Code of Practice – REF 2021

Part 1: Introduction

> Look out for these information sections with core information for staff.

> If you would like more information on REF 2021, this is described at https://www.ref.ac.uk/about/what-is-the-ref/.

1. The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions. The outcome of REF informs the funding the University receives from Research England to fund our research. This Code explains how the University will make decisions for the 2021 REF, specifically in the areas of: i) determining research independence; and ii) the selection of outputs, including the management of staff circumstances. It should be used to guide staff in decision-making roles within the University, and furthermore to provide clarity to all staff on the processes and the staff involved in decision-making.

2. The University was founded on the principles of excellence, equality and opportunity for all. It is committed to establishing a framework which is demonstrably fair to all staff and meets the underlying principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity. An Equality Audit was undertaken by the Research Strategy and Policy Office and Equality and Diversity Office as part of the REF 2014 submission review, and no evidence of selection bias was identified. In addition, there were very few issues raised by staff through the selection process, and the appeals process in place was not used by any staff. Whilst this indicates that the process was seen by staff as fair and transparent, a full review of the governance relating to REF was undertaken by University Research Committee. As a result, the University has revised its governance structures through the creation of a REF Strategy Group whose terms of reference (see appendix 2) include 'To advise the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research on recommendations and proposed strategy in relation to the development of the University of York REF 2021 submission'; and 'To ensure that the equality and diversity issues relating to REF 2021 are taken fully into account and addressed appropriately'. The membership of the group has been broadened to include HR, to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded into the REF framework. The REF Strategy Group reports to University Research Committee (see paragraph 4c), which retains oversight of the University's REF preparations and is responsible for the key institutional decisions for REF 2021, including approval of the Code of Practice. The aim

of these revisions is to ensure transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity in the University's decision-making for REF.

3. In addition, this Code is situated within a broader institutional strategic approach which embeds equality, diversity and inclusion throughout our work. Since 2014, the University has established a new strategic and policy framework to direct its approach to equality and diversity. For example, the vision of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2017-2022) is to 'create a working, learning, social and living environment that will enable all our staff and students to achieve their potential, whilst they experience and celebrate diverse cultures, knowledge and identities and are encouraged to make a positive contribution to the city, region and beyond'. This is also reflected in specific objectives within the Research Strategy (2015-2020), for example, to recruit and mentor staff 'to ensure equal career opportunities for all, as demonstrated in our work with Athena SWAN, Juno and other initiatives'. The University has held an institutional Athena SWAN award since 2006 and 19 departments hold awards. The policy framework includes the University's Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy which has the overall aim of ensuring that 'all employees of the University are treated fairly and with dignity and respect', and furthermore guides the recruitment policy with respect to job applicants.

> This Code of Practice takes as its starting point the institutional commitment to Equality and Diversity in employment policy.

4. The University's approach to the principles of transparency, consistency, accountability, and inclusivity is as follows[1]:

    a. **Transparency**: the University has a broad ranging approach (see paragraph 6), to ensure that all staff, especially those involved in decision-making, are made aware of and understand the Code of Practice.

    b. **Consistency:** the University's Code of Practice for REF 2021 will ensure that a consistent approach is applied across both the determination of research independence (Part 3), and the selection of outputs (Part 4). The REF Strategy Group (reporting to the University Research Committee) is responsible within the institution for overseeing the University's REF submission. It will review the decisions made in relation to research independence, and review the approach to

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[1] The funding bodies will put in place measures to enable individuals to make a formal complaint where they believe a university has not followed its agreed processes. Details will be published in Autumn 2019. The first recourse is the internal appeals process within this Code of Practice.

the selection of outputs within each UoA, to ensure that the Code is being adhered to in a consistent way across all UoAs.

c. **Accountability**: the committees and staff within the University who are involved in the University's structure for decision-making for REF 2021 are described in i-xi below. Through this structure, the University will ensure that i) decisions relating to REF can be accounted for and audited; and ii) the principles of transparency, consistency and inclusivity are applied. As part of its remit to ensure that equality and diversity is fully addressed in the University's processes, the REF Strategy Group takes responsibility for considering and reflecting on the representativeness of these groups. This was a consideration in the formation of the REF Strategy Group sub-groups described below. Additionally, REF Strategy Group monitors the composition and decision-making of Departmental Research Committees / Departmental REF Committees to assess their representativeness during REF preparation exercises, for example, the Spring 2019 Mock REF.

Departments (Heads of Department, Chairs of DRC and REF Lead)

REF submissions are made to units of assessment. To make it easier for staff to understand how they are managed, the Code of Practice uses the term 'departments' to explain the structure for decision-making for REF. There are a small number of cross-departmental submissions but the same decision-making processes are followed.

i. Within the institution, each department is typically mapped to a single REF unit of assessment (UoA) and is responsible for the preparation of the submission to that unit of assessment. The Chair of the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) will typically be responsible for the decisions made in relation to the submission. In some cases, this responsibility has been delegated to a REF Lead. In all cases, the Head of Department is required to oversee the decision-making process within their department. This is in line with the University's governance and managerial framework.

ii. Departments are required to inform the Research Strategy and Policy Office (RSPO) who is acting in these roles, and must also ensure that all staff within the department are also informed.

iii. Where a REF submission involves staff from more than one department[2], the REF Lead for the UoA will discuss the recommendations with the Chairs of DRC or REF

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[2] For example, unit of assessment 2 involves the Department of Health Sciences, Centre for Health Economics, Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, and Hull York Medical School.

Leads of the relevant departments and (where required by this Code) with the Heads of Department.

iv. In making recommendations, Chairs of DRC, REF Leads and (where required by this Code) Heads of Department may draw on the expert advice of their colleagues, such as the Departmental Research Committee (for terms of reference, see appendix 1) or Departmental REF Committee, whichever takes responsibility for advising on decision-making for REF.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research

v. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research is the academic lead for the REF 2021 submission and will take the final decisions. This is in line with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research's role as the principal manager of research within the University.

vi. In making decisions, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research will draw on the recommendations from departments, along with the advice from the members of the REF Strategy Group and the Research Strategy and Policy Office.

REF Strategy Group

vii. The members of the REF Strategy Group (for the membership and terms of reference, see appendix 2) act as decision-makers on the University's strategy for REF 2021, advise departments on the development of their REF submissions and ensure that a consistent approach to decision-making is being taken across the University.

REF Advisory Group

viii. The members of the REF Advisory Group (a sub-group of the REF Strategy Group) work alongside REF Strategy Group members to undertake the review of submissions for REF preparedness exercises. They advise departments on the development of their REF submissions (for the membership and terms of reference, see appendix 2).

REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group

ix. The members of the REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group (a sub-group of REF Strategy Group) will have a specific role to review the requests for output reductions which arise out of staff circumstances. They will advise the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research on cases where reductions in outputs required should be

sought from the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP); and, where a reduction is not sought, on how departments are managing staff circumstances (for the membership and terms of reference, see appendix 2).

> In some cases, the number of outputs an institution is expected to return can be reduced, due to staff circumstances. The institution has to request a reduction from a national committee, the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP), before the REF return is submitted.

University Research Committee

x.   REF Strategy Group reports to the University Research Committee which has oversight of the University's preparations for REF 2021 (for the terms of reference, see appendix 3). Members of the University Research Committee are involved in the key institutional decisions for REF 2021, including approval of the Code of Practice.

Research Strategy and Policy Office

xi.   The Research Strategy and Policy Office (RSPO) is the administrative office undertaking the management of the REF submission. The Officers, particularly the University REF Manager and the Head of the RSPO, will provide the expert advice on the REF framework to ensure that decision-making, for example, on the determination of research independence (see Part 3), is undertaken in a way that fully reflects both the University's Code of Practice and the broader REF criteria.

> Decisions are ultimately made by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research, based on recommendations from departments. They take technical advice from the RSPO and are guided by the REF Strategy Group and the University Research Committee.

d. **Inclusivity**: equality of opportunity and inclusivity are fundamental to the vision and values of the University Strategy (2014-20). In relation to REF 2021, this Code of Practice aims to ensure an inclusive submission which derives from the excellent research produced by all staff. Our overarching approach is described below:

i. **Staff**. The University will be returning all category A eligible staff. All staff on academic research and teaching contracts will be included in the submission and all staff on Grade 8 research-only contracts will be included. All staff on Grade 7

and Grade 6 research-only contracts will be included in the submission where they are determined to be independent. The University will take an inclusive approach to determining the independence of these staff in which all currently employed staff are reviewed to establish whether or not they satisfy any of the indicators of independence deemed to be appropriate in the REF guidance (see Part 3: Determining research independence);

ii. **The selection of outputs**. The University expects that all staff maintain up-to-date records of all their publications on Pure, our Current Research Information System (CRIS). This inclusive set of outputs forms the pool from which outputs are selected for REF. Whilst the primary criterion for selection is quality (see paragraph 43), where possible the attribution of outputs to staff will be distributed across staff to represent the contribution made by all staff to the submission (see Part 4, Selection of outputs).

5. The University recognises the need to ensure that all staff feel secure and are appropriately supported throughout their employment. The University is therefore committed to appointing staff on indefinite contracts wherever possible and has a Code of Practice for the Management of Staff on Fixed-term Contracts. There is significant harmonisation within the terms and conditions of employment offered to staff in York, with staff employed on a fixed term and/or part-time basis receiving the same benefits (for example, annual leave, sick pay, and maternity leave) as those in equivalent roles on an open and/or full-time basis. This parity of esteem is prevalent and embedded throughout the institution, including access to training and in opportunities for career development and promotion. For example, the University's academic promotions guidance explicitly states that it takes due account of the hours of part time staff and encourages all applicants to disclose confidentially any personal circumstances which may be relevant in order that the latter can be taken into account.

6. The University uses a variety of mechanisms and channels to ensure that all staff are made aware of this Code. In advance of the submission of the Code of Practice to EDAP (June 2019), the following communication has occurred:
    a. Meetings with decision-making staff, including Head of Department Forums, termly REF 2021 briefings and Research Forums (attended by HoDs, Chairs of Departmental Research Committees and REF Leads). This has included updates on the initial development of the Code of Practice;
    b. The draft Code of Practice was shared with all departments during the mock REF in Spring 2019 to inform the decision-making processes within each UoA submission. This has raised awareness of the draft Code of Practice across the University and informed the further development of the document;
    c. A specific meeting with the UCU (April 2019), to allow them to feed into the development of the Code of Practice;

d. A University-wide consultation with staff ran in May 2019 to provide the opportunity for staff and representative groups to provide feedback on the draft. For example, the following groups were invited to respond: UCU, the Athena SWAN Forum, INCLUDE, LGBTI Matters and the Staff Race Equality Forum.

7. Subsequent to the submission of the Code of Practice to EDAP, the following communication is planned:
   a. Further meetings with decision-making staff including Head of Department Forums, termly REF 2021 briefings and Research Forums (attended by HoDs, Chairs of Departmental Research Committees and REF Leads);
   b. Consultation with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion special interest groups including the Athena SWAN Forum, INCLUDE, LGBTI Matters and the Staff Race Equality Forum on how to implement the Code;
   c. Heads of Department will be required to inform all ART and research-only staff about the Code of Practice following approval by EDAP. They also have responsibility for ensuring that staff who are on long term absence (for example, maternity leave, career breaks, secondments and research leave) are informed;
   d. REF-specific equality training will be arranged for staff with decision-making responsibility;
   e. Email updates will be sent to the University's REF mailing list and to the institution-wide staff digest;
   f. The University's internal REF 2021 webpages will contain a summary of the Code of Practice, information on timescales, FAQs and a first point of contact (the REF Manager). They will also provide an explanation of the context for the Code, and a downloadable accessible PDF version. Copies of the Code in alternative formats (for example, braille, large print or audio) will be made available on request. The Code will be made available on the University's external website following approval of the Code by the EDAP.

Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

N/A. Part 2 of the Code of Practice is not completed because the University will submit 100% of its Category A eligible staff.

Identifying staff with significant responsibility is only needed for those institutions where being on a teaching and research contract does not automatically carry an expectation that staff undertake research. As York expects all staff on a teaching and research contract to undertake research, this section does not apply.

Part 3: Determining research independence

Policies and procedures

<u>Criteria used for determining staff who meet the definition of an independent researcher, including information about how the criteria are being applied</u>

8. The REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions defines an independent researcher as 'an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme'. A series of indicators of research independence are included in the Guidance but it is noted that 'each indicator may not individually demonstrate independence and where appropriate multiple factors may need to be considered'. These indicators are:

    i. leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project;
    ii. holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement;
    iii. leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package.

    Additionally, Main Panels C (Social Sciences) and D (Arts and Humanities) also consider that the following attributes may generally indicate research independence in their disciplines:
    iv. being named as a Co-I on an externally funded research grant/award;
    v. having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research.

9. In accordance with the REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions, the University will return all staff with a primary employment function of 'research-only' where they are independent on the census date and meet the other requirements to meet the definition of Category A eligible staff (i.e. employed by the institution on 31 July 2020, have a substantive research connection with the submitting unit and an FTE of 0.2 or above).

10. The University values the contribution made by all research-only staff to the research culture of the University. The outcome of the decision on whether a member of staff on a research-only contract is or is not determined to be independent (as defined in paragraph 8) will be used to determine eligibility for REF. This outcome will not be used by the University as a measure of the research performance of individual staff, nor will this information be used to determine other decision-making beyond REF.

11. The University's Research Performance Expectations (introduced in 2006 and comprehensively revised in 2015) provide the institutional framework for research performance. This document provides transparency and consistency in relation to the requirements for independent researchers and the concomitant research activities. The

staff defined as in scope for this policy are those researchers who are deemed to be independent by the institution. This includes all senior research-only staff (York Grade 8, equivalent to a Senior Lecturer grade). By the nature of their job role, staff on Grade 8 research-only contracts are expected to act as independent researchers and are deemed eligible for the REF 2021 submission.

12. The University also employs research-only staff on York Grades 6 and 7 who typically meet the REF definition of a research assistant as they are 'employed to carry out another individual's research programme rather than as independent researchers in their own right'. In some cases, Grade 7 research staff are independent, and in rare exceptional cases, Grade 6 staff may be determined as independent (as defined by REF). The eligibility of these staff will be determined following the process described in paragraphs 14-15.

13. The University employs Grade 5 research trainees who are normally undertaking a PhD as part of their research training and are working under the supervision of senior staff. Grade 5 research trainees are therefore not determined to be independent.

14. There are some staff on research-only contracts whose function is to carry out knowledge exchange[3]. These staff are not undertaking independent research and therefore are not considered as Category A eligible staff. This may be indicated by evidence including but not limited to the job title or job description of these staff and the types of project undertaken.

15. The University will use indicators i-iii and (for <u>Main Panels C and D only</u>) indicators iv-v from paragraph 8 in the following way to determine which staff on research-only contracts meet the definition of independent researcher:

   a. *Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement.* Where staff meet this criterion they will typically be considered to meet the REF definition for independence from the start date of the fellowship. The evidence for consideration will be the REF List of Independent Research Fellowships provided by the UK REF team as a guide to determine whether the REF definition is met. Staff holding these fellowships will be determined independent from the start date of the award, except where the fellowship has been determined to support a transition to independence (see paragraph 15b). Where the start of the fellowship is on or before the REF census date (31 July 2020), research staff will be deemed eligible for REF, assuming all other eligibility criteria are met. Where the fellowship

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[3] The existing HESA codes do not provide a category for staff undertaking knowledge exchange and therefore these staff are typically reported as 'research-only' to HESA.

scheme has changed since publication of the list, or is not included in the list, an assessment will be undertaken to determine whether the same requirement for independence exists. This will typically involve reviewing the fellowship scheme guidance to determine whether research independence is a requirement of the scheme. To ensure consistency, all individuals holding such a fellowship will then be included as appropriate. The REF List of Independent Research Fellowships will therefore be supplemented as decisions are made and shared across the institution.

b. *Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship which supports a transition to independence*. The evidence for consideration will be the REF List of Independent Research Fellowships provided by the UK REF team as a guide to determine whether the REF definition is met. In these cases, staff will typically be determined to be independent at the midpoint of the fellowship[4]. Where the midpoint of the fellowship is on or before the REF census date (31 July 2020) research staff will be deemed eligible for REF, assuming all other eligibility criteria are met. Where the fellowship scheme has changed since publication of the list, or is not included in the list, an assessment will be undertaken to determine if the fellowship supports a transition to independence during the period of the fellowship. This will typically involve reviewing the scheme guidance. To ensure consistency, all individuals holding such a fellowship will then be included as appropriate. The list of independent research fellowships will therefore be supplemented as decisions are made and shared across the institution.

c. *Marie Curie fellowships*. Guidance on the REF website states that these fellowships are not included on the REF List of Independent Research Fellowships because 'whether or not they have independence varies across the fellowships and the disciplines covered. HEIs should use the indicators in the guidance to establish whether individuals on these fellowships have independence'. To determine whether or not these fellows meet the REF definition of independence (paragraph 8) the evidence will be reviewed to determine eligibility. This will typically include the scheme guidance and fellowship application.

The most common form of Marie Curie Fellowship is the Individual Fellowship (divided into the European Fellowship and Global Fellowship schemes). This scheme involves a supervisor who oversees the project without a requirement for independence. Consequently, the fellows of these schemes will generally not

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[4] This builds on the following statement in the REF List of Independent Research Fellowships: 'It could be argued those at the start of an award are not "independent" yet, but those well in the award may be'.

be determined to be independent. In line with advice from REF, we recognise that the fellowships vary across disciplines. In <u>Main Panels C and D only</u>, and consistent with the process outlined in paragraph 15g, fellows of these schemes will be determined as independent where they have had significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research. Evidence must be provided to demonstrate that the fellow is working in a self-directed capacity. In most cases, this will be determined by reviewing the grant application form to identify the extent to which the fellow has had significant input into the research. Where available, the scheme guidance will also be consulted.

d. *Leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project*. Where staff act as principal investigator (PI) on an externally funded research project, they will typically be considered to meet the REF definition for independence from the start date of the research grant. The evidence for consideration will be the project record on our grant management system and a copy of the external research grant application form (or equivalent), which will be used to verify PI status.

In exceptional cases, PI status may not individually indicate that the researcher is independent. These cases are as follows:
i. Where the research project includes other academic (research and teaching) or research-only staff who are acting in a supervisory capacity to the PI. The original grant application and scheme guidance will typically be reviewed to determine the nature of the project and scheme;

ii. Where a member of staff is listed as PI on our internal systems but this does not accurately reflect their status on the grant[5]. For example, every collaborative research grant includes a member of staff who is listed as the PI on our grants management system even in cases where the PI is at another institution. The original grant application, research grant contract and/or external funder records (for example, the UKRI Gateway to Research) will be reviewed to determine the researcher's actual status on the grant;

iii. Where research independence is not a requirement or expectation of the scheme. It is recognised that there are cases where researchers will apply as PIs for research grants as part of a development pathway towards becoming independent researchers. For example, this could include research grants where the primary purpose of the research grant is travel/networking,[6] knowledge exchange or pump priming. In these cases, acting as a PI is not a reliable

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[5] Our systems require a project manager to be named for every research grant and they are designated as a PI as the York lead for the project. This includes where an external partner is the designated PI for the project.
[6] For example, the Royal Society International Exchanges scheme.

indicator of independence. To establish whether or not the researcher meets the REF definition of independence (see paragraph 8), the original grant application and scheme guidance will be reviewed to determine the nature of the project and scheme. Where the evidence demonstrates that these PIs are working in a self-directed capacity, they will be determined as independent. In Main Panels C and D only, this will include a consideration of whether they have had significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research (see paragraph 15g).

e. *Leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package.* Where staff are leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package they will be determined independent from the date on which they acted in this role. The evidence for consideration will be documentation that demonstrates (i) the nature of the research programme that they are leading; and (ii) that they are working in a self-directed capacity, as defined by REF. For example, a detailed work programme which provides evidence of the researcher's role and significant contribution. In the absence of such evidence being provided, it is assumed that these staff are supervised by senior academic staff and not acting in a self-directed manner.

f. *Acting as a co-investigator on an externally funded research project* (Main Panels C and D only). Research staff who are CoIs will be determined as independent where they have had significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research (see also paragraph 15g). Evidence must be provided to demonstrate that the CoI is working in a self-directed capacity. This will typically be a copy of the grant application.

g. *Having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research* (Main Panels C and D only). Main Panels C and D recognise that 'having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research' will generally indicate independence. Where staff on research-only contracts hold a competitively awarded fellowship in which they have had 'significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research' and they meet the REF definition of independence (see paragraph 8), they will be determined as independent (for example, see paragraph 15c). Staff holding these fellowships will be determined independent from the start date of the award, except where the fellowship has been determined to support a transition to independence (see paragraph 15b). Evidence must be provided to demonstrate that the fellow is working in a self-directed capacity. In most cases, this will be determined by reviewing the grant application form to identify the extent to which the fellow has had significant input into the research. Where available, the scheme guidance will also be consulted. In addition, this indicator will be used to

determine the eligibility of CoIs and (exceptionally) PIs, as described in paragraphs 15d and 15f.

> Not all staff on research contracts are automatically eligible to be included in REF. Your department is responsible for explaining the criteria to you in terms of what this means and for assessing whether you are eligible. This is not an assessment of your research expertise or the quality of your outputs.

How decisions are being made and communicated to staff, including timescale.

16. All Heads of Department will be required to communicate the University's process for determining research independence to their staff employed on research-only contracts, based on standard wording provided by the RSPO. This will explain how decisions are made and the timescale for these decisions.

17. The determination of which research-only staff meet the definition of an independent researcher will be made in an inclusive and transparent manner, following the process described below (see also the diagram in appendix 5):
    a. RSPO will provide all departments with an indicative list of all research-only staff who have met one of the following indicators for independence, based on information held in the University's Current Research Information System (Pure) and grant management system (Worktribe):
        i. Holding an externally awarded fellowship;
        ii. Acting as a principal investigator on an externally funded research project;
        iii. Acting as a co-investigator on an externally funded research project (shared with units submitting to Main Panels C and D only);
    b. Departments will review the indicative list and where they hold additional information on the eligibility of staff, should supplement this list;
    c. Additionally, where departments identify staff who are 'leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package' and meet the REF definition for undertaking self-directed research, they can propose these staff for inclusion;
    d. Departments will provide an updated list to RSPO and confirm which members of staff they a) determine to be independent; and b) determine not to be independent, with reference to the Code of Practice. They will also be asked to provide a rationale for the determination in each case and evidence (see paragraph 15), which will normally be to verify independence;
    e. The RSPO will verify that the Code of Practice and REF Guidance have been accurately interpreted and make a recommendation to the REF Strategy Group on every case either to a) determine the researcher as independent; or b) determine the researcher as not independent;

f. The REF Strategy Group will consider the recommendation and advise the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research on whether to a) determine the researcher as independent, or b) determine the researcher as not independent. The data provided to the Group will be presented in an anonymised format to reduce the potential for bias;

g. Heads of Department are informed of the outcome in each case. Heads of Department will be required to communicate the outcome of the process to their research-only staff, and to provide information on the appeals process (see paragraphs 26-35).

18. The timescale for decision-making is as follows.

In advance of the submission of the Code of Practice to EDAP (June 2019), the following has occurred:

a. **November 2018 – January 2019.** The initial version of the Code of Practice was developed by the REF Strategy Group, with departments informed and consulted about the planned approaches to determining research independence and the selection of outputs;

b. **January - February 2019.** The draft Code of Practice was approved by University Research Committee (30th January 2019) for use in the Mock REF exercise. Following revisions made in light of the published REF guidance (31st January 2019), the final version was approved by REF Strategy Group (4th February 2019) for use in the Mock REF;

c. **February 2019**. An indicative list of independent researchers was circulated by RSPO to departments to inform the provisional determinations on independence;

d. **1st March 2019.** Departments were set a deadline of 1st March 2019 to return a list of researchers they determined to be independent / not independent, using the indicative list as a starting point. Where researchers were provisionally determined to be independent, they were included in the Mock REF exercise prior to the deadline (29th March 2019). Departments were invited to provide comments on the process for determining independence in their submissions, to identify potential improvements;

e. **6th June 2019.** Following approval of an updated version by University Research Committee on 1st May 2019, REF Strategy Group agreed the final version of the Code of Practice for submission to EDAP by the deadline of midday, 7th June. This incorporated feedback gathered during consultation, feedback gathered from the Mock REF exercise and further consideration of the requirements in the REF guidance.

Subsequent to the submission of the Code of Practice to EDAP, the following events are planned:

f. **Autumn/Winter 2019.** Approval of the Code of Practice by the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP);

g. **Winter 2019.** The RSPO will provide an updated indicative list of independent researchers based on the approved Code of Practice;

h. **December/January 2020**. The provisional determinations of independence will be formalised, taking into account any adjustments to the Code required by EDAP. Heads of Department will communicate the outcome to staff, who will have the opportunity to provide further information if they believe the decision is incorrect;

i. **Spring 2020**. There will be an opportunity for staff to appeal the determination that has been made;

j. **July/August 2020**. An additional round to determine whether staff appointed in 2020 prior to the census date are eligible, with an appeal process following soon after.

> Grade 6 and Grade 7 research-only staff should know by January 2020 if they are eligible for REF. If you have further information which may change the decision, talk to your department in the first instance.

Staff, committees and training

Procedures for identifying designated staff and committees / panels responsible for determining research independence (distinguishing between those with advisory and those with decision-making roles)

19. The staff with responsibility for determining independence reflect the structures for decision-making which are identified in Part 1 and are as follows:
    a. The Chair of DRC / REF Leads (where applicable) make recommendations on which staff are determined independent and not independent;
    b. RSPO provide advice on whether the Code of Practice and REF guidance have been applied correctly;
    c. The REF Strategy Group considers the recommendations from departments and the advice from the RSPO and advises the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research on the final decision. The outcomes will be reported to Heads of Department and University Research Committee.

Information provided should include role descriptions for individuals and terms of reference for committees / panels, modes of operation, and record-keeping procedures, as well as information about where these roles / committees / panels fit into the wider institutional management structure

20. The terms of reference for University Research Committee, REF Strategy Group and Departmental Research Committees are included as appendices 1-3. Appendix 4 provides an overview of how these committees fit into the wider institutional management structure.

21. The RSPO acts as the secretariat for University Research Committee and REF Strategy Group (and its sub-groups) and minutes all the meetings held, on behalf of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research. Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring records are maintained for Departmental Research Committees and REF Committees.

22. The evidence that is collected to support the decisions made on independence is held by RSPO on a secure drive. Where this is presented to committees to support decision-making, the records will be anonymised wherever possible to limit the potential for bias.

Details of training provided to individuals and committees involved in identifying staff, the timescale for delivery, and content (including how it has been tailored to REF)

23. All staff involved in advisory roles will be required to undertake online modules on Equality and Diversity and Unconscious Bias Awareness in Recruitment & Selection, as well as holistic training on REF. The staff requiring this training are as follows:

    a. Members of Departmental Research Committees / Departmental REF Committees;
    b. Members of RSPO.

24. In addition, specific training on REF-related equality issues will be provided for those staff directly involved in making decisions. The training will be tailored to the specific requirements of REF 2021. Staff involved in making decisions will also be able to seek additional support and guidance from the Equality and Diversity Office. The staff requiring this training are as follows:

    a. Chairs of Departmental Research Committees and (where applicable) REF Leads;
    b. Heads of Department;
    c. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and members of REF Strategy Group;
    d. Staff responsible for considering appeals.

25. The training will be provided in the period September to November 2019, prior to the formal determination of independent researchers in Winter 2019.

> Staff involved in decision-making for REF will receive specific Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training.

Appeals

Code of Practice – REF 2021

How the appeals process has been communicated to staff

26. Following the formal determination of which research-only staff are independent in January 2020, all research-only staff will have the opportunity to provide further information.

27. Heads of Department will be required to provide information on the appeals process to staff when they communicate the outcome of the process. A standard template will be provided by the RSPO.

28. Heads of Department will be asked to confirm and evidence that this information has been shared with all applicable staff.

Details of the process, including how cases are submitted, eligible grounds for appeal

29. Where an individual has reasonable grounds for an appeal against the determination that they are not independent, they should raise this informally with the relevant Head of Department in the first instance.

30. If it is not possible to resolve the issue informally, members of staff should raise the matter formally, and without unreasonable delay, by putting his/her appeal in writing to the Director of HR (see paragraph 33).

31. The eligible grounds for appeal could include that there is additional information available which could change the outcome but which was overlooked in the original decision; or if they believe that their case has not been dealt with in accordance with this Code.

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

32. The appeal will be considered by an independent manager who has had no prior involvement in any of the original decisions. It is expected that this will be a member of the University Executive Board (UEB), but not the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research. The appeal will also be managed administratively via the HR department. This will allow the decision to be in line with our ethos of accountability and consistency and ensure staff have confidence that the appeal will be dealt with fairly and equitably. The manager considering the case may seek advice from others as appropriate. The individual raising the appeal may be accompanied to any formal meetings by a trade union representative or work colleague employed by the University of York.

33. The appellant must write to the Director of HR by one of the two following deadlines:

    a. 1st March 2020 (following the final decisions on independence in January 2020); or

    b. 28th August 2020 (for staff informed of the final decision on independence in August 2020).

34. A decision on the appeal will be made as soon as possible and certainly no later than 31st May 2020 (for appeals submitted to the 1st March 2020 deadline) and 16th October 2020 (for appeals submitted to the 28th August 2020 deadline).

35. The Director of HR will write to the individual member of staff informing them of the outcome. This outcome will also be communicated to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and the RSPO.

Equality impact assessment

How an equality impact assessment (EIA) has been used to inform the identification of staff and make final decisions.

36. The RSPO, HR and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Office undertook an initial equality impact assessment on this policy during the Mock REF Exercise (Spring 2019). This involved preparing baseline data pertaining to the membership of protected characteristics for all research-only staff at Grades 6 and 7.

37. Once provisional determinations have been made, a statistical analysis will be performed to compare those research-only staff determined as independent and included in the Mock REF against the baseline data. These assessments will typically be undertaken at institutional level and will be fully anonymised. Where the data are sufficient, analysis will be undertaken at the level of the UoA and/or Main Panel. Where there is a significant difference, further work will be undertaken to identify why such a difference may have occurred.

38. This EIA will be considered by the REF Strategy Group. This analysis will allow the institution to identify any issues that need to be taken into account in the process for determining research independence for REF 2021.

39. In the event of appeals, the equality impact assessment will be reviewed to ensure any required changes can be made in advance of the final submission.

40. This assessment will be repeated in early 2020, after the provisional determinations have been formalised. It will be repeated prior to the submission in October 2020 and

after the submission has been made. The data with the supporting analysis will be submitted to EDAP. These results will be made public, but only at a level that does not allow individual staff to be identified.

Part 4: Selection of outputs

Policies and procedures

> REF 2021 allows the number of outputs attributed to a current member of staff to vary between one and five and allows inclusion of outputs from staff who have left. The University will not use the number of outputs attributed to an individual member of staff for any other decision-making processes.

Details of procedures that have been developed to ensure the fair and transparent selection of outputs.

41. The decisions on the selection of outputs will be made in the context of ensuring the best submission for the University as a whole. The best submission is understood as a fair and transparent selection which draws from the excellent research produced by all staff, and which maximises quality in the context of the REF 2021 assessment criteria.

42. All staff employed on either i) academic, research and teaching contracts or ii) research-only contracts are required to provide details of all their publications on our Current Research Information System (Pure), which holds additional information to determine that the eligibility requirements for outputs are met (for example, staff eligibility, open access compliance and timing of the publication). In addition, this system holds information on the outputs for former staff which are now eligible for inclusion in REF. The intention of Research England (and the funding bodies collectively) is that submissions to REF reflect the investment that each institution has made in research. Reflecting the University's commitment to supporting the research of all staff, outputs from all current and former staff (where eligible) will form the available output pool and be considered for selection.

> REF 2021 allows for outputs from former staff to be submitted where they were published whilst staff were employed by the University. This does not restrict the potential for these same outputs to be submitted by that member of staff at another university. In these cases, both universities could submit the same output/s.

43. Outputs will be selected from this pool based on the primary criterion of quality as defined or expected by the relevant unit of assessment panel/s for which the output is

being considered for selection, with reference to the published REF criteria. In all cases, the final internal assessment of quality will rely on a process of expert academic review within departments, typically by two or more academic reviewers[7]. This will be undertaken by either the Department Research Committee, or where responsibility for REF has been delegated, to a Department REF Committee. In addition, predictions of quality may be informed by critical friends: external academic experts who have been appointed to inform the University's REF preparations and whose role is to support the calibration of quality assessment thresholds. To support an inclusive return, the predicted grades of all selected outputs will be recorded on Pure. REF Strategy Group will monitor the composition of these committees and their working methods to ensure the principles of fairness, inclusivity and transparency are adhered to (see paragraphs 82-84). In addition, REF Strategy Group will monitor where outputs may need assessment by other departments and ensure that appropriate assessment occurs (see also paragraph 44). Where the outputs of a member of staff relate to more than one unit of assessment, REF Strategy Group will advise the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research on the best allocation in order to achieve the best submission.

44. All outputs reviewed for potential submission will include (where appropriate) flags to indicate that an output is interdisciplinary or that it may be cross-referred to a different unit of assessment. To ensure the fair assessment of outputs, departments are expected to send outputs which may require assessment within another unit of assessment for review, and to review outputs which they receive from other departments for review. This outcome may also be achieved by seeking expert advice from critical friends. REF Strategy Group will monitor the use of interdisciplinary and cross-referral flags and the applicable assessment processes within the context of seeking to ensure the best submission for the University as a whole.

45. The University recognises that some units of assessment will use citation data to supplement the assessment process. Our approach is to utilise these indicators in line with our own Policy for Research Evaluation using Quantitative Data, which exists to ensure we use metric data responsibly when assessing research quality[8]. Citation data will only be used to supplement decisions on assessing research quality, and only used in those units of assessment where the sub-panels have stated they will use citation data.

46. As noted in paragraph 43, the primary criterion for the selection of outputs will be quality. The selection will seek to deliver the strongest possible submission for each unit of assessment which respects the framework provided by REF. To form this

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[7] In some cases, this may be informed by self-assessments of the quality of outputs from members of staff.
[8] Our approach aligns with the REF Panel Criteria and Working Methods which state that 'No sub-panel will use journal impact factors or any hierarchy of journals in their assessment of outputs. No output will be privileged or disadvantaged on the basis of the publisher, where it is published or the medium of its publication' (paragraph 207).

submission, all staff are normally expected to provide at least one output and may be attributed to up to five outputs. Departments are responsible for making the decisions on the selection of outputs and REF Strategy Group will review the outcomes of the process. The University recognises that there are a wide range of reasons why staff may have more or fewer outputs attributed to them in the submission, for example, their FTE,[9] or individual staff circumstances which have limited the time available for research. The final selection of outputs in the REF submission will not be used for decision-making outside REF. The research performance of staff is managed in accordance with the University's Framework for Research Performance Expectations and is independent of REF.

47. Where the attribution of outputs to staff within each unit of assessment can be improved without negatively impacting upon quality, the selection process will aim to distribute the attribution of outputs to reflect the excellent research produced by all staff. As with selection, departments are responsible for making the decisions on the attribution of outputs and REF Strategy Group will review the outcomes of the process. The final published REF results will not include the names of the staff submitted, or information on how outputs were attributed to staff, in order to be consistent with Lord Stern's recommendation that REF should focus on the submitting unit, not the individual researcher. Information about the attribution of outputs to individual staff will not form part of our public REF submission and will only be kept for essential decision-making for the REF submission and for appropriate supporting administrative purposes.[10]

48. To support these processes, a REF modeller has been developed which uses an algorithm to identify a selection of outputs within each UoA which will maximise the output GPA. Where it can do so without affecting quality, it also seeks to allocate evenly the distribution of outputs across staff within a unit of assessment. In addition, it will take account of reductions in outputs which arise from staff circumstances. The role of the REF modeller is purely *advisory*. It will suggest alternative allocation models which inform, but do not replace, the decisions made within each unit of assessment on which outputs to include.

49. It is recognised that the development of the final submission will be an iterative process as outputs will be published throughout the assessment period. Consequently, the selection process will be subject to regular review as the submission develops.

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[9] The calculation for determining how many outputs each unit of assessment requires is the FTE of the unit multiplied by 2.5. Staff whose FTE is between 0.2 and 1 are generally expected to contribute proportionally fewer outputs than full-time staff.

[10] This information will only be held by staff who are responsible for the selection of outputs (Chairs of DRC, REF Leads and Heads of Department) or have administrative responsibility for the REF submission (RSPO).

50. To ensure a fair and transparent selection of outputs we will undertake regular equality impact assessments (see paragraphs 82-84). Each UoA is required to account for their selection of outputs as part of the REF 5b environment template. The REF Strategy Group is responsible for reviewing the Mock REF (and equivalent) submissions and will advise departments where significant differences arise and/or where a fair and transparent selection process is not demonstrated.

51. It is recognised that the assessment of the research quality of outputs is a sensitive issue. Departments should discuss the grading with individual authors, as part of ongoing development and mentoring processes. In this way, feedback can underpin the transparency of the process and accountability of the process as described in the University's Research Performance Expectations.

> The quality of outputs is the primary criterion used for selection of outputs. Where possible, outputs will be selected and attributed equally across all staff, provided this has no impact on the overall quality. You can receive feedback on how your outputs have been assessed as part of ongoing mentoring and development discussions. However, whilst the outputs submitted to REF will be made public, how they have been attributed to staff will not.

Information should be provided about the procedure development process and the rationale for adopted methods

52. The procedures for ensuring a fair and transparent selection of outputs will be discussed with departments in advance of the Mock REF via relevant fora (see paragraph 6). The rationale for the methods adopted is that they evolve from the University's approach to REF 2014 as outlined in its Code of Practice but reflect the revised requirements for REF 2021.

Codes of practice should describe stages of approval (diagrams, schematics & timelines might be included as an aid)

53. The timeline for approval is described in paragraph 54. The provisional recommendations will be made at the stages described in paragraphs 54 a-d, with REF Strategy Group reviewing the provisional recommendations. The stages involved here are as follows:
    a. Departments make provisional recommendations on their output selection and explain their processes in their REF5b;
    b. REF Strategy Group reviews the provisional recommendations and REF5b and advises departments on whether their processes and selection meet the criteria set out in this Code and what actions, if any, are required.
    For the final stage of approvals, the stages are as follows:

    c. Departments make final recommendations on output selection and submit their REF 5b (29th January 2021);

    d. REF Strategy Group reviews selection of outputs and the REF 5b and advises the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research on the final decisions on output selection and approves the REF 5b unit environment template (February-March 2021).

54. The timeline for reviewing the selection of outputs and the REF 5b will follow an iterative process in accordance with this timescale:

Prior to the submission of the Code to EDAP:

    a. **June 2018**. Departments submitted their initial output selection to a University REF Check Exercise, with submissions reviewed by REF Strategy Group;

    b. **March 2019**. Departments submitted an updated output selection to a University Mock REF Exercise, with submissions reviewed by REF Strategy Group.

Following submission of the Code to EDAP:

    c. **December 2019**. Departments submit an updated output selection, with submissions reviewed by REF Strategy Group;

    d. **October 2020**. Departments submit an updated output selection, with submissions reviewed by REF Strategy Group;

    e. **February 2021**. The planned selection of outputs for selection is reviewed by REF Strategy Group;

    f. **April 2021**. The submitted selection of outputs is reviewed by REF Strategy Group.

Staff, committees and training

Procedures for identifying designated staff and committees / panels responsible for selecting outputs (distinguishing between those with advisory and those with decision-making roles)

55. The staff with responsibility for selecting outputs reflects the structures for decision-making which are identified in Part 1:

    a. The Chairs of DRC or REF Lead (where applicable) will typically make recommendations based on the advice received from Departmental Research Committees or Departmental REF Committees;

    b.   The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research is responsible for the final decision, drawing on advice from REF Strategy Group where appropriate.

Information provided should include role descriptions for individuals and terms of reference for committees / panels, modes of operation, and record-keeping procedures, as well as information about where these roles / committees / panels fit into the wider institutional management structure

56. See paragraphs 20 and 21.

Details of training provided to individuals and committees involved in the output selection process, the timescale for delivery, and content (including how it has been tailored to REF)

57. All staff involved in the decision-making process (including those responsible for appeals) will be required to undertake an online modules on Equality and Diversity and Unconscious Bias Awareness in Recruitment & Selection. The staff requiring this training are as follows:
    a. Members of Departmental Research Committees / Departmental REF Committees;
    b. Members of REF Strategy Group;
    c. Members of RSPO;
    d. Members of URC;
    e. Members of HR and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team who are involved in the process, for example, in action arising from staff circumstances.

58. In addition, specific training on REF related equality issues will be provided for those staff directly involved in making decisions on selection. The training will be tailored to the specific requirements of REF 2021. Staff involved in making decisions will also be able to seek additional support and guidance from the Equality and Diversity Office. The staff requiring this training are as follows:
    a. Chairs of Departmental Research Committees and (where applicable) REF Leads;
    b. Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research;
    c. Members of the REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group.

59. The training will be provided in the period September - November 2019, prior to the submission of an updated selection of outputs in December 2019.

Disclosure of circumstances

60. To ensure that equality and diversity is fully supported in research careers, the funding bodies have put in place processes to recognise the effect that individual staff circumstances may have on research productivity. The following list of circumstances may be taken into account and may lead to a reduction in the number of outputs which are required for REF, either to a) contribute to a unit reduction request (see paragraphs

63-75); or b) in exceptional cases, for individual staff to request the removal of the minimum of one output (see paragraphs 76-81). Full details of the circumstances and the tariffs for reductions are provided in the REF Guidance on Submissions (paragraphs 151-201 and Annex L):

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. Staff who are junior clinical academics;
e. Circumstances with an equivalent effect to absence, that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:
  i. 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 (REF Guidance on Submissions);
  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 REF Guidance on Codes of Practice or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

Procedures for staff to disclose circumstances in a confidential manner

61. The procedures for staff to disclose circumstances are as follows:
    a. Consultation will be held with EDI special interest groups on the process for engaging with staff on circumstances;
    b. A standard email will be sent by Heads of Department to all eligible staff[11] alongside a proforma, which will clearly state that any disclosures are voluntary and will be treated confidentially. All staff not present at the institution will be sent the information by post to their home address. This will provide an opportunity to elicit the voluntary disclosure of staff circumstances, including from those staff not present at the institution. There will be three deadlines for staff to declare their circumstances over a period of 12 months to provide an extended window for all those staff wishing to declare circumstances to do so;
    c. A standard reminder will be sent by Heads of Department in advance of each deadline (see timeline in paragraph 62);
    d. All members of staff will have the opportunity to have a confidential discussion and/or to seek advice (for example, on submitting evidence) with either the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Office or the HR Operations team;

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[11] This email should also be sent to research-only staff who are determined independent after the initial email has been circulated.

e. Individual staff will submit their circumstances in a confidential manner via a standard disclosure form (see appendix 7) to the Research Strategy and Policy Office. The disclosure forms (and supporting evidence where provided) will be held securely within the Research Strategy and Policy Office. Access to these files will be strictly limited to the REF Manager and RSPO Manager and the requests and any supporting evidence will be destroyed following the completion of the exercise. The data will only be shared with the Department[12] and HR[13] with the explicit consent of the member of staff submitting the form;

f. The REF Manager and RSPO Manager will review the forms to determine whether: i) additional details are required; and ii) whether the circumstances meet the REF criteria and support a request for a reduction in the number of outputs expected. The members of this office will have been trained to be fully conversant with the REF criteria and equality and diversity issues.

62. The timeline for the disclosure of circumstances is as follows:
    a. Staff are invited to submit staff circumstances (**September 2019, December 2019 and July 2020**[14]);
    b. A reminder is sent to staff approximately two weeks prior to the deadlines and by one of the following dates: **Monday 21st October 2019, Monday 6th January 2020 and Monday 10th August**;
    c. The deadlines for submitting staff circumstances are **Friday 1st November 2019, Friday 17th January 2020 and Friday 28th August.**

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

63. In order to determine where a unit request may need to be submitted, the first step is that all staff will be invited to disclose staff circumstances as described in paragraphs 61-62.

64. If consent has been provided by the member of staff, the RSPO will write to the relevant Head of Department with a summary of the staff who have submitted staff circumstances and an estimate of the applicable reductions, with reference to Annex L of the REF Guidance on Submissions. (If consent has been given, the HR Operations team will also be informed of which staff have requested a meeting to discuss circumstances disclosed through this process).

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[12] This will enable the department to be aware of staff circumstances and be in a position to ensure that expectations can be adjusted and/or appropriate support is put in place.

[13] This will enable HR to contact the member of staff concerned to discuss the circumstances that have been disclosed and any requirements in relation to these.

[14] This final round applies where there are staff changes since the submission of requests to EDAP in March 2020. For example, recently appointed staff.

65. Based on the information provided by the RSPO, Heads of Department are invited to identify if they consider that the Department's submission has been 'disproportionately affected'[15] by staff circumstances based on those declared. In the majority of units of assessment, it is expected that departments will be able to utilise the flexibility in the move to a pool of outputs and the permitted variability in the number of outputs assigned to each individual to manage any effect from staff circumstances, without seeking reductions.

Procedures for submitting a unit reduction request to EDAP

66. Where a department determines that it has been 'disproportionately affected' by staff circumstances, a statement must be provided using the format required by REF. This statement will be considered by the REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group. In order to demonstrate that a request is necessary, departments should consider the following:
    a. *The size of the submitting unit.* It is recognised that the impact of staff circumstances in smaller units is more likely to have a disproportionate effect on the research productivity of a unit;
    b. *The number of staff in the unit who have declared staff circumstances*. Requests would not typically be expected from units where the number of staff within the unit who have declared staff circumstances is very limited;
    c. *The cumulative effect of staff circumstances on the unit's output pool*. Requests should consider how the circumstances have impacted the unit's output pool and outline why this is determined to be disproportionate, with reference to the total number of outputs required for the submission.

67. All approved requests will be submitted to the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (March 2020). Where a decision is made not to submit the request, a summary of the rationale will be provided.

68. Where a reduction request has been submitted to EDAP, the Head of Department will be informed of the decision on the number of outputs required by the submitting unit after staff circumstances have been considered by EDAP. No details of the applicable circumstances will be shared with Heads of Department (unless the member of staff has explicitly permitted this).

69. Where reductions have been granted by EDAP, each unit must demonstrate in their unit environment template (REF5b) how the reductions are linked to their selection of outputs and this will be reviewed by the RSPO and the REF Strategy Group as part of the REF pre-submission process.

Procedure where no request is made for a unit reduction request

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[15] Paragraph 175 of the REF Guidance on Submissions state that units which have been 'disproportionately affected' by equality-related circumstances may seek a reduction in the number of outputs required.

70. Where a department determines that it has not been "disproportionately affected" by staff circumstances, a statement must be provided to explain how the department has or will adjust its expectations of the number of outputs each of these members of staff is expected to contribute to the output pool[16].

71. The REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group will consider the statements from departments where a unit reduction request is not being submitted, to determine whether appropriate action has been taken to adjust the expectations placed on the individual members of staff who disclosed circumstances. If the Group determines that appropriate action has not yet been taken, it will request further action from the department concerned.

72. RSPO will inform departments of the outcome of the REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group's discussion, providing details of any additional actions which are required and the deadlines which must be adhered to. The Group will consider updates from departments on additional actions which have been taken, following up with departments as required until it is satisfied that appropriate action has been taken.

73. RSPO will contact the individual staff members whose circumstances did not lead to a request for a reduction in outputs, to explain what action has been taken to ensure that the effect of staff circumstances have been considered.

74. The REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group will prepare the report required by the national REF team on how the University has managed staff circumstances. This will include a breakdown of the circumstances declared; the number of requests for the removal of the minimum of one requirement; how the circumstances declared fed into decisions on whether to request unit reductions in outputs required; how often reductions were/were not requested; and how the expectations made of individuals were managed in these cases. This report will be submitted following the REF submission deadline (31st March 2021) and will be shared internally with staff.

Timeline for considering staff circumstances which relate to the submitting unit

75. The timeline for consideration of staff circumstances which do or do not lead to a unit reduction request being submitted is as follows:
    a. **Friday 1st November 2019.** First deadline for disclosing staff circumstances;
    b. **Friday 15th November 2019.** First deadline for departments to provide statements to either a) request a unit reduction from EDAP in the number of outputs required; or b) explain how the department has or will adjust its expectations of the number of outputs each of these members of staff is expected to contribute to the output pool;

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[16] The approach that has been taken also needs to be described in the unit environment template, including on how staff circumstances were considered in the attribution of outputs to staff.

c. **November-December 2019.** The REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group considers a) requests for unit reduction requests to determine which requests should be submitted to EDAP; and b) how departments are adjusting expectations where a request for a reduction is not sought. Departments and members of staff are informed of the outcome;

d. **Friday 17th January 2020.** Second deadline for disclosing staff circumstances;

e. **Friday 31st January 2020.** A repeat of the process described for Friday 15th November;

f. **February 2020.** A repeat of the process described for November-December 2019;

g. **6th March 2020.** Approved requests are submitted to EDAP by the RSPO by the deadline;

h. **July-August 2020.** Where there are staff changes after requests have been submitted to EDAP, there will be a final opportunity to disclose circumstances. Any staff circumstances declared at this point will be reviewed by the REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group following the same process. In this case, details of any reduction requests would be included at the point of the REF submission (November 2020) with decisions made by EDAP during the assessment year (2021);

i. **September-October 2020.** The departments and individual staff members will be informed of the outcome of the requests made to EDAP by the RSPO;

j. **30th July 2021.** Deadline for the submission of the University's report on staff circumstances to the national REF team.

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

76. Where circumstances have had an exceptional effect on an individual member of staff's ability to work productively, staff may be able to seek a reduction where the minimum of one output requirement does not apply. In these cases, staff must have produced no eligible research outputs (as defined by REF) during the assessment period. All staff will be invited to disclose staff circumstances as described in paragraph 61 above.

77. Following the review of the disclosure forms by the RSPO (see appendix 7), and confirmation that no eligible research outputs exist, fully anonymised requests for the removal of the minimum requirement of one output will be sent to the REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group for approval.

78. If approved by the REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group, this form will be submitted to EDAP, and the member of staff and the applicable Head of Department will be informed of the decision. If the request is not approved for submission to EDAP,

the member of staff will be informed in writing with an explanation of the rationale (provided by the REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group).

79. Once EDAP has communicated the outcome of the request for a removal of the minimum of one output, the member of staff concerned will be informed of the outcome by the RSPO. The Head of Department will also be informed of the outcome of the request, to enable the request to be reflected in the submitting unit's selection of outputs. Where the member of staff is linked to a unit of assessment not directly managed by the department, the unit of assessment coordinator will also be informed.

80. As noted above (paragraph 73), the University's report on staff circumstances will include a consideration of how requests for the removal of minimum of one were managed.

81. The timeline for consideration of these requests is as follows:

    a. **Friday 1st November 2019.** First deadline for disclosing staff circumstances;
    b. **November-December 2019.** The REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group considers requests to remove the minimum of one output to determine which requests should be submitted to EDAP;
    c. **Friday 17th January 2020.** Second deadline for disclosing staff circumstances;
    d. **February 2020.** The REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group considers further requests to remove the minimum of one output to determine which requests should be submitted to EDAP;
    e. **6th March 2020**. Approved requests are submitted to EDAP by the RSPO by the deadline;
    f. **July-August 2020.** Where there are staff changes after requests have been submitted to EDAP, there will be a final opportunity to disclose circumstances. Any staff circumstances declared at this point will be reviewed by the REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group following the same process. In this case, details of any reduction requests would be included at the point of the REF submission (November 2020) with decisions made by EDAP during the assessment year (2021);
    g. **September-October 2020**. The departments and individual staff members will be informed of the outcome of the requests made to EDAP by the RSPO;
    h. **30th July 2021**. Deadline for the submission of the University's report on staff circumstances to the national REF team.

> It is recognised that there will be personal circumstances where you may not have been able to undertake research. There will be a process to allow you to submit these circumstances to the UK REF team. These will be treated confidentially and your department will not be told of the circumstances, unless you give permission. The information will either be used to make a request to EDAP that a member of staff can be returned without any outputs (known as 'individual circumstances'), or to request that the combination of circumstances from all staff means that the total number of outputs for the UoA submission as a whole should be reduced (known as 'unit circumstances').

Equality impact assessment

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

82. The RSPO will undertake a series of equality impact assessments on this policy and will prepare baseline data pertaining to the membership of protected characteristics for all Category A eligible staff.

83. Based on the protected characteristics of Category A eligible staff, a statistical analysis will be performed to compare the selection of outputs in the context of the protected characteristics of the submitted staff pool, both in terms of staff headcount and FTE. In addition to the analysis of the distribution of the selected outputs, the grading of outputs will also be analysed where possible to identify if any disparities exist. These assessments will typically be undertaken at institutional level and will be fully anonymised. Only where the data are sufficient will a main panel or UoA analysis be performed. Where there is a significant difference, further work will be undertaken to identify why such a difference may have occurred. In addition, the analysis will include a consideration of how circumstances have been used to inform the spread of outputs across staff. We will share this analysis with the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee to ensure that any findings can be embedded into our equality work more generally.

84. These assessments will be undertaken in line with the timescale in paragraph 54, with assessments undertaken from all the selections submitted to the Mock REF Exercise (March 2019) to an assessment of the final submission. The data with the supporting analysis will be submitted to EDAP. These results will be made public, but only at a level that does not allow individual staff to be identified.

Part 5: Appendices

Code of Practice – REF 2021

1 - Department Research Committee - terms of reference
2 - REF Strategy Group, REF Advisory Group and REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group - terms of reference
3 - University Research Committee - terms of reference
4 - Diagram of how these committees fit into the wider institutional management structure
5 - Diagram of the decision-making process for determining research independence
6 - Diagram for the appeal process for staff determined not to be independent (as defined by REF)
7 - Staff disclosure form

Code of Practice – REF 2021

Appendix 1 - Departmental Research Committee (DRC) – terms of reference

Committee Membership, scheduling and reporting should be in line with the following model:

Committee Membership:

Model Departmental Research Committee membership

While departments have flexibility to determine the exact constituency of their DRC, the following model membership is strongly recommended:

- **Chair of Departmental Research Committee**
- **Chair of Graduate Board** (or equivalent)
- **Departmental Impact Lead**
- **Representative of the relevant Ethics Committee**
- **Membership should include significant research areas within the Department:** *major* subject areas should be covered, including Interdepartmental Research Centres. However, these staff do not represent themselves or their research groups directly.
- An **early career researcher** and a **post-doctoral researcher** if appropriate, and if not already covered by the persons above
- **Senior Support Officers** (Departmental Finance Officer, Facility Manager or Research Administrator for example, where appropriate)
- *Optional – Head of Department*

Departments should aim for a diverse membership in relation to age, gender and ethnicity. The constituency should be selected in an open and transparent manner, and status (e.g. Professorship) does not automatically confer membership. Terms of office should be the University standard of three years, with the opportunity to stand for a further three years, and rotation of membership should be encouraged.

Schedule:
Meetings will occur at least once per term. Meetings will be minuted, including agreed actions.

Reporting:
There must be a clear reporting line between the Department's Research Committee and the Departmental Management Team. The Research Committee does not report to the Head of Department via the Board of Studies. If the Department has other related committees or working groups, their relationship with DRC should be defined.

The terms of reference of the Departmental Research Committee should include all the responsibilities below, <u>unless</u> these are delegated to a sub-committee reporting to the DRC; in this case, this should be clearly specified.

Code of Practice – REF 2021

Appendix 1

Terms of Reference:

The Departmental Research Committee is responsible for having the overview of research carried out in the department and for supporting the implementation and monitoring of the Departmental Research Strategy.

1. Research Strategy and Culture

The Departmental Research Committee will:

a. Develop and regularly review the Research Strategy of the Department, in conjunction with the Head of Department and Senior Management Team, ensuring relevant overlap with strategies in major research units (including Interdepartmental Research Centres).

b. Ensure that the departmental research strategy aligns with the University Research Strategy and appropriate University research themes.

c. Develop and maintain a Departmental research income strategy to support the research strategy, and develop rolling, forward-projections of research income

d. Develop and maintain a Departmental research publication strategy (in line with the institutional strategy).

e. Promote the Research Culture of the Department by:
   i.   Supporting a regular research seminar series, advocating attendance at these and encouraging them to be held at times when a wide range of staff can participate.
   ii. Ensuring robust communication and dissemination methods for research documentation, announcements and information across the department.
   iii. Sharing information about external research funding effectively.
   iv. Encouraging applications for external funding, in line with requirements of peer review and demand management of Research Councils.
   v.   Encouraging applications for internal funding, such as the Research Priming Fund.
   vi. Strategic allocation of resources (pump priming, research leave, impact-related funding) in line with departmental research strategy, and ensuring transparency in the distribution of departmental funds for research through the use of clear written criteria.

f. Promote the development of national and international links and collaborations, with both academic and non-academic organisations.

g. Maintain good channels of communication between the Departmental Management Team, DRC and all members of staff, which includes ensuring that the Departmental Research Strategy is effectively communicated to all staff, and is freely available.

2. Research Integrity

The Department Research Committee will ensure that frameworks are in place in the Department to enable the following, and take steps to make all staff aware of these:

a. research should be conducted in accordance with:
   i.   Code of Practice on Research Integrity
        https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/research/governance/policies/research-code/

Appendix 1

    ii.   Code of Practice and Principles for Good Ethical Governance
           https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/research/governance/policies/ethics-code/
    iii.   Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure
           http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/resources/policy/academic_misconduct.htm

b. research should comply with any statutory regulations that may apply in their field of research (e.g. Home Office legislation)

c. staff should understand their own full responsibility for the fulfilment of Terms and Conditions associated with the grants they hold.

The DRC will liaise appropriately with the relevant Ethics Committee (a member of which will be on the DRC) and follow up any issues with the Head of Department as necessary.

3. Performance Expectations and Incentives

The DRC will:

a. Ensure, along with the Head of Department, that there is suitable support and management of staff in relation to research

b. Interpret and implement the University's statement on research performance expectations in a manner suitable to the department, including developing and disseminating a written statement on expected performance norms

c. Ensure the staff comply with University grant application processes and policies

d. Put forward appropriate colleagues for prizes and awards when they arise

4. Monitoring and Evaluation of Research

The DRC will:

a. Ensure that research information is appropriately and accurately captured in PURE, and that this information is reported on locally. This should include ensuring appropriate PURE support and expertise is available, for example, an experienced PURE user in the Department.

b. Develop and maintain appropriate procedures for monitoring the quality of research outputs.

c. Develop and maintain appropriate procedures for peer review of research grant applications.

d. Use data from the Management Information Gateway and other sources for benchmarking research performance of both outputs and grant applications/awards.

e. Monitor departmental compliance with Open Access requirements, and ensure that all staff are aware of relevant requirements and issues.

f. Monitor the outcomes of Departmental resource allocations (e.g. pump-priming funding or research leave)

g. Ensure that the Department is prepared for external reporting requirements, including the development of a clear framework designating the roles and responsibilities of departmental staff in communication of such requirements.

h. Prepare the Annual Departmental Research Review response for internal reporting.

i. Maintain awareness of, and act on, Equal Opportunities data in relation to research.

Appendix 1

    j. Ensure that matters of concern are reported to the Head of Department, PVC (Research), or the Director of Research and Enterprise.

5. Staff Support and Mentoring

The DRC will:

    a. Ensure that mentoring expectations and responsibilities are clear to all staff, especially with reference to post-graduate researchers and early-career researchers

    b. Ensure that all staff are made aware of the training available on research matters

    c. Ensure that appropriate career guidance is provided for all staff

    d. Advise staff on their involvement with research-related activities beyond the University, with a view to enhancing the individual research profiles of staff members while ensuring their time on research is not compromised.

6. Impact

The DRC will:

    a. Develop and maintain the departmental strategy for impact and knowledge exchange.

    b. Foster a culture of impact throughout the department, through encouragement of knowledge exchange activity, creating opportunities for staff to share good practice, and disseminating specific impact or KE funding appropriately.

    c. Be aware of and support emerging impact case studies.

    d. Maintain good communications with Faculty and University impact managers to ensure awareness of UK-wide and national policy developments in this area.

    e. Support a department-level system/use of PURE for the recording of impact and related activities.

Code of Practice – REF 2021

Appendix 2 - REF Strategy Group, REF Advisory Group and REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group - terms of reference

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REF STRATEGY GROUP

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REF Strategy Group

The Strategy Group membership:-

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research (Chair)
- Professor Deborah Smith (Chair) (to 31st December 2020) / Professor Matthias Ruth (from 1st January 2021)[17]

The Faculty Associate Deans (Research) *(ex officio):*
- Associate Dean for Social Sciences (Professor Yvonne Birks)
- Associate Dean for Sciences (Professor Sarah Thompson)
- Associate Dean for Arts and Humanities (Professor Richard Ogden)

Members from each Academic Faculty:
- Professor Elizabeth Tyler (English)
- Professor Ally Lewis (Chemistry)
- Professor Sarah Nettleton (Sociology)

UoA 2 Lead:
- Professor Patrick Doherty (Health Sciences)

The Research Strategy and Policy Manager *(ex officio)*
- Ms Anna Grey (In attendance)

The Director of Research and Enterprise *(ex officio)*
- Ms Jennifer Gilmartin

REF manager *(ex officio)*:
- Mr Ed Kirby (In attendance)

University Impact Manager *(ex officio)*:
- Dr Linda Ko Ferrigno (In attendance)

HR Partner:
- Ms Helen Foster (In attendance)

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[17] Professor Smith was the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Research until 30th April 2020. Professor Ruth began as Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Research on 1st May 2020. During the period 1st May 2020 to 31st December 2020 Professor Smith continued as Chair of the REF Strategy Group and REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group as the Special Adviser to the Vice Chancellor (Research).

Code of Practice – REF 2021

Terms of Reference:

1. To advise the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Research on recommendations and proposed strategy in relation to the development of the University of York REF 2021 submission.
2. To recommend to University Research Committee and University Executive Board the timetable and management processes for the REF 2021 submission.
3. To report to University Research Committee and University Executive Board on the preparedness of Departments in relation to REF 2021, particularly in relation to areas of concern and action required.
4. To agree the mechanisms and process via which the REF Operations Group will assess the preparedness of Departments in relation to REF 2021 and to receive reports from the REF Operations Groups on the outcome of such assessments.
5. To advise the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Research on issues relating to research areas and UoA submissions, especially in relation to UoA boundary issues.
6. To oversee those institutional level elements of the REF 2021 submission, as may be required
7. To consider and make recommendations upon appropriate resourcing and support for REF 2021.
8. To provide a forum for confidential or commercially sensitive issues relating to REF 2021 to be discussed.
9. To ensure that the equality and diversity issues relating to REF 2021 are taken fully into account and addressed appropriately.

Appendix 2

REF STRATEGY GROUP

REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group

Overview

The REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group is a subgroup of REF Strategy which is convened to consider staff circumstances declared for REF 2021 in a confidential manner amongst a small group.

Membership of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group:-

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research (Chair)
- Professor Deborah Smith (Chair) (to 31st December 2020) / Professor Matthias Ruth (from 1st January 2021) (see footnote 17).

The Faculty Associate Deans (Research) *(ex officio)*:
- Associate Dean for Social Sciences (Professor Yvonne Birks)
- Associate Dean for Sciences (Professor Sarah Thompson)
- Associate Dean for Arts and Humanities (Professor Richard Ogden)

HR Partner:
- Ms Helen Foster (In attendance)

Head of Equality and Diversity *(ex officio)*:
- Ms Maria Ayaz (In attendance)

REF Manager *(ex officio)*:
- Mr Ed Kirby (In attendance)

The Research Strategy and Policy Manager *(ex officio)*:
- Ms Anna Grey (In attendance)

Terms of Reference:-

1. To review and (where appropriate) approve requests for output reductions for REF2021 which arise from staff circumstances declared for REF 2021, including a) requests for the removal of the minimum of one output from individual staff and b) unit reduction requests from Departments.
2. To monitor what action has been taken by Departments to ensure that staff circumstances are taken into account of in the selection of outputs, including a) reviewing statements from Departments on how staff circumstances have been taken account of where a request for a reduction is not being made to EDAP and b) requesting additional action where appropriate.
3. To prepare internal and external reports on how the University has managed staff circumstances for REF2021.

Code of Practice – REF 2021

Appendix 2

REF 2021 STRATEGY GROUP

REF Advisory Group

Overview
The REF Advisory Group is a small group which works alongside REF Strategy Group members to undertake the review of submissions for REF preparedness exercises.

Membership
The membership includes 1 member from University Research Committee (URC) from each Faculty, to support effective URC oversight of REF preparations.

<u>Arts and Humanities</u>
Professor David Barnett - TFTV
Professor Dawn Hadley – Archaeology

<u>Sciences</u>
Professor Elizabeth Meins - Psychology
Professor Stephen Smith – Electronic Engineering

<u>Social sciences</u>
Professor Martin Smith – Politics
Professor Jenny Steele – Law
Professor Maria Goddard – Centre for Health Economics
Professor Matthew Festenstein - Politics

Terms of reference

1. To review unit of assessment submissions for REF preparedness exercises and to make recommendations to REF Strategy Group on feedback and required actions.
2. To make any recommendations on future REF preparedness exercises that arise in the course of carrying out the review.

Relationship to other committees

1. REF Strategy Group – A single direct line of report to REF Strategy Group. Any onward communication to Departments would be from REF Strategy Group.
2. University Research Committee and University Executive Board – The REF Strategy Group would report on the work of the Advisory Group via its existing update.

Appendix 3 – University Research Committee – terms of reference

<u>**University Research Committee**</u>

**<u>Terms of reference</u>**

1. To advise Senate and the University Executive Board on all matters relating to the research strategy of the University, to support the development of the University's Research Strategy and to support the Vice-Chancellor, the University Executive Board and Pro-Vice-Chancellor(s) in driving the strategy forward.

2. To identify priority areas for research, to champion and promote research excellence, and to develop, promote and monitor policies and practices to stimulate research programmes in the agreed areas.

3. To set internal policy and monitor progress in response to external requirements (eg peer review processes, external research assessment).

4. To advise the University Executive Board and Planning Committee on organisational structures for research, on the selective distribution of resources within the University in order to ensure appropriate alignment of resource allocation with research strategy, and where other initiatives within the University have implications for research activity.

5. To support the University in its engagement with key external stakeholders relating to research, including business, industry, the government, cultural institutions and funding agencies.

6. To monitor the research performance of the institution, departments in terms of research quality, financial sustainability (generation of research income), impact and research integrity drawing on national and international benchmarking data.

7. To receive annual updates from departments on research activities and performance including research impact, in order to advise the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research on areas where improvements could be made, where there are significant risks and/or where new opportunities may be pursued.

8. To monitor and influence the development of research policy and strategy of key national and international agencies in the interests of the University (eg HEFCE, Research Councils, European Union).

<u>Reports to: Senate</u>
Summaries of business sent to: University Executive Board & Planning Committee
Committees which report in to University Research Committee
- Faculty Research Groups
- University Research Priming Committee
- Clinical Trials Sponsorship Committee
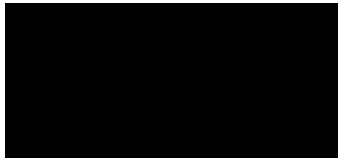
- York Graduate Research School Board
- Global Challenges Research Fund Steering Group
  Research Excellence Framework (REF) Strategy Group
- Research Excellence Training Steering Group
- Research Communications Strategy Group

Code of Practice – REF 2021

Appendix 4 - Diagram of how these committees fit into the wider institutional management structure

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │     Senate      │
                    │     and UEB     │
                    └────────┬────────┘
                             │
                    ┌────────┴────────┐
                    │   University    │
                    │    Research     │
                    │   Committee     │
                    └────────┬────────┘────────────┐
                             │                      │
┌──────────────┐    ┌────────┴────────┐    ┌────────┴────────┐
│ REF Advisory │────│   REF Strategy  │◄---►│ Faculty Research│
│    Group     │    │      Group      │    │     Groups      │
└──────────────┘    └──┬──────────┬───┘    └────────┬────────┘
┌──────────────────┐   │          │                 │
│ REF Equality,    │───┘   ┌──────┴──────┐   ┌───────┴───────┐
│ Diversity and    │       │     REF     │   │  Departments  │
│ Inclusion Group  │       │  Operations │   └───────────────┘
└──────────────────┘       │    Group    │
                           └─────────────┘
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Code of Practice – REF 2021

Appendix 5 – Diagram of the decision-making process for determining research independence

RSPO identifies potential independent researchers identified

Department review list

Department. Where applicable, they add staff who are leading a research group or substantial / specialised work package

Department returns the list of staff.

Independent | Not independent

Return updated list to **RSPO**

REF Strategy Group Consider recommendation and advises the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research

RSPO reviews and makes recommendations to REF Strategy Group

Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research Decision of independent or not independent

Heads of Department inform staff of the decision

Staff identified as independent (submitted)

Staff not identified as independent (not submitted)

Code of Practice – REF 2021

Appendix 6 - Diagram for the appeal process for staff determined not to be independent (as defined by REF)

Diagram A - for staff informed of the outcome in January 2020

January 2020
- Following the formal determination of which research-only staff are independent (January 2020) all research-only staff will have the opportunity to provide further information.

January-February 2020
- Where a member of staff has reasonable grounds for an appeal against the determination that are not independent, they should raise this informally with the relevant Head of Department in the first instance (January-February 2020).
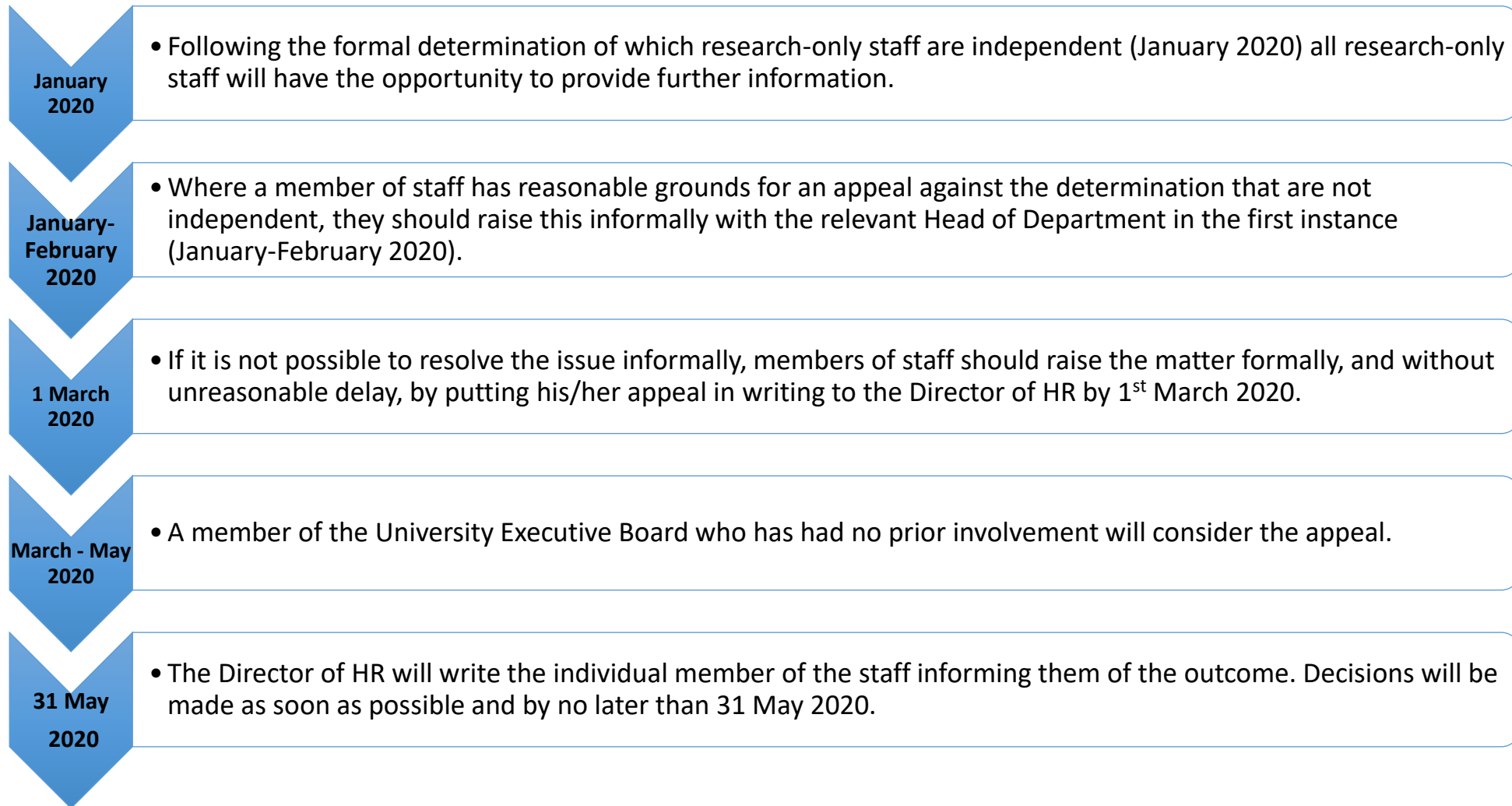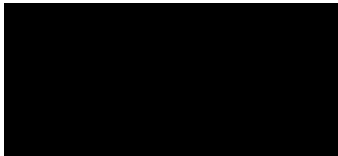
1 March 2020
- If it is not possible to resolve the issue informally, members of staff should raise the matter formally, and without unreasonable delay, by putting his/her appeal in writing to the Director of HR by 1st March 2020.

March - May 2020
- A member of the University Executive Board who has had no prior involvement will consider the appeal.

31 May 2020
- The Director of HR will write the individual member of the staff informing them of the outcome. Decisions will be made as soon as possible and by no later than 31 May 2020.

Code of Practice – REF 2021

Diagram B - for staff informed of the outcome in August 2020

August 2020	• Following the formal determination of which research-only staff are independent (August 2020) all research-only staff will have the opportunity to provide further information.
August 2020	• Where a member of staff has reasonable grounds for an appeal against the determination that are not independent, they should raise this informally with the relevant Head of Department in the first instance (August 2020).
28 August 2020	• If it is not possible to resolve the issue informally, members of staff should raise the matter formally, and without unreasonable delay, by putting his/her appeal in writing to the Director of HR by 28th August 2020.
September - October - 2020	• A member of the University Executive Board who has had no prior involvement will consider the appeal.
16 October 2020	• The Director of HR will write the individual member of the staff informing them of the outcome. Decisions will be made as soon as possible and by no later than 16 October 2020.

Code of Practice – REF 2021

Appendix 7 - 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 heath, 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

The disclosure forms (and supporting evidence where provided) will be held securely within the Research Strategy and Policy Office. Access to these forms and any supporting evidence will be strictly limited to the REF manager and RSPO manager. The information on the form will also be shared in fully anonymised form with members of the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group in order to determine whether a request can be made to the funding bodies to request a reduction in the number of outputs required. Staff will be kept closely informed on the outcome, whether or not a request is made to the funding bodies for a reduction in the number of outputs required.

The information provided will be used to determine whether staff circumstances warrant a reduction in the number of outputs expected from each individual member of staff for REF 2021. In addition, and only where staff provide consent:

- HR will contact staff to discuss the circumstances disclosed and any requirements that arise from this, including what information is to be shared with the Head of Department.
- Your Head of Department will be informed to enable expectations to be adjusted and appropriate support to be put in place.

The requests and any supporting evidence will be destroyed following the completion of the exercise. The data will only be shared with the Department and HR with the explicit consent of the member of staff submitting the form.

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 the REF manager or RSPO manager to provide the updated information.

Code of Practice – REF 2021

To submit this form you should send it by email to the University's REF manager (Ed Kirby – ed.kirby@york.ac.uk)

Name: Click here to insert text.
Department: Click here to insert text.

Do you have (or expect to have) a REF-eligible output published between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2020?
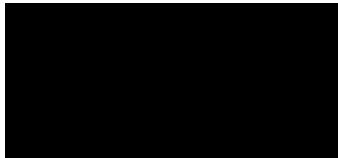
Yes ☐

No ☐

If no, please provide a brief statement (max. 200 words) describing how the circumstances have affected your ability to produce an eligible output in the period

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
Early Career Researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016). *Date you became an early career researcher.*	Click here to enter a date.
Junior clinical academic who has not gained Certificate of completion of Training by 31 July 2020.	Tick here ☐
Career break or secondment outside of the HE sector. *Dates and durations in months.*	Click here to enter dates and durations.
Family-related leave; • statutory maternity leave • statutory adoption leave • Additional paternity or adoption leave or shared parental leave lasting for four months or more. *For each period of leave, state the nature of the leave taken and the dates and durations in months.*	Click here to enter dates and durations.

Disability (including chronic conditions) *To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.*	Click here to enter text.
Mental health condition *To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.*	Click here to enter text.
Ill health or injury *To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.*	Click here to enter text.
Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of standard allowance *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.*	Click here to enter text.
Caring responsibilities *To include: Nature of responsibility, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.*	Click here to enter text.
Gender reassignment *To include: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.*	Click here to enter text.

Any other exceptional reasons e.g. bereavement. *To include: brief explanation of reason, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.*	Click here to enter text.

Please confirm, by ticking the box provided, that:
- The above information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances as of the date below
- I realise that the above information will be used for REF purposes only and will be seen by the University's REF manager, RSPO manager and (in a fully anonymised format) members of the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group
- I realise it may be necessary to share the information with the national 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 a HR partner/advisor 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 my Head of Department. (Please note, if you do not give permission your department may be unable to adjust expectations and put in place appropriate support for you).

I would like to be contacted by:
Email ☐ Insert email address
Phone ☐ Insert contact telephone number