

University of Plymouth

REF2021 CODE OF PRACTICE

Part 1: Introduction

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) involves the rating of the research performance of staff grouped into subject Units of Assessment (see Annex 1) against world leading, international and national standards of research excellence. The criteria to be used in this rating exercise are in the final published panel statements (<https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/panel-criteria-and-working-methods-201902/>) (January 2019). The contributions that individual staff can make to a submission, in addition to their collaborations and contributions to the discipline, include: research outputs; research impact; external research income; and PhD student completions.

The University is committed to ensuring that its practices and processes in preparing for, and submitting to, REF 2021 are transparent, consistent, accountable, and inclusive. This Code of Practice has been developed following an extensive consultation process and reflects our values and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/about-us/university-structure/service-areas/equality-diversity-and-inclusion>). It has been formally approved by the Vice-Chancellor following consideration by the University Executive Group and was considered by the University's Senate at its meeting on 19 June 2019.

Equal opportunities are available to all employees regardless of personal circumstances and protected characteristics. Within this context, the purpose of this Code of Practice is to ensure that all staff who are independent researchers have their work included in the University of Plymouth's submissions to REF2021. It will ensure the processes concerned with staff and output selection for inclusion in REF 2021 are fair, transparent and consistent across the institution. The Code has been drafted using the guidance provided by the funding bodies in the following documents: *REF2021 Decisions on Staff and Outputs* (REF2017/04, updated April 2017), *REF2021 Guidance on Submissions* (REF2019/01); *REF2021 Panel Criteria and Working Methods* (REF2019/02); and, the *Guidance on Codes of Practice* (REF2019/03), all of which are available from the REF2021 website. In addition, the open letter to the sector from the Chair of the funding bodies' Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) has been considered.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise (DVC RE) has responsibility for the implementation of the University's Research and Innovation strategy (2017-22) which includes the University of Plymouth's submissions to REF 2021. The latter are overseen by the Research and Innovation Committee which is chaired by the DVC RE and reports to the University academic Senate, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor. The Committee's current membership (2019/20), and its terms of reference, are shown in Annex 2. The University's REF submissions are co-ordinated by staff in the Research & Innovation directorate – the Head of Research Strategy and Governance, Research Impact and Quality Officer, and Research Information Officer (the REF team). These staff disseminate the relevant REF2021 documentation within the institution and this material is available on an internal SharePoint site. The University also provides, at regular intervals, an update on matters related to REF2021 on its Research Kaleidoscope webpage that ensures staff can engage with research

and its impact in an accessible format.

The Research and Innovation Committee has established a REF Steering Group as a subcommittee led by the DVC RE. The membership comprises Faculty-nominated representatives who are research active members of staff with experience of the REF environment, the Director of the Doctoral College, the Head of Research Strategy and Governance, and representatives from the Research and Innovation Directorate, Library and Digital Support, and Human Resources (HR). The objectives of this subcommittee are: to develop and support the delivery of a strategy to optimise the University's REF 2021 performance; to ensure good communication about, and understanding of, REF2021 across the University; and to develop and monitor the REF2021 Code of Practice (see Annex 2).

The University currently comprises three Faculties, each of which is led by a Faculty Executive Dean, and these are further sub-divided into 15 Schools. It is intending to divide its research activities, in its RE2021 submission, between 18 Units of Assessment (UoA).

For each UoA a coordinator has been appointed by the appropriate Faculty Executive Dean (FED) following consultation with the appropriate Head of School (HoS) and the Faculty Associate Dean for Research (ADR). The role of UoA Coordinator is normally undertaken by a member of staff at Professorial or Associate Professor level who is a research leader and has experience of previous research assessment exercises. In appointing staff to this role, Faculties consider ability to assess research quality across the discipline and aptitude for open and inclusive working with fellow academic staff. UoA Coordinators (correct as of January 2020) are listed in Annex 3.

UoA Coordinators are requested to report, as directed, to the Research and Innovation Committee, REF2021 Steering Group, the DVC RE, the ADR or Executive Dean of the appropriate Faculty. Communications to and from staff who are scheduled to be included within a specific UoA are most frequently mediated through the UoA Coordinator.

When making appointments to the position of UoA Coordinator or ADR the University has ensured, wherever possible, equal gender representation and a similar balance has been sought for the REF 2021 decision-making committees. All UoA Coordinators, ADRs, and members of these committees are mandated to undertake training in equality, diversity and inclusion, supported by documentation provided by the Advance HE Equality Challenge Unit.

1.1 REF Readiness Process

The University has integrated preparation for REF 2021 submission into existing processes and systems. For example, the individual Performance Development Review (PDR) is an annual process undertaken by all staff to identify past achievements and discuss, normally with their line manager, future goals, development needs, and proposed workload for the forthcoming year. For academic staff engaged in research activities PDR considers issues related to REF submission including: the identification of outputs; applications for funding and grants awarded; opportunities for training in research leadership; and the identification of the support required to achieve agreed objectives.

Since 2016, the University has undertaken an annual REF readiness exercise that provides a reporting mechanism through which the University communicates with research staff about

their contributions to the REF2021 submissions and has kept them apprised and updated about the process itself during its evolution from REF2014. Preparation for the exercise has routinely commenced in September each year and culminated with a draft submission three months later with final review meetings taking place with FEDs, ADRs and UoA Coordinators during the following February. The annual REF readiness exercises have involved the following steps:

- All research staff identify Open Access compliant outputs that they wish to be considered for inclusion within REF2021 using the University's publication database (Symplectic Elements). Staff have been fully briefed about Open Access compliance through circulated documentation and Faculty Q&A sessions hosted by the DVC RE. In addition, colleagues in the Library and Digital Support Directorate have developed tools and training materials for staff to facilitate the process of depositing full texts of research outputs on PEARL, the University's Open Access research repository (see Figure 1).
- UoA Coordinator reviews the proposed outputs and sends them for internal and/or external review. Evidence of research independence is reviewed by the UoA Coordinator in discussion with HoS and FED and is coordinated with the University's central system on the Academic Employment Function (AEF) designation of individual staff.
- UoA Coordinator communicates output selection and research independence (where required for AEF 2 or 3 designated individuals) with staff within their UoA. In consultation with the relevant HoS and FED, support is identified to enable academic staff to develop their research outputs and further their career. Such support activities are recorded as part of the staff PDR process and their delivery overseen by HoS.
- UoA Coordinator submits outputs and evidence of research independence (where required) to ADR for review.
- ADR discusses outputs with UoA Coordinator and, after consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion issues, together agree on a final output portfolio submission for the REF Readiness exercise.
- FED, ADR, HoS and UoA Coordinator for each Faculty meet with DVC RE and REF team to discuss the REF readiness submission. Action plans relating to output quality, development of Impact Case studies, and time frames for their delivery, are agreed.
- Where a member of research staff could be returned to more than one UoA discussions take place between potential UoA Coordinators and DVC RE to determine the optimum outcome for the overall University submission.
- REF2021 Steering Group reviews outcomes of REF readiness exercise and ensures that the decision-making processes have been open and transparent and all eligible staff have been treated fairly and consistently across UoAs.
- Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken on the profile of independent researchers, research outputs, and impact cases as part of the REF readiness exercises in December 2019 and May 2020. This will be undertaken using our Equality Analysis template (see Part 5).

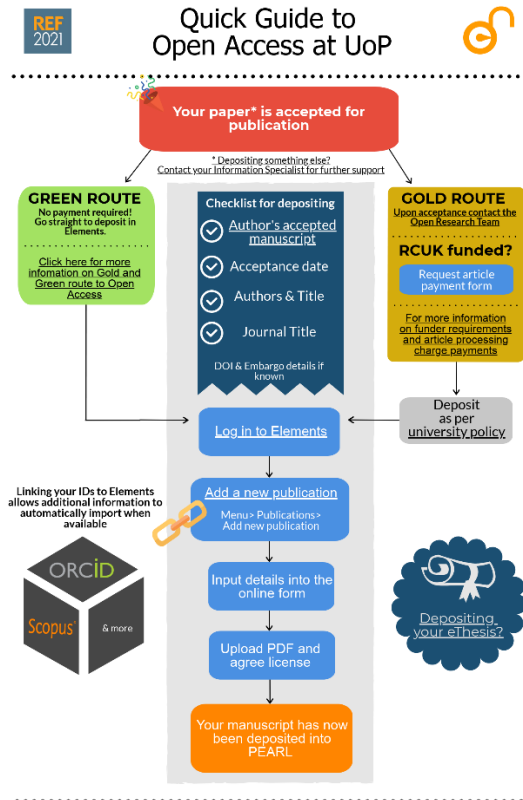


Figure 1. A guide to the Open Access process at the University of Plymouth

The University has operated a positive approach to promoting an inclusive culture throughout preparation for REF2021. All available opportunities for the enhancement of staff development and career progression for full-time staff are also available for those who are working part-time, who have adopted flexible hours, or who are involved in job-sharing. All fixed term and part-time members of academic staff who meet the category A eligibility criteria under the REF2021 guidelines, and are independent researchers, will be included in the University's REF submission (see Part 2).

Since REF2014, a number of measures have been introduced by the University to support equality, diversity and inclusion, informed by benchmarking exercises such as REF, the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), and participation in the Athena SWAN scheme. We have embraced the Athena SWAN charter as a framework for addressing gender equality challenges, and were pleased to succeed in our renewal of our University Bronze level, with 8 Schools/Faculties having achieved Athena SWAN at a silver or bronze level and the remaining working towards achieving this by 2021. Our Athena SWAN action plan includes specific deliverables, developed as a consequence of analysing the submission to REF2014, to improve the proportion of women submitted to REF 2021.

We have developed a range of initiatives to support our objectives, including the following:

- Introduced a women's mentoring scheme for research development;
- Implemented changes to our Academic Promotions process to encourage and support applications from women, building links between promotions criteria and the PDR process, ensuring interruptions to careers are considered as appropriate;

- Sponsored attendance on the AdvanceHE Aurora leadership development programme aimed at women;
- Provided opportunities for women at all levels to develop confidence and skills through the Springboard development programme;
- Formed an equal pay and gender pay gap working group to identify issues and develop actions to address gaps;
- Revised and updated our recruitment materials to be welcoming and inclusive for all potential applicants, including links to our equality, diversity and inclusion policy and family friendly policies
- Developed a Menopause policy
- Developed and launched a Transgender policy and raised awareness through externally facilitated workshops

1.2 Communication to Staff

In May 2019 the draft of this Code of Practice was disseminated to UoA Coordinators, ADRs and all eligible staff. In addition, input and feedback was sought from the University's Athena SWAN Self-Assessment team and from representatives from our academic union UCU. This was achieved via the targeted use of established and prominent communication channels consisting of email notification supplemented by an announcement on the front page of the Staff Portal (which is the default computer screen setting of all staff) and the REF2021 web pages. This communication also highlighted the availability of a dedicated email address which was set up to prioritise any issues related to the CoP, thus maintaining confidentiality and enabling staff to contact a dedicated member of the HR team for advice. Measures were also taken by HR to ensure that the communication was received in hard copy by any absent staff, or those without regular computer access for any reason, for example due to maternity, ill health, secondment or field work.

Once the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) of the REF 2021 team have approved the CoP it will be widely shared with all staff through the following channels in Spring 2020:

- DVC RE and REF team to host a Question and Answer session related to the CoP for each Faculty.
- CoP emailed to all academic staff through the Bulletin, a University-wide system strictly reserved for communicating only the highest impact and most critical 'need to know' information.
- In order to take reasonable steps to ensure that staff absent due to maternity, ill health, secondment, etc. receive a hard copy of the revised CoP it will be distributed, through HR, to these individuals with an accompanying letter signed by the DVC RE.
- As a reminder to Faculty / Schools / Institutes cascaded through FEDs.
- Publication of the code on the University's external facing website, as well as the intranet, to ensure transparency. The CoP will be made available in accessible pdf format and in alternative formats on request.

Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

REF 2021 'Guidance on submissions' paragraphs 117-150 defines staff groups that are eligible for submission to REF 2021. The definitions are as follows:

a. Category A eligible staff: “academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, on the payroll of the submitting institution on the census date, whose primary employment function is to undertake either ‘research only’ or ‘teaching and research’¹. Staff should have a substantive research connection with the submitting unit (see paragraphs 123 to 127). Staff on ‘research only’ contracts should meet the definition of an independent researcher (paragraphs 128 to 134).” [Guidance on Submissions paragraph 117]

b. Significant responsibility for research: “... those for whom explicit time and resources are made available to engage actively in independent research, and that is an expectation of their job role.” [in line with Guidance on Submissions paragraph 138]

c. Independent researcher: “ ... an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual’s research programme.” [in accordance with Guidance on Submissions paragraph 131]

The University considers that the core eligibility criteria (point a-c above) accurately identifies all staff with a significant responsibility for research. The University’s career pathways of ‘Research’ and ‘Balanced’ (Teaching and Research) map closely to the Academic Employment Function (AEF) codes 2 and 3 respectively and these classifications will be used as designators of eligible staff who have significant responsibility for research at all grades from Lecturer/Research Fellow to Professor. The University will therefore submit 100 per cent of ‘Category A Eligible’ staff who can be classified as independent researchers (see Part 3).

The Equality Impact Assessment will consider the gender and ethnicity balance within these two career pathways compared to the gender balance within the AEF code 1 (teaching and scholarship career pathways). Consideration will also be given to the gender balance of output selections and impact cases, in addition to careers interrupted by special circumstances (see Part 4).

Part 3: Determining research independence

Staff in ‘Research’ (AEF 2) or ‘Balanced’ (Teaching and Research ~ AEF 3) roles who are independent researchers on the census date are eligible for inclusion and will be submitted in the REF return. An independent researcher is defined in paragraphs 131-133 of the Guidance on submissions as “an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual’s research programme”. Possible indicators of independence as listed in paragraph 132 of Guidance on submission are listed below:

- leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project
- holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship (See Annex 5) where research independence is a requirement. An illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of independent fellowships can be found at www.ref.ac.uk, under Guidance (Appendix A)
- leading a research group or directing a substantial or specialised research activity

3.1 Procedure for determining research independence

The REF Readiness exercise described in Part 1 has been developed to ensure that the procedure for identification of research independence of AEF 2 and AEF 3 staff is fair and transparent (see Figure 2). The process is carried out for all UoAs and is monitored by the REF Steering Group. The REF readiness exercise has been undertaken annually since 2016 in order to recognise that independence status may change over time. Hence a member of staff working towards independence can be identified and supported to achieve this status in the timescale of the REF 2021 period.

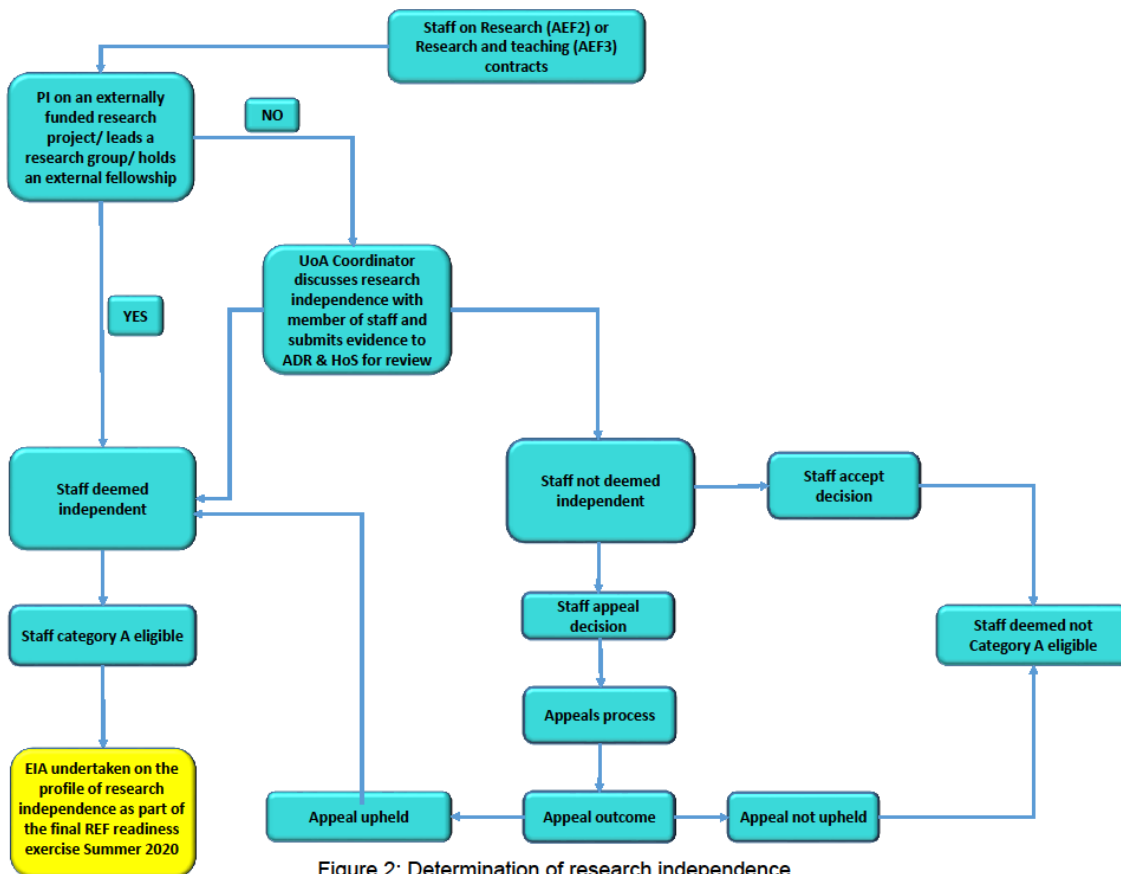


Figure 2: Determination of research independence

3.2 Staff, committees and training

The University will draw upon existing structures, together with REF-specific committees and individuals with senior-level responsibility, for REF matters to manage the REF exercise as detailed in the Introduction section of this code. The responsibilities of all committees or groups with a designated REF responsibility are identified below.

Responsibilities of University Executive Group (UEG)

UEG is the executive committee of the University, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and includes: the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience, Deputy Vice-Chancellor International and Planning, Executive Dean’s from each Faculty, Registrar and Secretary, Chief Marketing Officer, and Chief Finance Officer. UEG determines the overarching strategies to guide the REF 2021

exercise and will approve the final submission. The committee is the ultimate decision making body for all aspects of REF.

Responsibilities of Research and Innovation Committee

The Research and Innovation Committee (R&I), is chaired by the DVC RE, and reports to Senate. It has responsibility for the implementation of the University's Research and Innovation strategy (2017-22) which includes the University of Plymouth's submissions to REF 2021. Membership of the Committee and Terms of Reference are detailed in Annex 2. The Research and Innovation Committee has established a REF 2021 Steering Group as a subcommittee, led by the DVC RE, to operationalise the University's REF strategy. The Research and Innovation committee provides oversight of the Steering Group to ensure Faculty strategies are consistent with those established by UEG. The Committee, through the DVC RE, regularly updates UEG on REF2021 progress and on the basis of these reports UEG makes decisions on policy and processes relating to REF.

Minutes of the Research and Innovation Committee meetings are reported to Senate and are available on the University's SharePoint site.

Responsibilities of REF 2021 Steering Group

The REF 2021 Steering Group reports to the Research and Innovation Committee and is chaired by the DVC RE. Membership details and Terms of Reference are detailed in Annex 2. The objectives of the Steering Group are: to develop and support the delivery of a strategy to optimise the University's REF 2021 performance; to ensure good communication about, and understanding of, REF2021 across the University; and to develop and monitor the REF2021 Code of Practice (see Annex 2).

This will include:

- Making recommendations to the R&I committee based on the outcomes of the REF Readiness exercises (outputs, impact and environment)
- Sharing good practice across Faculties
- Ensuring adherence to the REF 2021 Code of Practice
- Communicating REF 2021 information and addressing staff concerns
- Overseeing the eligible staff pool and ensuring that procedures for determining research independence are implemented
- Interpreting REF guidance and providing a steer for its implementation
- Scrutinising the delivery of equality and diversity in all aspects of the REF, including the review of Equality Impact Assessment, and ensuring that appropriate actions are implemented when required

Minutes of the meetings of the REF2021 Steering Group are reported to the Research and Innovation Committee and are available on the University's SharePoint site.

3.3 Appeals

Following the May 2020 REF readiness exercise, all academic staff on AEF 2 or 3 codes will be informed about their anticipated status with regards to submission, the number of their

outputs that will likely be included, and if they are to be associated with a submitted Impact Case study. Academic staff members will be able to appeal these decisions, in the first instance, through discussion with their Faculty ADR and HoS. Appeals will be considered, normally within one week of submission, through informal resolution if appropriate. The potential grounds for appeal under this procedure are limited to the following:

- The individual can evidence that the criteria for determining research independence have not been appropriately applied. Individuals can appeal either for or against being deemed to be an independent researcher.
- Due process has not been followed as outlined within the Code of Practice.

Appeals may be logged at any time; however staff are strongly encouraged to raise the matter informally as soon as it arises. In the first instance their Faculty ADR/HoS should be contacted. The ADR/HoS will investigate and attempt to resolve the matter. Where the matter remains unresolved as far as the appellant is concerned, the appeal will be considered by a panel of three academics comprising FEDs/senior members of professorial staff taking into account gender representation. The panel can take advice from appropriate other staff (such as ADR, HoS, and UoA co-ordinator) in investigating the appeal and the member of staff raising the appeal may invite a union representative to attend the appeals meeting where a final decision will be made.

All appeals must be considered prior to the final REF readiness exercise, expected to take place in late summer 2020, being completed. This is to allow appeals to be considered in a timely fashion and their outcomes to be considered as necessary in the submission itself.

Staff may not appeal on the grounds of academic judgement, including decisions regarding selection of outputs, or staff allocation to a particular UoA.

3.4 Complaints

This Code of Practice describes specific processes by which staff are able to appeal against decisions related to REF2021. Issues arising outside the specific remit of this Code of Practice can be raised through the existing University grievance procedure ([https://liveplymouthac.sharepoint.com/sites/u114/HR%20portal%20documents/Terms and Conditions/Grievance Policy.pdf](https://liveplymouthac.sharepoint.com/sites/u114/HR%20portal%20documents/Terms_and_Conditions/Grievance_Policy.pdf)).

Part 4: Selection of outputs and Impact Case studies

Each UoA submission must include a set number of research outputs, equal to 2.5 times the combined FTE of 'Category A Submitted' staff. Rounding to the nearest whole number will be applied to give a whole number of outputs per submission. This number will be adjusted, as appropriate, to take account of approved requests for unit reductions (see 4.5). In addition, a minimum of one output will normally be required for each 'Category A Submitted' staff member, with no more than five outputs attributed to any individual (including former staff).

The REF readiness exercises undertaken since 2016 have ensured that the University makes all decisions relating to the selection of outputs in a fair and transparent manner. The final decisions on outputs submitted to REF2021, and how they are distributed across UoAs, is the

responsibility of the DVC RE supported by the REF Steering Group. All decisions aim to deliver the optimum outcome from REF2021 for the University as a whole.

4.1 Selection Process of Outputs

As defined in Part 1 the selection of outputs is driven through the REF readiness exercise. The following section provides a more detailed description of the process of output selection (see Figure 3):

- The pool of outputs from which the final selection will be made may include contributions from staff who have left the University for any reason but who, in accord with REF guidance, were employed in a REF eligible category at the time when the outputs were first made publicly available.
- REF 2021 outputs eligibility criteria and rules relating to the maximum and minimum number of outputs that may be attributed to an individual in the submission are provided to staff. It is also highlighted to staff that the REF2021 rules define that the primary criterion in the selection of outputs will be quality and that this criterion will be applied to optimise the institutional outcome.
- Staff use the University's publication database (Symplectic Elements) to select their 5 outputs of highest quality for consideration within the exercise.
- UoA Coordinator reviews each output in terms of academic rigor, originality, and significance. For some UoAs, where a sub-panel has identified that specific criteria may be used in the assessment, such as journal quality and number of citations, these parameters will also be used to inform a judgement. If the output is authored by more than one member of staff who is being returned into the same UoA, unless this is a co-produced double weighted output, the output will normally be allocated to the member of staff based on their output profile and ratings of existing allocated outputs to ensure the strongest return for the member of staff and the UoA. If the staff member is one of more than 15 co-authors on an output to be submitted to a UoA in Main Panel A the extent of their contribution will be reviewed by the UoA co-ordinator. This reduces the risk of submitting an output to a sub panel that may deem the author's contribution to be insufficient, which could result in the output being rated as 'unclassified'.
- Outputs will normally be sent for external review for assessment which will be used to moderate internal ratings.
- UoA Coordinator will also consider former Category A staff outputs (for definition see Part 4.7) within this stage of the review process.
- In parallel with the review process, library staff will determine Open Access status of outputs to confirm they comply with the REF2021 Open Access policy.
- UoA Coordinator feeds back the results of the review to staff and, in conjunction with the appropriate HoS, identifies opportunities for career development.
- ADR reviews outputs with all UoA Coordinators within their Faculty and agrees the submissions for the REF readiness exercise.

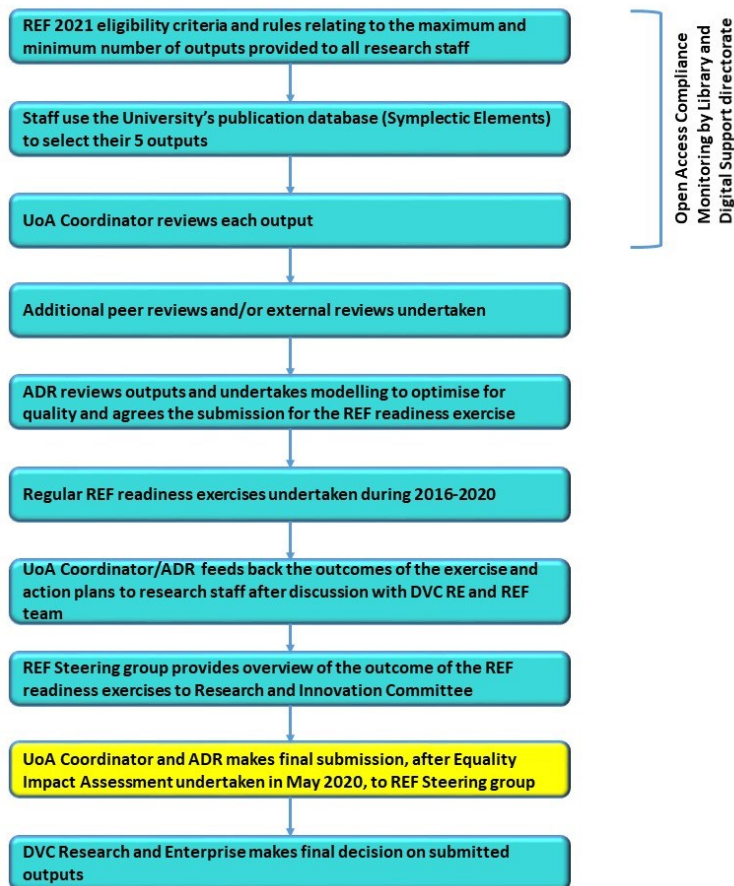


Figure 3: Selection of outputs

4.2 Impact Training and Selection Process of Impact Case studies

The development of Impact Cases has been promoted and fostered through the delivery of an impact-training programme that has been available to all Academic and Professional Services staff in addition to Postgraduate students. The programme delivers a range of workshops and 1-2-1 sessions on planning research impact, developing pathways to impact, how to generate impact, writing an Impact Case study & impact software use. The programme is supplemented with a range of impact development tools and resources that are available from the University website and materials have been developed into podcasts for staff with visual impairments or those unable to attend training in person due to personal or professional circumstances. Training courses are carefully planned to avoid family commitments such as school drop off and collection times and school holidays, or religious events, which may limit the ability for staff to attend. All training course slides are made available on the website for those unable to attend.

Regular one-to-one and UoA meetings with the REF impact and Quality officer have been held to assist with the development of case studies and identify any resources required to support staff, and provide equality of opportunity, to achieve the maximum impacts and for the case study to reach its full potential. All case studies are reviewed as part of the annual REF readiness process by the Research Impact & Quality Officer and the DVC RE.

A current and potential rating are given to all REF impact case studies being developed for possible submission and each author (the researcher upon which the Impact Case is based)

is provided with an action plan, developed in conjunction with the REF team and DVC RE, to assist with the planning of development activities. The impact case studies are reviewed following a set of criteria outlined below:

- Adherence to the REF submission guidelines
- Academic rigour and relevance of underpinning research
- Quality of the narrative
- Impact reach
- Impact significance
- Strong corroborative evidence.

The impact reviews are discussed and agreed at the REF readiness meetings. The UoA Coordinators disseminate the reviews and action plans to the authors. Follow up meetings with the Research Impact and Quality Officer are offered to all staff to discuss their review and actions and to ascertain if any support is required to enable the staff member to complete actions. The Research Impact & Quality Officer provides continued support via email, telephone, skype and face-to-face meetings. The type of meeting will be at the discretion of the Impact Case study author to ensure their individual needs and circumstances are met.

Impact Case studies will be externally reviewed in 2019/20 to provide moderation of existing reviews, and to provide additional guidance on the development of each case study. The external reviews will be discussed with each impact case study author and Research Impact Quality Officer and any barriers which staff may face will be discussed with the UoA Coordinator ADR and the DVC RE, to ascertain an agreed resolution.

At the May 2020 REF readiness meeting a final selection of impact case studies, using the criteria outlined above, will be agreed by the UoA Coordinator, ADR, and DVC RE with input from the REF team. The UoA Coordinators will formally notify 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' authors of the decisions. All impact authors will have the opportunity to discuss the REF readiness meeting decision with the Research Impact Officer and explore ways in which premature case studies can be supported towards a future REF exercise.

4.3 Supporting staff with equality-related circumstances

In order to increase flexibility in selecting outputs for submission; REF2021 requires the submission of a pool of outputs rather than a fixed number per person. In addition to the change of output submission the funding councils have put in place additional key measures to support equality and diversity. The measures recognise the effect that equality-related circumstances may have on research productivity:

1. Ensure that units recognise the effect circumstances can have upon individual researcher productivity, and reflect these in their expectations of individual staff contribution to the output pool.
2. Enable the 'minimum of one' requirement to be removed where exceptional circumstances have prevented staff from producing an eligible output.
3. Allow units to request a reduction in the total number of outputs required for submission where the cumulative effect of equality-related circumstances has had a disproportionate effect on the available output pool.

4.4 Disclosure and review of equality-related circumstances

The funding councils recognise that individual staff are best placed to consider whether circumstances have affected their productivity over the REF assessment period, and that they should not feel under any pressure to declare their circumstances where they do not wish to do so. The University supports this view and has put in place a supportive process to enable staff to voluntarily declare their equality-related circumstance. To allow individuals to disclose their circumstance in confidence, the process will be administered and overseen by members of the equality and inclusion team within HR.

4.5 Summary of applicable circumstances

The funding bodies, advised by EDAP, have identified the following equality-related circumstances that, in isolation or together, may constrain significantly the ability of submitted staff to produce outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period. Details of the permitted reductions are set out in Annex 6:

- a. Qualifying as an Early Career Researcher
- b. Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector.
- c. Qualifying periods of family-related leave.
- d. Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1–6, as defined in paragraphs 162-163

Circumstances with an equivalent effect to absence, that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, include:

- i. Disability: this is defined in the 'Guidance on codes of practice', Table 1 under 'Disability'.
- ii. Ill health, injury, or mental health conditions.
- iii. Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of – or justify the reduction of further outputs in addition to – the allowances set out in Annex L.
- iv. Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member).
- v. Gender reassignment.
- vi. Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed in the 'Guidance on codes of practice', Table 1, or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

4.6 Process for Disclosure

Upon approval of the Code of Practice, the DVC RE will write to all staff detailing the equality-related circumstances, timescales and disclosure process. Staff will be invited to voluntarily and confidentially declare any circumstances that have affected their ability to produce research outputs throughout the REF2021 assessment period. It will be made clear that the process is voluntary and staff are not required to provide information where they do not wish to do so. It will also be communicated to staff that each case will be dealt with sensitively.

Staff wishing to disclose circumstances and provide the associated information will be asked to return the standard form (Annex 6) electronically to HR via the dedicated email address (equality@plymouth.ac.uk). The email address has been set up to prioritise any issues related to the Code of Practice. HR, under the aegis of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor, will administer the process in consultation with the DVC RE and Head of Research Strategy and Governance.

Staff will also be offered face-to-face confidential discussions with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager to assist them in deciding whether to formally declare circumstances and to discuss the type of evidence that would be useful in cases requiring judgement.

The University will only consider information voluntarily disclosed, it will not consider any other information held centrally or provided by the UoA Coordinator on the behalf of the researcher. However, records held by HR may be used, with permission of the individual concerned, to validate information.

The disclosed circumstances will be reviewed by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager, DVC RE and the Head of Research Strategy and Governance and categorised into clearly defined circumstances and circumstances requiring judgement.

The Head of Research Strategy and Governance will validate the clearly defined circumstances (as identified in 4.4 above) and with reference to HR records and the appropriate reduction of outputs will be calculated using the tariffs set out in the guidelines (Annex 6).

Where circumstances require a judgement to be made, the Head of Research Strategy and Governance will review the evidence, in advance of consideration by a formal panel, to ensure that the information provided is sufficient. If required, further information will be requested. The panel will be chaired by the DVC RE and, in addition, will comprise two senior academic staff nominated by the REF Steering Group as having previous experience of supporting equality, diversity and inclusion. The Head of Research Strategy and Governance and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager will support the panel. All cases considered by the panel will be anonymised where possible.

The panel's role will be to determine whether the evidence justifies a reduction in an individual's contribution to a unit's output pool and calculate the potential reduction. Panel members will receive training and examples of clearly defined cases to ensure that criteria are applied appropriately and consistently.

Four deadlines for the submission of requests for circumstances will be offered to staff, with clearly defined deadlines for feeding back the outcome of the assessment (see Annex 8). The deadlines will reflect the National REF Team deadlines for the submission of cases for consideration.

The UoA Coordinator will receive the result of the panel and, if appropriate, the recommended reduction in contributions(s) to the output pool; however, they will not be informed of any information relating to the individual.

As a consequence of any cases being validated by the panel a request will be made to the National REF Team to reduce the number of outputs required by the UoA. If the institution decides to apply to the National REF Team for either form of reduction of outputs (removal of 'minimum of one' requirement or unit circumstances), the University will provide the National REF Team with data that the staff member has disclosed about their individual circumstances, to show that the criteria have been met for reducing the number of outputs. The 'Guidance on submissions' document (paragraphs 151-201) provides more detail about reductions in outputs and what information needs to be submitted.

Where cases for a reduction have been accepted by the National REF Team, the actual number of outputs submitted will be determined by the REF Steering Group, on the advice of ADRs, UoA Coordinators.

Information about individual circumstances will be kept confidential, but will be included in the return to the National REF Team. The 'Panel Criteria and Working Methods' document provides details of who will have access to this information externally.

The REF 2021 Assessment Framework 'Guidance on submissions' requires all higher education institutions participating in the REF to ensure appropriate confidentiality in handling individual staff circumstances.

4.7 Changes in circumstances

The University recognises that staff circumstances may change between completion of the declaration form and the census date (31 July 2020). If this is the case, then staff should contact their HR partner to provide the updated information.

4.8 Outputs of Former staff

'Guidance on Submissions' (paragraphs 211-216) sets out that the outputs of former staff that were first made publicly available while the staff member was employed by the institution as 'Category A Eligible' can be submitted to REF 2021. This includes:

- Staff who have left the employment of the institution on the census date.
- Staff who remain employed at the institution but no longer meet the core eligibility criteria
- Staff who were on a period of unpaid leave of absence or secondment that was no greater than two years.

Part 5: Equality impact assessment

The University of Plymouth promotes the use of the Equality Impact Assessment as a tool to identify and address potential issues to ensure our policies and practices are fair and free from direct or indirect discrimination against employees with a protected characteristic as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out after the December 2019 and May 2020 REF readiness exercises in relation to the policies and processes used within the REF 2021, and used as living documents including the following:

- Determination of research independence;
- Process to determine an academic's career pathway and therefore determination of those to be included (AEF codes 2 and 3);
- Representation of individuals with a protected characteristic within the AEF 2 and 3 to be included;
- Selection of outputs to be included, assessed by quantity and quality by protected characteristics;
- Collection of personal information for employees to voluntarily disclose where outputs are limited by personal circumstances and how this should be treated;
- The appeals process.

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) will be undertaken by representatives from the EDI team with input from FEDs, with the ultimate responsibility being held by the DVC RE. The process will be carried out at a University and Faculty/School level, and will consider statistical unreliability of small numbers within smaller Schools or where there is a low disclosure rate for a particular protected characteristic, e.g. religion or religious belief. The following process will be followed:

- EIAs will be prepared and shared with staff in relation to policies and practices used within the REF 2021
- EIAs will be reviewed within significant stages within the processes and updated as appropriate.
- EIAs will be informed by data, feedback from staff, and communication and consultation activities, with analysis of the feedback against protected characteristics.
- Where the EIA identifies an imbalance or detrimental impact on staff with a protected characteristic, the REF 2021 Steering Committee will investigate the issue, engage with the impacted population and, through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee where issues are identified within specific areas, develop and implement actions to address concerns.
- This CoP will be reviewed after the second EIA to determine if there are any changes needed prior to the submission deadline.
- The EIA and any actions from this will be reported to the REF 2021 Steering Committee and made available to all academic staff with the proviso that any information shared will be redacted where small numbers could compromise confidentiality.
- A final EIA will be undertaken in September 2020, published on the (REF SharePoint site) after the REF 2021 submission has been made and reported to Senate.

Part 6: Annexes

1	Units of Assessment
2	Committee Terms of Reference and Membership
3	Staff Roles
4	Training and Communication Plan for Code of Practice
5	Research Fellowships
6	Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances template
7	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion considerations for the REF
8	Outline timetable for REF2021 submission

Annex 1: Units of Assessment

Main panel	Unit of assessment	
A	1	Clinical Medicine
	2	Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care
	3	Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy
	4	Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience
	5	Biological Sciences
	6	Agriculture, Food and Veterinary Sciences
B	7	Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences
	8	Chemistry
	9	Physics
	10	Mathematical Sciences
	11	Computer Science and Informatics
	12	Engineering
C	13	Architecture, Built Environment and Planning
	14	Geography and Environmental Studies
	15	Archaeology
	16	Economics and Econometrics
	17	Business and Management Studies
	18	Law
	19	Politics and International Studies
	20	Social Work and Social Policy
	21	Sociology
	22	Anthropology and Development Studies
	23	Education
	24	Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism
D	25	Area Studies
	26	Modern Languages and Linguistics
	27	English Language and Literature
	28	History
	29	Classics
	30	Philosophy
	31	Theology and Religious Studies
	32	Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory
	33	Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies
	34	Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management

Annex 2: Committee Terms of Reference and Membership

Terms of Reference for Research and Innovation Committee from University Bye-laws (2018-2019)

E5 Research and Innovation Committee

5.1 Terms of Reference

5.1.1 The Research and Innovation Committee is responsible to the Senate for the governance and strategic enhancement of research and innovation within the University and its purpose is to support the successful delivery of the research and innovation strands of the University's 2030 strategy. The Research and Innovation Committee's specific objectives are to:-

(a) advance the achievement of world-leading, international excellence in research and innovation in key thematic areas;

(b) monitor and review the implementation of the University's Research and Innovation Strategy 2017-22;

(c) monitor and review research performance across the University in order to advise the Executive on the allocation of funds to support the University's research and innovation strategy (including the physical infrastructure requirements necessary to support world class research);

(d) monitor and review innovation performance across the University in order to advise the Executive on the allocation of funds to support the University's research and innovation strategy (including the physical infrastructure requirements necessary to support cutting edge innovation performance);

(e) monitor and maintain research integrity and ensure the compliance of research and innovation activities with all applicable legal, regulatory and ethical requirements;

(f) encourage an enterprise-based approach towards research and innovation through identifying and fostering the means by which the University can respond to emerging research and commercialisation opportunities;

(g) encourage and facilitate the identification of opportunities to secure income and support for research and commercialisation through the pursuit of competitive funding, with the aim of increasing University income;

(h) promote research with high impact and innovation through engagement with diverse communities of users, beneficiaries and audiences (including the indirect contribution of research and innovation through reputation building and synergies with teaching);

(i) ensure an open, friendly, caring and inclusive research and innovation community and culture that promotes equality and inclusion and values diversity;

(j) sustain effective support for post-doctoral and early career researchers through identifying and promoting good practice in Faculties, Schools, and Research Institutes;

- (k) work with the Senate's Doctoral College Board to foster and develop a vibrant and growing community of research students;
- (l) regularly review the establishment and development of University research centres and research institutes with annual or bi-annual reviews of their performance against agreed targets;
- (m) promote an understanding of REF requirements in relation to outputs, environment and impact in preparation for REF 2021;
- (n) review the implementation of the electronic repository and publication management information systems required for REF 2021;
- (o) review the activities and decisions of the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee and Doctoral College Board; and
- (p) promote public engagement with, and understanding of, the University's research and innovation outcomes and projects.

5.1.2 The Research and Innovation Committee shall deliver the following:-

- (a) an annual report to the Senate at the end of each Academic Year; and
- (b) approval of new, and/or dissolution of existing, Research Institutes.

5.2 Composition and Membership

The Research and Innovation Committee will comprise the following Members:-

5.2.1 Ex Officio Members Vice-Chancellor (ex officio), Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) who shall act as Chair of the Committee (subject as provided in paragraph E2.5) Director of the Doctoral College, Director of Research and Innovation, Director of Information Technology, Chief Marketing Officer, Head of Research Strategy and Governance, Associate Dean (Research) (or their duly authorised representative) for each Faculty, Director of the Institute of Health and Community (IHC), Director of the Marine Institute (MI), Director of the Sustainability Institute (SI), Director of the Cognition Institute, Director of the Institute of Translational and Stratified Medicine (ITSMed), Director of Arts Institute, Director of the Institute for Social, Policy and Enterprise Policy (ISPER)

5.2.2 Elected Members One Post-Doctoral or Early Career Researcher elected by and from the Researchers' Forum Two Post-Graduate Research Students (one of whom should be following a part-time mode, if possible)

5.2.3 Co-opted Members The Research and Innovation Committee may co-opt up to three additional Members to ensure that a full range of research paradigms and activities are represented at its meetings.

5.2.4 Attendance Without limitation to paragraph F4, a representative of the Finance Team and the Committee Administrator may attend meetings of the Research and Innovation Committee.

5.3 Terms of Membership

5.3.1 Each ex-officio Member of the Research and Innovation Committee will continue as a Member for so long as they continue to occupy their respective role as listed in paragraph E5.2.1. Co-opted Members will hold office for one year.

5.3.3 Elected Members will hold office for three years.

5.4 Quorum

The quorum for meetings of the Research and Innovation Committee shall be one-third (rounded up to the next whole number) of the then current total membership of the Committee.

5.5 Clerk to the Research and Innovation Committee

The Head of Research Strategy and Governance will act as Clerk to, and provide or procure secretarial and administrative support for, the Research and Innovation Committee.

5.6 Frequency of Meetings

The Research and Innovation Committee will meet at least three times each Academic Year (with a presumption that it will meet at least once each term) on such dates as the Chair thereof shall agree.

5.7 Sub-Committees

5.7.1 As at the date of these Bye-laws, the Research and Innovation Committee has the following sub-committees:-

- (a) REF2021 Steering Group
- (b) Research Institutes Steering Group
- (c) GCRF Steering Group
- (d) Research Ethics and Integrity Committee

5.7.2 In addition, the Research and Innovation Committee may establish such further subcommittees and delegated authorities, for such purposes and with such powers as the Senate may approve from time to time in order to assist and advise the Committee in the discharge of its functions and responsibilities.

5.7.3 Reports from each sub-committee will be standing items on the agenda of all ordinary meetings of the Research and Innovation Committee.

Research and Innovation Committee Named Membership

Named Membership	Position	Status
DVC RE (Chair)	Ex Officio	Professor Jerry Roberts
Director of the Doctoral College	Ex Officio	Professor Roberta Mock
Director of R & I or nominee	Ex Officio	Adrian Dawson
Head of Research Strategy and Governance	Ex Officio	Dr John Martin
Chief Marketing Officer	Ex Officio	David Alder
TIS	For specific items of business as appropriate	Ruth Bourne
Faculty ADR	Faculty representative – Science and Engineering	Professor Will Blake
Faculty ADR	Faculty representative – Health: Medicine, Dentistry and Human Sciences	Professor Bob Fern, Professor Jackie Andrade, Dr Philip Buckhurst
Faculty ADR	Faculty representative – Arts and Humanities	Professor James Daybell
Director of the Institute of Health and Community (IHC)	Ex Officio	Professor Jill Shawe
Director of the Marine Institute (MI)	Ex Officio	Professor Richard Thompson
Director Sustainable Earth Institute (SEI)	Ex Officio	Professor Iain Stewart
Director of Cognition Institute	Ex Officio	Professor Judy Edworthy
Director of the Institute of Translational and Stratified Medicine (ITSMed)	Ex Officio	Professor Bob Fern (acting)
Director of the Arts Institute	Ex Officio	Professor James Daybell
Director of the Institute for Social, Policy and Enterprise Policy (iSPER)	Ex Officio	Professor Rod Sheaff
Two postgraduate research students (one full-time and one part-time where possible)		TBC
One Post-Doctoral or ECR		Lynne Callaghan
Finance Business Partner		Matt Townend

REF 2021 STEERING GROUP Terms of Reference

Remit

The REF2021 Steering Group develops and supports a strategy and the delivery of an associated action plan to optimise the University's REF 2021 performance.

The REF2021 Steering Group meets four times per year and may be convened on an *ad hoc* basis if necessary. It reports to the University Research and Innovation Committee (URIC).

Specific Objectives

- To oversee and co-ordinate preparations for REF 2021 in a timely, efficient and effective manner.
- To advise Research and Innovation Committee of necessary management actions, investment needs, support and training programmes, PGR requirements and funding strategies in relation to optimising preparation for REF 2021.
- To advise on REF 2021 submission strategy including the identification of specific Units of Assessment (UoA), the disposition of researchers across UoAs, and the modelling of threshold standards to maximise both financial and reputation return to the University.
- To ensure the University's preparations are in-line with the REF 2021 Guidelines (including Open Access and Equality and Diversity Governance) as they become available.
- To manage the interpretation and dissemination of REF 2021 information (as a single source) across the institution.
- To co-ordinate UoAs preparedness and REF readiness exercises

Membership

#	Position	Post Holder	Role
1	Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Enterprise	Jerry Roberts	Chair
2	Head of Research Strategy and Governance	John Martin	Member
3	Impact Officer, RSD	Jane Minett	Member
4	Associate Dean (Research) (ADR) Faculty of Arts & Humanities	James Daybell	Member
5	ADR Faculty of Science & Engineering	Will Blake	Member
6	ADR Faculty of Health: Medicine, Dentistry and Human Sciences	Bob Fern/ Jackie Andrade/Philip Buckhurst	Member
7	Research Institute Director (Representative)	Judy Edworthy	Member
8	Director of the Doctoral College	Roberta Mock	Member
9	Library and digital support	Jason Harper	Member
10	R & I Business Partner	Niki Carnell	Member
11	HR Data & Systems Manager	Nikki Allen	Member

Representatives from other areas e.g. HR, and TIS may be invited for timed business from time-to-time.

Annex 3: Staff Roles

Deputy-Vice Chancellor – Research & Enterprise

Name
Prof. Jerry Roberts

Associate Deans of Research

Faculty	Name
Faculty of Arts & Humanities	Prof. James Daybell
Faculty of Health: Medicine, Dentistry and Human Sciences	Prof. Prof. Jackie Andrade/Dr Philip Buckhurst
Faculty of Science & Engineering	Prof. Will Blake

Deans of Faculty

Faculty	Name
Faculty of Arts & Humanities	Prof. Dafydd Moore
Faculty of Health: Medicine, Dentistry and Human Sciences	Prof. Sube Banerjee
Faculty of Science & Engineering	Prof. Kevin Jones

UoA Coordinators

UoA	Name
1 Clinical Medicine	Prof. Robert Fern
3 Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy	Dr Mona Nasser & Dr Philip Buckhurst
4 Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience	Prof. Andy Wills
6 Agriculture, Food & Fisheries	Prof. Awadhesh Jha
7 Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences	Prof. Paul Russell
10 Mathematical Science	Dr Nathan Broomhead , Dr Antonio Rago , Dr Julian Stander
11 Computer Science and Informatics	Dr Thomas Wennekers
12 Engineering	Prof. Alison Raby & Prof. Genhua Pan
13 Architecture, Built Environment and Planning	Dr Katharine Willis
14 Geography and Environmental Studies	Prof. Ralph Fyfe
17 Business and Management Studies	Dr Alexander Haupt
18 Law	Dr Zoe James
20 Social Work and Social Policy	Prof. Alison Anderson
23 Education	Dr Verity Campbell-Barr
27 English Language & Literature	Dr Kathryn Gray
28 History	Prof. James Daybell
32 Art & Design, Practice & Theory	Prof Michael Punt & Prof Steve Goodhew
33 Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies	Prof. Roberta Mock

Annex 4: Training and Communication Plan for Code of Practice

Activity	Purpose	Audience	Delivered by	Timing
Unconscious bias, equality, inclusion and diversity training This is compulsory for all members of staff	To ensure all staff are aware of the issues surrounding unconscious bias and equality, inclusion and diversity	All staff	University of Plymouth on-line training.	Continuous
Q&A sessions and UoA coordinator meetings	Introduction to REF2021 draft guidance and opportunity to contribute to consultation and discuss differences from REF2014	Research and academic staff	DVC RE and REF team	2018/2019
Code of Practice Working Group	Introduction to the Code, discuss approaches to issues in the Code and an opportunity to contribute to its development. Support the Steering Group in ensuring that the Code is adhered to.	Code of Practice Working Group	DVC RE, REF team and Code of Practice Working Group	April - June 2019
Sign off of draft code	In readiness for submission for approval of the Code and dissemination to all staff once approved	Equality Diversity Inclusion Committee and University Executive Group (UEG)	Equality Diversity Inclusion (EDI) Committee and UEG	May and June 2019
Electronic circulation of invitation to declare staff circumstances. A hard copy will be sent to absent staff.	Invite colleagues to confidentially and voluntarily declare circumstances	Research and academic staff	Exclusive EDI team in HR with dedicated email address	January 2020
Confidential meetings	Optional meetings with The EDI team in HR to discuss personal circumstances	Staff considering declaring circumstances	EDI team in HR	January 2020
Electronic circulation and publication	Publication of the code to ensure complete	All staff	REF team	January 2020

of the code on the University's external facing website, as well as the staff portal. A hard copy will be sent to absent staff.	transparency. The Code will be made available in accessible pdf format and in alternative formats on request.			
Q&A sessions and UoA coordinator meetings	Introduction to the full code and provide opportunity for staff to ask questions and raise any issues	All research Staff and professional services staff supporting REF2021	DVC RE and REF team	January – June 2020
Electronic circulation of updates	Email and intranet updates complementary to the Q&A sessions and UoA coordinator meetings	All research and academic staff, professional services staff supporting REF2021	REF team	Ongoing until submission

Annex 5: Research Fellowships

Table 1 provides a list of competitive research fellowships, presented in alphabetical order by funder, that have been confirmed by the funder to require research independence. This list **should not be taken to be exhaustive** and many relevant fellowship schemes are not captured, including research fellowships funded by HEIs, which may require research independence. The Fellowship asterisked support the transition to independence. Applicants should demonstrate readiness to become independent and the award enables them to become so. It could be argued those at the start of an award are not 'independent' yet, but those well in the award may be.

Table 1

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

EPSRC	EPSRC Postdoctoral Fellowship* ¹
ESRC	ESRC Future Cities Catapult Fellowship
ESRC	ESRC Future Leaders Grant
ESRC	ESRC/Turing Fellowships
ESRC/URKI	Early Career Researcher Innovation Fellowships
European Research Council	ERC Advanced Grants
European Research Council	ERC Consolidator Grants
European Research Council	ERC Starting Grants
Health Education England	Integrated Clinical Academic Programme Clinical Lectureship*
Health Education England	Integrated Clinical Academic Programme Senior Clinical Lectureship
Leverhulme Trust	Early Career Fellowship
Leverhulme Trust	Research Fellowship
Leverhulme Trust	Emeritus Fellowship
Leverhulme Trust	Major Research Fellowship
Leverhulme Trust	International Academic Fellowship
MRC	MRC Career Development Awards*
MRC	MRC New Investigator Research Grants (Non-clinical)*
MRC	MRC New Investigator Research Grants (Clinical)*
MRC	MRC Clinician Scientist Fellowships*
MRC	Senior Non-Clinical Fellowships
MRC	Senior Clinical Fellowships
NC3R	David Sainsbury Fellowship
NC3R	Training fellowship
NERC	Independent Research Fellowships
NERC/UKRI	Industrial Innovation Fellowships
NERC/UKRI	Industrial Mobility Fellowships
NIHR	Advanced Fellowship*
NIHR	Career Development Fellowship
NIHR	Clinical Lectureships*
NIHR	Clinician Scientist*
NIHR	Post-Doctoral Fellowship*
NIHR	Research Professorships
NIHR	School for Primary Care Post-Doctoral Fellowships*
NIHR	Senior Research Fellowships
Royal Academy of Engineering	RAEng Engineering for Development Research Fellowship
Royal Academy of Engineering	Industrial Fellowships
Royal Academy of Engineering	RAEng Research Fellowship
Royal Academy of Engineering	RAEng Senior Research Fellowship
Royal Academy of Engineering	UK Intelligence Community (IC) Postdoctoral Research Fellowship
Royal Society	Royal Society Wolfson Fellowship
Royal Society	Dorothy Hodgkin Fellowship*
Royal Society	JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship

Royal Society	Newton Advanced Fellowship
Royal Society	Royal Society/Leverhulme Trust Senior Research Fellowship
Royal Society	University Research Fellowship*
Royal Society and Wellcome Trust	Sir Henry Dale Fellowship*
Royal Society of Edinburgh	RSE Arts & Humanities Awards (for permanent staff)
Royal Society of Edinburgh	RSE Personal Research Fellowship
Royal Society of Edinburgh	RSE Sabbatical Research Grants (for permanent staff)
Sêr Cymru	Research Chairs
Sêr Cymru	Rising Stars
Sêr Cymru	Recapturing Talent*
Sêr Cymru	Research fellowships for 3 -5 year postdocs
STFC	CERN Fellowships
STFC	Ernest Rutherford Fellowship
STFC	ESA Fellowships
STFC	Innovations Partnership Scheme Fellowships
STFC	Returner Fellowships
STFC	RSE/STFC Enterprise Fellowships
STFC	Rutherford International Fellowship Programme
UKRI	UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships
UKRI	UKRI Innovation Fellowships
Wellcome Trust	Intermediate Fellowship in Public Health and Tropical Medicine
Wellcome Trust	Principal Research Fellowships
Wellcome Trust	Research Award for Health Professionals
Wellcome Trust	Research Career Development Fellowship
Wellcome Trust	Research Fellowship in Humanities and Social Science
Wellcome Trust	Senior Research Fellowship

Annex 6: Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances template

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

- To enable staff who have not been able to produce a REF-eligible output during the assessment period to be entered into REF where they have;
 - circumstances that have resulted in an overall period of 46 months or more absence from research during the assessment period, due to equality-related circumstances (see below)
 - circumstances *equivalent* to 46 months or more absence from research due to equality-related circumstances
 - two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave.
- To recognise the effect that equality-related circumstances can have on an individual’s ability to research productively, and to adjust expectations in terms of expected workload / production of research outputs.
- To establish whether there are any Units of Assessment where the proportion of declared circumstances is sufficiently high to warrant a request to the higher education funding bodies for a reduced required number of outputs to be submitted.

Applicable circumstances

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

If your ability to research productively during the assessment period has been constrained due to one or more of the following circumstances, you are requested to complete the attached form. Further information can be found paragraph 160 of the [‘Guidance on submissions’](#) (REF 2019/01). Completion and return of the form is voluntary, and individuals who do not choose to return it will not be put under any pressure to declare information if they do not wish to do so. This form is the only means by which the University will be gathering this information; we will not be consulting HR records, contract start dates, etc. You should therefore complete and return the form if any of the above circumstances apply and you are willing to provide the associated information.

Ensuring Confidentiality

In order to maintain confidentiality, staff should return the form electronically to the EDI team in HR via the dedicated email address which was set up to prioritise any issues related to the Code of Practice. The EDI team in HR, under the aegis of the Head of Employee Relations, Well Being & Inclusion, will administer the process in consultation with the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Enterprise and Head of Research Support and Development.

Information about individual circumstances will be kept confidential, and sensitive details removed before it is returned to the national REF team. See the '[Panel Criteria and Working Methods](#)' document for details of who will have access to this information externally. The decisions about the reduction will be collated by the EDI team in HR and information required to complete the REF return will be disseminated only as necessary. Information about the Early Career Researcher Status will be recorded centrally.

The REF Assessment Framework '[Guidance on submissions](#)' requires all higher education institutions participating in the REF to ensure appropriate confidentiality in handling individual staff circumstances. Where joint submissions are made, it may be necessary to share the information provided with another institution.

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

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

Changes in circumstances

The University recognises that staff circumstances may change between completion of the declaration form and the census date (31 July 2020). If this is the case, then staff should contact HR to provide the updated information.

To submit this form you, please send it to equality@plymouth.ac.uk

Name: Click here to insert text.

Department: Click here to insert text.

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

Yes

No

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

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

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

Please confirm, by ticking the box provided, that:

- The above information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances as of the date below
- I understand that the above information will be used for REF purposes only and will be seen by HR, the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Enterprise and Head of Research Support and Development.
- I realise it may be necessary to share some information with the REF team, the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs.

I agree

Name: Print name here

Signed: Sign or initial here

Date: Insert date here

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

I give my permission for the details of this form to be passed on to the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Enterprise and Head of Research Support and Development. (Please note, if you do not give permission, they may be unable to adjust expectations and put in place appropriate support for you).

I would like to be contacted by:

Email Insert email address

Phone Insert contact telephone number

Annex 7: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion considerations for the REF

As outlined in our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy, we are committed to providing equality for everyone, regardless of:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Ethnicity (including race, colour and nationality);
- Sex;
- Gender;
- Religion or belief;
- Sexual orientation;
- Marriage and civil partnership; and
- Pregnancy and maternity (whether or not you are pregnant or have given birth recently).

These are defined in the Equality Act 2010 as 'protected characteristics'.

The REF 2021 is based on the submissions of outputs, rather than the previous REF focus on individuals to be submitted. This provides a greater opportunity to ensure objectivity, e.g. around the quality of a submission, compared to previous submissions where the decision was around individuals to select. However, judgements need to be made based on outputs to submit, with a minimum of between one and five per submitted employee.

Equality, diversity and inclusion considerations should be given to enable the consideration of personal circumstances which may be linked to protected characteristics have limited outputs.

Part 5 of this Code of Practice references the need to carry out Equality Impact Assessments, for example in relation to determining research independence and the assessment criteria and processes used for the selection of outputs.

The Table below has been developed with reference to the REF 2021 Equality Briefing for Panels and provides a summary of all of the protected characteristics included within the Equality Act 2010 and how they might impact on an employee included in the REF submission.

Protected characteristic	Summary of the protection within the legislation and comments in relation to the REF
Age	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful for employers to discriminate, harass or victimise employees because of their age. In addition, legislation introduced in October 2011, abolished the default retirement which meant that age cannot be used as a reason for dismissal.</p> <p>Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or if they are associated with a person of a particular age group.</p> <p>Age discrimination can occur when people of a particular age group are treated less favourably than people in other age groups. Examples of age groups could be: people of the same age, people under 30 or over 50.</p>

	<p>Discrimination can also occur if a person is treated less favourably because of their perceived age or if they are treated less favourably because they are associated with a person of a particular age group.</p> <p>Age discrimination may be justified if it can be shown that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. However, in the context of the REF, if a researcher produces excellent research an HEI will not be able to justify not submitting the research because of the researcher's age group.</p> <p>It is important to note that early career researchers are likely to come from a range of age groups. The definition of early career researcher (ECR) used in the REF is not limited to young people.</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010, which replaced the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), it is unlawful for employers to discriminate, harass or victimise employees because of disability.</p> <p>Staff are also protected if they are perceived to have a disability or if they are associated with a person who is disabled (for example, if they are responsible for caring for a disabled family member).</p> <p>Under the Equality Act, an employee is considered to be disabled if they have or have had a physical and/or mental impairment which has 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. Long-term is defined as meaning an impairment that lasts or is likely to last for at least 12 months. Day-to-day activities are taken to mean activities that people, not individuals, carry out on a daily or frequent basis.</p> <p>The definition includes a wide range of impairments, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sensory impairments; • impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as rheumatoid arthritis, depression and epilepsy; • progressive impairments, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, HIV and cancer; • organ-specific impairments, including respiratory conditions and cardiovascular diseases; • developmental impairments, such as autistic spectrum disorders and dyslexia; • mental health conditions such as depression and eating disorders; • impairments caused by injury to the body or brain. <p>Some health conditions are automatically included as a disability, for example, Cancer, HIV, multiple sclerosis and progressive / degenerative conditions. An impairment which is managed by medication or medical treatment, but which would have had a substantial and long-term adverse effect if not so managed, is also a disability.</p> <p>Employers are required to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people and failure to make a reasonable adjustment constitutes discrimination.</p>

	<p>Therefore, where a researcher has a disability that has affected the quantity of their research outputs, this should be taken into account when considering how many outputs they are expected to contribute to the submission.</p> <p>For the purpose of the REF assessment period it is important to note that people who have had a past disability are also protected from discrimination, victimisation and harassment because of disability.</p>
<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful for employers to discriminate, harass or victimise employees because of their trans status, including those who have proposed, started or completed a process to change their sex from discrimination, victimisation and harassment.</p> <p>Employees do not have to be under medical supervision to be afforded protection because they are trans and staff are protected if they are perceived to be undergoing or have undergone related procedures. They are also protected if they are associated with someone who has proposed, is undergoing or has undergone related procedures. Trans people who undergo gender reassignment will need to take time off for appointments and in some cases, for medical assistance. The transition process is lengthy, often taking several years and it is likely to be a very difficult period for the trans person as they seek recognition of their new gender from their family, friends, employer and society as a whole.</p> <p>The Gender Recognition Act 2004 gave privacy rights to trans people who undergo gender reassignment. Confidentiality is essential and panel members must not pass any information they receive onto anyone else. A person acting in an official capacity who acquires information about a person's status as a transsexual must not pass this information onto a third party without explicit consent, and could be liable to criminal proceedings if they do this.</p> <p>The UK government is currently consulting on reform of the Gender Recognition Act 2004, which may include streamlining the procedure to legally change gender. While not all people undergoing gender reassignment will choose to change their name, where they do, panels should be aware that this may affect citation data</p>
<p>Marriage and civil partnership</p>	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful for employers to discriminate, harass or victimise employees because of marriage and civil partnership status.</p> <p>This protection applies to people who are married or in a civil partnership receive the same benefits and treatment in employment but not those who are single.</p> <p>If REF panels use citation data it is important that they are aware that people entering a civil partnership or marriage may change their name, and this may affect the citation data associated with their research outputs.</p>
<p>Pregnancy and maternity</p>	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful for employers to discriminate, harass or victimise employees because of pregnancy and maternity-status.</p>

	<p>If a researcher has taken time out of work because of pregnancy-related illness and/or maternity this should be taken into account in considering how many outputs they are expected to contribute to the submission.</p> <p>In addition, researchers who are pregnant or on maternity leave should not be overlooked during the submission process. This protection extends to primary adopters (women and men) on adoption leave, who have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave</p>
Race	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful for employers to discriminate, harass or victimise employees because of their race.</p> <p>The definition of race includes colour, ethnic or national origins or nationality. Discrimination, harassment and victimisation because of race can occur because of a person's perceived race or because of their association with a person of a particular race.</p> <p>Panels should be aware of not making any judgements on the quality of outputs based on a researcher's race or assumed race (for example based on their name).</p>
Religion and belief	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful for employers to discriminate, harass or victimise employees because of their religion, belief or non-belief.</p> <p>Panels should be aware of not making any judgements on the quality of outputs based on a researcher's actual or perceived religion or belief, including non-belief.</p> <p>'Belief' includes any structured philosophical belief with clear values that has an effect on how its adherents conduct their lives.</p>
Sex	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful for employers to discriminate, harass or victimise employees because of their sex. Employees are also protected because of their perceived sex or because of their association with someone of a particular sex.</p> <p>Women are also explicitly protected from less favourable treatment because they are breastfeeding. Consequently, the impact of breastfeeding on a women's ability to conduct research needs to be considered in the context of the REF.</p> <p>Under the Shared Parental Leave legislation, mothers are able to cut short maternity leave and pay for the father of her child or her partner to take up shared parental leave within the first year of the baby's birth. Fathers/partners who take additional paternity or adoption leave or who take shared parental leave have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave and barriers that exist to taking the leave.</p> <p>Consequently in the context of the REF, additional paternity and adoption leave and shared parental leave should be taken into account by HEIs in considering how many outputs fathers or the partners of new mothers are expected to contribute to the submission.</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful for employers to discriminate, harass or victimise employees because of their sexual orientation or their perceived sexual orientation. Staff are also protected if they are associated with someone who is of a particular sexual orientation. Panels</p>

	should be aware of not making any judgements on the quality of outputs based on a researcher's actual or perceived sexual orientation.
Fixed-term and part-time employment	<p>Under the Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 a fixed-term employee has the right not to be treated by his or her employer less favourably than the employer treats a permanent employee, unless there are objectively justifiable grounds for doing so.</p> <p>In addition, a part-time worker has the right not to be treated less favourably than a comparable full-time worker.</p>

Annex 8: Outline timetable for REF2021 submission

Activity	Delivered by	Deadline
REF Readiness exercise	University of Plymouth	Annually since 2016
UOAs submit early drafts of impact case studies	University of Plymouth	December 2016
UOAs submit updated draft impact case studies	University of Plymouth	December 2017, December 2018 and then every three months up until submission
UOAs submit early drafts of UOA-level Environment templates	University of Plymouth	December 2018
UOAs submit updated draft UOA-level Environment templates	University of Plymouth	Every three months up until submission
Code of Practice Working Group develop documentation	University of Plymouth	Spring, Summer 2019
Draft Code of Practice ratified by University Executive Group	University of Plymouth	June 2019
Code of Practice submitted	University of Plymouth	Noon 7 June 2019
Invitation to declare staff circumstances	University of Plymouth	Winter 2019
Confidential meetings around staff circumstances	University of Plymouth	Spring 2020
Publication of the Code of Practice	University of Plymouth	Winter 2019
REF2021 update Q&A sessions and UoA coordinator meetings	University of Plymouth	Winter 2019/Spring 2020
Pilot of the REF submission system; survey of submissions intentions opens; proposed date for inviting reduction requests for staff circumstances	REF2021 team	Winter 2019
Survey of submissions intentions complete; final deadline for requests for multiple submissions, case studies requiring security clearance, and exceptions to submission for small units; publication of approved codes of practice	REF2021 team	Winter 2019
Formal release of the submission systems and accompanying technical guidance; invitation to HEIs to make submissions; invitation to nominate panel members and assessors for the assessment phase; deadline for staff circumstances requests Mid 2020 Appointment of additional members and assessors to panels	REF2021 team	Early 2020
Institutions submit requests for unit level reductions in outputs and for staff to be submitted with zero outputs due to staff circumstances	REF2021 team	March 2020
Impact Case Study Reviews and outputs to the VC for review and comment	University of Plymouth	July 2020
Census date for staff; end of assessment period (for research impacts, the research environment, and data about research income and research doctoral degrees awarded)	REF2021 team	31 July 2020

Staff lists circulated by REF team for final check	University of Plymouth	1 st August
Start output data completion and validation	University of Plymouth	01 September 2020
Lock REF1 staff data on Elements – no further changes	University of Plymouth	30 September 2020
Updated UoP Code of Practice submission deadline	University of Plymouth	09 October 2020
Funding data circulated for UoA environment statement update	University of Plymouth	21 October 2020
Institutional Environment Statement published & circulated	University of Plymouth	23 October 2020
Equality Impact Statements circulated	University of Plymouth	30 October 2020
Impact Case Study Submission for final review	University of Plymouth	02 November 2020
UoA Environment Statement Final submission	University of Plymouth	16 November 2020
REF wash up meetings	University of Plymouth	01-11 December 2020
Lock REF2 output data on Elements – no further changes	University of Plymouth	18 December 2020
Return of Impact case study reviews	University of Plymouth	21 December 2020
End of publication period (cut-off point for publication of research outputs, and for outputs underpinning impact case studies)	REF2021 team	31 December 2020
End of Impact Eligibility Period		
REF team uploading REF submission material to database	University of Plymouth	01 January 2021
Deadline for providing further details for outputs delayed due to COVID-19; completed impact case studies; and corroborating evidence held for impact case studies	REF2021 team	29 January 2021
REF final Submission completed by Midday	REF2021 team	31 March 2021
Panels assess submissions	REF2021 team	Throughout 2021