2014 was successful in increasing the numbers of women, early-career researchers and those with equality-related circumstances, submitted to the exercise. The REF 2014 submission at Queen's saw increases in the returnable rates of a number of Section 75 groups. The sustained focus on equality and diversity in REF 2021 is expected make a positive contribution to diversity and inclusion in research careers at Queen's. The code of practice commits to undertaking multiple interim equality impact assessments during its lifespan, regardless of whether equality issues are identified through the screening process, ensuring that equality-related issues can be identified and addressed in advance of the final submission and delivering full transparency on the diversity and representativeness of the final REF submission.

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Who initiated or wrote the policy?
The Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise), Professor Paul Connolly, was the initial institutional lead on the development of this policy. A new Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor Emma Flynn, took up post in April 2019 and will be the institutional lead for implementation. The policy was drafted by members of the REF Support Team in Research & Enterprise – primarily Chris Browne and Karis Hewitt.
Directorate responsible for devising and delivering the policy?
Research and Enterprise Directorate.

Background to the Policy to be screened.

Include details of any pre- consultations/consultations which have been conducted and/or whether the policy has previously been tabled at the University's Operating Board or the Standing Committee of the Senate.

The REF is the system for assessing research in UK higher education institutions (HEIs). It was first conducted in 2014, and replaced the previous Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). The REF is managed by Research England (RE), on behalf of the four funding bodies for HE in the UK, including the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and the Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland (DfE).

REF produces quality outcomes for each submitting HEI through its assessment process, which deliver the wider threefold purpose of the exercise:

- The four funding bodies intend to use the assessment outcomes to inform the selective allocation of their grant for research to the HEIs which they fund, with effect from 2022–23.
- The assessment provides accountability for public investment in research and produces evidence of the benefits of this investment.
- The assessment outcomes provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks, for use within the HE sector and for public information.

Each university making a submission to REF 2021 is required to develop, document and apply a **'code of practice' setting out its policies and processes for identifying which staff are eligible for submission and how their work will be fairly and transparently selected for inclusion.**

Outlined below are a series of key points as relates to the inclusion of individual members of staff in REF 2021 and institutional expectations for their contribution:

Staff Eligibility (section 1.2 of policy)

The code of practice primarily affects academic staff employed on 'teaching and research' contracts (i.e. not teaching only) and on 'research only' contracts.

REF eligible staff are those individuals with a contract of 0.2 FTE+; whose primary employment function is 'teaching and research' or 'research only'; who have a substantive research connection with the HEI; and who are employed on the census date of 31 July 2021. All eligible staff with 'significant responsibility for research' (SRR) are required to be included in an HEI's REF submission.

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Where the criteria identify eligible staff who **do not** have SRR, HEIs are required to develop and apply an agreed process to identify who among their staff meeting the core eligibility criteria have significant responsibility for research. **Queen's has determined that all staff meeting the eligibility criteria have SRR and will therefore be included in REF 2021.**

Staff employed on 'research only' contracts (also described at Queen's as research fellows, postdoctoral research assistants, or contract research staff) are not eligible for REF.

Individual staff on 'research only' contracts may only be considered for submission to REF if they meet an institutional definition of 'research independence'.

Selection of outputs (section 4 of policy)

All eligible staff included in the REF submission contribute directly to the 'research outputs' component of the assessment. Each UoA is required to provide a total number of research outputs published in the unit during the census period (2014 – 2020). The total requirement is calculated as 2.5 multiplied by the unit's FTE on the census date of 31 July 2020. **Within this total each member of staff must contribute at least one and no more than five outputs.**

At Queen's, the selection of outputs for submission to REF will be primarily informed by their anticipated REF quality grading as determined by a combination of internal and external peer review. This is intended to optimise Queen's REF outcomes in terms of block grant funding and reputation in the sector. As the selection of outputs will take place at unit-level, rather than per individual staff member, and is only one of a number of methods for evaluating research quality. **There is no connection between individual contributions to REF and wider performance management and career progression within the University; in particular, the number of outputs attributed to each individual is a relative judgement made for REF purposes only and not an absolute judgement of the value of their research.**

Staff circumstances (section 4.6 of policy)

Where an individual's circumstances have an effect on their productivity during the REF period, there are three key measures by which this can be recognised by UoAs in relation to their individual contribution to the REF submission:

1. The flexibility to return between varied numbers of outputs per individual means submitting UoAs can adapt their submission to the varied research portfolio of individual members of staff. Staff are required to contribute only a minimum of one output published during the 7 year REF period.
2. There will be a voluntary and confidential process by which staff can disclose circumstances as set out in section 4.9 of the policy. Where the available output pool of a particular unit has been disproportionately affected by a significant volume, or the cumulative effect, of disclosed circumstances, units may optionally request a reduction, without penalty, in the total number of outputs required.
3. Where an individual's circumstances have had an exceptional effect on their ability to work productively during the REF period so that they have been unable to produce a single output, a request may be made to remove the requirement to contribute a minimum of one output.

APPENDIX 3

Core principles

The code of practice has been developed in line with the core principles of REF 2021 as defined by Research England, namely: transparency, consistency, accountability, and inclusivity. The University's commitment to these principles, which is embedded throughout the document, is summarised as follows:

Transparency: All policies and procedures outlined in the policy are fully transparent and information is readily accessible to all staff. There has been a comprehensive programme of communication with staff on the core principles underpinning the University's approach to REF 2021, followed by a formal consultation on a full draft. There has also been direct engagement with staff representative groups during the consultation period, including a meeting with the Queen's Gender Initiative (26 Feb 2019) and two meetings with the local branch of the Universities and Colleges Union (08 Feb and 09 April 2019). The final Code of practice is subject to approval through the University's formal committee structure. Key documents have been made available through the staff intranet, internal REF webpages and all-staff e-mails.

Consistency: The policies and procedures set out in the code of practice are applied consistently to all staff. The decision making processes set out in the policy for determining staff who are independent researchers and the selection of outputs are applied identically in each Faculty, School and submitting UoA. All members of staff and UoA leads were asked for specific feedback on whether bespoke unit-level policies are required for the identification of staff with significant responsibility for research through the consultation process.

Accountability: The code of practice clearly defines the decision making process that will be adopted for determining staff who are independent researchers and the selection of outputs, as outlined in sections 3 and 4. This includes the roles and responsibilities of those involved from UoA-level leads to senior institutional committees.

Inclusivity: The University is committed to the promotion of an inclusive environment and equality of opportunity in the REF. The University will submit all eligible staff to the REF exercise and ensure that individuals in all disciplines and at all career stages are supported to produce excellent research for submission to REF 2021.

B. Implementation factors

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy?

If yes, are they

financial?

legislative?

other?(please specify)

There are no specific factors that have been identified that should affect the implementation of the policy. There is a considerable amount of oversight both institutionally, through UEB and the REF Equality and Diversity Group, and through the regional and national funding

APPENDIX 3

bodies, including the Research England REF Equality and Diversity Panel, to monitor the implementation process.

It is important to note that the development of the policy takes place within the parameters of national guidelines applied to all institutions by the four funding bodies. While there is flexibility to adapt to institutional differences at the margins, the broad principles such as the inclusion of all eligible staff with SRR are non-negotiable.

C. Main stakeholders affected

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

X staff

service users

other public sector organisations

X voluntary/community/trade unions

other, please specify _____

D. Other policies with a bearing on this policy

what are they? (please list)

Internal

- [QUB Corporate Plan 2016-2021](#)
- [QUB Vision 2020](#)
- [QUB Equality and Diversity Policy](#)
- [QUB Equality Scheme](#)
- [QUB Trans Equality Policy](#)
- [QUB Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Final Equality Impact Assessment on the Code of Practice for REF 2014](#)
- [QUB Research Strategy 2016-2021](#)

External

- [REF Guidance on Submissions 2019/01](#)
- [REF Guidance on Codes of Practice 2019/03](#)
- [REF Codes of Practice for the selection of staff: A report on good practice, published by HEFCE in October 2012](#)
- [Equality and diversity in the REF: Final report by EDAP, published by HEFCE in January 2015](#)
- [AdvanceHE/ Equality Challenge Unit guidance on Codes of Practice and EIAs for REF 2014](#)

who owns them?

- **Internal**
- QUB Corporate Plan 2016-2021 (Institutional)
- QUB Vision 2020 (Institutional)
- QUB Equality and Diversity Policy (Diversity and Inclusion Unit, People and Culture Directorate)
- QUB Equality Scheme (Diversity and Inclusion Unit, People and Culture)
- QUB Trans Equality Policy (Diversity and Inclusion Unit, People and Culture)
- QUB Data Protection Policy (Registrar’s Office)
- Final Equality Impact Assessment on the Code of Practice for REF 2014 (Research and Enterprise)
- QUB Research Strategy 2016-2021 (Research and Enterprise)

External

- REF Guidance on Submissions 2019/01 (Research Excellence Framework)
- REF Guidance on Codes of Practice 2019/03 (Research Excellence Framework)
- REF Codes of Practice for the selection of staff: A report on good practice, published by HEFCE in October 2012
- Equality and diversity in the REF: Final report by EDAP, published by HEFCE in January 2015
- AdvanceHE/ Equality Challenge Unit guidance on Codes of Practice and EIAs for REF 2014

E. Available evidence

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories.

This means any data or information you currently hold in relation to the policy or have gathered during policy development. Evidence to inform the screening process may take many forms and should help you to decide who the policy might affect the most. It will also help ensure that your screening decision is informed by relevant data.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
Religious belief	<p>Our Staff Profile</p> <p>Under Fair Employment legislation, the University has a statutory duty to monitor the religious composition of the workforce.</p> <p>These statistics below reflect our Academic and Research Staff Composition by NI Community Background and religious belief as at 8 March 2019.</p>

The University conducted a full Equality Impact Assessment following the REF submission in November 2013, which can be accessed [here](#). In the final REF 2014 submission at Queen's the return rates of staff from the Catholic and Protestant communities was similar.

	Eligible	Returned
Catholic	31.8%	31.8%
Protestant	28.6%	28.6%
Non-determined	39.6%	39.6%

QUB Academic Staff Statistics (excluding Academic Education) as at 8th March 2019)

Broad Community Background

Broad Cat	Academic		
Row Labels	Count of	Per No	%
Not Known	1		0.10%
P	256		26.53%
RC	328		33.99%
ND	380		39.38%
Grand Total	965		100.00%

Community Background

Broad Cat	Academic		
Row Labels	Count of	Per No	%
Perceived Protestant	15		1.55%
Perceived Roman Catholic	30		3.11%
Perceived Non-determined	58		6.01%
Neither	124		12.85%
Non-determined	199		20.62%
Protestant	241		24.97%
Roman Catholic	298		30.88%
Grand Total	965		100.00%

Religious Beliefs

Broad Cat	Academic		
Row Labels	Count of	Per No	%
Buddhist	1		0.10%
Christian - Methodist Church	3		0.31%
Spiritual	3		0.31%
Muslim	3		0.31%
Hindu	5		0.52%
Jewish	6		0.62%
Information refused	6		0.62%
Any other religion or philosophical belief	7		0.73%
Christian - Church of Ireland	12		1.24%
Christian - Other Denomination	22		2.28%
Prefer not to say	22		2.28%

APPENDIX 3

Christian - Presbyterian	25	2.59%
Christian - Roman Catholic	46	4.77%
No Religion	103	10.67%
(blank)	701	72.64%
Grand Total	965	100.00%
<u>Research Staff Statistics as at 8 March 2019</u>		
<u>Broad Community Background</u>		
Broad Cat	Research	
Row Labels	Count of	Per No %
Not Known	8	1.20%
P	135	20.18%
RC	189	28.25%
ND	337	50.37%
Grand Total	669	100.00%
<u>Community Background</u>		
Broad Cat	Research	
Row Labels	Count of	Per No %
Perceived Protestant	6	0.90%
(blank)	8	1.20%
Perceived Roman Catholic	11	1.64%
Perceived Non-determined	86	12.86%
Non-determined	91	13.60%
Protestant	129	19.28%
Neither	160	23.92%
Roman Catholic	178	26.61%
Grand Total	669	100.00%
<u>Religious Beliefs</u>		
Broad Cat	Research	
Row Labels	Count of	Per No %
Christian - Methodist Church	1	0.15%
Information refused	3	0.45%
Any other religion or philosophical belief	4	0.60%
Spiritual	4	0.60%
Hindu	6	0.90%
Christian - Church of Ireland	8	1.20%
Muslim	10	1.49%
Prefer not to say	10	1.49%
Christian - Presbyterian	13	1.94%
Christian - Other Denomination	19	2.84%
Christian - Roman Catholic	30	4.48%
No Religion	69	10.31%
(blank)	492	73.54%
Grand Total	669	100.00%

Political opinion	Data is not collected on the political opinion of job applicants or members of staff in the University.		
Racial group	<p>Our Staff Profile</p> <p>The University conducted a full Equality Impact Assessment following the REF submission in November 2013, which can be accessed here. In the final REF 2014 submission at Queen's there was a 3.5 percentage point difference between the return rates of staff from an ethnic minority background and white staff, with the return rate of white staff above that of staff from an ethnic minority background.</p>		
		Eligible	Returned
	Ethnic minority background	9.1%	8.8%
	White	85.3%	85.5%
	No information	5.6%	5.6%
	<u>QUB Academic Staff Statistics (excluding Academic Education) as at 8th March 2019)</u>		
	<u>Broad Ethnicity</u>		
	Broad Cat	Academic	
	Row Labels	Count of	Per No %
	Not Known	49	5.08%
Ethnic	90	9.33%	
White	826	85.60%	
Grand Total	965	100.00%	
<u>Ethnic Origin</u>			
Broad Cat	Academic		
Row Labels	Count of	Per No %	
Other Ethnic background	1	0.10%	
White and Asian	1	0.10%	
Not Known	3	0.31%	
Black or Black British - African	3	0.31%	
Other Black background	3	0.31%	
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	4	0.41%	
Other Mixed background	7	0.73%	
Information refused	10	1.04%	
Prefer not to say	14	1.45%	
Other Asian background	15	1.55%	
Asian or Asian British - Indian	20	2.07%	
(blank)	22	2.28%	
Chinese	36	3.73%	
Other White Background	90	9.33%	

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White - Other European	118	12.23%
White - Irish	270	27.98%
White - British	348	36.06%
Grand Total	965	100.00 %
<u>Broad Nationality</u>		
Broad Cat	Academic	
Row Labels	Count of Per No	%
Not Known	4	0.41%
International	131	13.58%
EU	137	14.20%
ROI	187	19.38%
UK	506	52.44%
Grand Total	965	100.00 %
<u>Nationality</u>		
Broad Cat	Academic	
Row Labels	Count of Per No	%
Mexican	1	0.10%
Argentinian	1	0.10%
Nepalese	1	0.10%
Niger	1	0.10%
Nigeria	1	0.10%
Ukrainian	1	0.10%
Taiwanese	1	0.10%
Netherlands Antilles	1	0.10%
Cuba	1	0.10%
New Zealander	1	0.10%
Indonesian	1	0.10%
West Bank	1	0.10%
Jordanian	1	0.10%
Brazil	1	0.10%
Malaysian	1	0.10%
Norwegian	1	0.10%
Hong Kong	1	0.10%
Peruvian	1	0.10%
Macedonian	1	0.10%
Singapore	1	0.10%
Japanese	1	0.10%
South African	1	0.10%
Bulgarian	1	0.10%
South Korean	1	0.10%
(blank)	2	0.21%
Cyprus (European Union)	2	0.21%
Not Known	2	0.21%
Iranian	2	0.21%
Swiss	2	0.21%
Romanian	2	0.21%
Czech	2	0.21%

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Belgium	3	0.31%
Swedish	3	0.31%
Serbia	3	0.31%
Pakistani	3	0.31%
Austrian	4	0.41%
Polish	4	0.41%
Turkish	4	0.41%
Wales	4	0.41%
Hungarian	5	0.52%
Russian	5	0.52%
Vietnamese	5	0.52%
Portuguese	7	0.73%
Australian	8	0.83%
Dutch	8	0.83%
Canadian	11	1.14%
French	11	1.14%
Scotland	12	1.24%
Spanish	13	1.35%
Indian	15	1.55%
Greek	19	1.97%
Chinese/Tibetan	21	2.18%
England	21	2.18%
German	26	2.69%
Italian	27	2.80%
American	29	3.01%
Northern Ireland	154	15.96%
Irish	187	19.38%
British (not Channel Islands or IOM)	315	32.64%
Grand Total	965	100.00%
<u>QUB Research Staff Statistics as at 8 March 2019</u>		
<u>Broad Ethnicity</u>		
Broad Cat	Research	
Row Labels	Count of	Per No %
Not Known	82	12.26%
Ethnic	136	20.33%
White	451	67.41%
Grand Total	669	100.00%
<u>Ethnic Origin</u>		
Broad Cat	Research	
Row Labels	Count of	Per No %
Other Black background	1	0.15%
Not Known	5	0.75%
Information refused	5	0.75%
Other Ethnic background	7	1.05%
Prefer not to say	8	1.20%
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	8	1.20%

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Other Mixed background	11	1.64%
Black or Black British - African	17	2.54%
Other Asian background	20	2.99%
Other White Background	32	4.78%
Asian or Asian British - Indian	33	4.93%
Chinese	39	5.83%
(blank)	64	9.57%
White - Other European	101	15.10%
White - Irish	134	20.03%
White - British	184	27.50%
Grand Total	669	100.00%
 <u>Broad Nationality</u>		
Broad Cat	Research	
Row Labels	Count of Per No	%
Not Known	5	0.75%
ROI	81	12.11%
EU	129	19.28%
International	163	24.36%
UK	291	43.50%
Grand Total	669	100.00%
 <u>Nationality</u>		
Broad Cat	Research	
Row Labels	Count of Per No	%
Iraqi	1	0.15%
Zimbabwean	1	0.15%
Wales	1	0.15%
Australian	1	0.15%
Chile	1	0.15%
Jordanian	1	0.15%
Croatian	1	0.15%
Kenyan	1	0.15%
Cyproit	1	0.15%
Lebanese	1	0.15%
Estonian	1	0.15%
Libyan	1	0.15%
Icelandic	1	0.15%
Luxembourg	1	0.15%
Congo	1	0.15%
New Zealander	1	0.15%
Cyprus (European Union)	1	0.15%
Niger	1	0.15%
Burma	1	0.15%
Peruvian	1	0.15%
Gibraltarian	1	0.15%
Serbia	1	0.15%
Cuba	1	0.15%
Thai	1	0.15%
(blank)	2	0.30%

APPENDIX 3

	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr><td>Mexican</td><td>2</td><td>0.30%</td></tr> <tr><td>Syrian</td><td>2</td><td>0.30%</td></tr> <tr><td>Cameroon</td><td>2</td><td>0.30%</td></tr> <tr><td>Belgium</td><td>2</td><td>0.30%</td></tr> <tr><td>Scotland</td><td>2</td><td>0.30%</td></tr> <tr><td>Czech</td><td>2</td><td>0.30%</td></tr> <tr><td>Bulgarian</td><td>2</td><td>0.30%</td></tr> <tr><td>Malaysian</td><td>2</td><td>0.30%</td></tr> <tr><td>Sri Lankan</td><td>2</td><td>0.30%</td></tr> <tr><td>Hungarian</td><td>3</td><td>0.45%</td></tr> <tr><td>Not Known</td><td>3</td><td>0.45%</td></tr> <tr><td>Austrian</td><td>3</td><td>0.45%</td></tr> <tr><td>Swedish</td><td>3</td><td>0.45%</td></tr> <tr><td>Romanian</td><td>3</td><td>0.45%</td></tr> <tr><td>Indonesian</td><td>3</td><td>0.45%</td></tr> <tr><td>Canadian</td><td>3</td><td>0.45%</td></tr> <tr><td>Vietnamese</td><td>3</td><td>0.45%</td></tr> <tr><td>South Korean</td><td>4</td><td>0.60%</td></tr> <tr><td>Egyptian</td><td>4</td><td>0.60%</td></tr> <tr><td>Russian</td><td>4</td><td>0.60%</td></tr> <tr><td>Dutch</td><td>5</td><td>0.75%</td></tr> <tr><td>Brazil</td><td>6</td><td>0.90%</td></tr> <tr><td>German</td><td>8</td><td>1.20%</td></tr> <tr><td>American</td><td>9</td><td>1.35%</td></tr> <tr><td>Iranian</td><td>9</td><td>1.35%</td></tr> <tr><td>French</td><td>9</td><td>1.35%</td></tr> <tr><td>Nigeria</td><td>10</td><td>1.49%</td></tr> <tr><td>Pakistani</td><td>10</td><td>1.49%</td></tr> <tr><td>Polish</td><td>10</td><td>1.49%</td></tr> <tr><td>Greek</td><td>13</td><td>1.94%</td></tr> <tr><td>Portuguese</td><td>13</td><td>1.94%</td></tr> <tr><td>England</td><td>15</td><td>2.24%</td></tr> <tr><td>Spanish</td><td>21</td><td>3.14%</td></tr> <tr><td>Italian</td><td>27</td><td>4.04%</td></tr> <tr><td>Indian</td><td>33</td><td>4.93%</td></tr> <tr><td>Chinese/Tibetan</td><td>37</td><td>5.53%</td></tr> <tr><td>Irish</td><td>81</td><td>12.11%</td></tr> <tr><td>Northern Ireland</td><td>118</td><td>17.64%</td></tr> <tr><td>British (not Channel Islands or IOM)</td><td>155</td><td>23.17%</td></tr> <tr><td>Grand Total</td><td>669</td><td>100.00%</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Mexican	2	0.30%	Syrian	2	0.30%	Cameroon	2	0.30%	Belgium	2	0.30%	Scotland	2	0.30%	Czech	2	0.30%	Bulgarian	2	0.30%	Malaysian	2	0.30%	Sri Lankan	2	0.30%	Hungarian	3	0.45%	Not Known	3	0.45%	Austrian	3	0.45%	Swedish	3	0.45%	Romanian	3	0.45%	Indonesian	3	0.45%	Canadian	3	0.45%	Vietnamese	3	0.45%	South Korean	4	0.60%	Egyptian	4	0.60%	Russian	4	0.60%	Dutch	5	0.75%	Brazil	6	0.90%	German	8	1.20%	American	9	1.35%	Iranian	9	1.35%	French	9	1.35%	Nigeria	10	1.49%	Pakistani	10	1.49%	Polish	10	1.49%	Greek	13	1.94%	Portuguese	13	1.94%	England	15	2.24%	Spanish	21	3.14%	Italian	27	4.04%	Indian	33	4.93%	Chinese/Tibetan	37	5.53%	Irish	81	12.11%	Northern Ireland	118	17.64%	British (not Channel Islands or IOM)	155	23.17%	Grand Total	669	100.00%
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Age	<p>The University conducted a full Equality Impact Assessment following the REF submission in November 2013, which can be accessed here. There is detailed information available on the return rates for different age groups and by gender in the REF 2014 EQIA. The key findings of the assessment are as follows:</p> <p>In the final REF 2014 submission the return rate of staff :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the 20-29 age range was below the overall University return rate by 14.8 percentage points; • in the 30-39 age range was similar to the overall University return rate; • in the 40-49 age range was above the overall University return rate by 1.8 percentage points; 																																																																																																																								

- in the 50-59 age range was similar to the overall University return rate;
- in the 60 years and above age range was below the overall University return rate by 3.6 percentage points.

Whilst not mandatory, in line with best practice suggested by the Funding Councils, the University also conducted an impact assessment in relation to part time/ full time and fixed term working in the REF 2014 submission. In the final REF submission there was a 0.7 percentage point difference between the return rates of staff employed part time and staff employed full time. There was a 1.2 percentage point difference between the return rates of staff employed on a fixed term contract and staff employed on a permanent contract, with the return rate of staff employed on a fixed term contract above that of staff employed on a permanent contract.

Our Staff Profile

QUB Academic Staff Statistics (excluding Academic Education) as at 8th March 2019)

Age - 5 year bands

Broad Cat	Academic	
Row Labels	Count of	Per No %
25-29	15	1.55%
65 +	26	2.69%
60-64	65	6.74%
30-34	91	9.43%
55-59	96	9.95%
50-54	148	15.34%
45-49	160	16.58%
40-44	182	18.86%
35-39	182	18.86%
Grand Total	965	100.00%

Age -10 year bands

Broad Cat	Academic	
Row Labels	Count of	Per No %
20-29	15	1.55%
60+	91	9.43%
50-59	244	25.28%
30-39	273	28.29%
40-49	342	35.44%
Grand Total	965	100.00%

QUB Research Staff Statistics as at 8 March 2019

Age - 5 year bands

Broad Cat	Research
-----------	----------

	Row Labels	Count of Per No	%	
	65 +	4	0.60%	
	60-64	8	1.20%	
	55-59	13	1.94%	
	20-24	14	2.09%	
	50-54	29	4.33%	
	45-49	31	4.63%	
	40-44	57	8.52%	
	35-39	147	21.97%	
	25-29	152	22.72%	
	30-34	214	31.99%	
	Grand Total	669	100.00%	
	<u>Age -10 year bands</u>			
	Broad Cat	Research		
	Row Labels	Count of Per No	%	
	60+	12	1.79%	
	50-59	42	6.28%	
	40-49	88	13.15%	
	20-29	166	24.81%	
	30-39	361	53.96%	
	Grand Total	669	100.00%	
	<u>External Sources of Data</u>			
	<p>According to the Advance HE/ Equality Challenge Unit’s annual staff statistical report for 2018, academics under the age of 35 are more likely to be on fixed term contracts than academic staff between the ages of 35 and 65. Staff aged 35 and under also tend to be more concentrated in research only roles than older staff. For example, 63.7% of staff aged 51–55 were in teaching and research roles compared with 55.5% of staff aged 26–30 who were in research only roles.</p>			
	Marital status	Our Staff Profile		
		<p>The University conducted a full Equality Impact Assessment following the REF submission in November 2013, which can be accessed here. In the final REF 2014 submission at Queen's all staff in a civil partnership were returned and there was a 1.1 percentage point difference between the return rates of married staff and staff who were single.</p>		
		Eligible	Returned	
Civil Partnership		2.1%	2.1%	
Married		55.9%	56.3%	
Single		29.6%	29.5%	
No information		12.4%	12.1%	
<u>QUB Academic Staff Statistics (excluding Academic Education) as at 8th March 2019)</u>				
<u>Marital Status</u>				
Broad Cat		Academic		
Row Labels	Count of Per No	%		

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	Widowed	6	0.62%	
	Separated	16	1.66%	
	Civil Partnership	17	1.76%	
	Divorced	22	2.28%	
	Prefer not to say	37	3.83%	
	Other	37	3.83%	
	(blank)	40	4.15%	
	Single	217	22.49%	
	Married	573	59.38%	
	Grand Total	965	100.00%	
	<u>QUB Research Staff Statistics as at 8 March 2019</u>			
	<u>Marital Status</u>			
	Broad Cat	Research		
	Row Labels	Count of	Per No	%
	Widowed	1		0.15%
	Separated	2		0.30%
	Civil Partnership	4		0.60%
	Divorced	8		1.20%
	Prefer not to say	9		1.35%
	Other	22		3.29%
	(blank)	72		10.76%
	Married	233		34.83%
Single	318		47.53%	
Grand Total	669		100.00%	
Sexual orientation	Our Staff Profile			
	<p>The University conducted a full Equality Impact Assessment following the REF submission in November 2013, which can be accessed here. In the final REF 2014 submission at Queen's there was a 1.6 percentage point difference between the return rates of gay / lesbian / bisexual staff, and heterosexual staff, with the return rate of gay / lesbian / bisexual staff above that of heterosexual staff.</p>			
		Eligible	Returned	
	Gay / Lesbian / Bisexual	2.4%	2.4%	
	Heterosexual	44.0%	43.5%	
	No information	53.6%	54.1%	
	<u>QUB Academic Staff Statistics (excluding Academic Education) as at 8th March 2019</u>			
	<u>Sexual Orientation</u>			
	Broad Cat	Academic		
	Row Labels	Count of	Per No %	
Of either sex	5	0.52%		
Of the same sex	27	2.80%		
I do not wish to answer	149	15.44%		

	(blank)	176	18.24%	
	Of a different sex	608	63.01%	
	Grand Total	965	100.00%	
	<u>QUB Research Staff Statistics as at 8 March 2019</u>			
	<u>Sexual Orientation</u>			
	Broad Cat	Research		
	Row Labels	Count of	Per No	%
	Of either sex	8		1.20%
	Of the same sex	26		3.89%
	I do not wish to answer	58		8.67%
	(blank)	113		16.89%
	Of a different sex	464		69.36%
	Grand Total	669		100.00%
	Men and women generally	Our Staff Profile		
<p>The University conducted a full Equality Impact Assessment following the REF submission in November 2013, which can be accessed here. In the final REF submission there was a 2.5 percentage point difference between the return rates of female and male staff, with the return rate of male staff above that of female staff.</p>				
		Eligible	Returned	
Female		32.0%	31.4%	
Male		68.0%	68.6%	
<u>QUB Academic Staff Statistics (excluding Academic Education) as at 8th March 2019</u>				
<u>Gender</u>				
Broad Cat		Academic		
Row Labels		Count of	Per No	%
F		353		36.58%
M		612		63.42%
Grand Total		965		100.00%
<u>QUB Research Staff Statistics as at 8 March 2019</u>				
<u>Gender</u>				
Broad Cat	Research			
Row Labels	Count of	Per No	%	
F	325		48.58%	
M	344		51.42%	
Grand Total	669		100.00%	

	<p><u>External sources of data</u></p> <p>According to the Advance HE/ Equality Challenge Unit's annual staff statistical report for 2018, women are more likely to work in part-time or fixed-term roles.</p> <p>Evidence from the Equality Commission on Key Inequalities in Employment (para 5.6) show that women are more likely to be in part time employment.</p>																																																																		
Disability	<p>Our Staff Profile</p> <p>The University conducted a full Equality Impact Assessment following the REF submission in November 2013, which can be accessed here. In the final REF 2014 submission at Queen's there was a 7.5 percentage point difference between the return rates of staff who declared a disability and staff stated they did not have a disability, with the return rate of staff who stated they did not have a disability above that of staff who declared a disability.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Eligible</th> <th>Returned</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Declared disability</td> <td>4.6%</td> <td>4.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Declared no disability</td> <td>78.8%</td> <td>79.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No information</td> <td>16.7%</td> <td>16.3%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><u>Academic Statistics (excluding Academic Education) as at 8th March 2019</u></p> <p><u>Disability</u></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Broad Cat</th> <th colspan="2">Academic</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Row Labels</th> <th>Count of</th> <th>Per No %</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>60</td> <td>6.22%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not Known</td> <td>174</td> <td>18.03%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>731</td> <td>75.75%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grand Total</td> <td>965</td> <td>100.00 %</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><u>Type of Disability</u></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Broad Cat</th> <th colspan="2">Academic</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Row Labels</th> <th>Count of</th> <th>Per No %</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Multiple Disabilities</td> <td>2</td> <td>0.21%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>3</td> <td>0.31%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disabled</td> <td>4</td> <td>0.41%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sensory Impairment</td> <td>4</td> <td>0.41%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Learning Disability/Difficulty</td> <td>5</td> <td>0.52%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mental Health Condition</td> <td>6</td> <td>0.62%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Physical Impairment</td> <td>8</td> <td>0.83%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Declined to specify</td> <td>15</td> <td>1.55%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Long Standing Illness or Health Condition</td> <td>28</td> <td>2.90%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(blank)</td> <td>68</td> <td>7.05%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Eligible	Returned	Declared disability	4.6%	4.2%	Declared no disability	78.8%	79.5%	No information	16.7%	16.3%	Broad Cat	Academic		Row Labels	Count of	Per No %	Yes	60	6.22%	Not Known	174	18.03%	No	731	75.75%	Grand Total	965	100.00 %	Broad Cat	Academic		Row Labels	Count of	Per No %	Multiple Disabilities	2	0.21%	Other	3	0.31%	Disabled	4	0.41%	Sensory Impairment	4	0.41%	Learning Disability/Difficulty	5	0.52%	Mental Health Condition	6	0.62%	Physical Impairment	8	0.83%	Declined to specify	15	1.55%	Long Standing Illness or Health Condition	28	2.90%	(blank)	68	7.05%
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	Not known	91	9.43%
	No disability	731	75.75%
	Grand Total	965	100.00%
	<u>Research Statistics as at 8 March 2019</u>		
	Broad Cat	Research	
	Row Labels	Count of Per No	%
	Yes	25	3.74%
	Not Known	260	38.86%
	No	384	57.40%
	Grand Total	669	100.00%
	<u>Type of Disability</u>		
	Broad Cat	Research	
	Row Labels	Count of Per No	%
	Physical Impairment	1	0.15%
	Disabled	2	0.30%
	Learning Disability/Difficulty	2	0.30%
	Other	4	0.60%
	Mental Health Condition	6	0.90%
	Declined to specify	9	1.35%
	Long Standing Illness or Health Condition	10	1.49%
	Not known	73	10.91%
	(blank)	178	26.61%
	No disability	384	57.40%
	Grand Total	669	100.00%
	Dependants	Our Staff Profile	
<p>The University conducted a full Equality Impact Assessment following the REF submission in November 2013, which can be accessed here. In the final REF 2014 submission at Queen's there was a 3.1 percentage point difference between the return rates of staff with and without dependants, with the return rate of staff with dependants above that of staff without dependants.</p>			
		Eligible	Returned
With dependants		35.6%	36.0%
Without dependants		28.4%	27.7%
No information		36.0%	36.3%
<u>QUB Academic Staff Statistics (excluding Academic Education) as at 8th March 2019)</u>			
<u>Dependants</u>			
Broad Cat		Academic	
Row Labels		Count of Per No	%
(blank)	142	14.72%	
No	354	36.68%	

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Yes	469	48.60%
Grand Total	965	100.00%
<u>Type of Dependants</u>		
Broad Cat	Academic	
Dependants	Yes	
Row Labels	Count of Per No	%
Care of all three dependant groups	2	0.43%
Care of both children and disabled person(s)	10	2.13%
Care of a person/persons with a disability/disabilities	11	2.35%
Care of a dependant older person(s)	12	2.56%
(blank)	16	3.41%
Care of both children and a dependant older person	18	3.84%
Care of a child/children	400	85.29%
Grand Total	469	100.00%
<u>QUB Research Staff Statistics as at 8 March 2019</u>		
<u>Dependants</u>		
Broad Cat	Research	
Row Labels	Count of Per No	%
(blank)	100	14.95%
Yes	158	23.62%
No	411	61.43%
Grand Total	669	100.00%
<u>Type of Dependants</u>		
Broad Cat	Research	
Dependants	Yes	
Row Labels	Count of Per No	%
Care of a person/persons with a disability/disabilities	1	0.63%
Care of both a dependant older person and disabled person(s)	1	0.63%
Care of both children and a dependant older person	5	3.16%
(blank)	6	3.80%
Care of a dependant older person(s)	10	6.33%
Care of a child/children	135	85.44%
Grand Total	158	100.00%

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F. Needs, experiences and priorities

Having looked at the data/information you have collected in the question above, what does this tell you are the needs, experiences and priorities for the people who fall into the groups below, in relation to your policy⁸? And what is the actual or likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by the policy. **(See appendix 1 for information on levels of impact).**

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities and details of policy impact	Level of Impact
Religious belief	<p>The code of practice is underpinned by the University’s Equality and Diversity Policy and its statutory obligations under Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.</p> <p>As set out above, the policy is based upon the four core principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity. All staff will be fully informed of the policy and directly involved in its development. All aspects of the policy are applied consistently to all staff groups and the decision making processes are clearly stated in the policy. The University is committed to an inclusive research environment and will include all eligible staff in the REF exercise.</p> <p>Based on the evidence, there is no clearly identifiable impact on equality of opportunity for individuals on the basis of this S75 category likely to arise from the implementation of the policy.</p> <p>The evidence on S75 categories in Section E demonstrates some discrepancies in representation between different groups in REF 2014, however, the mandatory full return of all eligible staff is expected to minimise the possibility of this in REF 2021. Issues relating to the representation of staff groups in the distribution of outputs selected will be monitored on an ongoing basis through multiple EIAs. It is intended that the policy should serve as a tool to support the advancement of equality and diversity at the University and improve representation of individuals within this category.</p>	None.

⁸ If you do not have enough data to tell you about potential or actual impacts you may need to generate more data to distinguish what groups are potentially affected by your policy.

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Political opinion	As above.	None.
Racial group	As above.	None.
Age	<p>As above for religious belief, political opinion and racial group, and:</p> <p>Individuals in younger age categories are often more likely to fall into the 'early-career researcher' category, meaning that they may have been research-active for a smaller portion of the eligible REF publication period than colleagues at more advanced stages in their career.</p> <p>Younger staff are also more likely to be employed on fixed-term contracts, meaning that they are more likely to be subject to process for determining research independence.</p> <p>It is important that there is no differentiation between individuals on the basis of age in their opportunity to contribute to their unit's REF submission.</p>	Minor.
Marital status	As above for religious belief, political opinion and racial group.	None.
Sexual orientation	As above for religious belief, political opinion and racial group.	None.
Men and women generally	<p>As above for religious belief, political opinion and racial group, and:</p> <p>Female staff are more likely to have qualifying periods of family-related leave such as maternity leave and to be employed on part-time or fixed-term contracts.</p> <p>There is evidence that there is underrepresentation of female staff in research careers more generally. While this improved in REF 2014, it is important that the policy delivers continued emphasis on ensuring that REF submissions are reflective of quality wherever it is found in the University.</p>	Minor.

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	<p>Trans people who undergo gender reassignment will need to take time off for appointments and in some cases medical assistance. The transition process is lengthy, often taking several years</p> <p>It is important that such periods of absence (or equivalent) that affect individuals' research productivity during the REF period do not detrimentally affect their equality of opportunity to contribute to their unit's REF submission or lead to any inadvertent discrimination based on these circumstances.</p>	
<p>Disability</p>	<p>As above for religious belief, political opinion and racial group and:</p> <p>Individuals with a disability, prolonged periods of sickness absence, or other long term conditions, may have reduced research productivity during the REF period relative to colleagues not covered by this protected characteristic.</p> <p>It is important that such periods of absence (or equivalent) that affect individuals' research productivity during the REF period do not detrimentally affect their equality of opportunity to contribute to their unit's REF submission or lead to any inadvertent discrimination based on these circumstances.</p>	<p>Minor</p>
<p>Dependants</p>	<p>As above for religious belief, political opinion and racial group.</p> <p>Individuals with dependants such as children or adults with caring needs may be more likely to have been absent from work for a period of time during the REF cycle or to have caring responsibilities that give rise to circumstances equivalent to a period of absence from work.</p> <p>It is important that such periods of absence (or equivalent) that affect individuals' research productivity during the REF period do not detrimentally affect their equality of opportunity to contribute to their unit's REF submission or lead to any inadvertent discrimination based on these circumstances.</p>	<p>Minor.</p>

Part 2 Screening questions

1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?		
Section 75 category	Issue	Minor/major/none?
Religious belief	<p>There is no evidence that the policy will have a specific impact on individuals on the basis of religious belief. All eligible staff will be included in the submission and the selection of outputs is a relative academic judgement of outputs based on anticipated quality which is submitted at unit-level.</p> <p>The Code of Practice is likely to have a positive impact on equality of opportunity for eligible staff regardless of religious belief.</p>	None.
Political opinion	As above but for political opinion.	None.
Racial group	As above but for racial group	None.
Age	<p>Early-career researchers in REF 2021 are defined as individuals who have only been in a full academic post since 1 August 2016. ECRs will therefore have been independent researchers for a shorter period of time relative to colleagues and may have a smaller pool of outputs to contribute to the unit's total. Staff that meet this definition of ECR are more likely to be in younger age categories.</p> <p>However, the code of practice mandates that all eligible staff will be included in the submission,. Furthermore, the selection of outputs is a relative academic judgement of outputs based on</p>	Minor and positive.

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	<p>anticipated quality which is submitted at unit-level, and only requiring each individual to contribute one output. Relative to REF 2014, this represents increased flexibility and should reduce the administrative burden on units and individuals in including outputs from ECRs.</p> <p>Sections 4.7.1 and 4,7,3 provide that Units may optionally request a reduction without penalty in the total number of outputs required for a submission. The eligible circumstances for a request for reduction at Unit level includes qualifying as an early career researcher. The process for making disclosure of circumstances is entirely voluntary and made through the disclosure process outlined in section 4.9, Section 4.9.4 states that all individual staff members are encouraged to disclose any relevant circumstances in order for the University to obtain a clear picture of equality and diversity related issues across the submission and to ensure that any accumulation of circumstances affecting wider productivity in a unit is reflected in the total outputs pool.</p> <p>Contract (fixed term) research staff on 'research only' contracts, such as research fellows, research assistants, and postdoctoral research staff, are younger as a cohort compared to staff on 'research and teaching' contracts. Normally these individuals are not eligible for REF submission as they are not deemed to be 'research independent'. The policy on determining who is an independent researcher will be applied consistently across all contract research staff regardless of age.</p> <p>The Code of Practice is likely to have a positive impact on equality of opportunity for eligible staff, regardless of age.</p>	
Marital status	As above for religious belief but for marital status	None.
Sexual orientation	As above but for sexual orientation	None.
Men and women generally	Female staff are more likely to have experienced significant periods of absence in the REF cycle due to equality-related circumstances such as maternity leave. It is therefore foreseeable that	Minor and positive.

	<p>female members of staff may have been less productive than male colleagues for portions of the REF publication period and may have a smaller pool of outputs from which to contribute to the total outputs required in the unit. There is the possibility that might create a disincentive to include female staff in the submission.</p> <p>Trans people who undergo gender reassignment will need to take time off for appointments and in some cases medical assistance. The transition process is lengthy, often taking several years...</p> <p>Section 1.2.1 of the code of practice mandates that all eligible staff will be included in the submission. Furthermore, the selection of outputs is a relative academic judgement of outputs based on anticipated quality which is submitted at unit-level, and only requiring each individual to contribute one output each. Relative to REF 2014, this represents increased flexibility and should reduce the administrative burden and individual stress and pressure associated with declaring circumstances in REF 2014.</p> <p>Sections 4.7.1 and 4.7.3 provide that Units may optionally request a reduction without penalty in the total number of outputs required for a submission. The eligible circumstances for a request for reduction at Unit level includes “constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of or justify the reduction of further outputs,,” and “gender reassignment.”</p> <p>The process for making disclosure of circumstances is entirely voluntary and made through the disclosure process outlined in section 4.9, Section 4.9.4 states that all individual staff members are encouraged to disclose any relevant circumstances in order for the University to obtain a clear picture of equality and diversity related issues across the submission and to ensure that any accumulation of circumstances affecting wider productivity in a unit is reflected in the total outputs pool.</p> <p>The Code of Practice is likely to have a positive impact on equality of opportunity, regardless of gender.</p>	
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<p>Disability</p>	<p>Individuals with a disability, prolonged periods of sickness absence, or other long term conditions, may have reduced research productivity during the REF period relative to colleagues not covered by this protected characteristic. There is the possibility that might create a disincentive to include individual in this category in the REF submission. However, the code of practice mandates that all eligible staff will be included in the submission. Furthermore, the selection of outputs is a relative academic judgement of outputs based on anticipated quality which is submitted at unit-level, and only requiring each individual to contribute one output each. Relative to REF 2014, this represents increased flexibility and should reduce the administrative burden and individual stress and pressure associated with declaring circumstances in REF 2014.</p> <p>The staff circumstances process allows units to apply for reductions to the total outputs required in the unit of up to 1.5 for periods of absence or equivalent circumstances related to disability, as outlined in section 4.5 of the Code of Practice. The process for making disclosure of circumstances is entirely voluntary and made through the disclosure process outlined in section 4.9, Section 4.9.4 states that all individual staff members are encouraged to disclose any relevant circumstances in order for the University to obtain a clear picture of equality and diversity related issues across the submission and to ensure that any accumulation of circumstances affecting wider productivity in a unit is reflected in the total outputs pool.</p> <p>The Code of Practice is likely to have a positive impact on equality of opportunity for eligible staff, including those with disabilities.</p>	<p>Minor and positive.</p>
<p>Dependants</p>	<p>Individuals with dependants such as children or adults with caring needs may be more likely to have been absent from work for a period of time during the REF cycle or to have had caring responsibilities that give rise to circumstances equivalent to a period of absence from work. However, the code of practice mandates that all eligible staff will be included in the submission,. Furthermore, the selection of outputs is a relative academic judgement of outputs based on anticipated quality which is submitted at unit-level, and only requiring each individual to contribute one</p>	<p>Minor and positive.</p>

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	<p>output each. Relative to REF 2014, this represents increased flexibility and should reduce the administrative burden and individual stress and pressure associated with declaring circumstances in REF 2014.</p> <p>The staff circumstances process set out at section 4.6 of the Code of Practice allows units to apply for reductions to the total outputs required in the unit of up to 1.5 for periods of absence or equivalent circumstances related to caring responsibilities. The process for making disclosure of circumstances is entirely voluntary and made through the disclosure process outlined in section 4.9, Section 4.9.4 states that all individual staff members are encouraged to disclose any relevant circumstances in order for the University to obtain a clear picture of equality and diversity related issues across the submission and to ensure that any accumulation of circumstances affecting wider productivity in a unit is reflected in the total outputs pool.</p> <p>The Code of Practice is likely to have a positive impact on equality of opportunity for eligible staff, including those with dependants and those without.</p>	
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2 Are there any actions which could be taken to reduce any adverse impact which has been identified or opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity?

Section 75 category	Issue	Mitigating Measure
Religious belief	No adverse impact of equality of opportunity has been identified for this group. It is intended that the policy will act as a tool to support the advancement of equality and diversity at the University and improve representation of individuals within this category in REF 2021 relative to the 2014 exercise.	None

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Political opinion	As above.	None
Racial group	As above.	None
Age	Contract research staff (including fixed-term) such as research fellows, research assistants, and postdoctoral research staff are often (but not always) younger as a cohort compared to staff on 'research and teaching' contracts.	As a result of the equality screening process, reference to the regulations pertaining to equality of treatment for staff on fixed term and part time contracts has been added to Appendix 2 of the policy. Further clarification was provided on the position of individuals employed on part-time contracts at para 4.8.2. and explicit statements on the University's commitment to ensuring equal treatment for staff on fixed term and part time contracts have been added to the document at paras 3.1.1, 4.7.3 and 4.7.4.
Marital status	As above under religious belief, political opinion and racial group.	None
Sexual orientation	As above under religious belief, political opinion and racial group.	None
Men and women generally	Female staff are more likely to be in part-time or fixed-term employment.	As a result of the equality screening process, reference to the regulations pertaining to equality of treatment for staff on fixed term and part time contracts has been added to Appendix 2 of the policy. Further clarification was provided on the position of individuals employed on part-time contracts at para 4.8.2. and explicit statements on the University's commitment to ensuring equal treatment for staff on fixed term and part time contracts have been added to the document at paras 3.1.1, 4.7.3 and 4.7.4.
Disability	As above under religious belief, political opinion and racial group.	None

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Dependants	As above	None

3 To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?		
Good relations category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact minor/major/none
Religious belief	No expected impact.	None.
Political opinion	As above.	As above.
Racial group	As above.	As above.

4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?		
Good relations category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons

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Religious belief		The REF process does not involve specific interactions between individuals on the basis of their categorisation in the good relations groups and is therefore not expected to present opportunities to improve good relations in this respect.
Political opinion		As above.
Racial group		As above.

E Multiple identity

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities?

(For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

We do not hold inter-sectional data on individuals' multiple identities as all equality and diversity data is reported separately and anonymously in individual categories.

As far as is practicable, any foreseeable impacts on individuals on the basis of multiple identities are addressed through the staff circumstances policy outlined in section 4.6 of the code of practice, which recognises that in some cases individuals will combine multiple circumstances and the E&D panel will take account of this in their judgement of the allowable reduction.

Disability Duties

Consider whether the policy:

Discourages disabled people from participating in public life and fails to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people..

No. All eligible staff will be returned in REF 2021. The guidance for REF 2021 affords submitting institutions enhanced flexibility in assembling their portfolio of submitted outputs i.e a minimum of one and a maximum of five outputs per individual. This is the primary means by which Queen's will recognise the impact of individual circumstances on research productivity. Units may optionally request a reduction without penalty on the total number of outputs required for submission. Eligible circumstances for a request in reduction include disability/long term condition. Where a Unit requests a reduction in outputs based on circumstances with an equivalent effect to an absence including disability or long term condition, individual staff will be asked to voluntarily disclose their circumstance through the disclosure process.

- a) Provides an opportunity to better positive attitudes towards disabled people or encourages their participation in public life. Yes, see above.

Part 3. Screening decision

Through screening, an assessment is made of the likely impacts, either major, minor or none, of the policy on equality of opportunity and/or good relations for the relevant categories. Completion of screening should lead to one of the following three outcomes; please mark an x in the appropriate box:

'Screened out' i.e. the likely impact is none and no further action is required

'Screened out' with mitigation i.e. the likely impact is minor and measures will be taken to mitigate the impact or an alternative policy will be proposed

'Screened in' for an equality impact assessment (EQIA) i.e. the likely impact is major and the policy will now be subject to an EQIA

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

The Code of Practice has been reviewed and has identified that further consideration needs to be given in respect of Part-time and Fixed term workers to mitigate against any potential adverse impact.

As a result of the equality screening process, reference to the regulations pertaining to equality of treatment for staff on fixed term and part time contracts has been added to Appendix 2 of the policy. Further clarification was provided on the position of individuals employed on part-time contracts at para 4.8.2. and explicit statements on the University's commitment to

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ensuring equal treatment for staff on fixed term and part time contracts have been added to the document at paras 3.1.1, 4.7.3 and 4.7.4.

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, but the policy has minor equality impacts, please provide details of the reasons for this decision and of any proposed mitigating measures or proposed alternative policy.

As above

If the decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

The REF Code of Practice will not be subject to an EQIA as a result of this screening exercise. In Northern Ireland, an EQIA is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy. Equality Commission guidance recommends that public authorities should allow a 12 week consultation.

It should be noted that the EQIA process in NI is distinct from the EIA process as required by REF. While the determination is that the policy will be screened out with mitigating actions, and therefore not require an EQIA, the sector REF guidelines require that HEIs conduct multiple EIAs during the REF process. As such, the application of the code of practice to the University's REF preparations will be subject to a series of equality impact assessments (EIAs) at key junctures in the planning process. These key junctures are: (i) following the autumn 2019 REF Planning Meetings; (ii) prior to the staff census date of 31 July 2020; (iii) prior to the final submission in November 2020 and; (iv) following the final submission of the University's REF return.

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D Timetabling and prioritising

If the policy has been ‘**screened in**’ for equality impact assessment answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

Priority criterion	Rating (1-3)
Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	Click
Social need	Click
Effect on people’s daily lives	Click
Relevance to the University’s functions	Click

E Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities?

If yes, please provide details

Research England REF 2021 timetable:

- Institution submits code of practice to REF team, by 7 June
- Funding bodies notify institutions that code of practice meets REF requirements; or requests resubmission of the code of practice, by 16 August
- Institution resubmits code of practice to funding bodies, by 20 September
- Funding bodies notify institutions that code of practice meets REF requirements, or request second resubmission, by 8 November
- Institution resubmits code of practice to funding bodies, by 15 November
- Funding body notifies institutions whether or not code of practice meets REF requirements, by 29 November

Further deadlines for the submission of staff circumstances reductions will be published by Research England in due course.

Part 4. Monitoring

Effective monitoring will help the University identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy which may lead the University to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

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Please detail how you will monitor the effect of the policy?

Equality impact assessments (EIAs) at key junctures in the planning process to ensure equality issues are addressed prior to final submission: (i) following the autumn 2019 REF Planning Meetings; (ii) prior to the staff census date of 31 July 2020; (iii) prior to the final submission in November 2020 and; (iv) following the final submission of the University's REF return.

Regular reports to University Executive Board, QUB REF Equality and Diversity Group, intermittent sector audit by Research England REF team.

What data is required in the future to ensure effective monitoring of the policy?

Section 75 data will be collected through EIAs.

Part 5 - Data Protection

If applicable, has legal advice been given due consideration?

Yes No N/A

Has due consideration been given to information security in relation to this policy?

Yes No

Research England Guidance: [Model REF Data Collection Statements for HEIs \(2019/04\)](#)

Part 6 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Approved by:		

A copy of the screening form, for each policy screened, should be 'signed off' and approved by the senior manager responsible for the policy

In instances where a screening decision concludes that an EQIA is required then the screening form should be countersigned by a Director.

There may at times be policy issues which fall within the scope of being novel, contentious or politically sensitive and could only be taken forward following consultation with the University's Operating Board

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and/or Standing Committee of the Senate. Where a policy screening highlights such issues the screening form must be signed off by the Director prior to proceeding to the University's Operating Board and/or the Standing Committee of the Senate.

Following ratification, a copy of the approved screening form, and associated policy must be forwarded to the Diversity and Inclusion Unit for publication on the University's website.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO INFORM THE ANNUAL EQUALITY PROGRESS REPORT TO THE EQUALITY COMMISSION

1. Please provide details of any measures taken to enhance the level of engagement with individuals and representative groups as part of screening.

University Executive Board approved an initial draft of the University's REF 2021 Code of Practice on 11 March 2019. This was subsequently disseminated to all members of staff and subject to a period of consultation which has included:

- Three briefing events open to all staff during February 2019 (attended by c. 250)
- Consultation with Research Strategy Group and Research Forum
- Meetings with local UCU representatives and the Queen's Gender Initiative (QGI)
- An online feedback survey circulated to all staff (13 March – 29 April, 147 responses)

There were 147 responses to the online feedback survey between 13 March and 29 April, with a good spread of responses across Faculties and career stages.

The majority of respondents indicated that they 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the Code of Practice was clear, although a range of constructive suggestions in the free text sections highlighted areas where further clarity or minor amendments would be welcomed.

Feedback from meetings with local UCU representatives and the QGI was broadly positive. Both groups welcomed the decision to de-couple individual REF contributions from performance management and the 'unit-level' approach to submitting outputs in REF 2021. Both groups, and feedback from Research Strategy Group and Research Forum, provided a number of constructive suggestions relating to the practicalities of implementing the Code of Practice. QGI representatives made a specific request that QGI should be represented on the internal REF Equality and Diversity Group.

UEB approved an updated version of the policy on 21 May 2019. Key changes are noted below.

2. In developing this policy were any changes made as a result of equality issues raised during :

- (a) pre-consultation / engagement;
- (b) formal consultation;
- (c) the screening process; and/or
- (d) monitoring / research findings.

If so, please provide a brief summary including how the issue was identified, what changes were made, and what will be the expected outcomes / impacts for those affected.

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As a result of the equality screening process, reference to the regulations pertaining to equality of treatment for staff on fixed term and part time contracts has been added to Appendix 2 of the policy. Further clarification was provided on the position of individuals employed on part-time contracts at para 4.8.2. and explicit statements on the University's commitment to ensuring equal treatment for staff on fixed term and part time contracts have been added to the document at paras 3.1.1, 4.7.3 and 4.7.4.

As a result of consultation with staff and representative groups, members of the QGI were added to membership of the REF Equality and Diversity Group.

At paragraph 5.2.2., the draft Code of Practice stated: "the University is not obliged to submit any member of research staff deemed to meet the definition". Consultation feedback suggested that this incorrectly reflected the funding bodies' REF guidance and criteria. In response to this, the REF Support Team submitted a query to Research England, which clarified that: "If the member of staff is Category A eligible (and is an independent researcher with Significant Responsibility for Research) then the institution **must** return them".

- **The updated draft of the Code of Practice has been updated at 5.2.2 to remove this statement and clarify at 3.1.1 that any staff deemed to meet the definition must be submitted.**

Several respondents took issue with the wording at section 4.2, which states: "assessments and decisions made in preparing the REF submission will have no direct bearing on processes for the management of performance and career progression of individuals". A number of respondents expressed concern with the use of the word 'direct', querying which 'indirect' circumstances might apply.

- **Section 4.2 has been updated to remove the word 'direct' and clarify that there should be no reference made to REF through these processes.**

Feedback suggested that further clarity could be provided on how final decisions around the selection of outputs will be made, particularly with regard to roles and responsibilities at unit-level. In instances where there is a surplus of outputs that cannot be differentiated with a high degree of confidence, respondents requested a clearer definition of 'diversity and sustainability' of the unit as set out at 4.5.2.

- **The updated draft clarifies at 4.5.2 that 'diversity and sustainability' refers to an aspiration to ensure that, in the case of surplus outputs within the same quality rating band, priority is given to even distribution across individuals and sub-disciplines, e.g. minimising the volume of staff with only one output attributed.**

While respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the proposed approach to disclosure of staff circumstances was clear and that the Code promotes equality and diversity, there were some queries regarding the practicalities of the disclosure process, including who initiates a request for the removal of the requirement for a single output for submission.

- **The Code of Practice has been updated comprehensively at section 4.9 to clarify the process, particularly in the case of individual requests for a reduction to zero. Extra assurances have been added to clarify that the responsibility for disclosing circumstances lies with individuals and that Schools/ UoAs will at no stage have access to the detail of disclosed circumstances.**

There was some feedback that the Code of Practice was not clear on the position of academic staff employed on 'teaching only' contracts.

- **While the guidance clearly states who is eligible, the updated draft will make explicitly clear at 1.2.1 that staff employed as 'teaching only' or Academic (Education) are not eligible for submission to REF.**

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3. Does this policy / decision include any measure(s) to improve access to services including the provision of information in accessible formats? If so please provide a short summary.

We will respond to requests for the Code of Practice in alternative formats in a timely manner, as set out in the main policy document at 1.2. Formats may include but are not limited to: Easy Read, Braille, large print, audio formats (CD, mp3, DAISY) and in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English.

Appendix 1

Levels of Impact (Questions 6-9)

Introduction

In making a decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment, you should consider the answers provided to the questions above.

In addition, the **screening questions** above further assist you in assessing your policy and must be completed. Some of these questions require you to assess the level of impact of the proposed policy on

“equality of opportunity” and “good relations”. The scale used when assessing this impact is either “None”, “Minor” or “Major”. The following paragraphs set out what each of these terms mean.

If your conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then you may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is ‘screened out’ as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, you should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.

If your conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure.

If your conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality categories and/or good relations categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an equality impact assessment, or to introduce:

- measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or
- an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of a ‘major’ impact

- a) The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;

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- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

In favour of 'minor' impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of none

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.

The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Appendix 4 – Terms of Reference

University Executive Board

Terms of Reference		
(a) Development of integrated corporate plan in line with the approved vision; (b) Development and implementation of approved strategies to support delivery of the corporate plan; (c) Maintaining a general oversight of performance against the University's strategic academic and related objectives; (d) Initiating, and giving preliminary consideration to, strategy and policy matters in order to determine strategic directions for the University and to ensure that these are consistent with the institutional strategy and objectives; (e) Formulating and developing strategic and policy issues, initiatives, (both internal and external) developments etc; (f) Taking management decisions within the framework of the University's agreed corporate plan and related objectives; (g) Development and implementation of academic plans, including ongoing review in the context of an integrated planning and performance enhancement framework; (h) Advising and, where appropriate, making recommendations to the University's Academic Council and Senate and committees, on strategies and policies needed to achieve the University's corporate objectives; (i) Taking decisions on behalf of Senate or the Academic Council in circumstances where there is an urgent need; (j) Advising upon such issues as may be referred to it by the Vice-Chancellor or the Senate; (k) Acting on behalf of the Senate or other University body on such matters as may be delegated to it.		
Membership		
Composition		Current Members
Chair:	President and Vice-Chancellor	Professor Ian Greer
Ex Officio:	Pro-Vice-Chancellors	Professor David Jones Professor Emma Flynn Professor Richard English
	Registrar and Chief Operating Officer	Ms Joanne Clague
	Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellors	Professor Nola Hewitt-Dundas Professor Chris Johnson Professor Stuart Elborn
	Director of Finance	Ms Wendy Galbraith
	Director of Marketing, Recruitment, Communications and Internationalisation	Ms Isabel Jennings
	Director of People and Culture	Mr Alistair Finlay (interim)
In Attendance:	Relevant University Officers	As Required
Serviced by:	Vice-Chancellor's Office	
Reports to:	Senate; Academic Council - if required; Planning and Finance Committee	
Receives reports from:	University Operating Board Other University Committees and Working Groups as required	

REF Planning Groups

Terms of Reference	
(a) Perform Unit of Assessment level REF 2021 Planning	
(b) Ensure Unit is prepared for REF 2021 submission	
(c) Monitor readiness and profile of REF eligible outputs	
(d) Coordinate reading, review, grading and external calibration of REF eligible outputs	
(e) Coordinate support of individuals and Unit in achieving maximum quality of outputs	
Membership	
Composition	Position
Chair:	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise)
Ex Officio:	UoA REF Champion
	Head(s) of School
	Faculty Dean of Research
	As required: Director(s) of Research; Impact Champion; REF Administrator(s)
	Director of Research and Enterprise
	REF Manager/ Head of Research Policy
In Attendance:	REF Support Team
Serviced by:	REF Support Team
Reports to:	University Executive Board
Receives Reports from:	UoA Reading Groups

Unit of Assessment Reading Groups

Terms of Reference:	
(a) To coordinate the peer review of research outputs proposed for REF submission and provide provisional quality scores to inform REF 2021 review and assessment processes.	
(b) To report outcomes of review processes through UoA Champions to the relevant REF Faculty Review Panels.	
(c) To seek external review where possible and to ensure that assessment processes are robust and consistent.	
Membership:	
Composition	Position
Chair:	Head of School or nominee
	UoA Champion
	Senior academic researchers from disciplines covered by the UOA
Serviced by:	UoA REF Administrator
Reports to:	UoA Planning Group

REF Equality and Diversity Group

Terms of Reference:		
(a) Advise on equality and diversity related issues throughout the University's preparations for the REF, making recommendations to the University Executive Board and REF Faculty Review Panels as appropriate. (b) Oversee the implementation of the University's Code of Practice for REF2021. (c) Coordinate and review multiple Equality Impact Assessment, and associated screening analyses, as relates to the implementation of the Code of Practice. (d) Provide oversight for Equality and Diversity training for individuals involved in decision-making and appeals processes. (e) Oversee the staff circumstances disclosure process and review all requests for unit or individual output reductions and approve requests to be submitted to EDAP.		
Membership:		
Composition	Position	Current Members
Chair:	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Internationalisation and Engagement)	Professor Richard English
	2 x Senior Independent Professorial Staff	Professor Aileen Stockdale Dr Dina Belluigi
	Faculty Dean(s) of Research	Professor Tony Gallagher (AHSS)
		Professor Aaron Maule (MHLS)
		Professor Su Taylor (EPS)
	Head of Diversity and Inclusion Unit	Mr Conor Curran
	Director of Research and Enterprise	Dr Wendy McLoone (acting)
REF Manager	Mr Chris Browne	
	Representative of Queen's Gender Initiative (QGI)	Professor Karen McCloskey
In attendance	Research Policy Assistant	Dr Mary Stevenson
Serviced by:	REF Support Team	
Reports to:	University Executive Board	

REF Appeals Panel

Terms of Reference:		
(a) To consider and make recommendations on appeals from eligible academic staff regarding their exclusion from the University's REF submission, in accordance with the University's REF Code of Practice. (b) To request further information and documentation relating to the appeal case where necessary. (c) To make a judgement on each case based on information provided by the appellant, the grounds of the appeal, the records of the REF process pertaining to the appellant and main and sub panel criteria and working methods. (d) To confirm decisions and associated reasons, in writing, to the individual appellant.		
Membership:		
Composition	Position	Current Members
Chair:	Pro Vice-Chancellor Education	Professor David Jones
	Director People and Culture	Mr Alistair Finlay (interim)
	Senior Academic Staff	tbc as required
tbc as required		
Serviced by:	REF Support Team	
Reports to:	University Executive Board	

Research Strategy Group

Terms of Reference:		
In order to maximise research potential across the University, leading to significant improvement in the University's research profile and visibility nationally and internationally, the Group will advise on:		
(a) The strategic priorities for the development of world class research across the University.		
(b) Development of institutional preparations and strategy for REF 2021.		
(c) The identification and leadership of key strategic initiatives that address major international and national research priorities, responding to relevant funding or investment opportunities.		
(d) The prioritisation of University investment in future research themes, in particular investment aligned with the Institutional Research Strategy (2016-2021) and its priorities.		
Membership:		
Composition	Position	Current Members
Chair:	Pro Vice Chancellor Research & Enterprise	Professor Emma Flynn
Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences	Dean of Research	Professor Aaron Maule
	School of Nursing and Midwifery	Professor Maria Lohan
	School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences	Professor Denise Fitzgerald Professor Danny McAuley
	School of Pharmacy	Professor Carmel Hughes
Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences	Dean of Research	Professor Su Taylor
	School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering	Professor David Rooney
	School of Electronics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science	Professor Maire O'Neill
	School of Mathematics and Physics	Professor Stephen Smartt
Faculty of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences	School of Natural and Built Environment	Professor David Livingstone
	Dean of Research	Professor Tony Gallagher
	School of Arts, English and Languages	Professor Isabel Torres
	School of Law	Professor Kieran McEvoy
Research and Enterprise Directorate	Queen's Management School	Professor Nola Hewitt-Dundas
	The Senator George J Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice	Professor Hastings Donnan
	Director, Research and Enterprise Directorate	Mr Scott Rutherford
	Head of Research Policy	Mrs Karis Hewitt
In Attendance: Research Policy Manager	Head of Research Development	Dr Wendy McLoone
	In Attendance: Research Policy Assistant	Chris Browne
	In Attendance: Research Policy Assistant	Lynne Gault
Serviced by:	Research Policy Office	
Reports to:	University Executive Board – where required	

Appendix 5 - Reductions for staff circumstances⁹

1. Given the reduced output requirement for 2021, the tariffs for the defined reductions differ from those set in REF 2014. This is to ensure that a broadly equivalent reduction is given in the context of the submitted output pool, and to ensure that panels receive a sufficient selection of research outputs from each submitted unit upon which to base judgements about the quality of that unit's outputs.

Early career researchers

2. ECRs are defined in the Code of Practice at 4.7.3. Table L1 sets out the permitted reduction in outputs without penalty in the assessment that HEIs may request for ECRs who meet this definition.

Table L1: Early career researchers: Permitted reduction in outputs

Date at which the individual first met the REF definition of an ECR:	Output pool may be reduced by up to:
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 or career breaks

3. Table L2 sets out the permitted reduction in outputs without penalty in the assessment that HEIs may request for absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside of the HE sector, and in which the individual did not undertake academic research.

Table L2: Secondments or career breaks: Permitted reduction in outputs

Total months absent between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2020 due to a staff member's secondment or career break:	Output pool may be reduced by up to:
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

⁹ Taken directly from REF guidance published by Research England - <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/guidance-on-submissions-201901/>

4. The allowances in Table L2 are based on the length of the individual's absence or time away from working in HE. They are defined in terms of total months absent from work.

5. As part-time working is taken account of within the calculation for the overall number of outputs required for the unit (which is determined by multiplying the unit's FTE by 2.5), reduction requests on the basis of part-time working hours should only be made exceptionally. For example, where the FTE of a staff member late in the assessment period does not reflect their average FTE over the period as a whole.

Qualifying periods of family-related leave

6. The total output pool may be reduced by 0.5 for each discrete period of:

- a. Statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave taken substantially during the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020, regardless of the length of the leave.
- b. Additional paternity or adoption leave¹⁰, or shared parental leave¹¹ lasting for four months or more, taken substantially during the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020.

7. This approach to reductions for qualifying periods of family-related leave is based on the funding bodies' considered judgement following consultation in the previous REF exercise that the impact of such a period of leave and the arrival of a new child into a family is generally sufficiently disruptive of an individual's research work to justify the specified reduction.

8. While the above reduction of outputs due to additional paternity or adoption leave is subject to a minimum period of four months, shorter periods of such leave could be taken into account as follows:

- a. By applying a reduction in outputs where there are additional circumstances, for example where the period of leave had an impact in combination with other factors such as ongoing childcare responsibilities.
- b. By combining the number of months for shorter periods of such leave in combination with other circumstances, according to Table L2.

¹⁰ 'Additional paternity or adoption leave' refers to leave of up to 26 weeks which is taken to care for a child where the person's spouse, partner or civil partner was entitled to statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave, and has since returned to work. The term 'additional paternity leave' is often used to describe this type of leave although it may be taken by parents of either gender. For the purposes of the REF, we refer to this leave as 'additional paternity or adoption leave'. It should be noted that additional paternity leave was abolished and replaced by Shared Parental Leave from April 2015.

¹¹ 'Shared parental leave' refers to leave of up to 50 weeks which can be shared by parents having a baby or adopting a child. This can be taken in blocks, or all in one go.

9. Any period of maternity, adoption, paternity or shared parental leave that qualifies for the reduction of an output under the provisions in paragraph 6 above may in individual cases be associated with prolonged constraints on work that justify more than the defined reduction set out. In such cases, the circumstances should be explained in the request.

Combining circumstances

10. Where individuals have had a combination of circumstances that have a defined reduction in outputs, these may be accumulated up to a maximum reduction of 1.5 outputs. For each circumstance, the relevant reduction should be applied and added together to calculate the total maximum reduction.

11. Where Table L1 is combined with Table L2, the period of time since 1 January 2014 up until the individual met the definition of an ECR should be calculated in months, and Table L2 should be applied.

12. When combining circumstances, only one circumstance should be taken into account for any period of time during which they took place simultaneously.

13. Where an individual has a combination of circumstances with a defined reduction in outputs **and** additional circumstances that require a judgement, the institution should explain this in the reduction request so that a single judgement can be made about the appropriate reduction in outputs, taking into account all the circumstances. The circumstances with a defined reduction in outputs to be requested should be calculated according to the guidance above (paragraphs 2 to 10).

Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1–6

14. In UOAs 1–6, the number of outputs may be reduced by up to one, without penalty in the assessment, for Category A submitted staff who are junior clinical academics. These are defined as clinically qualified academics who are still completing their clinical training in medicine or dentistry and have not gained a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) or its equivalent prior to 31 July 2020.

15. This allowance is made on the basis that the staff concerned are normally significantly constrained in the time they have available to undertake research during the assessment period. Where the individual meets the criteria in paragraph 14, and has had significant additional circumstances – for any of the other reasons set out in the Code of Practice at 4.7.3 – the institution can make a case for further reductions in the unit reduction request.

Circumstances requiring a judgement about reductions

16. Where staff have had other circumstances during the period (see paragraph 4.7.3 and 4.8.2 in the Code of Practice) – including in combination with any circumstances with a defined reduction in outputs – the institution will need to make a judgement about the effect

of the circumstances in terms of the equivalent period of time absent, apply the reductions as set out in Table L2 by analogy, and provide a brief rationale for this judgement.

Appendix 6 – Template Form for Declaration of Circumstances

This document is being sent to all staff whose outputs are eligible for submission to REF 2021 (see section 1 of the Code of Practice). As part of the University's commitment to supporting equality and diversity in REF, we have put in place safe and supportive structures for staff to declare information about any equality-related circumstances that may have affected their ability to research productively during the assessment period (1 January 2014 – 31 July 2020), and particularly their ability to produce research outputs at the same rate as staff not affected by circumstances. The purpose of collecting this information is threefold:

- 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;
 - circumstances that have resulted in an overall period of 46 months or more absence from research during the assessment period, due to equality-related circumstances (
 - circumstances *equivalent* to 46 months or more absence from research due to equality-related circumstances
 - two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave.
- To recognise the effect that equality-related circumstances can have on an individual's ability to research productively, and to adjust expectations in terms of expected workload / production of research outputs.
- To establish whether there are any Units of Assessment where the proportion of declared circumstances is sufficiently high to warrant a request to the higher education funding bodies for a reduced required number of outputs to be submitted.

Applicable circumstances

- Qualifying as an ECR (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016)
- Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector
- Qualifying periods of family-related leave
- Junior clinical academics who have not gained a Certificate of Completion of training by 31 July 2021
- 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

If your ability to research productively during the assessment period has been constrained due to one or more of the following circumstances, you are requested to complete the attached form. Further information can be found in Section 4 of the Code of Practice. **Completion and return of the form is voluntary, and individuals who do not choose to return it will not be put under any pressure to declare information if they do not wish to do so.** This form is the only means by which the University will be gathering this information; we will not be consulting administrative records, contract start dates, etc. You should therefore complete and return the form if any of the above circumstances apply and you are willing to provide the associated information.

Ensuring Confidentiality

If the institution decides to apply to the funding bodies for either form of reduction of outputs (removal of 'minimum of one' requirement or unit circumstances), we will need to provide 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.

Internally, submitted data will be kept confidential to a small group of 2 – 3 support staff in the REF Support Team and members of the REF Equality and Diversity Group. Externally, submitted data will be kept confidential to the REF team at Research England, the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs. All these bodies are subject to confidentiality arrangements. The REF team will destroy the submitted data about individuals' circumstances on completion of the assessment phase.

Changes in circumstances

The University recognises that staff circumstances may change between completion of the declaration form and the census date (31 July 2021). If this is the case, then staff should contact the REF Support Team confidentially to provide the updated information.

To submit this form you should complete and e-mail to ref@qub.ac.uk with the subject line 'Confidential: Completed REF Disclosure Form'. This e-mail account will only be accessed by a small group of 2 – 3 administrative staff in the REF Support Team.

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

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

Do you have a REF-eligible output published between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2021?

Yes

No

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

Circumstance	Time period affected
<p>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.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter a date.</p>

Junior clinical academic who has not gained Certificate of completion of Training by 31 July 2021.	Tick here <input type="checkbox"/>
Career break or secondment outside of the HE sector. <i>Dates and durations in months.</i>	Click here to enter dates and durations.
Family-related leave; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • statutory maternity leave • statutory adoption leave • Additional paternity¹² or adoption leave or shared parental leave lasting for four months or more. <i>For each period of leave, state the nature of the leave taken and the dates and durations in months.</i>	Click here to enter dates and durations.
Disability (including chronic conditions) <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>	Click here to enter text.
Mental health condition <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>	Click here to enter text.
Ill health or injury <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>	Click here to enter text.
Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of standard allowance <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>	Click here to enter text.
Caring responsibilities <i>To include: Nature of responsibility, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when</i>	Click here to enter text.

¹² It should be noted that additional paternity leave was abolished and replaced by Shared Parental Leave from April 2015.

<i>unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i>	
Gender reassignment <i>To include: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i>	Click here to enter text.
Any other exceptional reasons e.g. bereavement. <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>	Click here to enter text.

Please confirm, by ticking the box provided, that:

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

I agree

Name: Print name here

Signed: Sign or initial here

Date: Insert date here

I give my permission for an HR partner to contact me to discuss my circumstances, and my requirements in relation this these.

I give my permission for the details of this form to be passed on to the relevant contact within my department/faculty/centre. (Please note, if you do not give permission your department may be unable to adjust expectations and put in place appropriate support for you).

I would like to be contacted by:

Email Insert email address

Phone Insert contact telephone number