



Research Excellence Framework

REF Code of Practice

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Part 1: Introduction

1.0 Aims of the Code of Practice

The University College of Osteopathy (UCO) Research Excellence Framework (REF) Code of Practice sets out the policies and procedures by which the UCO is applying to join REF for the first time. It has been written as a guideline for all staff, including those who are currently involved in research activities as part of their UCO role, staff who have plans to be research active in the future and those involved in the processes of identifying eligible staff and selecting research outputs for submission to REF 2021. The Code of Practice is aligned with the 'Guidance of Codes of Practice' published by REF in January 2019 and aims to describe the processes which will guide the fair and transparent identification of eligible research staff and their work.

1.1 Previous REF actions

1.1.1 The UCO did not apply to REF 2014 as it was not at that time a fully independent educational institution. Degrees were validated by the University of Bedfordshire (UoB) from 2004 until 2015 when the UCO was awarded Taught Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP) for taught degrees. A new agreement with UoB was signed in February 2017 to allow continuing collaboration for research degrees. The UCO received institutional designation in 2017 and then implemented its TDAP but is not currently in a position to apply for Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP). The UCO has an agreement in principle to continue working with UoB as a partner centre for PhD students. It has also been confirmed that, although we are a small institution with relatively limited research outputs in comparison with larger universities, the UCO's research strategy and long-term developmental goals mean that we are eligible to apply to REF 2021.

1.1.2 The UCO is currently a mono-disciplinary institution that provides undergraduate and postgraduate osteopathic healthcare education but has a

strategic plan to broaden provision in future. We are applying to REF2021 in one Unit of Assessment (UOA); A3 Allied Health. The last HESA return included 182 members of staff (95.72 FTE), of whom seven (4.85 FTE) currently work in the Research Department. In preparing to apply to REF 2021, the UCO joined GuildHE Research and staff have engaged in discussions with similar small universities and participated in workshops to develop the skills to strengthen our institutional research culture and capabilities. Staff have also collaborated with other universities and research teams to deliver research and develop capacity.

1.1.3 Identification of Category A staff

Only UCO staff who are categorised as '*Category A*' can be considered for submission to REF. These staff will be identified by a new Research Ethics Framework Committee (REFC; Appendix 1), using the following criteria:

- a). HESA codes for 'Research' or 'Research and Teaching' contracts
- b). Equal to or greater than 0.2 FTE working contract (i.e. >1 day a week)
- c). Having 'significant responsibility' for research, defined as one or more of the following criteria:
 - research role specified in the job description, minimum 0.1 FTE
 - research expectations recorded in annual Professional Development Review (PDR) (i.e. applying for funding, publications, involvement with external research groups etc.)
 - institutional acknowledgement of research activity (e.g. sponsored training, sabbaticals, funding for conference participation etc.)
- d). Identified as an '*independent researcher*', which is defined as:
 - individuals who are employed or funded as part of their UCO role to carry out self-directed research (i.e. as Principal Investigators and Project Leaders or staff who have been awarded research funding).

1.1.4 UCO staff or students who carry out research activities for someone else or under supervision will not be considered as independent researchers. For example, Postdoctoral Research Assistants and PhD students would not be eligible *unless* they have had significant input into the design of an extended study or led a substantial or specialised discrete package of work.

1.1.5 Staff on HESA 'Teaching' contracts who are found to be research active within the REF 2021 census dates (January 1st 2014 to August 31st 2020) but are not on a HESA research code will be identified by line managers in annual PDRs and by email communication with all staff inviting self-identification. The annual institutional research report will also be checked to identify other staff who may be Category A eligible. Self-identifying staff will be invited to discuss their job role with line managers in annual PDRs to explore whether it would be appropriate to change from a 'Teaching' to a 'Teaching and Research' HESA code in order to become Category A eligible staff for future REF submissions.

1.1.6 Category A staff who have moved to managerial or other roles within the UCO will be included if their outputs were created and made publicly available during the relevant research period. Former Category A eligible staff who have left the UCO to work elsewhere or have been made redundant will be included if their research outputs were created within the census period. Newly appointed staff who have research outputs within the census period from previous employment will be included as Category A eligible. The UCO does not currently employ Category A eligible research staff outside the UK.

1.2 Strategies to enhance equality and diversity

1.2.1 The existing UCO Equality and Diversity Policy relates to educational and administrative processes for staff and students (Appendix 5.2). The new REF Equality and Diversity policy (Appendix 5.3) upholds the same principles. It aims to identify and avoid discrimination on the basis of the protected characteristics outlined by REF which include age, sex or sexual orientation,

gender reassignment, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, race/ethnicity, disability, pregnancy and adoption, maternity and paternity leave, and employment conditions. The new REF E&D policy has been created to identify and manage specific challenges relating to the identification of Category A staff, assessment of research responsibility and independence, and fair and transparent processes guiding the selection of a representative set of impact case studies and research outputs. It includes policies for managing staff disclosures of sensitive personal issues which have affected their ability to engage with research activity in the census period and outlines grounds for appeal and procedures developed to identify and mitigate against inequality and discrimination in all REF related processes.

1.2.2 The UCO is aware of limited diversity within the institution as a whole and is currently working to widen access and increase diversity amongst staff, student and patient populations. Data from the last HESA return indicate that the seven staff currently identified as potentially eligible for Category A have similar characteristics to the academic/clinical teaching population (Appendix 5.4). However, future comparisons and intersectional data analysis of demographic and protected characteristics will be limited by small numbers. Information will be strengthened by collecting qualitative data at different stages of the REF process, using guidance from Advance HE about analysing equality data in small institutions - <https://www.ecu.ac.uk/guidance-resources/using-data-and-evidence/working-with-data/>

1.3 Transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity

1.3.1 Transparency will be demonstrated through regular communications from the REF Committee (REFC) to Category A staff, UCO staff in general and other stakeholders throughout the process of developing, implementing and monitoring the REF process. Procedures will be clearly described and information about eligibility criteria, decision-making processes and outcomes will be available on the UCO website once fully approved by the UCO Academic Council and REF. Information will be distributed to staff via emails and at relevant institutional meetings and staff development sessions.

Responses to concerns and feedback about unexpected or unintended consequences of REF processes will also be made available for discussion, as will the reasons for, and effects of, any changes implemented to enhance the quality of the UCO submission.

1.3.2 Consistency will be demonstrated through reports to higher committees in the UCO academic governance and quality assurance structure (Appendix 5.5). Reports will describe how processes have adhered to the agreed criteria for identifying Category A staff who are independent researchers with significant responsibility for research, and the criteria agreed for selecting a representative range of impact case studies and research outputs for submission. Reports will also describe any challenges experienced, or failure to follow agreed policies, and will identify potential solutions and action plans for discussion, agreement and approval.

1.3.3 Accountability will be demonstrated in reporting procedures described above (i.e. to the RSSC and Academic Council), and provision of information to REF when requested (see Committee Structure in Appendix 5.5). REFC will respond to questions from Academic Council. Financial accountability for REF-related costs will be demonstrated through information provided to the Finance Department in budget and resource allocation meetings. Accountability for managing sensitive or confidential staff data will be demonstrated by adherence to UCO data protection and storage policies, informed by the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR.

1.3.4 Inclusivity will be demonstrated in the strategies developed to identify all UCO staff potentially eligible for submission to REF. Information about staff with the protected characteristics listed in the Guidance for Submission document will be collected using data from the HR department (e.g. HESA returns) and via new institution-wide staff surveys. Data about Category A staff and their research outputs submitted to REF will be separated but will be compared independently against all staff data to ensure that REF submissions reflect the diversity of the institution. Findings which indicate that there may be unintended or systematic exclusion of staff from protected groups will be

analysed to develop appropriate remedial actions or policy changes. Given the small numbers of staff likely to be eligible for submission, we will be mindful of the limits of quantitative analysis in this context and will consider qualitative approaches to further inform our analysis.

1.4 Communication with UCO staff

1.4.1 Initial information about UCO plans for REF 2021 was communicated via Outlook email to 'All Staff' in January 2019, including those on leave of absence, sabbatical and maternity or paternity leave.

1.4.2 Policies and processes for managing the REF submission will be disseminated to all staff for feedback, including those on leave of absence, after initial drafts have been approved by the relevant committees and the REF Committee has been constituted in June 2019.

1.4.3 Staff will be invited to contribute to and comment on the development of REFC Terms of Reference, composition, processes and policies.

1.4.4 The main channel of communication with staff will be via the UCO Outlook email system and SharePoint. Information will also be shared during REF staff training and development sessions and via Course Leaders and Unit Leaders to their respective teams.

1.4.5 Mechanisms for obtaining staff feedback will include anonymised survey data, personal feedback via email, communication via Course Leader and Heads of Area, and staff involvement on the REFC through clinical and academic staff representatives.

1.4.6 The Code of Practice will be disseminated on the policies and procedures section of the UCO intranet and accessible externally via the research section of the external UCO website at <https://www.uco.ac.uk/>

Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

2.1. Policies and procedures

2.1.1 The UCO is currently working on developing a formal workload model for all staff on academic, clinical and research contracts, managed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education). As the UCO is a small institution, many staff have more than one role and contracts have historically been developed on a flexible, individual basis. These rarely specify the number of hours per week to be spent in each role and include no formal expectations about quantity of research output per year (e.g. funding income, number of funding applications, publications or conferences). In conjunction with the plans to enhance academic management and accountability, the UCO's research teaching curriculum is being substantially revised to strengthen student education and enhance staff involvement in research activities. It is anticipated that the new curriculum will be implemented in September 2019 and will result in changes in the balance of teaching and research for staff.

2.1.2 Staff roles and work activities are monitored in annual Professional Development Reviews (PDRs), which are conducted between January and April. For REF 2021, the process of identifying staff with significant research responsibility will start in individual discussions with line managers during PDRs, followed by screening for eligibility by REFC, rather than the new academic workload model which is not yet fully in place.

2.1.3 The first phase will involve identifying staff who have been returned to HESA on 'Research' or 'Research and Teaching' codes and who have a 0.2 FTE or greater contract of employment, whether full or part time, permanent or fixed term. The second phase will be to identify staff from this group who have 'significant responsibility' for research, based on the following criteria:

- Where Category A eligible staff are on 'Research' only contracts, research activity will be explicitly identified in their job description and will account for a minimum of 0.2 FTE.
- Where Category A eligible staff are on 'Research and Teaching' contracts, the balance of responsibility for academic management, research teaching and educational research compared to healthcare research activities which are directly relevant to the REF A3 Unit of Assessment will be assessed. Significant responsibility for research will be based on an estimated average of > 0.1 FTE hours per week on independent healthcare research activity.
- For all Category A eligible staff, written expectations of engagement with research activities, applying for research funding, writing publications and conference attendance are explicitly stated on the Professional Development Review (PDR), which will be monitored and amended annually in collaboration with the line manager.
- Significant responsibility for research will also be demonstrated by documented evidence of UCO funding or sponsorship for research-related activities within the census period (e.g. conference attendance fees, research training opportunities, sabbatical pay etc.).

2.1.4 The process of identifying staff with significant responsibility for research will be started by line managers followed by screening by a panel of members REFC who have completed REF E&D training (Appendix 5.6). Decisions will be made through discussions among the screening panel until consensus is reached and submitted to the full REFC for approval. REFC decisions about research responsibility will be discussed with individual staff.

The UCO provides a vocational healthcare course and has a high percentage of staff who are practising clinicians and employed on part-time educational contracts. Within the current pool of potential Category A eligible staff (i.e.

minimum 0.2 FTE, HESA return on a 'Research only' or 'Teaching and Research' code), seven of the four are part-time. The UCO intends to submit all current Category A staff to REF 2021.

The policy for identifying significant responsibility for research will be the same for all staff, whether full or part-time, and based on:

- the function of their employment (i.e. documented expectations of research activity in job descriptions and the annual Professional Development Reviews created in collaboration with line managers)*
- documented institutional support for research activities (i.e. time, resources and/or financial support provided for research training, conferences, writing grant applications and sabbaticals) and proportion of work time expected to be allocated for research > 0.2 FTE*

In line with the guidance (REF 2019/01), the identification of significant responsibility will not relate to the quantity or quality of research outputs.

2.1.5 Staff who are not considered to have significant responsibility for research but who wish to appeal will be invited to present their grounds for appeal using the process outlined in Section 2.4.

2.1.6 The process of identifying staff with potentially significant responsibility for research started in January 2019 with an online survey of research activity. Currently only seven staff are returned on HESA 'Research' or 'Research and Teaching' contracts and the majority of staff are on 'Teaching' contracts. Information about REF was distributed to all staff, including those who were on sick leave, maternity/paternity/adoption leave or on sabbatical at that time. An accompanying anonymous online survey requested information about research activity and the results of the survey are in Appendix 5.4

2.1.7 REFC decisions about staff with significant responsibility for research will be presented in reports for discussion and approval by the Research and Scholarship Strategy Committee (RSSC) and Academic Council (AC) to ensure that the relevant policies and procedures are being upheld. The timescale for informing staff about REF processes and identifying Category A staff is outlined in Table 1. See full REF timescale in Appendix 5.7.

Table 1: Timeline for identifying Category A staff

2019	Process
February	Initial REF information distributed by email to all staff Survey of current research activity and REF expressions of interest
March	Survey data analysed
May	Draft Code of Practice disseminated to staff for feedback
June	Code of Practice submitted to REF
August	Response to REF feedback and amendments made as necessary
September	1st Equality and Diversity Training day
September	Staff on relevant HESA Research contracts invited to apply for REF
September	Other staff identified through self-selection and invited to discuss current research activity, roles and future plans with line managers
October	Screening staff for Category A eligibility by REFC Individual staff informed of decisions about submission to REF
November	Appeals processes instigated, if necessary Individual staff informed of Appeals Panel decisions
December	Final decisions disseminated to all staff Notice of intention to submit sent to REF

2.2 Development of processes

2.2.1 All policies and procedures have been developed to comply with the guidance document published by REF in January 2019. The UCO became a member of GuildHE Research in Summer 2018 to gain knowledge and feedback about how to develop REF processes appropriate for a small institution with limited research staff and outputs. Individual members of staff have attended REF related conferences and work shops.

2.2.2 The UCO's plan to apply to REF 2021 was first presented for consultation via email in January 2019. In the absence of formal union representation, staff discussions about REF policies and procedures were also conducted at the annual Staff Development weekend in March 2019 and relevant committee meetings, including members of the Research and Scholarship Strategy Committee (RSSC) in March and May 2019 and the Academic Council (AC) in December 2018 and June 2019.

2.2.3 As this is the first time the UCO has applied to REF amendments are likely to be required to the Code of Practice. We have therefore decided to delay training for staff involved in enacting REF processes until we have received REF feedback and final approval for the Code of Practice. We plan to constitute the REFC in June, after the draft Code of Practice has been approved by the Academic Council. Policies, procedures and the outcome of the REF processes at each stage will be communicated to all UCO staff using the same methods described in Part 1.4, once consultations with staff and approval by the relevant committees have been completed.

2.2.4 *The UCO is a small institution with recent University [College](#) status and no current union representation. The CoP has been reviewed and approved by [the staff and a letter signed by the Vice Chancellor to confirm](#) that REF policies and procedures are considered to be transparent, fair and inclusive for staff and appropriate for the context of the UCO as an institution with limited research activity is in Appendix 5.14.*

2.3 Staff, committees and training

2.3.1 The procedure for appointing staff to the Research Excellence Framework Committee (REFC) will be managed by the RSSC, who will nominate staff with appropriate roles within the institution to create a broad range of expertise in research, academic management and human resources. See Appendix 5.1 for the REFC Terms of Reference. This committee will be responsible for developing, enacting and reporting all processes, including identification of Category A eligible staff, determining significant research responsibility and research independence, screening and selecting outputs and developing the impact case studies and institutional research environment statement.

2.3.2 For practical reasons, different stages of the process will be managed by smaller REFC sub-committees, consisting of a minimum of three members, who will make recommendations for discussion and approval by the full REFC. All members of REFC will have decision-making roles, except the secretary. In the event of differing opinions within the committee, advice from an external advisor will be requested and their decision will be prioritised.

2.3.3 The Chair of REFC will be the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and minutes and records of REF decisions and outcomes will be managed by the Research Administrator. REFC will provide direct reports of activity to the RSSC which meets 3-4 times per year, and thence to the Academic Council (see Institutional Committee Management Plan in Appendix 5.5).

2.3.4 All members of REFC will participate in Equality and Diversity (E&D) training before starting REF activities in September 2019. To enhance transparency, fairness and inclusivity within the institution, a range of other UCO staff will also be asked to participate in E&D training. They will include senior management, such as the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Head of Human Resources who will be involved in REF appeals processes, and course leaders and senior line managers who will be

discussing research activity, future career plans and REF applications with staff in annual PDRs.

2.3.5 E&D training will be run by the DVC (Research) and Head of Research who both participated in courses run by Advance HE and Guild HE Research in March and April 2019. The first REF-specific training day is planned for September 2019, which is anticipated to be after the Code of Practice has been amended, if necessary, and the final version approved by REF. A second E&D training day will occur in April 2020 to support the process of screening and selecting research outputs - see timeline in Appendix 5.7.

2.3.6 The aim of the first E&D training day is to equip UCO staff with the knowledge and skills to raise their awareness of E&D issues in decision making processes throughout the institution, and with specific reference to REF 2021 (see Training course details Appendix 5.6). Morning sessions will be relevant to a wide range of UCO employees, including senior management, student services and registry staff but the afternoon sessions will be REF-specific and attended by staff with specific REF roles. The aim of including other staff in the morning sessions is to raise awareness and embed E&D concepts within the institution's culture, rather than focusing solely on REF activities. The second training day in January 2020 will focus on issues influencing REF output selection.

2.3.7 The majority of the material to be used has already been tailored for REF by Advance HE and was disseminated to their workshop participants. Material will be further adapted for the context of the UCO's REF submission by amending examples and activities to reflect the nature of staff and research outputs relevant to the A3 Allied Health Unit of Assessment. Content includes: definitions of equality, diversity, disability and discrimination, legal requirements, factors affecting implicit and cognitive personal bias, impact on institutional culture and processes, and specific implications for the development and enactment of the REF 2021 Code of Practice and associated policies and procedures.

2.4 Appeals

2.4.1 Appeals processes will be communicated to all UCO staff via email once the Code of Practice has been provisionally approved by the Academic Council in June 2019. Any amendments following REF feedback and approval will be similarly communicated from September onwards. This information will also be made more widely available once the final approved Code of Practice has been uploaded to the UCO website and will include details about confidentiality, appeals at different stages of the REF process, eligible grounds for appeal, a link to the REF Appeal Form, timelines for appeals and decisions, and details about the panel responsible for managing appeals.

2.4.2 Individuals who have applied for submission to REF will be informed of the decision about their eligibility by email from REFC and/or discussion with their line manager in October 2019. See timeline in Appendix 5.7. A summary of decisions will be communicated to all UCO staff by email once all relevant individuals have been notified and any appeal processes are completed (e.g. the total number of anonymous staff members being submitted to REF).

2.4.3 Staff who wish to appeal against a decision about their eligibility for submission to REF will be asked to submit their reasons on a REF Appeal Form (Appendix 5.8). Eligible grounds for appeal are:

- A significant error in the procedure for identifying eligible staff, determining significant responsibility for research or research independence.
- A decision was not made in accordance with the Code of Practice.
- A staff member believes that a decision was affected by an assessor's personal bias or prejudice.

2.4.4 Appeals will be dealt with confidentially by an independent panel consisting of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), a member of the Human Resources Department not previously involved in REF processes and a senior member of staff with experience of equality and diversity issues in higher educational institutions. The Appeal Panel (Appendix 5.9) will be chaired by the DVC(E) and will deal with appeals within two weeks of receiving an Appeal Form. Where there is a difference of opinion within the panel, advice will be sought from an external source with REF experience and their decision will be prioritised. The decision will be communicated directly by the DVC(E) in a face-to-face meeting or via telephone or email if the member of staff is on sick leave, maternity/paternity leave or on sabbatical.

2.5 Equality impact assessment

2.5.1 A preliminary survey was conducted in January 2019 to identify research active staff currently eligible for REF 2021 and to identify other UCO staff with future research plans or aspirations. Demographic data for the seven members of staff who were predicted to be potentially Category A eligible were compared against data for the academic faculty population to identify any early indications of inequality issues. Data suggested broadly similar characteristics (Appendix 5.4) but the small number of potential Category A eligible staff make it make unwise to draw conclusions about equality of representation without further quantitative and qualitative data.

2.5.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be conducted in November 2019 to assess the fairness and inclusivity of process of identifying staff with significant responsibility for research and research independence. A further EIA will be conducted in November 2020 to assess outcomes from the selection of research outputs for submission to REF. A final EIA will be conducted on the whole REF process after the mock REF in January 2021.

2.5.3 The EIAs will compare the demographic and protected characteristics of staff who have been selected, and whose research outputs have been

selected, for submission to REF against all Category A eligible staff and the UCO staff population as a whole.

Part 3: Determining research independence

3.1 Policies and procedures

3.1.1 Category A eligible staff will be identified as outlined in Section 2.1 (i.e. HESA 'Research' or 'Research and Teaching' codes, 0.2 FTE or greater contract of employment and having significant responsibility for research). The criteria for determining which staff are 'independent researchers' will be:

- individuals on 'Research' codes who are employed or funded for the majority of their UCO role to carry out self-directed research (i.e. as Principal Investigators and Project Leaders or staff who have been awarded research funding)
- individuals on 'Research and Teaching' HESA codes who are employed or funded as one aspect of their UCO role to carry out self-directed research (i.e. as Principal Investigators and Project Leaders or staff who have been awarded research funding)
- UCO staff or students who carry out research activities for someone-else or under supervision will not be considered as independent researchers. For example, Postdoctoral Research Assistants and Professional Doctorate and PhD students would not be eligible *unless* they had significant input into the design of an extended study or led a substantial or specialised discrete package of work.
- Early Career Researchers (ECRs) will be included in the submission as part of their and UCO's strategic development of research capacity and experience. The definition of ECR will be taken from paragraphs 148 and 149 in the 'Guidance on Submissions, REF 2019/01.

3.1.2 The fulfilment of criteria for research independence for individuals potentially eligible for submission to REF will be screened by a REFC subcommittee and presented to the full committee for discussion and approval in October 2019. Decisions will be made using the criteria in 3.1.1 and final decisions will be communicated to individual staff by REFC in December 2019, after completion of any staff appeals, if necessary.

3.1.3 The stages for determining staff who are independent researchers, and associated appeals processes, are illustrated in the timeline in Appendix 5.7.

3.2 Staff, committees and training

3.2.1 The process of determining research independence will be conducted by REFC members who will have participated in the first E&D training day in September 2019. Where there are differences of opinion within panels, the advice of the external advisor will be prioritised. The process will be the same as in Section 2.3.

3.3 Appeals

3.3.1 Appeals will be conducted by the independent Appeals Panel. Where there are differences of opinion within panels, the advice of the external advisor will be prioritised. Appeal processes and methods of communicating appeals information to staff will be the same as in Section 2.4.

3.3.2 Appeals will be submitted on confidential Appeals Form (Appendix 5.8) and the eligible grounds for appeal will be the same as in Section 2.4.3.

3.4 Equality impact assessment

3.4.1 An equality impact assessment will be conducted in November 2019 to assess fairness and inclusivity in identifying researcher independence.

Part 4: Selection of outputs

4.1 Policies and procedures

4.1.1 The UCO plans to submit all Category A staff. It is anticipated that the seven potentially eligible staff will equate to approximately 5 FTE, which will require submission of two impact case studies and 13 research outputs.

4.1.2 Information will be disseminated by REFC about the grading system for research outputs to enable staff to identify their own highest quality work (See Guidance for selecting output submissions in Appendix 5.10). The criteria are:

- 4* Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
- 3* Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but falls short of the highest standards of excellence.
- 2* Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
- 1* Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.

4.1.3 To ensure a fair, transparent selection process:

- Staff will be invited to identify all in-scope outputs created during the census period (January 1st 2014 to August 31st 2020). They will submit a maximum of five of highest quality to REFC in January 2020 (including planned work that is expected to be published or accepted for publication by December 2020)
- In June 2020, REFC members involved in screening and selecting outputs will participate in the second E&D training day (see Appendix 5.6)

- In October 2020, all submitted outputs will be screened for quality and eligibility i.e. made publicly available in the Guild HE Research repository within three months of publication for outputs created after the UCO was awarded University College status in September 2017.
- Outputs will be graded independently by a REFC sub-committee (minimum of three staff) using checklist criteria for quality in terms of originality, significance and rigour, and impact in the osteopathic healthcare and research environment (Appendix 5.10.2).
- Scores will be compared amongst the REFC subcommittee and recommendations for output selection will be presented for discussion by the full REFC committee. Where there are differences of opinion within the committee, advice will be sought from an external advisor with prior experience of REF and this opinion will be prioritised.

4.1.4 As the small number of potential Category A staff are currently all part of the UCO research department, it is unlikely that their individual outputs can be effectively blinded before review. Conflicts of interest in decision making will be managed using the same processes that have been adopted by the UCO Research Ethics Committee, whereby staff identify their own conflicts of interest to the committee and withdraw from relevant discussions or decisions. Strategies for minimising risk of personal bias influencing decisions will be:

- adherence to policies and procedures set out in the Code of Practice;
- systematic screening processes using criterion-based checklists;
- discussion of sub-panel recommendations by the whole REFC;
- REF-specific E&D training to alert staff to the potential for unconscious influences on their decision-making; and
- seeking the opinion of an external advisor with previous REF experience when there are conflicting opinions or areas of uncertainty.

4.1.5 To promote fairness, inclusivity, diversity and representativeness in the UCO's REF submission process, the one highest quality output from each Category A staff will initially be selected (approximately 6-7 outputs)

- REFC will then identify the two highest quality outputs from this group around which two Impact Case Studies will be created.
- The remaining 6-7 research outputs will then be discussed for selection on the basis of star quality; relevance to an Impact Case Study; and in proportion to the total outputs submitted by an individual (maximum 5).
- Where two outputs are considered to be equal in terms of quality and relevance, selection will be based on creating maximum diversity within the REF submission as a whole with reference to the protected characteristics of the staff submitted (e.g. sex, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, religious belief, FT/PT contract, currently at work or on leave).

4.1.6 REFC will be responsible for developing the criteria for selecting outputs, based on published REF Guidance (i.e. originality, significance and rigour), discussions with other institutions (e.g. at GuildHE Research meetings) and feedback from external advisors. Criteria for assessing the quality and relevance of research outputs will be developed as a checklist (Appendix 5.10.2). This information will be disseminated to staff to assist in the selection of their own outputs in July 2020.

4.1.7 The timeline of the stages for developing criteria, screening and selecting outputs, and assessing the impact of decisions on equality and diversity is illustrated in Appendix 5.7.

4.2 Staff, committees and training

4.2.1 The process of selecting outputs and impact case studies will be conducted by REFC members who will have participated in E&D training in September 2019 and July 2020. Where there are differences of opinion within panels, the advice of the external advisor will be prioritised. The process will be the same as in Section 2.3.

4.2.2 Appeals from staff about the content or quantity of their outputs selected for submission to REF will be conducted by the independent Appeals Panel. Where there are differences of opinion within panels, the advice of the external advisor will be prioritised. Appeal processes and methods of communicating appeals information to staff will be the same as in Section 2.4.

4.2.3 Appeals will be submitted on confidential Appeals Form (Appendix 5.8) and the eligible grounds for appeal will be the same as in Section 2.4.3. The appeals timeline is illustrated in Appendix 5.7.

4.3 Disclosure of circumstances

4.3.1 The minimum research output required for each member of Category A staff submitted to REF is one. Staff who feel that their ability to engage effectively with research activities within the census period (January 1st 2014 to August 30th 2020) has been limited by personal circumstances can request that their contribution is reduced to zero if they wish. This process will involve the member of staff completing a confidential Personal Circumstances Form (Appendix 5.11).

4.3.2 Forms will be submitting by email to an independent panel of three staff who have not been involved in the REF screening and selection processes. This panel will consist of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), the Head of Human Resources and a senior member of the academic management team with experience of E&D issues in higher education (Appendix 5.12).

4.3.3 The panel will address requests to consider personal circumstances within two weeks of receiving a Personal Circumstances Form. A member of staff reporting difficulties in relation to REF submissions, whether previously disclosed or not, will receive ongoing support and will be invited to discuss issues with their line manager and/or the UCO counsellor. The details of an individual's personal circumstances will remain confidential to the panel but the decision about whether a reduction in output is appropriate will be communicated to the Chair of REFC.

The UCO does not currently stipulate any expectations about research outputs from members of staff in their formal job descriptions and contracts. In addition, research outputs are not formally assessed or linked to remuneration, tenure or imposed as conditions for continuing employment. There are no stated minimum targets regarding number of peer-reviewed publications per year, conference attendances or successful grant applications. Individual workloads and targets are agreed collaboratively with Line Managers during the annual Professional Development Reviews.

If any staff disclose circumstances which are affecting their work in general, as well as their ability to undertake research activities, these are discussed with line managers or the Human Resource department. Adjustments to work load, working hours and attendance are agreed and monitored by HR who discuss individual needs for additional support (e.g. occupational health assessments, psychological support and counselling) as necessary.

For REF 2021 submissions, these policies and processes would be supplemented with discussions about the member of staff's choices to:

- either request a reduction of minimum required output from one to zero*
- or receive additional time, support, resources or work adjustments to enable them to fulfil the minimum requirement of one output*

The UCO has limited research staff (currently seven). If one Category A member of staff had an agreed reduction in output, we would not plan to request a reduction in total institutional outputs. However, if two or more staff disclosed circumstances, cumulative effects might make this necessary.

4.3.4 Personal circumstances that may have affected an individual's ability to engage effectively with their research role between January 1st 2014 and August 30th 2020, and which may be grounds for a reduction in minimum output to zero include work, personal health or family issues such as:

- Extended absence from the UCO due to a planned sabbatical or a career break in which no research activities were conducted.
- Illness, injury, disability and mental health conditions.
- Gender reassignment.
- Issues relating to protected characteristics or employment legislation.
- Qualifying periods of family leave including any length of statutory maternity/adoption leave; or paternity/adoption leave lasting more than four months.
- Other issues related to pregnancy, maternity, paternity or adoption.
- Caring responsibilities for children and other family members.
- Being an Early Career Researcher, as defined in the REF Guidance on Submissions, paragraphs 148-9.

4.3.5 Some staff with difficult personal circumstances may choose not to disclose these as part of the REF process, and the minimum expectation of one submitted output will remain.

4.4 Appeals about the selection of research outputs

4.4.1 Staff will be able to make an appeal if they feel that decisions about the quantity or composition of their research outputs chosen for submission to REF have not been conducted fairly.

4.4.2 Appeals will be submitted on confidential Appeals Form (Appendix 5.8) and the eligible grounds for appeal will be the same as in Section 2.4.3.

4.4.3 Appeals will be conducted by the independent Appeals Panel (Appendix 5.9). Where there are differences of opinion within panels, the advice of the external advisor will be prioritised. Appeal processes and methods of communicating appeals information to staff will be the same as in Section 2.4.

4.5 Equality impact assessment

4.5.1 An EIA will be conducted in November 2020 to assess the effects of the procedures for selecting outputs on the fairness and inclusivity of the UCO's proposed REF submissions. Diversity of outputs from staff with protected characteristics will be compared against diversity in all Category A staff and amendments will be made to output selection if inequalities are identified.

4.5.2 Areas to be assessed for equality impact will include: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy/adoption, maternity/paternity, race/ethnicity, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation and employment status (e.g. full-time and part-time staff).

4.5.3 An external mock REF will also be conducted in December 2020 to assess the impact of the procedures for staff selection and output selection on the diversity and inclusivity of the outcomes. This process will provide information to guide decisions about the final REF submission.

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Appendix 5.1: REFC Composition and Terms of Reference

Date for approval:	June 12 th 2019 (Academic Council)
Date for review:	June 2020
Chair:	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)
Secretary:	Research Administrator

Context

The UCO aims to conduct and disseminate the findings of high-quality healthcare research conducted by faculty members, in collaboration with other institutions and with stakeholder partners, as part of its' mission to promote an evidence-based approach to osteopathic practice and education. This year, we are applying to join the Research Excellence Framework (REF) for the first time. This will involve submitting a selection of impact case studies and research outputs completed by UCO staff between 2014 and 2020. The application process for the next round of institutional assessment involves developing a REF Code of Practice and a new research-related Equality and Diversity policy which clearly outlines the procedures developed to ensure a fair, transparent and inclusive selection of staff and research outputs for REF 2021.

This document sets out the Terms of Reference guiding the composition and work of a new Research Excellence Framework Committee (REFC) which will be constituted in June 2019 after approval by the Academic Council. REFC will report to the Research and Scholarship Strategy Committee (RSSC) three times per year and the Academic Council twice a year. The Terms of Reference will be reviewed and amended annually in accordance with UCO Quality Assurance guidelines.

Terms of Reference

To be responsible to the Research and Scholarship Strategy Committee to:

1. Demonstrate the enactment and monitoring of fair, inclusive and transparent policies and procedures for identifying 'Category A' eligible staff for submission to the Allied Healthcare Unit of Assessment (A3) in REF 2021.
2. Demonstrate the enactment and monitoring of fair, inclusive and transparent policies for identifying staff who have 'significant responsibility' for healthcare research as part of their UCO role.
3. Demonstrate the enactment and monitoring of fair, inclusive and transparent policies for identifying staff who meet the REF criteria for 'independent researchers'.
4. Demonstrate the enactment and monitoring of fair, inclusive and transparent policies for selecting representative high-quality impact case studies and healthcare research outputs from all Category A staff submitted to REF, including conducting a mock REF exercise.
5. Demonstrate the enactment and monitoring of appropriately sensitive and confidential processes for identifying staff with personal circumstances that have limited their ability to fulfil their research roles in the REF period.
6. Demonstrate the enactment and monitoring of fair, independent appeals processes for staff who believe they have been unfairly discriminated against in terms of selection or representation of their research outputs.
7. To manage and monitor processes to ensure that research outputs are made available within the required timeframe via appropriate research repositories.
8. Report any concerns regarding patterns of issues to the Research and Scholarship Strategy Committee and Academic Council.
9. Monitor and record actions and meetings accurately and produce evidence of adherence to UCO REFC processes, as requested.
10. Produce annual reports for the RSSC and Academic Council that accurately reflect REFC activities and demonstrate congruence with UCO policy, including Equality and Diversity and staff development opportunities.

Rolling agenda items

1. To monitor changes in staff employment and contracts that relate to Category A staff (i.e. staff on 'Research' or 'Teaching and Research' HESA codes employed for more than 0.2 FTE).

2. To manage and keep under review REF processes, including efficiency and effectiveness.
3. To maintain awareness of current guidelines for REF and the in broader healthcare research environment, developing and amending strategy and policy for REF submissions.
4. To produce an annual Research Excellence Framework Report for the RSSC, including an analysis of research activity, quality, reach and significance, equality and diversity impact assessments of REFC selection and submission processes and action plans for the next year.
5. To review the REFC Terms of Reference annually.

REFC processes and procedures

REFC will be responsible for identifying eligible staff for submission to REF 2021, choosing and creating impact case studies and the institution's research environment statement, and selecting research outputs, in line with the processes outlined in detail in the Code of Practice, including:

- Identifying 'Category A' staff who may be eligible for submission to the A3 Unit of Assessment.
- Identifying staff with 'significant responsibility' for healthcare research as part of their UCO role.
- Identifying staff who are considered to be 'independent researchers'.
- Selecting research outputs from all eligible staff for submission to REF 2021.
- Developing and managing processes for identifying staff with personal circumstances that have limited their ability to engage actively with their research role during the REF 2021 census period, including receiving and responding to recommendations from an independent REF Personal Circumstances Panel - see separate document.
- Developing and managing appeals processes for staff, including receiving and responding to recommendations from an independent REF Appeal Panel - see separate document.
- Collaborating with all UCO staff to develop REF policies and disseminating information about REF decisions and outcomes.
- Managing all data in accordance with GDPR, UCO data protection and security policies and current legislation, including sensitive or confidential staff information.

- Managing an audit trail of REF activities and outcomes and producing accurate, timely reports.
- Monitoring adherence to policies and the impact of REF processes on equality and diversity within the institution (e.g. Equality and Diversity Impact Assessments).

Conflicts of interest: Conflicts of interest may only be raised by committee members. Conflicts of interest will be noted in minutes of REFC meetings.

Types of conflict of interest:

1. Committee member has a conflict of interest with regards their own research activity.

Procedure: Conflicted member formally declares their conflict of interest to REFC. Conflicted member withdraws from screening/selection processes of their own outputs.

2. Committee member has a conflict of interest not covered by 1 above.

Procedure: Conflicted member formally declares their conflict of interest to REFC. Conflicted member withdraws from screening/selection processes relating to this output.

Appeals

Members of staff may appeal decisions made by REFC about their eligibility for submission to REF 2021 and the content and quantity of their research outputs selected for submission. Eligible grounds for appeal are:

- A significant error in the procedure for identifying eligible staff, determining significant responsibility for research or research independence.
- A decision was not made in accordance with the Code of Practice.
- A staff member believes that a decision was affected by an assessor's personal bias or prejudice.

Appeals processes: There are two main levels of appeal: firstly, to an independent internal REF Appeal Panel or secondly to an external advisor with previous experience of REF.

1. Staff who are concerned about REFC decisions relating to their Category A status, significant responsibility for research, research independence or the composition or quantity of their research outputs selected for submission will be invited to complete a REF Appeal Form stating their reasons.

This will be reviewed within two weeks of receipt by an independent REF Appeal Panel of senior staff who have not been involved in other REF processes but have relevant experience of TEF, HR management and/or academic appeals. Recommendations from the Appeal Panel will be sent to the REFC Chair to be actioned.

2. If the appeal cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the Appeal Panel, external advice will be sought from an external advisor and their recommendations will be prioritised.

In addition, staff who are concerned that they have been discriminated against in relation to the protected characteristics outlined in the Code of Practice, or because of personal circumstances that have affected their ability to fulfill their research role fully during the REF census period, can raise concerns with the line manager or the Head of Human Resources. Sensitive and confidential issues will be discussed with the member of staff and a joint decision will be made about whether to forward their concerns for internal or external review.

Frequency of meetings: The REF Committee will meet three times a year, with additional meetings scheduled as necessary to respond to requests for further information or amendments from REF.

Composition and conditions of REFC membership

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) - **Chair**
- Head of Research
- Vice-Chancellor
- Doctoral Programme Leader
- Head of Human Resources
- Academic/clinic staff representative
- Data access representative, Head Librarian or Head of ICT
- Research Administrator - Secretary (no decision-making role)

Members will be appointed in accordance with their role within the UCO and by invitation, self-selection and recommendations to the Chair. The term of service for each member is rolling. All members of REFC have decision-making roles (apart from the Secretary) and will take part in REF-specific Equality and Diversity training. This training aims to enhance fairness and inclusivity in processes for identifying eligible staff for submission to REF and selecting case studies and research outputs, and outcomes will be assessed in Equality and Diversity Impact Assessments. E&D training will be run by staff who have participated in external training courses run by GuildHE Research and Advance HE. Training content and timing are included in a separate document.

Quorum

REFC meetings will be quorate provided the Chair (or the alternate Chair) and at least three other members are present.

Reporting and subcommittees

Reports to:

The Research Excellence Framework Committee (REFC) reports directly to the Research and Scholarship Strategy Committee (RSSC) through the submission of the minutes of its meetings. It submits an Annual Report to the RSSC, for final approval by the Academic Council. The REFC reports, as necessary, any immediate concerns regarding serious issues to the RSSC and Academic Council.

Receives reports from:

Screening and Selection Committee is a subcommittee of REFC which manages the identification of Category A staff, selection of case studies and outputs and presents recommendations to the full REFC for discussion and decision making. It consists of a minimum of three members of REFC.

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment Committee is a REFC subcommittee which designs, conducts and analyses survey data about the fairness and inclusivity of UCO policies on REF submissions. It consists of a minimum of three members of REFC, including an HR representative.

Composition of the REF Appeals Panel

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)
- Head of Human Resources
- A member of senior academic management team with experience of E&D in higher education

External appeals

- Research Director from other institution

Composition of the REF Personal Circumstances Panel

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)
- Head of Human Resources
- A member of senior academic management team with experience of E&D in higher education

External appeals

- Research Director from other institution

The UCO is a small institution with limited staff members in each department. The same senior members of staff will sit on both the Appeals and Personal Circumstances Panel because they have the requisite experience but are not directly involved in the REF selection processes.

Appendix 5.2: Existing UCO Equality and Diversity Policy

Core Documentation Cover Page					
Equality & Diversity Policy					
Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	Jan 2017 SMT	Major Change to update and combine the Equal Opportunities Policy for Staff and Equality and Diversity Policy for Students.	HR Manager	All master versions will be held in: J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Intranet	Jan 2019 or in line with any legislative changes
V2.0	Jul 2017 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to update institution name change from British School of Osteopathy to University College of Osteopathy.	HR Manager	All master versions will be held in: J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Intranet	Jan 2019 or in line with any legislative changes
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
If you have feedback/suggestions about this policy, please email comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk					

CONTENTS

1. Scope
2. Introduction
3. Principles of Equality and Diversity
4. The UCO as an Education Provider
5. The UCO as an Employer
6. The UCO as a Service Provider
7. Data Collection
8. Monitoring
9. Related Policies and Procedures

1.Scope

- 1.1 The University College of Osteopathy (UCO) is committed to promoting equality and diversity and expects all those connected with the UCO to be treated equally, with dignity and respect and without being subjected to discrimination.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all those who come into contact with the UCO and includes staff, students, patients, visitors, trustees, partner organisations, contractors and suppliers.
- 1.3 This policy is designed to enable us to meet our equality duties, including legislative requirements under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duties.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Promoting equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion is included in our core underpinning values and is integrated into activities undertaken within the UCO. This includes strategic and operational planning; development, delivery and assessment of curriculum; student admissions and all aspects of employment including the recruitment and selection of staff. We also aim to ensure that equality of opportunity is an integral part of engagement of contractors and procurement of services.
- 2.2 This policy advises both those affected by and those who witness an act of discrimination on the process of making a complaint. The UCO will take complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination seriously and will deal them promptly.
- 2.3 The Head of HR and Student Support Officer can provide advice and guidance on equality and diversity matters.
- 2.4 This policy is non-contractual and may be updated or varied by the UCO.

3. Principles of Equality and Diversity

- 3.1 This policy applies specifically to discrimination and equality of opportunity in respect of the nine protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010:
 - a) Age
 - b) Disability
 - c) Race
 - d) Gender
 - e) Religion or cultural beliefs
 - f) Gender re-assignment
 - g) Marital status and civil partnership
 - h) Sexual orientation

i) Pregnancy and maternity

3.2 The UCO's commitment to anti-discriminatory practice relates to all kinds of discrimination as detailed below:

- a) Direct discrimination: where someone is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic.
- b) Indirect discrimination: when a requirement or a condition is applied resulting in a detrimental effect on a particular group or individual. This applies even if there was no deliberate intention to discriminate.
- c) Associative discrimination: direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who has a protected characteristic.
- d) Perceptive discrimination: direct discrimination against someone because others think they have a protected characteristic even if they do not possess that characteristic.
- e) Victimisation: when someone receives detrimental treatment because they have made or supported a complaint under the Equality Act, or it is thought that they have done so.
- f) Harassment: unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This applies even if the conduct is not directed at the individual or if they do not have the protected characteristic. Harassment in some cases may also be considered a criminal matter. This could include sexual harassment or harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic.

4. The UCO as an Education Provider

4.1 The UCO is fully committed to a policy of inclusion and aims to promote equality and diversity as an education provider. This includes taking reasonable steps to ensure that no applicant or student of the UCO receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable. Advertising, student recruitment, selection, teaching and assessment practices will be subject to regular review to ensure that they comply with this policy, current legislation and best practice.

4.2 The UCO regards discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying as a disciplinary offence. If a student is reported to have breached this policy, the matter will be investigated in accordance with the Code of Conduct Policy & Disciplinary Procedure for Students.

4.3 In circumstances where a student raises a complaint, this should be made and investigated in accordance with the Student Complaints Procedures, or where appropriate the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy.

4.4 Students will not be penalised for raising a complaint of discrimination or harassment even if it is not upheld, unless the complaint is found to be untrue and raised maliciously.

5. The UCO as an Employer

- 5.1 The UCO aims to promote equality and diversity as an employer and to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievance and disciplinary matters, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.
- 5.2 The UCO regards discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying as a disciplinary offence that could be regarded as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal. In circumstances where a member of staff is suspected to have breached this policy, an investigation will be carried out in accordance with the Code of Conduct Policy for Staff and Disciplinary Procedure for Staff.
- 5.3 In addition, line managers who had knowledge that such discrimination or harassment had occurred but who had taken no action to eliminate or report it in a timely manner, may also be subject to an investigation in accordance with the policies and procedures detailed in 5.2.
- 5.4 All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held personally liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public.
- 5.5 In circumstances where a member of staff raises a complaint, this should be made and investigated in accordance with the Staff Grievance Procedure, or where appropriate the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy.
- 5.6 Employees will not be penalised for raising a complaint of discrimination or harassment even if it is not upheld, unless the complaint is found to be untrue and raised maliciously.

6. The UCO as a Service Provider

- 6.1 The UCO will seek to support access to our services, this will include wherever practicable, making specific access arrangements for patients with a protected characteristic.
- 6.2 Complaints by a patient or any other service user should be made and will be investigated in accordance with the Patients Complaints Procedures, or where appropriate the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy.

7. Data Collection

- 7.1 The UCO will comply with the requirements of the GDPR and Data Protection Act in the collection, storage, monitoring and reporting of sensitive personal data. Data will be collected where it is reasonable, proportionate and practical to do so in line with the UCO's Data Protection Policy .

8. Monitoring

- 8.1 The Equality Committee, which includes board member representation, has a responsibility for ensuring that the UCO's aims for equality and diversity are met, and for fostering a working and learning environment in which all staff and students have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.
- 8.2 The Equality Committee will support and monitor the implementation of this policy and the UCO Equality Scheme and Action Plan.
- 8.3 Managers and policy holders will update UCO policies and procedures when necessary and in response to changes in legislation. This will include carrying out or updating an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), which will be reviewed by the Equality Committee.
- 8.4 Registry and Human Resources will collect and monitor sensitive personal data for students and staff to report to regulating bodies as required. This data may also be used to analyse the profile of students and staff against protected characteristics to identify and address any issues in equality and diversity.

9. Related Policies and Procedures

- 9.1 All UCO policies and procedures referred to in this document can be found on the UCO intranet page at: <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>
 - a) Code of Conduct Policy & Disciplinary Procedure for Students
 - b) Student Complaints Procedures
 - c) Code of Conduct Policy for Staff
 - d) Disciplinary Procedure for Staff
 - e) Staff Grievance Procedure
 - f) Data Protection Policy
 - g) Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy
 - h) Patient Complaints Procedures

Appendix 5.3: New REF-specific Equality and Diversity Policy

Date for approval at UCO:	June 12 th 2019 (Academic Council)
Date for submission to REF:	June 7 th 2019, noon
Date for review at UCO:	TBC
Chair:	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)
Secretary:	Research Administrator

REF Equality and Diversity Policy Contents

1. Scope
2. Introduction
3. Principles of Equality and Diversity
4. The UCO as a centre for conducting healthcare research
5. Data Collection
6. Monitoring
7. Related Policies and Procedures

1. Scope

1.1 The University College of Osteopathy (UCO) is committed to promoting equality and diversity throughout its' healthcare and educational activities and expects all those connected with the UCO to be treated equally, with dignity and respect and without being subjected to discrimination. In terms of the recruitment, development and career progression of staff, the key criterion is that an individual meets the requirements of the role.

1.2 The existing E&D policy applies to all those who come into contact with the UCO including: staff; students; patients; visitors; trustees; partner organisations; and contractors and suppliers. It is designed to enable the UCO to meet equality duties, including legislative requirements under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duties.

1.3 The new REF E&D policy relates specifically to strategies that aim to promote and ensure fairness and inclusivity in the processes related to the UCO's application to be included in the Research Excellence Framework.

1.4 This includes the development of criteria, and monitoring of processes to identify Category A staff with significant responsibility for research who are independent researchers, and the fair and transparent selection of a representative range of research outputs for submission to REF 2021.

1.5 This REF E&D policy also addresses development of strategies and processes for identifying discrimination or exclusion of staff in protected groups, and the actions required to resolve individual or institutional issues.

2. Introduction

2.1 The UCO aims to promote equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion in all areas of activity, including research, professional development and career opportunities for staff. This includes staff recruitment and selection, support with funding applications, further professional training, career enhancement opportunities, support in disseminating research outputs through publications and at conferences and fair representation of work in REF submissions.

2.2 This policy advises both those affected by, and those who are aware of the consequences of, a discriminatory REF-related process or decision on the process of making an appeal. The UCO will take complaints of unlawful discrimination seriously and will deal them promptly.

2.3 The Head of HR can provide staff with advice and guidance on general equality and diversity matters, and the Chair of the Research Excellence Framework Committee (REFC) can provide information about equality and diversity matters of specific relevance to the UCO's submission to REF 2021.

2.4 This policy is non-contractual and may be updated or varied by the UCO.

3. Principles of equality and diversity

3.1 This policy applies specifically to discrimination and equality of opportunity with respect to nine protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010:

- a) Age
- b) Disability
- c) Race
- d) Gender
- e) Religion or cultural beliefs
- f) Gender re-assignment
- g) Marital status and civil partnership
- h) Sexual orientation
- i) Pregnancy and maternity.

3.2 In line with REF guidance it also includes issues relating to:

- j). Paternity
- k). Adoption
- l). Caring responsibilities
- m). Variations in employment status (e.g. full-time and part-time staff, permanent and fixed term contracts)

These may all affect a staff member's ability to engage in research activities and potentially influence decisions about selecting outputs to submit to REF.

3.3 Direct discrimination may occur when a research staff member is treated less favourably because of a demographic or protected characteristic.

3.4 Indirect discrimination may occur when a policy or applied criterion results in a detrimental effect on REF-related decisions about a group or individual. This applies even if there was no deliberate intention to discriminate.

4. The UCO as a centre for conducting healthcare research

4.1 The UCO is fully committed to a policy of inclusion and aims to promote equality and diversity as a centre for conducting healthcare research. This includes taking reasonable steps to ensure that no staff member receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged in consideration for submission to REF by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable.

4.2 Procedures for selecting eligible research staff and their outputs for submission to REF 2021 will be subject to regular review to ensure that they comply with this policy, current legislation and best practice.

4.2 In circumstances where a member of staff appeals against a REFC process or decision or raises a complaint, this will be investigated by an independent REF Appeals Panel, in accordance with procedure set out in the Code of Practice. This may include seeking advice from an independent external advisor if requested by the member of staff for appeals or complaints that cannot be resolved satisfactorily within the UCO.

4.4 Staff will not be penalised for appealing against a REFC process or decision or raising a complaint of discrimination even if it is not upheld, unless the complaint is found to be untrue and raised maliciously.

4.5. The UCO aims to promote equality and diversity as an employer of research staff and to ensure that no employee receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable. This E&D policy specifically addresses unfair exclusion from submission to REF 2021 as a Category A member of staff or discrimination in quantity or content of outputs selected for submission.

4.6 In circumstances where a member of staff raises a complaint, this should be made and investigated in accordance with REFC appeals procedures.

5. Data Collection

5.1 The UCO will comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 in collecting, storing, monitoring and reporting sensitive personal data relating to the identification of research staff and the selection of their outputs for REF.

5.2 Data will be collected where it is reasonable, proportionate and practical to do so in line with the UCO's Data Protection Policy. Data about individuals will

remain confidential and will be anonymised in UCO reports, apart from circumstances in which it is required by REF and UKRI for monitoring and further analysis. The circumstances in which personal details will be disclosed will be explained to the staff involved - Appendix 5.13.

5.3 The process for staff who wish to disclose sensitive information about personal circumstances that affected their ability to conduct research during the REF census period will be managed confidentially via a member of the HR department who is not directly involved in any other REF screening or selection processes. Reasons for requesting a reduction in research output will be sent to the Chair of the Personal Circumstances Panel. Data on this confidential form will be stored securely within the HR department.

6. Monitoring

6.1 The UCO Equality Committee, which includes board member representation, has a responsibility for ensuring that the UCO's aims to uphold equality and diversity are met, and for fostering working and learning environments in which all staff and students have opportunities to fulfil their potential.

6.2 The implementation of this additional REF E&D policy will be monitored by the Academic Council and the UCO Equality Scheme and Action Plan.

6.3 REFC will update the REF E&D policy and procedures when necessary and in response to changes in legislation or REF guidance. This will include carrying out or updating an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) on the selection and submission of research staff and outputs to REF 2021. which will be reviewed by REFC and the Equality Committee.

6.4 Human Resources will collect and monitor sensitive personal data for staff to report to REF as required. This data may also be used to analyse the profile of staff against protected characteristics to identify and address any issues in equality and diversity in staff selection and REF submissions.

7. Related policies and procedures

Appendix 5.2 - UCO Equality and Diversity Policy

Appendix 5.9 - REF Appeal Panel and Procedures

Appendix 5.13 - Information for Staff about Use of Personal Data

Appendix 5.4: HESA return data and summary of initial REF survey data

5.4.1 HESA return

Categories	All UCO staff (n=182)	Current research staff (n=7)
Male	56%	5
Female	44%	2
Ethnicity White British	52%	7
Other	48%	
Heterosexual	34%	6
LGBTIQ+	7%	1
Not known	41%	
Average age range	42 to 50	45 to 55

Additional HESA data indicated that out of 139 academic faculty, only 7 were employed full time and the majority, 61% (84), worked at the UCO for one to two days per week. 35% (48) had multiple roles within the institution

5.4.2 Summary of initial REF survey data

In January 2019, information about the UCO's intention to submit to REF (5.4.3) and an anonymous survey about work roles and research activity (5.4.4) was distributed to all academic, clinical and research staff via Outlook emails. Responses were received from 30 out of approx. 139 faculty (22% response rate), of whom four reported active research roles. Comparisons and intersectional analysis of demographic and protected characteristics were limited by the small number of research active staff. In line with guidance from Advance HE about analysing equality data in small institutions, future E&D surveys will include the collection of qualitative data to provide a broader perspective on equality issues at different stages of the REF process. (<https://www.ecu.ac.uk/guidance-resources/using-data-and-evidence/working-with-data/>)

Survey responses illustrated the largely part-time nature of UCO staff. Median hours per week worked at the UCO were 16 (IQR 23.25), representing approx. two days per week. Approximately 44% worked at the UCO for one-two days a week and were 23% full-time. Responses also illustrated the tendency for multiple roles. Twelve participants worked in clinic, fourteen were lecturers and four were technique teachers. Thirteen had some administrative work and fifteen reported 'other' roles, including research teaching and supervision.

Self-reported research activity was relatively limited. Ten people were involved in some form of research since 2000. Six published papers, six presented conference keynotes, five had given oral conference presentations and five had presented posters. One person was a member of a REC, one was on a guideline panel, and four were involved in research outside the UCO. Four staff wished to be considered for eligibility for REF (anticipated as the core research team), and twelve would be interested in research in future but not at present).

Demographic data indicated the median average age was 40-49 (median 3), representing the 40-49 age group. 50% were male, 37% female and 13% preferred not to say. 70% were White British, 7% Black British, 7% other ethnic category and 17% preferred not to say. 77% were heterosexual, 3% LGBTI+ and 20% preferred not to say. Of the four staff who wished to be considered for REF eligibility, all were male, three were White British, three were heterosexual and one was LGBTI+. There were no obvious differences in age group or FT/PT employment status between staff who wanted to be considered for REF and those who did not.

5.4.3 Initial REF email for staff information

Dear colleagues,

We are writing to ask you all to take part in a staff-wide consultation about joining the Research Excellence Framework (REF), a government-led structure for assessing research quality in all UK universities. The UCO applied to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and was awarded a Silver grade last year. We can also apply to join the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in 2020. As a small and recently designated University College, we are only likely to get onto the bottom of the league table at first, but it is a step towards recognition for osteopathic research, and in the field of allied health we are in a similar position to the AECC. Applying to REF would mean that a selection of work from all UCO staff who have 'significant responsibility' for research would be submitted for grading. A score of between 1 to 4 stars could, eventually, lead to new funding and be useful in attracting future students. Most UCO staff are coded on annual HESA returns (information we complete on iTrent) in one of three categories: 'Teaching', 'Teaching and Research' or 'Research'. These categories are equally valued and teaching staff have responsibility for doing educational research and disseminating research to students but are not necessarily involved in leading clinical or practice-based research projects. REF criteria for staff eligibility are: working at the UCO more than one day a week (i.e. > 0.2 FTE); HESA 'Research' code on iTrent; 'significant responsibility' for research; and being an independent researcher (i.e. not working under supervision).

We plan to submit the core members of the research team to REF 2021 because we currently have the relevant HESA codes. However, we also need to find out if other staff are interested in research and wish to be considered for the next REF. Even if research does not particularly interest you, we would be grateful if you would spend about two minutes filling in a short questionnaire so we can collect data about the UCO as a whole. All universities need to show that the process of selecting researchers for REF does not discriminate against particular people. As well as standard questions about age group and sex, we are asking for data about ethnicity and sexual preference, but these questions are optional. All data will be anonymised before analysis and it will not be possible to identify any individuals. If you are willing to take part, please click on the Survey Monkey link below.

Many thanks for your help, Steve Vogel and Hilary Abbey

5.4.4 Preliminary REF Questionnaire

Section 1: UCO work role

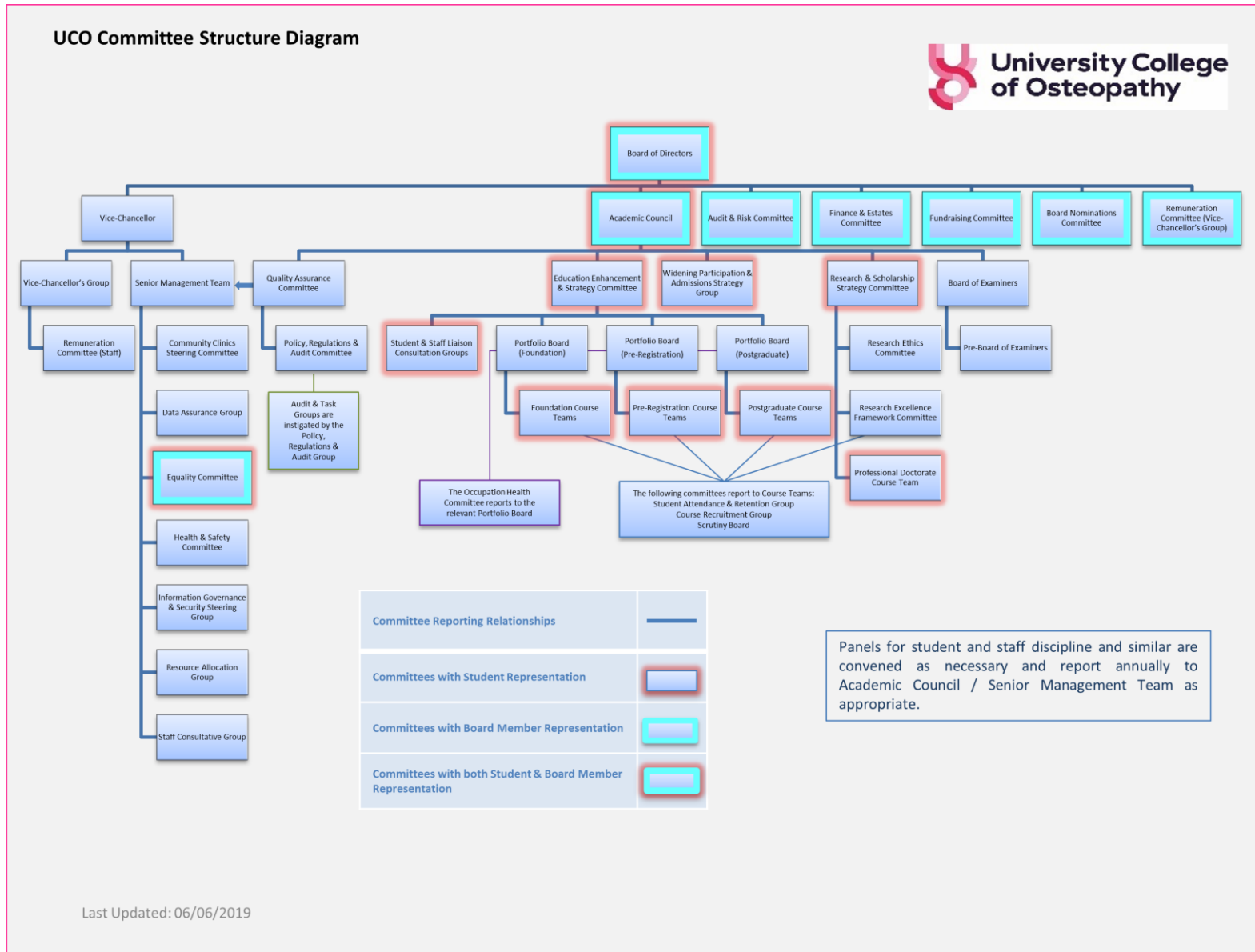
1. Approximately how many hours a week do you work at the UCO?
2. Approximately how many hours per week are allocated to:

Clinic tutoring	_____	hrs
Academic lecturing	_____	hrs
Technique teaching	_____	hrs
Academic tutoring	_____	hrs
Administration including unit leading	_____	hrs
Other (please specify)	_____	hrs
Total (should be the same as for Q1)	_____	hrs
3. Have you been actively involved in any UCO research since 2000? Yes No
4. Are you currently actively involved in any UCO research? Yes No
5. If yes to Q3 or Q4, please give details of research activity since Jan 2000
 - Number of published peer-reviewed research articles
 - Number of research conference invited or keynote presentations
 - Number of research conference paper presentations
 - Number of research conference poster presentations
 - Participation in ethics or research ethics committees
 - Participation on external guideline or policy-making panels
 - Other research-related activities: Please specify
6. Are you involved in any research activities external to the UCO? Yes No
7. If yes, please specify:
8. Are you interested in being actively involved in research in future? Yes No
9. Are you interested in being considered for eligibility for REF? Yes No

Section 2: Demographic data

10. Age group 18-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60+
11. Sex Male Female Non-binary Prefer not to say
12. Ethnicity White/White British
Black/Black British
Asian/Asian British
Mixed: please specify
Other: please specify
Prefer not to say
13. Sexuality Heterosexual
LGBTI
Other
Prefer not to say

V5 29/09/20 - Updated REF activity timetable
Appendix 5.5: UCO Committee Reporting Structure¹



¹ Academic committee structure is under review with some changes to the quality and enhancement committee structures from September 2019 – no planned change to research structure as depicted above

Appendix 5.6: Equality & Diversity Training Course

Trainers: Steve Vogel (DVC-R) and Hilary Abbey (HoR)

Proposed participants: All members of REFC, the Appeals Panel, the Personal Circumstances Panel, Head of Human Resources, Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), Course Leaders, Heads of Area, Line Managers and Unit Leaders, and representatives from the Registry and Admissions departments.

Aims of the First E&D training course:

The aim of this course is to equip UCO staff with knowledge and skills to raise their awareness of E&D issues in decision making processes throughout the institution, and with specific reference to REF 2021. Morning sessions will be relevant to a wide range of UCO staff, but the afternoon sessions will be REF-specific and attended by staff with specific roles. The aim of including other staff in the morning sessions is to raise awareness and embed E&D concepts holistically within institutional culture, rather than REF activities alone.

Content has been adapted from the REF-specific E&D courses delivered by Advance HE and includes: definitions of equality, diversity, disability and discrimination, legal requirements, factors affecting implicit and cognitive personal bias, impact on institutional culture and processes, and specific implications for the development and enactment of the REF 2021 code of practice and associated policies and procedures.

Day 1: (September 2019)

	Time	Content	Activity
	Pre-course preparation	Project Implicit - exploring personal bias related to age, gender, race or sexuality https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/uk/selectatest.jsp	Individual online activity
1	09:30-10:15	Introduction to the aims of the day and context of the UCO's submission to REF	Presentation
	Break		
2	10:30-11:15	Defining equality, diversity and discrimination	Group activity
3	11:30-12:15	Exploring factors that affect cognitive bias	Presentation
4	12:15-12:45	Exploring implications for the UCO in terms of curriculum design, admissions, teaching, learning and assessment and opportunities to succeed	Group discussion
	Lunch		
5	13:30-14:15	Exploring how implicit and cognitive bias affects the development of REF policies and the identification of Category A staff	Presentation Activity Discussion
6	14:15-15:00	Practical strategies to minimise bias in REF panels and processes	Group discussion
	Break		
7	15:30-16:00	Exploring the implications of E&D for staff identification and developing an effective Equality and Diversity Assessment process	Group discussion

Aims of the Second E&D training course:

The second E&D training course will be REF-specific all day. The aim is to revise and refresh awareness of the concepts of equality and diversity presented in Day 1, introduce new concepts about disability and discrimination and explore their relevance and implications for the fair, inclusive selection of outputs and impact case studies for submission to REF. Morning sessions will explore the underlying theories and concepts and their relevance to individual participant's self-awareness. Afternoon sessions will be based around group exercises using the Output Selection Checklist (Appendix 5.10.2) to compare the quality and potential for selection of UCO research publications which fall outside the scope of REF 2021. Outcomes from individual grading and group discussions will be explored in terms of diversity of opinions and the concepts that underpin individual decision-making processes. Focus will be on developing strategies to raise E&D awareness and minimise bias and discrimination.

Day 2: (January 2020)

	Time	Content	Activity
	Pre-course preparation	Reading a selection of UCO research publications (out of scope for REF 2021)	Individual reading activity
1	09:30-10:15	Revising equality and diversity concepts and exploring implications for selecting research outputs/impact case studies	Presentation Group activity Discussion
	Break		
2	10:30-11:15	Exploring the personal circumstances that can influence the ability to engage fully with research roles at the UCO	Presentation
3	11:30-12:15		
4	12:15-12:45	Exploring relevance/implications of disability and discrimination on fair and inclusive selection of research outputs	Group discussion
	Lunch		
5	13:30-14:15	Grading UCO research publications using the checklist criteria for quality	Individual activity
6	14:15-15:00	Comparing results and selecting best outputs for hypothetical REF submission	Group discussion
	Break		
7	15:30-16:00	Exploring the E&D concepts that may influence individual selection decisions	Group discussion

Appendix 5.7: Updated timeline of REF activity

Date	Process	Staff involved
24-25/09/18	Information gathering at GuildHE/CREST meeting to liaise with similar institutions (e.g. AECC UC)	Deputy VC (Research) and Head of Research
27/09/18	Working group meeting	DVC (R) and HoR
05/10/18	REF 2021 Consultation Meeting, GuildHE/CREST at MRC, London WC2	HoR
Oct 2018	REF proposals submitted to RSSC and SMT for discussion and approval to proceed	DVC (R) and HoR
08/10/18	Comments on REF guidelines sent to CREST	VC (R) and HoR
Jan 2019	Preliminary information about REF and initial consultation survey of UCO staff distributed	HoR UCO staff
22/01/19	Participated in CREST meeting	HoR
Feb 2019	Started to draft new UCO REF Code of Practice	DVC (R) and HoR
March 2019	Analysed initial REF survey data	HoR
03/03/19	Discussed draft Code of Practice with staff at the UCO Staff Development Weekend	UCO staff
04/03/19	Participated in GuildHE Research meeting	DVC (R)
05/03/19	Participated in CREST workshop on Code of Practice	HoR
13/03/19	Met with GuildHE Research to discuss UCO environment	DVC (R) and HoR
18/03/19	Draft Code of Practice presented at Research and Scholarship Strategy Committee for discussion	Research staff
26/03/19	Attended Advance HE Equality and Diversity training	HoR
27/03/19	Presented draft Code of Practice to Academic Council for discussion and approval to proceed	HoR
02/04/19	GuildHE Research Equality and Diversity training	DVC (R)
09/05/19	Meeting with representative from Research England to discuss the UCO's long-term research strategies	DVC (R)
June 2019	Draft Code of Practice sent to RSSC for discussion Draft Code of Practice shared for staff feedback	Research staff UCO staff
07/06/19	Submit Code of Practice to REF	DVC (R) / HoR
12/06/19	Code of Practice presented to Academic Council (AC) for discussion and approval	Academic Council
Jun 2019	REFC and Appeals and Personal Circumstances Panels constituted after approval by AC	DVC (R)
Aug 2019	Feedback and amendments received from REF and amendments made as necessary (anticipated)	DVC (R) and HoR
Sep 2019	1st REF specific Equality and Diversity training day (re identification of responsibility and independence)	DVC (R) and HoR Senior management, HR, line managers
Sep 2019	Staff on 'Research' and 'Research & Teaching' contracts invited to apply for submission to REF Research-active 'Teaching' staff identified through self-selection and discussions with line managers; invited to apply for screening if potentially eligible.	DVC (R) and HoR Research team staff Line managers UCO staff
October 2019	REFC screening of Category A eligibility, significant responsibility and research independence Staff with personal circumstances invited to disclose Staff informed about decisions re REF submissions	REFC Personal Circumstances Panel
Nov 2019	Appeals processes initiated, if necessary Individual staff informed re Appeals Panel decisions	Appeals Panel
Nov 2019	Equality Impact Assessment conducted to assess	REFC

V5 29/09/20 - Updated REF activity timetable

	fairness and inclusivity of the staff selection process	
Dec 2019	Final decisions disseminated to individuals being submitted and to all UCO staff	DVC (R) and HoR DVC (R) and HoR
Dec 2019	Upload Intention to Submit documents to REF	DVC (R) and HoR
January 2020	Disseminate criteria and checklists for selecting outputs to all Category A staff Category A staff invited to submit a max of 5 outputs	REFC All Category A staff
March 2020	REF activities suspended due to Covid-19	
July 2020	REF activities recommenced	
08/06/20 July-Oct 20	2nd Equality and Diversity training day (re outputs) Outputs and case studies screened and selected	DVC (R) and HoR REFC
April 2020	Deadline to submit special circumstances staff	
Oct-Nov 20	Staff informed of outcomes of output selection Appeals process initiated, if necessary	REFC Appeals Panel
Nov 2020	Equality Impact Assessment conducted to assess fairness/inclusivity of the output selection process	REFC
Dec 2020	Internal Mock REF	REFC
Dec 2020	Impact Case Study development and institutional Environmental Impact Statement started	REFC
Jan 2021	Impact Case Study development and institutional Environmental Impact Statement completed	REFC
Jan 2021	External Mock REF	REFC
31/07/20	Final staff census of eligibility for REF	REFC
31/03/21	Submit UCO REF 2021 documents	DVC (R) and HoR
June 2021	Submit final evidence for Impact Case Studies	DVC (R) and HoR

Appendix 5.8: REF Appeal Form

The information you provide here will be managed confidentially by the REF Appeal Panel, who will respond within two weeks of receiving this form. After investigating the grounds for your appeal against a REF decision, they will inform you about the outcome and present their recommendations to the REF Committee. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you can ask for your appeal to be considered by an independent external advisor with experience of REF issues in another institution.

Your details:

Name	
Job title	
Phone number	
Email	

Area of concern (please tick *one*):

Decision about appropriate HESA code	
Decision about significant responsibility for research	
Decision about research independence	
Decision about submission to REF	
Decision about quantity of my outputs to be submitted to REF	
Decision about which of my research outputs are to be submitted to REF	
Other concern. Please specify:	

Grounds for appeal (please tick *one*):

There has been a material irregularity or significant procedural error during the appraisal process regarding my work as a researcher	
The decision-making process was not conducted in accordance with the guidelines set out in the UCO REF Code of Practice	
There is evidence of bias or prejudice that affected the decision	

Please provide details to support your appeal. Continue on another sheet if needed.

Signed:

Date:

Please email your completed form to Sharon Potter, Chair of the REF Appeal Panel, at sharon.potter@uco.ac.uk and attach copies of any relevant documents.

Appendix 5.9: REF Appeal Panel Composition and Terms of Reference

Background:

The REF Appeal Panel will consist of senior members of staff at the UCO and personnel with experience of equality and diversity issues in higher education. They will complete the REF-specific Equality and Diversity training days in September 2019 and January 2020 but will not be involved in REF screening or selection processes. If there are differences of opinion within the Panel that cannot be resolved through discussion, they will consult an external advisor, and the external advice will be prioritised in recommendations to REFC.

Membership:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) (Chair)
Head of Human Resources
Academic management representative

Terms of reference:

1. To consider staff appeals relating to REF decisions about
 - Appropriate HESA coding
 - Significant responsibility for research
 - Research independence
 - Staff submission to REF
 - Quantity of a member of staff's output to be submitted to REF
 - Content of a member of staff's research outputs to be submitted
2. To make decisions based on the following criteria:
 - There has been a material irregularity or significant procedural error during the appraisal process regarding the member of staff's work
 - The decision-making process was not conducted in accordance with the guidelines set out in the UCO REF Code of Practice
 - There is evidence of bias or prejudice that affected the decision
3. To make recommendations about appeals to the REF Committee
4. To inform staff about the outcome of REF appeals and advise them of their right to seek an independent external opinion, if required.
4. To contact an external advisor, as needed.
5. To maintain complete and accurate confidential records of REF appeals.
6. To provide anonymised data about appeal processes and outcomes for REF reports.
7. To monitor failures of adherence to processes in the REF Code of Practice or systematic patterns in appeals and report concerns to REFC.

Meeting frequency:	As and when required to hear an appeal
Quorate:	When Chair and one other member are present
Reporting to:	REFC

Appendix 5.10: Guidance for selecting research outputs

5.10.1: Guidance for staff on assessing research output quality

Research outputs will be separated into 4 categories which are:

- 4* Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour
- 3* Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but falls short of the highest standards of excellence
- 2* Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour
- 1* Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour

Each output will be allocated a code number to separate it from the member of staff who has submitted it. All outputs will be assessed by a panel of three members of REFC using a criterion-based checklist (Appendix 5.10.2) in terms of their originality, significance and rigour, which are defined as:

Originality - a creative/intellectual advance that makes an important and innovative contribution to understanding and knowledge. This may include substantive empirical findings, new arguments, interpretations or insights, imaginative scope, assembling information in an innovative way, development of new theoretical frameworks and conceptual models, innovative methodologies and/or new forms of expression.

Significance - the enhancement or deserved enhancement of knowledge, thinking, understanding and/or practice.

Rigour - intellectual coherence, methodological precision and analytical power, accuracy and depth of scholarship, awareness of and appropriate engagement with other relevant work.

Outputs will also be assessed in terms of their potential to support one of the UCO's two Impact Case Studies and relevance to the osteopathic profession.

The grades and recommendations of the sub-panel will be discussed by the full REF Committee. If there are differences of opinion within the committee that cannot be resolved by discussion, an external advisor will be consulted, and the external opinion will be prioritised. Staff who have submitted outputs will be informed of REFC decisions and will have the opportunity to appeal if they have concerns about the number or choice of outputs selected for submission to REF - Appendix 5.8.

5.10.2: Draft checklist for research output screening and selection:

Staff ID:

Output number:

Assessor ID:

Total score:

/ 20

Assessment criterion	Grade	Justification for grade
Originality <i>e.g. offers new empirical findings, insights, innovative theories or conceptual frameworks</i>	0 1 2 3 4	
Significance <i>e.g. potential to enhance knowledge, understanding or practice</i>	0 1 2 3 4	
Rigour <i>e.g. intellectual coherence, methodological precision, analytic power, depth of scholarship, engagement with other relevant work</i>	0 1 2 3 4	
Potential to support an Impact Case Study <i>e.g. coherence with other outputs and UCO research initiatives</i>	0 1 2 3 4	
Relevance to UCO and osteopathic profession <i>e.g. potential for dissemination and/or practical application</i>	0 1 2 3 4	
Other comments:		

Appendix 5.11: Personal Circumstances Form

The information you provide here will be managed confidentially by the Personal Circumstances Panel, who will respond within two weeks of receiving this form. After investigating the grounds for your request for a reduction in research output due to personal circumstances, they will inform you about the outcome and present their recommendations to the REF Committee. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you can ask for your request to be considered by an independent external advisor.

Your details:

Name	
Job title	
Phone number	
Email	

Personal circumstances (please tick as many as are relevant):

I am an Early Career Researcher	
I have had an extended absence from work during which I did no research	
I have/have had an illness, injury, disability or mental health problem	
I am undergoing gender reassignment	
I have taken statutory maternity or adoption leave	
I have taken paternity or adoption leave lasting more than four months	
I have issues with caring responsibilities for children / other family members	
I have issues in relation to my contract of employment	
Other issues, please specify:	

Please provide details to support your request for a reduction in research output because of difficult personal circumstances. Continue on another sheet if needed.

This information will remain confidential and will be stored securely in the HR office in accordance with GDPR regulations and the UCO privacy policy. If your request is upheld and your expected research output for REF 2021 is reduced to zero, details of your personal circumstances will be submitted to REF but all data will be managed confidentially - see information for staff about use of personal data (Appendix 5.13).

Signed:

Date:

Please email your completed form to xxx, Chair of the Personal Circumstances Panel, at xxx.xxx@uco.ac.uk and attach copies of any relevant documents.

Appendix 5.12: Personal Circumstances Panel

Background:

The Personal Circumstances Panel will consist of senior members of staff and personnel with experience of staff management and support services. They will complete the REF Equality and Diversity training days in September 2019 and January 2020 but will not be involved in REF screening or selection processes. If there are differences of opinion within the Panel that cannot be resolved through discussion, they will consult an external advisor and the external advice will be prioritised in recommendations to REFC.

Membership:

Head of Human Resources (Chair)
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)
Academic management representative

Terms of reference:

1. To consider staff appeals requests to reduce their minimum research output to zero because of personal circumstances that have significantly affected their ability to engage effectively with research work during the REF census period (January 1st 2014 to August 31st 2020)
2. To consider requests based on the following personal circumstances: output to zero include work, personal health or family issues such as:
 - Being an Early Career Researcher.
 - Extended absence from the UCO due to a planned sabbatical or a career break in which no research activities were conducted.
 - Illness, injury, disability and mental health conditions.
 - Gender reassignment.
 - Issues relating to protected characteristics or employment legislation
 - Qualifying periods of family leave including any length of statutory maternity/adoption leave; or paternity/adoption leave lasting more than four months.
 - Other issues related to pregnancy, maternity, paternity or adoption.
 - Caring responsibilities for children and other family members.
3. To make recommendations about research output reduction to REFC.
4. To inform staff about the outcome of their request and advise them of their right to seek an independent external opinion, if required.
4. To contact an external advisor, as needed.
5. To maintain complete and accurate confidential records of personal circumstances output reduction requests and outcomes.
6. To provide anonymised data about personal circumstances for REF reports.
7. To monitor systematic patterns in personal circumstances amongst Category A staff and report concerns to REFC.

Meeting frequency:	When required to assess personal circumstances
Quorate:	When Chair and one other member are present
Reporting to:	REFC

Appendix 5.13: Information for staff about use of personal data

Dear _____,

You have been identified as being eligible for inclusion as a research-active member of staff in the UCO's first submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2021). The aim of the REF process is to assess the quality of research conducted within UK universities and to guide the effective use of research funding. As part of the submission process, the UCO has to submit personal data about you to REF, part of the Research England section of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

The data we will provide about you will not be anonymised and will include details such as your name, date of birth, HESA staff identifier code, type of employment contract, area of research activity, and nature and quantity of your research outputs. If you choose to disclose personal circumstances that have affected your ability to engage fully with research activities during the REF census period (1st January 2014 to August 31st 2020) and you have requested a reduction in the minimum number of research outputs you are expected to submit (i.e. from 1 to 0), these details will also be sent to REF. Data about personal circumstances will be deleted by REF at the end of the assessment stage. Within the UCO, data about disclosed personal circumstances will be held confidentially and securely within the HR department, in accordance with data protection policies, and will be anonymised in any internal reports about REF processes. Please see the REF Code of Practice for further details.

Personal information may also be passed by UKRI to other funding or higher education organisations, such as the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), so that they can conduct additional analyses to monitor the REF process. All organisations will respect the confidentiality of your data and only use it for purposes specified by UKRI, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679). Some data may be shared by different REF panels to assess issues of equality and diversity in overall content and quality of submissions, but this will not involve judgements about individuals/individual performance.

In December 2021, UKRI will publish the overall grouped results of the REF process for each participating institution (i.e. the star grading) in a way that does not explicitly identify any individuals. However, it is possible your name and job title may be cited in one of the Impact Case Studies. A list of all outputs submitted by UCO will also be published, including author's names, but individual publications will not be graded.

Further data about the information collected on the REF website can be found in the 2019/01 'Guidance on Submissions' document accessible at www.ref.ac.uk. You have the right to access any personal information that the UKRI holds - see further information at <https://re.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards/foi-data-protection/>. If you have any concerns about how your personal data will be shared or used, please contact the UCO's REF Committee, the Data Protection Officer at UKRI, Swindon SN2 1FL or email dataprotection@ukri.org

Also see UCO privacy notices aligned with GDPR article 13 on the UCO website at <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

[5.14 Vice-Chancellor's confirmation letter regarding staff agreement](#)



19th September

Dear Colleague

University College of Osteopathy REF2021 Code of Practice

I can confirm that agreement has been received from staff at the University College of Osteopathy for the processes to identify staff with significant responsibility for research outlined in the REF 2021 Code of Practice. Full information was distributed to staff with appropriate mechanisms for feedback or concerns to be submitted to the Head of Human Resources.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charles Hunt', with a horizontal line underneath.

Charles Hunt
Vice Chancellor