

Robert Gordon University

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2021

**CODE OF PRACTICE FOR
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY
IN THE SUBMISSION PROCESS:
STAFF AND OUTPUTS SELECTION**

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Part 1: Introduction

How the code relates to broader RGU policies and strategies that promote and support E&D.

1. At the heart of Robert Gordon University's (RGU) Human Resources Strategy (Annex 1) is the requirement for a culture where everyone feels engaged, empowered and recognised for their contribution. The HR Strategy identifies four priority areas for action:
 - a. **People:** People share values and ambitions; feel engaged and involved and experience effective leadership at all levels.
 - b. **Roles:** Everyone understands their role and how they contribute to our success.
 - c. **Recognition:** People feel valued and respected and are treated equitably and fairly.
 - d. **Culture:** People feel their wellbeing is taken seriously and that they are involved in and consulted on important decisions.
2. The HR Strategy will provide the framework for our decisions on the REF 2021 submission. It will be supplemented by this detailed *Code of Practice*. This *Code of Practice* adheres strictly to relevant equality legislation and it will guide the work of all those involved in the preparation of submissions and the identification of staff for inclusion. This will ensure that a fair, equitable and transparent process is in place to govern the selection of excellent research and associated staff for inclusion in the REF 2021 submission.
3. RGU values the contributions of all staff, to research, to teaching, to commercialisation and academic administration and to the other diverse activities that together differentiate us from other universities. Our progression and promotions processes are designed to identify and reward the many and diverse contributions that our academic staff make to the success of the University.
4. **The University recognises that the generation of outputs that may be included in any REF is not the only measure of academic contribution or success.**
5. This Code of Practice was prepared initially by the Research Strategy and Policy Team. Following consultation with the RGU Research Committee, the Heads of Schools, the Human Resources Department, the Trade Unions' Representatives and with all staff in the University.
6. Trade Unions were asked to feedback their comments by the end of March 2019. The document was made available to all staff during May 2019. The Code of Practice was revised in the light of that feedback.

An update of actions taken since REF 2014.

7. Since REF 2014, the University has implemented major structural and operational changes: the dissolution of the Research Institutes in 2015, and then Faculties in 2016, moving to a school-based structure that includes a single Graduate School. In 2016, the University opened a voluntary severance scheme that led to the departure of 5% of academic staff. A new Vice Principal (Research) joined in December 2015 and will depart in November 2020. A new Principal was appointed in 2018 and in 2020.
8. In 2017 and 2018 a review of academic roles led to a re-design of promotion and progression routes, increasing significantly the opportunities for staff progression through contributions in research, teaching and commercial activities. All these changes were equality impact-assessed as fair and equitable by HR.
9. These changes have been followed by the RGU Board's phased investment in research over a period of ten years from 2018. This investment is designed to build capacity and capability and support the emergence and growth of the next generation of excellent researchers.
10. In line with RGU's policies and the Scottish Funding Council's requirement for an Outcome Agreement with them, a Gender-Action Plan, first drafted in 2017, has been implemented. The University has adopted the Athena SWAN principles with an action plan in place to ensure we adhere to these principles and where possible extend our activities beyond any minimum requirements. A variety of HR policies has been updated to ensure they remain compliant with current legislation, with most extending our provision beyond the legal minimum requirements, including a set of family-friendly policies relating to maternity, paternity and adoption.

How the institution is addressing the principles of Transparency, Consistency, Accountability, and Inclusivity in demonstrating fairness.

11. **Transparency:** All guidance and material supplied by the UK REF team is signposted to all University staff and key documents on the process uploaded to an internal website that is accessible by all staff from on and off-campus.
 - a. Updates on progress in defining the RGU Code of Practice and REF 2021 submission are provided on this page and have been since August 2018. The site contains a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) and a direct link for staff to raise any issues related to the *Code of Practice*.
 - b. During the consultation on the development of the *Code of Practice*, the *Code of Practice* was made available on the RGU website, with feedback invited on it. Care has been taken to ensure the Code of Practice is made available in accessible formats for any staff with identified requirements.
 - c. Heads of Schools have been tasked with ensuring that individuals who are research active and who are on leave of absence, or for any reason are absent from work for prolonged periods (over one month), were provided with hard copies of internal RGU REF guidance documentation by mail issued after the start of their absence and where it is appropriate to do so. This was facilitated by the Human Resources Department.
 - d. Staff have been invited to open consultation meetings to offer views on the *Code of Practice*. These meetings and those with staff union representatives

were identified on the RGU REF webpage and periodically in the weekly *RGU Bulletin* that is circulated to all staff.

- e. In addition to the online distribution of material, details of the draft *Code of Practice* and the processes related to:
 - i. identifying staff with significant responsibility for research,
 - ii. determining research independence and
 - iii. selecting outputs for submission

will be used as part of *final* mock REF2021 exercise scheduled for late 2019 - early 2020 and were presented at open meetings held for each of RGU's Schools. These were first held in May 2019.

- f. Feedback from these processes has informed the final version of the *Code of Practice* used for REF2021 selections.
- g. Individuals acting as external advisers or internal reviewers as part of the University's *final* REF 2021 preparations will be provided with a copy of the *RGU Code of Practice* and will be required to apply its principles in their work.

12. **Consistency:** The principles governing the processes covered by the *RGU Code of Practice* will be applied consistently across the institution and at all stages of the decision-making process. We are using an independent internal audit process to monitor the decision-making process and to sample relevant documentation thus subjecting our selection processes to scrutiny. Equality impact assessments are scheduled during the preparation of the REF 2021 submission.

13. **Accountability:** The major responsibility for managing the REF processes and making key decisions will be with the Principal and Vice-Chancellor (or his nominee) and the REF Manager (the Vice-Principal (Research)) who is the responsible individual for the management and co-ordination of the REF 2021 submission. The Head of Research Strategy & Policy will serve as the Deputy REF Manager.

- a. The REF Manager will Chair the *REF 2021 Management Working Group* (Annex 2 – Membership of REF2021 MWG)
- b. The *REF 2021 Management Working Group* will advise the RGU Research Committee and through them the Academic Council and the Board of Governors.

14. **Inclusivity:** This detailed *RGU Code of Practice* has been designed to ensure that the excellent research being conducted at the University is included in the REF 2021 submission. The processes described in the *Code of Practice* have been subject to a rigorous consultation with staff, the Equality and Diversity Group, representative staff Unions, the RGU Research Committee, Academic Council and the Board of Governors. The processes are designed to promote an inclusive environment with the aim of ensuring that all RGU staff, including those in protected groups,

- a. who have significant responsibility for research,
- b. are independent researchers, and
- c. are generating excellent research

have their work included in the REF 2021 submission in line with the recommendations made in Stern's report (2016) and REF document 2019/01.

Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

Transparency, Consistency, Accountability, and Inclusivity

Policies and procedures

15. RGU operates with contractual terms derived from the HE 2000 Contract that in practice means some staff on a T&R contract have only a minor, or even no responsibility for undertaking research. Others with a primary teaching role may engage in scholarship to support their teaching but in practice, do no research. For others, a high proportion of their time is devoted to research. The distribution of effort is determined by the line managers within RGU's Schools. They allocate duties through the annual Employee Performance Review (EPR), a transparent process that enables academics to be full participants in determining their priorities and where appropriate their time for research.
16. This annual review allows individuals flexibility to move between research and teaching intensive periods during their careers, enriching the academic environment, encouraging knowledge exchange, entrepreneurial activities and professional practice.
17. RGU has not changed individual academic's contracts in order to fulfil a process for the administration of REF 2021. We do not wish academics to feel inappropriately pressured to channel their efforts to REF-focused types of research at the expense of the important academic activities that support the quality of teaching and the wider reach and impact of the University.

Criteria used for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research, including information about how the criteria are being applied, and grounds for decisions taken.

18. The guidance provided by the National REF Team (see REF 2019/01) identifies Category A eligible staff to be those with a contract of 0.2FTE or greater on the payroll of the submitting institution on the census date whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'teaching and research'. Staff meeting these criteria are our 'initial pool'.
19. Based on RGU's use of an annual EPR for assigning duties and responsibilities as well as setting goals and targets for the research time allocation, the selection of staff with significant responsibility for research (our final pool) is based on the time allocated to them for research activity by their line manager and endorsed by their Head of School. For inclusion in the final pool they will have been allocated a minimum of 0.2FTE for research activity within their EPR (our annual performance review or equivalent).
20. For inclusion in the final pool they will also need to demonstrate research independence. The Guidance on Submissions document (REF2018/1) states that 'an independent researcher is defined as an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme. Our process recognises that the guidance states that 'each indicator (of independence) may not individually demonstrate independence and where appropriate multiple factors may need to be considered'. In all cases we expect staff to have had significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of this research.

21. The indicators that we will use are those listed in the REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions document to demonstrate independence and are considered 'appropriate by all main panels', namely:
- leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project. This could include acting as a co-investigator on an externally funded research project, but only for larger grants such as Horizon 2020 (for clarity, in all cases the income must be HESA returnable).
 - holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement.
 - leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package (for clarity, a sub-project within a larger project).
22. It is a requirement that this activity has been sustained over a period of three years and continues to be reflected in the time they have been allocated for research through the annual EPR process. Appropriate adjustments will be made to account for individual staff circumstances, including those who work part time, or join RGU part way through the REF2021 time period as well as early career researchers (Annex 3). This may be through our appeals process.
23. The proposed aggregation of staff from this final pool into Units of Assessment (UOAs) will be based on a range of considerations that will include the relevance of their research to the UOA, regardless of the School they belong to, and the quality profile of research outputs.
24. In addition to internal forms of self-assessment and analysis, *external assessors* (external to the University) have been commissioned to act on behalf of the University. The assessors will assist with the assessment of output quality and will provide an independent source of help and advice during relevant stages of the preparations for the final submission. External reviews of outputs classed as potential submissions to relevant UOAs were undertaken in late 2018/early 2019. A further external review of updated submissions will be performed in early 2020. This is intended to maintain the rigour and integrity of the University's internal processes and procedures, and to strengthen and complete the final submissions. The input of assessors will be considered in the context of the University's agreed targets for its performance in the REF 2021 (see paragraph 27).
25. These reviews will use the same scoring mechanism that was used in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014) or the latest information available from the REF 2021 Panels being assembled as part of REF 2021. We will use the profile of the star ratings and an unclassified level which relates to contributions that do not achieve a nationally recognised standard of research quality. The results of these reviews will be analysed by the trained Academic Leads for REF 2021, Heads of Schools and the REF Manager and thereafter discussed, in confidence, by the *REF 2021 Management Working Group*.
26. The first external review conducted in late 2018/early 2019 provided an early indication of the strength and breadth of outputs for the REF2021 submission. It was used to help highlight the appropriateness of submission of outputs to relevant UOAs and reveal any gaps that may need to be filled in order to maximise the strength of each potential UOA submission.
27. Where a staff grouping or unit in RGU is too small to merit an independent submission to a UOA, the University may request an exception to submission for such small units or explore joint submissions with other universities if this is deemed

appropriate and substantial collaboration with them can be evidenced (Paragraphs 68-72, REF 2019/01).

28. With the above information, discussions will be held with Heads of Schools and other colleagues, as appropriate, to agree how the most strategically important gaps will be filled and agree timescales when this can be done. The process will also identify cases where work is required to support individuals to achieve the quality of contributions that will be necessary in order to be included in the final submission to *REF 2021*.
29. Simultaneously with the above process and following consultation with relevant stakeholders, the University will decide during 2019 the minimum expected quality threshold that should be applied for each UOA submission to the REF. This is intended to help the University achieve suitably beneficial profiles that will position the University appropriately when the final REF2021 results are published. These threshold standards will be formed into a proposal for consideration by the *REF 2021 Management Working Group* and the RGU Research Committee. Recommendations from them will be presented to the Academic Council for endorsement and ultimately to the Principal for approval (Annex 4).
30. Data on research income, research students and research studentships, will also be secured and analysed for their contributions to the eventual submissions the University chooses to make. Impact case studies will be produced in line with the requirements of the national REF Team. At appropriate stages these will inform future internal and external assessments of quality and progress towards final submission status.
31. Provisional decisions on the inclusion of outputs will be made on the basis of appropriate quality thresholds.
32. The University may decide not to submit in any given UOA and final decisions on this will be made once all data and circumstances have been considered.

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

33. The selection criteria and processes were made available to staff in the draft *Code of Practice* issued for consultation in May 2019 and have been modified as part of that process.
34. Staff were advised at this stage that it was important for them to identify individual circumstances that were known to them in May 2019, or any change in their circumstances that emerges prior to the REF2021 submission deadline, so that, where possible and appropriate, these might be taken into account during the development of the RGU REF2021 submission. A disclosure form is provided for this purpose (Annex 5). The categories shown on this form are intended to cover the major categories of circumstances that individuals may wish to disclose. There is scope for 'other exceptional and relevant reasons' to be identified. Confidential discussions for further guidance may be held with the Head of Research Strategy & Policy or with HR if further advice or explanation is required.

The approach to identifying staff with significant responsibility for research by discipline and UOA.

35. The University has adopted a uniform approach to identifying staff with significant responsibility for research across all disciplines and UOAs. The case of *'practice-*

based research' within Gray's School of Art and the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment has been considered and a decision taken not to deviate from the criteria being applied across the rest of the University.

Development of process(es)

How processes to be followed have been consulted on and agreed with staff representative groups.

36. The draft of the RGU *Code of Practice* was written by the REF Manager with input from the Head of Research Strategy & Policy. It was revised following consultation with the *Research Committee, Heads of Schools and the Human Resources Department*. The draft *Code of Practice* was then shared for consultation with the University community, after the final submission guidance was issued by the REF team. The final *Code of Practice* has been considered by the Heads of Schools, Academic Leads for REF2021, the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG) and the relevant trade unions. In its final version, it will be approved by the *REF 2021 Management Working Group*, the Senior Management Group, the Research Committee, Academic Council and approved by the Executive and the Board of Governors.

Communication throughout the process and of the final agreed processes to staff.

37. The University's *Code of Practice for Equality and Diversity in the Submission Process: Staff and Outputs Selection* is aimed at making its REF 2021 preparations and submissions consistent, accountable, and inclusive. Transparency will be achieved through the following programme of dissemination and communication.
38. Together with a timeline for REF 2021 (Annex 6) prepared by the *REF Manager*, the *REF 2021 Management Working Group* published the University's *Draft Code of Practice for Equality and Diversity in the Submission Process: Staff and Outputs Selection* (abbreviated as *Code of Practice*) for community consultation in May 2019. Online, email or hard copy feedback was welcomed.
39. Open sessions for staff were held across RGU in May 2019. These will be repeated in later 2019.. Staff who were unable to attend the meeting organised for their own School were free to attend any of the other sessions. It is intended that these sessions will increase ownership of the Code of Practice by all staff, not just those directly involved in the decision-making processes for REF2021.
40. The *Code of Practice* was considered by the Heads of Schools, the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG), the relevant trade unions, the RGU Research Committee and Academic Council and the Board of Governors.
41. There will be a regular schedule of updates (verbal or written) provided for the meetings of formal internal groups and committees from September 2018 until the REF 2021 submission has been finalised. These include:
- a. The Senior Management Group;
 - b. Research Committee;
 - c. Academic Council;
 - d. The Executive; and

- e. The Board of Governors.
- 42. Centrally distributed mail bulletins to all relevant staff and internal digital displays across the campus will direct people to the information held on the University's dedicated *REF 2021* webpage on a regular basis. This process will be reinforced by the activities of the *REF 2021 Management Working Group*, the REF Manager, and the Head of Research Strategy & Policy.
- 43. Heads of Schools have been tasked with ensuring that research active individuals who are on leave of absence or for any reason are absent from work for prolonged periods (over one month), are, where appropriate, provided with hard copies of internal RGU REF documentation by mail. This will be facilitated by the Human Resources Department.
- 44. There will be discussions with relevant higher education institutions on potential joint working in the context of the Research Pooling or other collaborative initiatives in Scotland, such as the pan-Scotland Graduate Schools. Decisions will be finalised by December 2019. The University will ensure that joint decision-making across institutions does not compromise adherence to this *Code of Practice*.
- 45. Once the final *Code of Practice* has been approved, an appropriate communication will be distributed across the University. In this, staff will be reminded once again of the opportunity to flag, confidentially, if they have individual circumstances that they wish to have considered with respect to their potential inclusion in the University's *REF 2021* submission (Annex 5). Their proposal must be within the terms and conditions identified by the relevant Main Panel and UOA criteria and working methods.

Staff, committees and training

Procedures for appointing designated staff and committees / panels responsible for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research.

Academic Council (Decision-making)

- 46. The Academic Council is appointed by the Board of Governors. Members are nominated by the Principal subject to the approval of the Board. The Academic Council is responsible to the Board for the planning, co-ordination, development and supervision of the academic work of the University and for maintaining the academic standards of the University. The Academic Council has all the powers and duties of the Board in relation to its functions and in addition has the power to make recommendations to the Board on such matters as it thinks fit. The current regulations are included at Annex 7.
- 47. In relation to the RGU REF 2021 submission, the Academic Council will review, and if necessary, challenge the decisions of the Research Committee. If required, Academic Council will refer matters back to the Vice-Principal (Research) (VPR) and Research Committee for further consideration prior to the details of the RGU REF 2021 submission being authorised by Academic Council and reviewed by the Board of Governors.

Vice-Principal (Research) (VPR) (Decision-making)

48. The Vice-Principal (Research) sets research strategy and policy for the University in consultation with the University Research Committee, a Standing Committee of Academic Council and Heads of Schools. Academic Council takes authority from legislation contained in *The Robert Gordon University (Scotland) Order of Council 2006*. This role will be taken over temporarily by the Principal after the current VPR leaves in November 2020, until a new roleholder is in place.
49. The VPR reports on all matters related to research and research assessment, including REF 2021, to the Research Committee, the Senior Management Group, the Academic Council, the Executive and to the RGU Board of Governors.
50. The VPR is the *REF Manager* for the University. The VPR is the Chair of the *REF 2021 Management Working Group* and will be responsible for the final decisions on the RGU REF 2021 submission agreed by the RGU Research Committee and presented for approval to Academic Council.

REF 2021 Independent Appeals Panel (Decision-making)

51. This panel will consist of:
 - a. A Vice-Principal, (Chair), (*not* the VPR),
 - b. An independent Head of School, not the Head of School through which the appellant was considered for submission to REF 2021,
 - c. The Executive Director Human Resources, or nominated representative and
 - d. An Equality practitioner from the Human Resources Department.
52. The Head of Research Strategy & Policy will attend to offer clarification on the REF Guidelines but will not participate in the decision-making process.
53. Full details of the Appeals Process are provided below (Paragraphs 63-71 of this document). The Appeals Panel will refer the outcome of the appeal to the Research Committee.

The Research Committee (Decision making)

54. The remit of the Research Committee is to advise the University on the appropriate strategic direction, priorities and activities in order to be internationally, nationally and regionally recognised for excellence in translational research, enterprise and innovation in key thematic areas and to demonstrate tangible success in applying that research for the benefit of the wider community and to the University's course portfolio. In pursuance of this role the Committee will:
 - a. support the Vice-Principal for Research in developing coherent strategies to deliver the University's strategic priorities to maintain, sustain and enhance the research activities of the University, its research profile, and ensure an effective and cohesive research culture throughout the University;
 - b. regularly monitor overall performance in research activities against key performance indicators as determined by the University from time to time, and within the context of the *Research Excellence Framework*, including the identification and monitoring of risks associated with research;
 - c. regularly review Schools' research plans and monitor performance against targets;
 - d. oversee the development of, and compliance with, the University's research governance and research ethics policies and associated procedures, and

- advise on good practice as appropriate;
- e. ensure the University has a clear strategy to support the career development of researchers, and monitor the impact of the strategy, with particular reference to the UK- wide *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*, the *Athena SWAN* programme, requirements for research data management, and the UK-wide *Vitae* programme;
- f. monitor and advise the University on the implications of changes in the external environment including, *inter alia*, international, national and government priorities and initiatives;
- g. advise and report on a regular basis to the Academic Council on issues related to research.

55. The Research Committee consists of four *Ex Officio* members

- a. *Vice-Principal for Research (Convener)*
- b. *Head of Research Strategy & Policy*
- c. *Head of Graduate School*
- d. *Director of Library Services (or nominee) and*

56. Up to twelve *Ordinary Members* consisting of twelve established researchers with a demonstrable track record of sustained research success.

REF 2021 Management Working Group (Advisory)

57. *REF 2021 Management Working Group* is responsible for the day to day preparation of the REF2021 submission for presentation to the RGU Research Committee. The members of the *REF 2021 Management Working Group* have been nominated by the Heads of Schools and Heads of Services. They have been chosen to represent their diverse research interests and the UOAs relevant to the research activities underway at RGU and to ensure appropriate information is provided to them from key departments including Human Resources, the Library, Finance and the Graduate School.

- a. REF Manager (Chair, Vice-Principal (Research));
- b. Head of Research Strategy & Policy, (Deputy Chair);
- c. Academic Leads for REF 2021, nominated by Heads of Schools;
- d. Director of Business Development;
- e. Head of Human Resources Operations and Support;
- f. Human Resources Admin Manager;
- g. Research Liaison Librarian;
- h. Repository & Metadata Assistant Librarian;
- i. Cost Accountant (Finance);
- j. Head of the Graduate School.

58. The advice formulated by *REF 2021 Management Working Group* will be informed by the recommendations of the *Academic Leads for REF2021* who will apply the criteria for:

- i) identifying those with significant responsibility for research,
- ii) determining their research independence and
- iii) initial filtering of outputs (see selection process below) for REF submissions and thereafter providing advice to the *REF 2021 Management Working Group* on final selections.

Training on Equality and Diversity

59. As part of the University's *Equality and Diversity Policy* all individuals are expected to:
- a. be aware of, and comply with, the University's *Equality and Diversity Policy*;
 - b. complete mandatory training in Equality and Diversity;
 - c. treat everyone with respect;
 - d. eliminate discrimination;
 - e. advance equality and promote good relations across all protected characteristics;
 - f. actively promote equality and diversity; and
 - g. co-operate with the University in complying with any requirements or duty imposed under any relevant legislation.
60. Those involved in selecting staff including members of the *REF 2021 Management Working Group* and Heads of Schools, those who handle appeals, and those who will be providing feedback to staff who are not selected, have been given training on their specific responsibilities in terms of their REF role. This includes sessions on the *Equality and Diversity Policy* and associated policies e.g. the *Family Friendly, Flexible Working and Sickness Absence Policies* as they pertain to individual staff circumstances.
61. Training has been tailored to the REF processes and will include case studies that are used to explore issues including the implications of dealing with individual and/or complex circumstances.
62. The training provided has covered such issues as:
- a. Early career researchers;
 - b. Absence from work due to secondment or career breaks;
 - c. Qualifying periods of family-related leave;
 - d. Circumstances that apply in UOAs 1–6;
 - e. Circumstances equivalent to absence including disability;
 - f. Ill health, injury, or mental health conditions;
 - g. Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare;
 - h. Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member);
 - i. Gender reassignment;
 - j. Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.
63. This training will be completed by December 2020 and will be updated, as appropriate, to accommodate any changes in legislation and the final guidance on submissions from the UK REF Team.

Appeals (see paragraphs 75-78 Guidance on codes of practice REF 2019/03).

64. Staff were advised of the Appeals Process (Annex 8) through the release of the Draft Code of Practice in May 2019.

Details of the Appeals Process, including how cases are submitted, eligible grounds for appeal.

65. In the period prior to the final recommendations on inclusion, the *REF 2021 Management Working Group* will ensure there is ample provision for an individual's research output to be discussed confidentially, including both feedback from *final* external review and any possible mitigating circumstances that an individual may wish to be considered.
66. Once a final decision on eligibility of staff and inclusion/non-inclusion of outputs has been made, this will be conveyed to individuals through confidential discussions with their *Academic Leads for REF 2021*. Previous discussions should ensure that expectations are managed.
67. Any individual who is dissatisfied with a decision may lodge an appeal in writing to a *REF 2021 Appeals Panel*. All such appeals must be lodged with the Head of Research Strategy & Policy, by **20th November 2020** and a decision will be reached by **30th November 2020**, with communication back to the appellant by **31st December 2020**. In any appeal the grounds of any perceived discrimination should be fully set out. Issues relating to the quality or otherwise, of research outputs will not be considered. Should our external review be delayed, then the final appeal date will be reviewed as appropriate.
68. The *REF 2021 Independent Appeals Panel* will consist of a University Vice-Principal, an independent Head of School (not the Head of School through which the appellant was considered for submission), the Executive Director of Human Resources and an Equality practitioner. It will be chaired by the Vice-Principal in attendance. The individual lodging the appeal may choose to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at the appeal meeting.
69. The *REF 2021 Independent Appeals Panel* will review, in confidence, the written case that has been submitted to them and consider any additional relevant information presented to them either orally or tabled by the appellant during the meeting. They will not make a judgment on the quality of outputs, this is not their role.
70. Members of the *REF 2021 Independent Appeals Panel* may ask for clarification of any matters relevant to the case in question. The meeting will normally be scheduled for thirty minutes. The *REF 2021 Independent Appeals Panel* will reach a decision and convey this result to the staff member in writing, and normally within five (5) working days.
71. The final appeals process will be concluded by the end of **January 2021**.

Equality impact assessments (EIAs) (see paragraphs 59 to 72 (REF 2019/03)).

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

72. EIAs of various Human Resource policies including the recruitment and selection policy have been conducted and these were again reviewed before the end of January 2019. An EIA was also conducted prior to the revised Equality and Diversity Policy being ratified by the University's Board of Governors.
73. The University will continue to conduct EIAs on its policies and procedures for the selection of staff and outputs for the REF at various stages throughout the process. This will include a comparative quantitative report on the diversity characteristics of

those 'eligible for submission' and those 'not eligible' for the REF 2021. This will be supported by the Human Resources Department.

74. The EIA has encompassed:

- a. For processes related to identifying staff; the assessment has considered data on the characteristics of staff considered to meet the criteria for having significant responsibility for research in the context of all staff who are eligible for submission, and all academic staff.
- b. For policy and procedures relating to the identification of independent researchers; the assessment has considered data on the characteristics of staff determined to meet the definition, in the context of an appropriate comparator pool for junior academic staff (appropriate to the RGU context).
- c. For policy and procedures relating to output selection; the assessment has considered data on the distribution of selected outputs across staff, by protected characteristic, in the context of the characteristics of the submitted staff pool.

75. The REF Manager will be responsible for assessing and determining whether the staff selection policy for REF 2021 may have a differential impact on particular groups of staff. The REF Manager will be supported in this by internal Equality practitioners nominated by the University's Human Resources Department.

76. EIAs will be informed by an analysis of data on staff who are eligible for selection in respect of all the equality protected characteristics for which data are available. The equality profiles will be made available by the University's Human Resources Department to the REF 2021 Management Working Group.

77. The findings of EIAs will be reported by the REF 2021 Management Working Group to other relevant committees to ensure appropriate actions on equality and diversity are taken in amending policies and procedures in research and other areas.

78. To mitigate against the risk of discrimination, the REF 2021 Management Working Group will meet to review the EIAs when newly-recruited staff submissions have been examined, when considering appeals, and when preparing the final submission.

79. The development of the *Code of Practice* has involved the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group and Equality Champions, including individuals who are from protected groups and who are research active. They have also been involved in informing Equality Impact Assessments to ensure the University is adopting best practice in the area of equality and diversity. This approach allows us to satisfy the requirements of the public sector equality duty. All Equality Impact Assessments will be made available upon request after the REF 2021 submissions have been made.

Part 3: Determining research independence.

Policies and procedures (see paragraph 15-17 of this document).

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

80. *Category A eligible staff* are defined as academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, on the payroll of the submitting institution on the census date, whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'teaching and research'. Staff should have a substantive research connection with the submitting unit.
81. Staff on 'research only' contracts must meet the definition of an independent researcher.
82. Staff on 'teaching and research' contracts are considered to be independent researchers. In exceptional instances, where this is not the case, independence can be considered as part of the process of identifying staff with significant responsibility for research.
83. For the selection process governed by this *Code of Practice* RGU has defined an independent researcher as an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme.
84. In making this determination a set of objective criteria has been applied, recognising that multiple factors need to be considered. In addition to their being given a time allocation for their research activity, we have assessed whether the individual has:
 - a. Led or acted as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project.
 - b. Held an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement.
 - c. Acted as a co-investigator on an externally funded research project (only for larger grants)
 - d. Led a research group or a substantial work package, (for clarity, a sub-project within a larger project).
 - e. Had significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of this research.
85. The information has been collated from the institutional database of applications made during the timeframe eligible for the REF 2021 submission. The information has been supplied to the Academic Leads for REF 2021 and the *REF 2021 Management Working Group*. Any individual staff circumstances will be considered as part of this assessment where these have been identified.
86. A member of staff is not deemed to have undertaken independent research purely on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs. They must secure external funding *and* make significant contributions to the design, conduct and interpretation of the research. There is an expectation at RGU that staff allocated time for research will submit applications for external funding on a regular basis and be successful in securing such funding. At an institutional level we do not anticipate assigning a threshold funding level due to the wide variations in funding available by discipline and associated with different UOAs.

87. Staff have been advised of the criteria that will be applied as part of the consultation on this *Code of Practice*.

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

Staff, committees and training (see paragraphs 44 to 45), **Appeals** (see paragraphs 62 to 69) and **Equality impact assessments** (see paragraphs 70 to 77) are all covered in Part 2 and Part 4 and the Annexes of this Code of Practice.

Part 4: Selection of outputs

Policies and procedures

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

88. The selection of outputs for submission has been completed in accordance with the guidance provided by the national REF Team, as outlined initially in their Draft Guidance on submissions 19/01 and has been adjusted for any revisions of that guidance (Annex 9).
89. Academic Leads for REF 2021, the Research Liaison Librarian, and the Repository & Metadata Assistant Librarian with the assistance of academic colleagues collated all eligible outputs.
90. Through an iterative process with the *Academic Leads for REF 2021*, academic staff were asked to identify and agree up to five of the highest quality outputs from individuals who may be eligible for submission to REF 2021. This recognises that staff with equality related circumstances may not have five outputs to offer and that staff who are not eligible under the 'independent researcher' criterion may become eligible by meeting that criterion during the REF 2021 assessment period, prior to the REF 2021 submission date.
91. All selected outputs were then used as part of the mock-REF exercise in 2018-2019 and early 2020. The outputs were assessed by independent quality assessors and the outcomes from this were then discussed by the *REF 2021 Management Working Group*.
92. At all times the focus has been on the quality of each output. In consideration of outputs, both internally and externally, we have used the criteria and definitions of the starred levels and the specific criteria identified by each Main Panel and provided in the Guidance on Submissions (REF 2019/01) and any revisions thereof.
93. Therefore, the criteria for assessing the quality of outputs are 'originality, significance and rigour'.
 - a. **Four star:** Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
 - b. **Three star:** Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence.
 - c. **Two star:** Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
 - d. **One star:** Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
 - e. **Unclassified:** Quality that falls below the standard of nationally recognised work. Or work which does not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of this assessment.

94. For journal outputs, journal Impact Factors and citations data are available through RGU's online services and through other sources but all those involved in the selection process have been advised that, while they are free to consult this information, it is not necessarily a reliable indicator of quality and should not be a determinant in their decision-making.
95. Once the highest quality outputs have been established, the *REF 2021 Management Working Group* will form a view on the capacity for the University to make a submission in a particular UOA. The final decision on the 'shape' of the REF 2021 submission will be determined by the VPR following consultation with the Research Committee.
96. The *REF 2021 Management Working Group* will also consider if there is a case for consideration of an exception to submission for any small units.
97. Consideration will be given to the appropriate distribution of outputs from those available to be submitted for each UOA, with the aim of presenting the required 2.5 outputs per Category A FTE. The number of submitted outputs will of course be modified on the basis of any circumstances that are identified and confirmed.
98. *The overall quality of the submission in each UOA will be the sole determinant of this selection process.*

Staff, committees and training (see paragraphs 44 to 45).

See Part 2

Disclosure of circumstances (see paragraph 32).

Procedures for considering staff whose circumstances have affected their ability to research productively throughout the period in relation to the unit's total output requirement or do not have the required minimum of one output.

Consideration of Equality-related circumstances

99. Decisions taken about which outputs to submit to *REF 2021* will be based on the key principle of the quality of research, taking account of the specific guidance supplied by the national *REF Units of Assessment (UOA) Panels* in their *Panel Criteria and Working Methods* statements. While up to five items of excellent research output may be submitted by those eligible for inclusion in the University's return, with an average of 2.5 outputs per FTE submitted, we recognise that the REF 2021 process allows for adjustments to be made where there are mitigating circumstances.
100. The REF Manager, in consultation with the *REF 2021 Management Working Group*, makes the final decision about the Units of Assessment to which the University will submit and those staff to be included in the submissions that will be submitted for endorsement by the Research Committee and Academic Council.
101. As a measure to support Equality and Diversity, the *REF 2021 Management Working Group* will consider a defined set of *equality-related circumstances* that may have significantly constrained the academic's ability to produce sufficient or indeed any outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period.

These circumstances are listed in the next section of this document and are consistent with those identified in Paragraphs 160-163, (REF 2019/01). The quality of publications of staff with such circumstances will be assessed in the same manner as those of staff without such circumstances.

Eligible Individual Staff Circumstances

102. Individual staff circumstances which may have significantly constrained their ability to produce outputs or work productively throughout the assessment period:
 - a. Early career researchers;
 - b. Absence from work due to secondment or career breaks;
 - c. Qualifying periods of family-related leave;
 - d. Circumstances that apply in UOAs 1–6, i.e. junior clinical academics;
 - e. Circumstances equivalent to absence including disability;
 - f. Ill health, injury, or mental health conditions;
 - g. Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare;
 - h. Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member);
 - i. Gender reassignment;
103. Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

Procedures related to Declaration of Equality-related Circumstances

104. The University has put in place the procedures to enable staff to disclose their circumstances in an appropriate and confidential manner and will maintain details of relevant procedures on internal webpages.
105. All staff eligible for selection will be asked to complete a form about their equality-related circumstances. In order to ensure the appropriate level of confidentiality, this process will be managed centrally by the *REF 2021 Management Working Group* with responsibility for oversight of the process assigned to the *Head of Research Strategy & Policy*. All forms should be returned to the *Head of Research Strategy & Policy*. All forms will be treated as confidential.
 - a. At this point, an initial check of the information provided will be undertaken by the *Head of Research Strategy & Policy* to ensure that the disclosure falls within the allowable circumstances, and requires a clearly defined reduction in outputs as stipulated in the *Guidance on Submissions (REF 2019/1 paragraph 160-163)*. The *Head of Research Strategy & Policy* will advise the *REF 2021 Management Working Group* of the reduced research outputs that are appropriate (Annex 10).
 - b. Where an individual has multiple circumstances and require a judgement to be made on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs submitted, in accordance with the *Panel criteria and working methods*, the form(s) will then be immediately referred to a convened *Independent Individual Circumstances Selection Panel*, comprising the *Head of Research Strategy & Policy*, *The Head of Human Resources*, and an appropriate member of the University's Equality and Diversity Advisory Group. This will ensure a restricted distribution of the confidential material

submitted for consideration.

- c. The *Individual Circumstances Selection Panel* will report the judgement of reductions to outputs to the *REF 2021 Management Working Group*, which, in turn, will adjust the submissions accordingly.
- d. This process will take into account relevant equality legislation and guidance, in addition to all guiding rules and regulations of the REF.
- e. The outcome of this process will be notified to the staff member in person and confirmed in writing. This information will be conveyed with appropriate confidentiality and sensitivity.

106. The REF Manager will monitor the proposed submissions to ensure that all relevant actions have been taken to ensure equitable and appropriate representation, and to ensure that all relevant equality and diversity issues have been appropriately taken into account.

107. The above process will be initiated following the mock REF review in Winter/Spring 2018/19 and then repeated following update audit/mini REF assessments in 2019/2020 and the final preparations in Autumn 2020. It is intended that the final stage of decision-making with respect to an individual's inclusion in the university's *REF 2021* submission will be made by October 2020 and communicated forthwith to the relevant staff.

108. Individuals who are being considered for inclusion in the REF 2021 submission will be advised of their provisional (or final) inclusion status at several stages throughout the preparations process normally, as stated, following the conclusion of the most recent audit update process.

109. Decisions taken about which staff to submit to REF 2021 will take account of the specific guidance supplied by the national REF team on behalf of the funding bodies and UOA Panels in their *Panel Criteria and Working Methods* statements.

110. Consideration will also be given to a range of other contributions to the REF 2021 that will be taken into account in the final assessment by UOA Panels. These will include contributions to the research environment and research impact, and will take into account any relevant factors that are identified by the *Panel criteria and working methods*.

111. Once individuals have received notification of their final inclusion status, those not included and wishing to appeal against the decision reached in their own case, within the context of this *Code of Practice* (i.e. on the basis of equality issues) may invoke a process of appeal. This process is outlined in the Appeals of this *Code of Practice* (paragraphs 62-69).

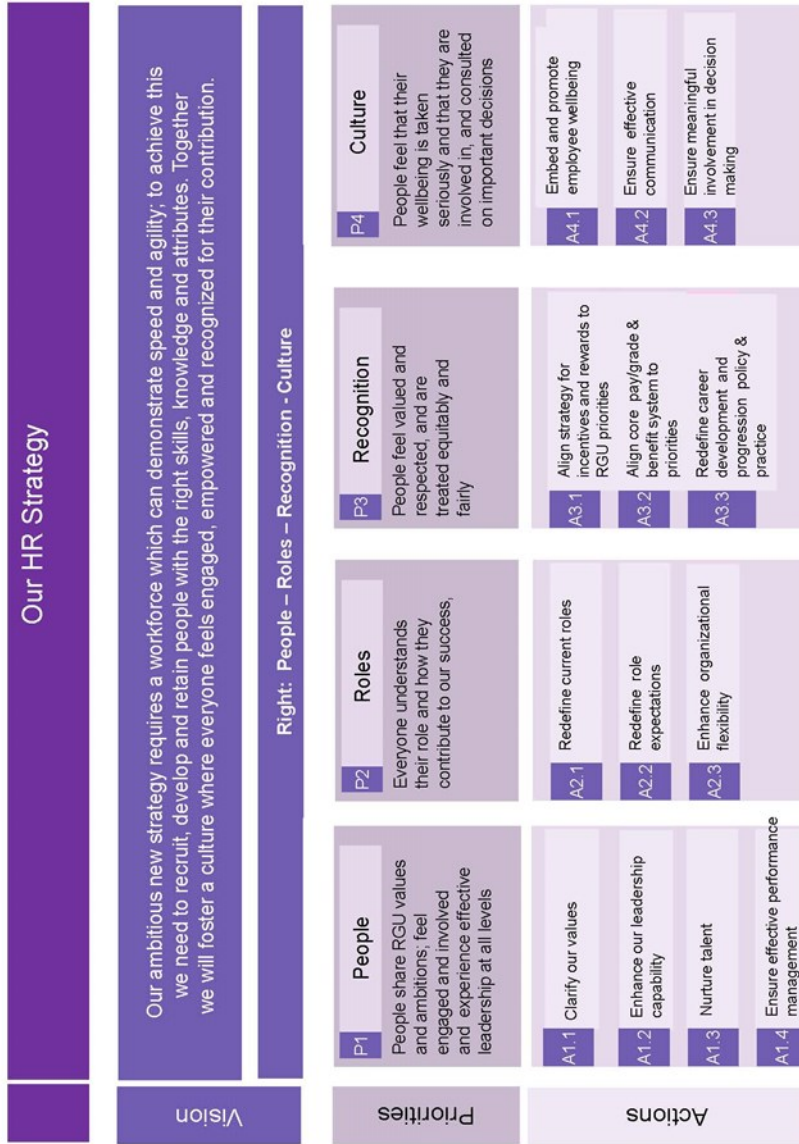
112. The University will continue to support fixed-term and part-time staff in relation to Equality and Diversity in the same manner as its full-time staff.

Equality impact assessment (EIA) (see paragraphs 70-77).

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.

TO BE COMPLETED ONCE OUTPUTS SELECTED

ANNEX 1: Human Resources Strategy

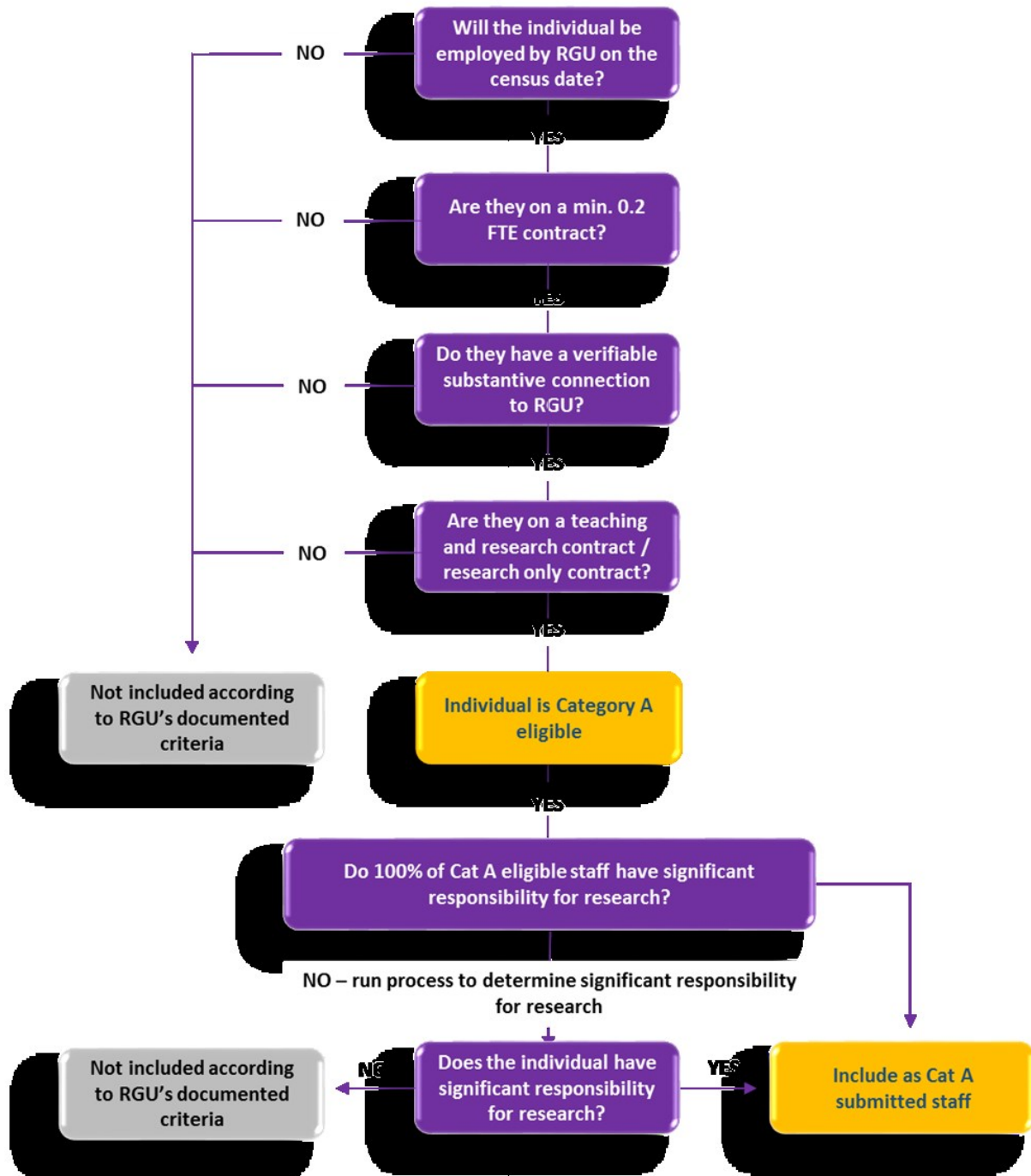


ANNEX 2: REF 2021 MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

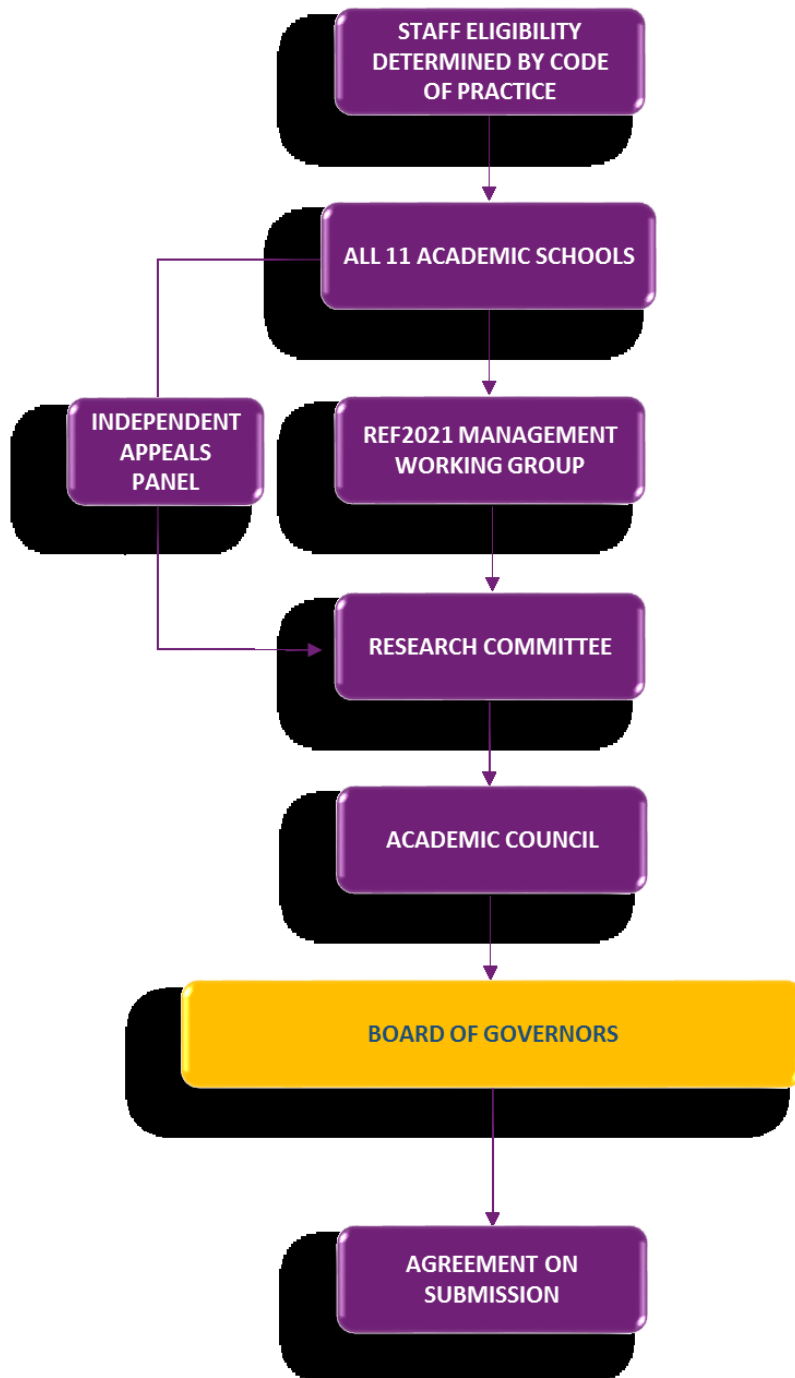
| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| NAME | <i>REF 2021 Management Working Group (REF 2021 MWG)</i> |
| PROCESS OWNER: | Vice-Principal (Research) [REF Manager] |
| MEMBERSHIP: | REF Manager (Chair, Vice-Principal (Research)); Head of Research Strategy & Policy; Academic Leads for REF 2021, nominated by Heads of Schools; Director of Business Development; Head of Human Resources Operations and Support; Human Resources Admin Manager; Research Liaison Librarian; Repository & Metadata Assistant Librarian; Costs Accountant (Finance); Head of the Graduate School |
| REPORTING TO: | Research Committee |
| EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY | As part of the University's <i>Equality and Diversity Policy</i> all individuals are expected to: be aware of, and comply with, the University's <i>Equality and Diversity Policy</i> ; complete mandatory training in Equality and Diversity; treat everyone with respect; eliminate discrimination; advance equality and promote good relations across all protected characteristics; actively promote Equality and Diversity; and co-operate with the University in complying with any requirements or duty imposed under any relevant legislation. All members of the <i>REF 2021 MWG</i> will receive specific Equality and Diversity training in relation to <i>REF 2021</i> . |
| REMIT: | The <i>REF 2021 MWG</i> will: conduct and manage the <i>REF 2021</i> submission process and ensure the University's adherence to the <i>Code of Practice for Equality and Diversity in the Submission Process: Staff Selection</i> , under the responsibility of the <i>REF</i> Manager; produce, prior to final submission to the REF in late 2021, an Equality and Diversity profile for all staff who are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ eligible for submission; and ■ submitted; annually monitor and analyse data for any imbalances and assess the need for further Equality Impact Assessment, providing this analysis to the University's Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG), and informing EDAG of outcomes of Equality Impact Assessments undertaken, prior to the <i>REF 2021 MWG</i> informing the Research Committee; |
| Transparency | |
| Consistency | |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Accountability</p> <p>Inclusivity</p> | <p>report to, and take advice from, the University's Research Committee when considering draft submissions for UOAs for final approval;</p> <p>ensure all papers and minutes of the <i>REF 2021 MWG</i> are made available to staff on the University's <i>REF 2021</i> webpages.</p> |
| <p>FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS:</p> | <p>The <i>REF 2021 MWG</i> will meet on a quarterly basis until late 2021 (last date for submissions) and, thereafter, annually to monitor, evaluate and review the selection procedures and processes, including feedback on appeals processes.</p> |

STAFF ELIGIBILITY IN REF 2021



RGU APPROVAL PROCESS FOR REF 2021 SUBMISSION



ANNEX 5: CONFIDENTIAL: Individual Staff Circumstances Disclosure Form

This document is being circulated to all staff who have been identified by the University as Category A eligible according to REF2021 guidance. As a key measure to support equality and diversity of staff with responsibility for research, the REF2021 guidance enables RGU to recognise the effect that an individual researcher's equality-related circumstances may have had on their productivity during the assessment period (1 January 2014 – 31 July 2020). RGU can then adjust this individual's contribution to the output pool within their unit of assessment as part of its submission.

The approach to staff circumstances has been developed by the funding bodies to meet a number of key principles:

- a. Ensure recognition of the effect circumstances can have upon an individual researcher's productivity.
- b. Create the right incentives for HEIs to support staff with circumstances (and avoid introducing negative incentives, for example around recruitment).
- c. Recognise the potential disparity in the available output pool for units in particular contexts, for example where there are high proportions of staff with circumstances, or for very small units.
- d. Maintain the integrity of exercise – both in supporting equality and diversity and ensuring the credibility of the assessment process.

In order to identify and support staff with circumstances, RGU is asking staff to complete the attached form. Completion and return of this form is entirely 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 RGU will be gathering this information; we will not be consulting HR records, contract start dates, etc. except where it is necessary to verify information supplied by you. You should therefore complete and return the form by 30th November 2020 if any of the circumstances apply and you are willing to provide the associated information.

Please note that it is the view of the funding bodies that are coordinating REF2021 that the flexibility offered by decoupling staff and outputs, and the reduction in output requirement since the previous exercise – from four outputs per person in REF2014 to an average of 2.5 per FTE in REF2021 – that institutions will not routinely need to request reductions to the number of outputs required by a submitting unit of assessment. The defined reductions for circumstances that can be applied to the unit of assessment (detailed in [Annex L](#) of the Guidance on Submissions) are considered an effective way to recognise the effect of circumstances on individual staff productivity and ensure the aim of promoting equality and diversity is met.

However, in some instances the available output pool for a given unit may have been disproportionately affected by equality-related circumstances. In such instances, it would be appropriate for the institution to seek a reduction to the total number of outputs required for that submitting unit and this is described in more detail in RGU's Code of Practice.

Part-time working

As part-time working is taken account of within the calculation for the overall number of

outputs required for a unit of assessment (which is determined by multiplying the unit's FTE by 2.5), reduction requests on the basis of part-time working hours should only be made exceptionally. As a result, details of working hours are not requested on this form.

Changes in Circumstances

Staff may provide an update to their circumstances on this form at any time up until 31st December 2020.

Ensuring Confidentiality

If RGU decides to apply to the funding bodies for a 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.

Please be aware that completion of this form is not evidence of eligibility for your inclusion in the REF2021 exercise. Eligibility is determined through a separate exercise, please refer to RGU's Code of Practice.

Please return this form to Dr Emma Gillibrand, Head of Research Strategy & Policy,
by 30th November 2020

| | |
|--------|--|
| Name | |
| School | |

Section One:

I wish to make the university aware of the following circumstances which have had an impact on my ability to produce outputs or work productively between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2020:

Please provide information required on relevant circumstance(s) and continue onto a separate sheet of paper if necessary:

| Circumstances (Circumstances listed in (a) to (d) have defined output reductions) | |
|--|--|
| a) Early career researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016) | |
| Detail required: Date on which you became an early career researcher. Please also attach a brief CV | |
| b) Absence from work due to career break or secondment outside of the higher education sector | |
| Detail required: Dates and total time absent from work in months | |
| c) Qualifying periods of family-related leave. | |

| |
|--|
| <p>Detail required: Please indicate the number of periods of statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave taken substantially during the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020, regardless of the length of the leave. Please also indicate any additional paternity or adoption leave, or shared parental leave lasting for four months or more, taken substantially during the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020</p> |
| <p>d) Junior clinical academic staff who have not gained a Certificate of Completion of Training by 31 July 2020 (applies to UOA 1-6 only)</p> |
| <p>Please indicate if this circumstance applies: Yes / No</p> |
| <p>e) Circumstances equivalent to absence (RGU will make a judgment about the effect of these circumstances in terms of the equivalent period of time absent):</p> |
| <p>Disability:</p> |
| <p>Detail required: Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months</p> |
| <p>Ill health, injury, or mental health conditions</p> |
| <p>Detail required: Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months</p> |
| <p>Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of – or justify the reduction of further outputs in addition to – the detail provided in (c).</p> |

| |
|---|
| <p>Detail required: For each period of leave state which type of leave was taken and the dates and duration in months</p> |
| <p>Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member).</p> |
| <p>Detail required: Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months</p> |
| <p>Gender reassignment.</p> |
| <p>Detail required: Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months</p> |
| <p>Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.</p> |
| <p>Detail required: Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months</p> |

Please confirm acceptance of the following by signing below:

- I confirm that the above information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances as of the date below.
- I realise that the information provided will be used for REF2021 purposes only and will be seen by the Head of Research Strategy & Policy and REF Manager (Vice Principal (Research)) as well as the Independent Individual Circumstances Selection Panel* if appropriate.
- I realise that it may be necessary to share information with the UK funding bodies' REF team, the REF panel chairs and the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel.
- I also recognise that if a joint submission is made, information may be shared with another institution.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

*The Independent Individual Circumstances Selection Panel comprises the Head of Research Strategy & Policy, The Head of Human Resources, and an appropriate member of the RGU's Equality and Diversity Advisory Group.

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

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Section Three:

I would like to be contacted by a member of HR staff to discuss my circumstances and requirements and/or the support provided by RGU. My contact details for this purpose are:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Email | |
| Telephone | |
| Preferred method of communication | |

I do **not** wish to be contacted by a member of HR staff:

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Following consideration of the individual circumstances described above, the Head of Research Strategy & Policy has determined that:

- The staff member does not meet the circumstance criteria outlined within REF2021 guidance. The reason(s) for this decision are:
 - *e.g. circumstances detailed are not recognised within the relevant paragraph of the Guidance on Submissions (2019/01)*

- RGU requires further information about the circumstances described before making a decision about output reduction:
 - *e.g. please provide information from your occupational health assessment on the effectiveness of reasonable adjustments provided.*

- One or more circumstance is identified from those with a defined reduction in outputs based on the guidance and therefore RGU will reduce the number of outputs in the relevant unit of assessment based on the tariff reduction detailed in Annex L of the Guidance on Submissions (2019/01).

- Circumstances have been identified that require a judgement about output reduction. The Head of Research Strategy & Policy will make a judgement about the effect of the circumstances in terms of the equivalent period of time absent, apply the reductions as set out in Annex L by analogy, and provide a brief rationale for this judgement. RGU will make a recommendation about outputs required and seek confirmation from the REF2021 team.

If [insert name of staff member] wishes to appeal against the decision of the [insert name of the committee or individuals] they will need to do so by 31st December 2020 and details of the appeals process can be found at www.rgu.ac.uk/research.

Signature: _____ Date:.....

[Insert name of person responsible for the decision]

Signature: _____ Date:.....

(REF Manager)

ANNEX 6: TIMELINE FOR REF 2021
(Italics indicate RGU activities)

| Date | Activity |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| September 2017 | Publication of 'Initial decisions on the Research Excellence Framework' by the funding bodies, following consultation on implementation of the Stern review recommendations (REF 2017/01) |
| October 2017 | Publication of 'Roles and recruitment of expert panels' (REF 2017/03) |
| <i>November 2017</i> | <i>REF 2021 Management Working Group established.</i> |
| November 2017 | Publication of 'Decisions on staff and outputs' (2017/04) |
| March 2018 | Panel membership for criteria phase announced |
| <i>May 2018</i> | <i>Non-binding Mock REF exercise started with identification relevant external reviewers. Collation and preliminary filtering of outputs.</i> |
| July 2018 | Publication of draft 'Guidance on submissions' and 'Panel criteria' for consultation |
| 15 October 2018 | Close of consultation on draft 'Guidance on submissions' and 'Panel criteria' |
| <i>December 2018-January 2019</i> | <i>Open meetings and consideration of the Draft Code of Practice by relevant panels and committees and recognised staff unions</i> |
| Winter 2019 | Publication of final 'Guidance on submissions', 'Panel criteria' and 'Guidance on codes of practice' |
| <i>February 2019</i> | <i>Second Revision of Draft Code of Practice. Further consultation.</i> |
| <i>April 2019</i> | <i>Final Draft Code of Practice submitted to EDAP.</i> |
| <i>May 2019</i> | <i>Open sessions for staff to discuss draft Code of Practice</i> |
| Spring/summer 2019 | Institutions intending to make submissions to the REF submit their codes of practice; invitation to request multiple submissions, case studies requiring security clearance, and exceptions to submission for small units; beta versions of the submission system will be available in both test and live environments for institutions to use |
| Autumn 2019 | Pilot of the REF submission system; survey of submissions intentions opens; proposed date for inviting reduction |

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| | requests for staff circumstances (the deadline is proposed for November 2020) |
| | |
| December 2019 | Survey of submissions intentions complete; deadline for requests for multiple submissions, case studies requiring security clearance, and exceptions to submission for small units; publication of approved codes of practice. |
| | |
| Early 2020 | Formal release of the submission systems and accompanying technical guidance; invitation to HEIs to make submissions; invitation to nominate panel members and assessors for the assessment phase; deadline for staff circumstances requests. |
| | |
| 31 July 2020 | Exercise recommences, census date for staff; end of assessment period (for research impacts, the research environment, and data about research income and research doctoral degrees awarded) |
| | |
| 31 December 2020 | End of publication period (cut-off point for publication of research outputs, and for outputs underpinning impact case studies); end of impact assessment period |
| | |
| 31 March 2021 | Closing date for submissions |
| | |
| 30 July 2021 | Deadline for submission of staff circumstances report, equalities impact assessment and final codes of practice |
| | |
| May 2021-March 2022 | Panels assess submissions |
| | |
| April 2022 | Publication of outcomes |
| | |
| Summer 2022 | Publication of submissions, panel overview reports and sub-profiles. |

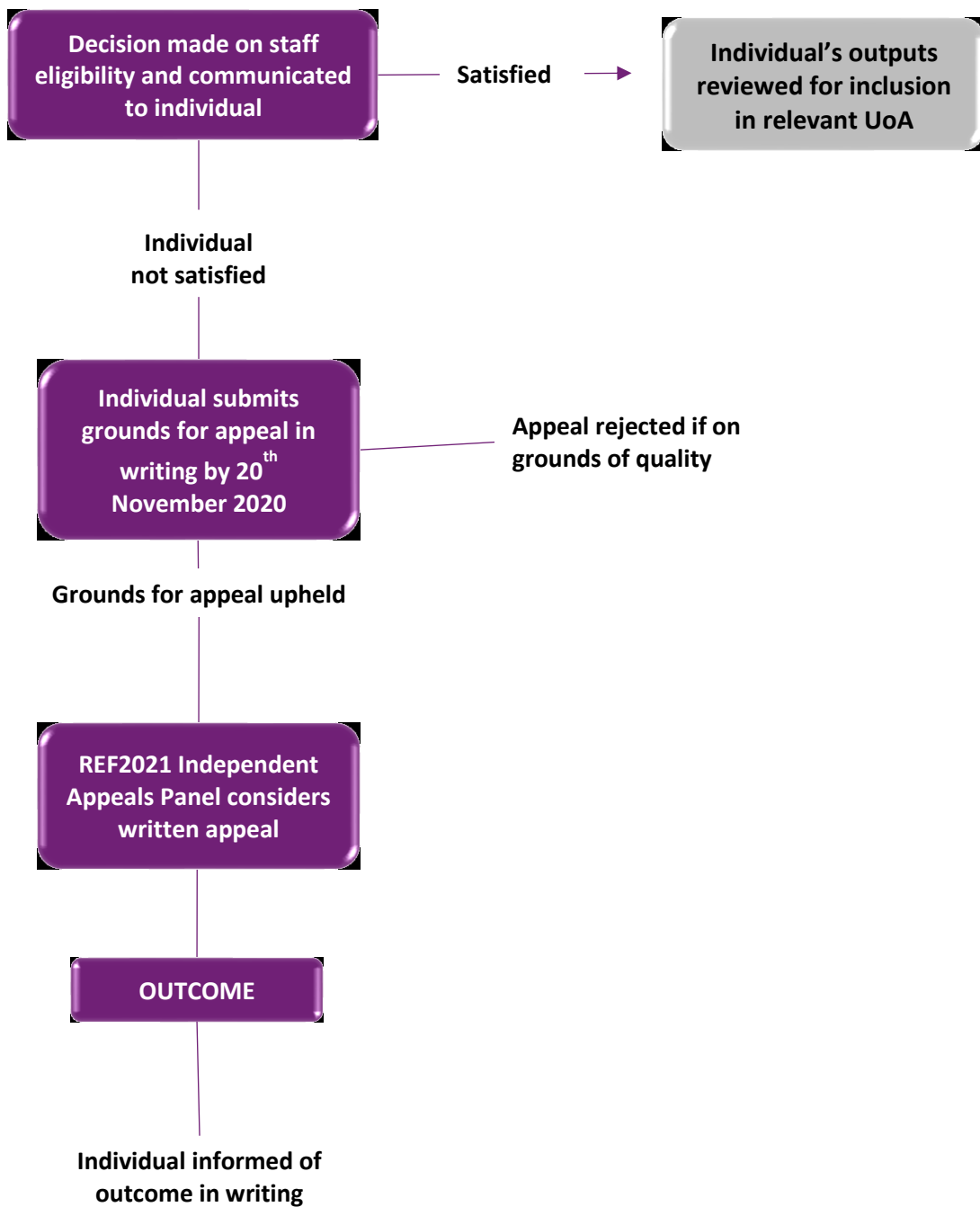
ANNEX 7: Excerpt from RGU Academic Regulations: O3 Academic Council

2. REMIT

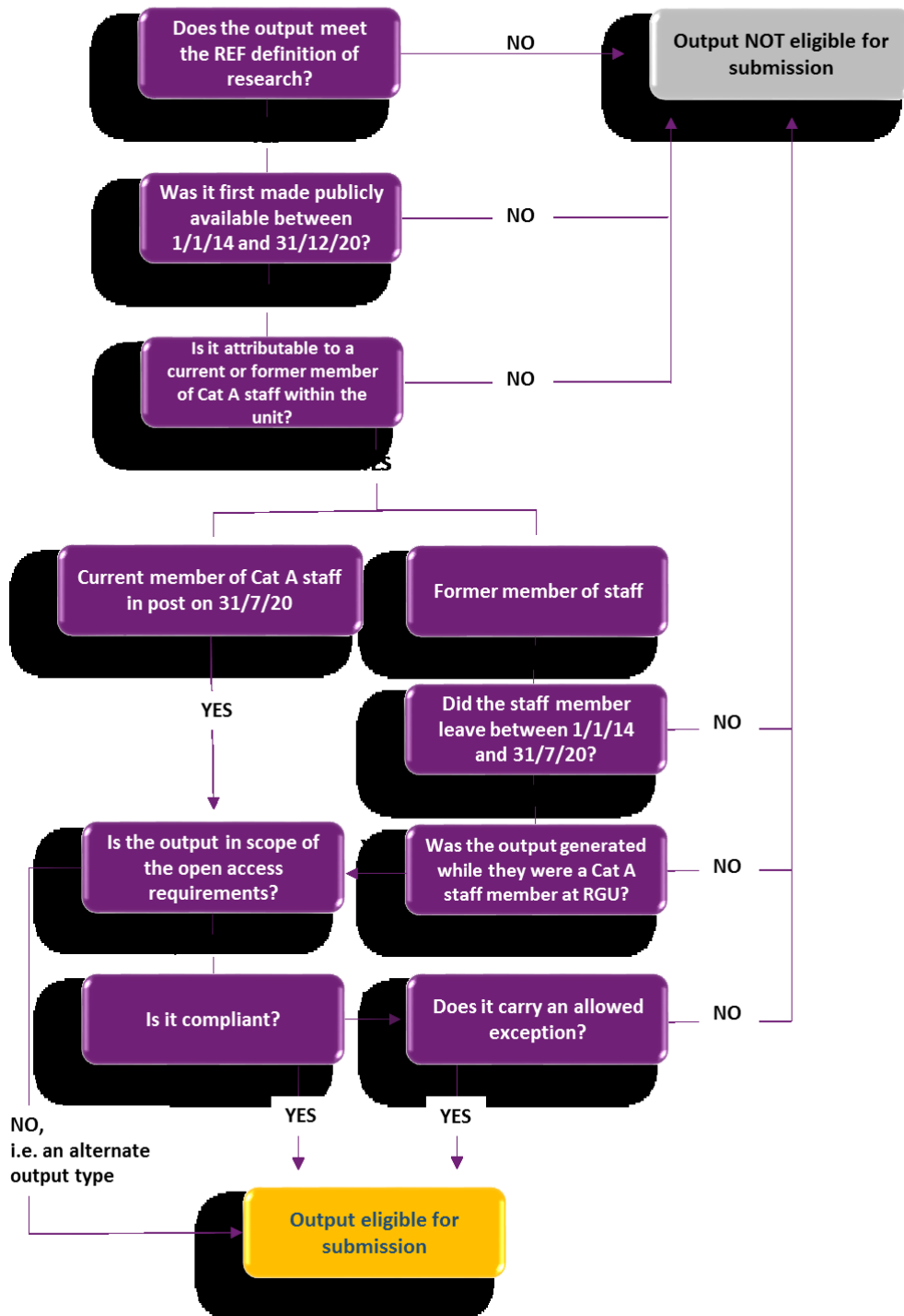
- (i) Academic Council shall be responsible to the Board of Governors for the overall planning, co-ordination, development and supervision of the academic work of the University.
- (ii) Academic Council shall be responsible to the Board of Governors for the planning, co-ordination, development and supervision of the research work of the University.
- (iii) Academic Council shall be responsible for maintaining the academic standards of the University.
- (iv) Academic Council may establish such Standing Committees, Boards and working groups as it considers necessary for the purposes of enabling it to carry out its responsibilities and shall determine their membership and functions. Such Standing Committees, Boards and working groups may appoint Sub-Committees and determine their membership and functions.

ANNEX 8

APPEALS PROCESS in REF 2021



OUTPUT ELIGIBILITY IN REF 2021



ANNEX 10: Reductions for individual staff circumstances

Annex L: Reductions for staff circumstances

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

Early career researchers

2. ECRs are defined in the 'Guidance on submissions' (paragraph 148). Table L1 sets out the permitted reduction in outputs without penalty in the assessment that HEIs may request for ECRs who meet this definition.

Table L1: Early career researchers: Permitted reduction in outputs

| Date at which the individual first met the REF definition of an ECR: | Output pool may be reduced by up to: |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| On or before 31 July 2016 | 0 |
| Between 1 August 2016 and 31 July 2017 inclusive | 0.5 |
| Between 1 August 2017 and 31 July 2018 inclusive | 1 |
| On or after 1 August 2018 | 1.5 |

Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks

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

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

| Total months absent between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2020 due to a staff member's secondment or career break: | Output pool may be reduced by up to: |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Fewer than 12 calendar months | 0 |
| At least 12 calendar months but less than 28 | 0.5 |
| At least 28 calendar months but less than 46 | 1 |
| 46 calendar months or more | 1.5 |

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

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

Qualifying periods of family-related leave

6. The total output pool may be reduced by 0.5 for each discrete period of:
- Statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave taken substantially during the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020, regardless of the length of the leave.
 - Additional paternity or adoption leave²², or shared parental leave²³ lasting for four months or more, taken substantially during the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020.
7. This approach to reductions for qualifying periods of family-related leave is based on the funding bodies' considered judgement following consultation in the previous REF exercise that the impact of such a period of leave and the arrival of a new child into a family is generally sufficiently disruptive of an individual's research work to justify the specified reduction.
8. While the above reduction of outputs due to additional paternity or adoption leave is subject to a minimum period of four months, shorter periods of such leave could be taken into account as follows:
- By applying a reduction in outputs where there are additional circumstances, for example where the period of leave had an impact in combination with other factors such as ongoing childcare responsibilities.
 - By combining the number of months for shorter periods of such leave in combination with other circumstances, according to Table L2.
9. Any period of maternity, adoption, paternity or shared parental leave that qualifies for the reduction of an output under the provisions in paragraph 6 above may in individual cases be associated with prolonged constraints on work that justify more than the defined reduction set out. In such cases, the circumstances should be explained in the request.

Combining circumstances

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6

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

15. This allowance is made on the basis that the staff concerned are normally significantly constrained in the time they have available to undertake research during the assessment period. Where the individual meets the criteria in paragraph 14, and has had significant additional circumstances – for any of the other reasons set out in the ‘Guidance on submissions’ in paragraph 160 – the institution can make a case for further reductions in the unit reduction request.

Circumstances requiring a judgement about reductions

16. Where staff have had other circumstances during the period (see paragraph 160e. in this ‘Guidance on submissions’ document) – including in combination with any circumstances with a defined reduction in outputs – the institution will need to make a judgement about the effect of the circumstances in terms of the equivalent period of time absent, apply the reductions as set out in Table L2 by analogy, and provide a brief rationale for this judgement.