



Arts University Bournemouth Code of Practice for REF 2021

1.0 Part 1: Introduction

- 1.1 The Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF) is the process for assessing research in UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The REF will be assessed through a process of discipline based expert review and will be undertaken by the four UK higher education funding bodies including Research England.
- 1.2 The primary purpose of the REF is to produce assessment outcomes for each submission made by institutions. These outcomes deliver the wider threefold purposes of the exercise, as follows:
 - a. The four HE funding bodies intend to use the assessment outcomes to inform the selective allocation of their grant for research to the institutions which they fund, with effect from 2022-23.
 - b. The assessment provides accountability for public investment in research and produces evidence of the benefits of this investment.
 - c. The assessment outcomes provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks, for use within the HE sector and for public information.
- 1.3 In addition, the independent review of the REF led by Lord Stern identified three further roles fulfilled by the REF:
 - to provide a rich evidence base to inform strategic decisions about national research priorities
 - to create a strong performance incentive for HEIs and individual researchers
 - to inform decisions on resource allocation by individual HEIs and other bodies
- 1.4 Expert sub-panels for each of 34 units of assessment (UOAs) will carry out the assessment, working under the guidance of four broad main panels. Institutions will be invited to make submissions to each UOA and each submission will be assessed in terms of the quality of research outputs, the wider impact of research and the research environment.

2.0 Principles of Transparency, Consistency, Accountability and Inclusivity

2.1 Each Institution making a submission to the REF is required to develop, document and apply a code of practice on the fair and transparent identification of staff with significant responsibility for research; determining who is an independent researcher; and the selection of outputs. This document sets out the code of practice which will be used by Arts University Bournemouth (AUB) to determine its submission to REF 2021.

2.2 Eligibility to make a submission to the REF requires that the code of practice is submitted to Research England by 7 June 2019 for approval by the funding councils.

2.3 The University will endeavour to secure the best possible outcome from its REF 2021 submission whilst observing the principles of:

Equity: We will consider all types of research and all forms of research output across our disciplines on a fair and equal basis.

Equality. This code provides the principles and guidance required to ensure that those responsible for the identification of staff and selection of outputs do so in an inclusive and fair manner.

Transparency: Our selection criteria will be transparent and communicated widely to all staff who are eligible for return to the REF, including those who are currently absent from the University.

Consistency: We will make best efforts to ensure that the principles set out in this document will be applied consistently in respect of staff and the selection of outputs across the whole institution. The University's REF 2021 Steering Group will have responsibility to ensure this takes place.

Accountability: This code clearly defines the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved in the decision making process for the REF 2021.

2.4 These principles will be implemented uniformly and applied to all stages of the process and at all levels within the University where decisions will be made.

3.0 Institutional Management Framework

3.1 The preparation and implementation of the strategy will be delegated to the REF 2021 Steering Group. The Steering Group will recommend matters of policy to University Academic Board and will also report directly to the Vice Chancellor who will approve the final submission.

3.2 The role of the Steering Group will be to consider and recommend the best return to REF 2021 for the University and ensure the best possible presentation of the University's research strengths and strategy.

4.0 Relationship of code to broader institutional policies/strategies that promote and support E&D

- 4.1 All members of the University's community including staff, students, visitors and contractors have a responsibility to treat others fairly and respectfully regardless of the characteristics which may define their identity, such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation.
- 4.2 AUB is committed to the provision of a working and learning environment founded on dignity, respect and equity where unfair discrimination of any kind is treated with the utmost seriousness.
- 4.3 All the University's policies and practices are designed to meet the principles of dignity, respect and fairness, and take account of the commitments set out in the Equalities and Diversity Plan; this includes a Gender Identity Policy and an Equality at Work Policy.
- 4.4 An Equalities Analysis (EA) has been conducted on this code of practice and approved by the Compliance Working Group of Equalities Committee. AUB adopts the good practice of conducting EAs as part of any policy development/review, which includes all material pertaining to REF 2021.

5.0 Actions taken since REF 2014 to support Equality and Diversity (E&D)

- 5.1 AUB has developed and implemented an Equalities and Diversity Plan 2015-20 to guide its work in this area focused on five key areas: compliance, communication, curriculum, campus and continuous professional development.
- 5.2 It has promoted awareness and understanding of Equality and Diversity matters among staff through policies, training, guidance and campaigns including:
- The introduction of an Academic Career Framework with clearly defined progression routes
 - All staff have undertaken equality and diversity training and passed a test to evidence their understanding
 - All staff have been invited to attend mental health first aid training
 - Improved induction for new staff which highlights E&D
 - A series of pro-active roundtable discussions designed to promote a broad discussion on equality and diversity issues including unconscious bias
 - Enhanced research ethics policy, guidance and training
 - Report on the institution's gender pay gap
 - Appointment of Governor with specific responsibility for Safeguarding and Prevent, alongside the Governor with specific responsibility for equalities
 - Publication of a statement on the freedom of speech
 - Industry led panel discussions on diversity in the workplace

- Programme to disseminate information about equalities and diversity including an equalities leaflet for staff and dedicated web pages.
- Events linked to *Disability History Month*; *Black History Month* and *International Womens' Day* and *disAbility Celebration Month* including open lectures exploring barriers for gender equality

6.0 Development of the Code of practice

6.1 The Code of practice was:

- Developed by the REF Working Group during autumn 2018.
- Considered by Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee in January 2019.
- Considered by the Compliance Working Group, part of Equalities Committee in February 2019.
- Sent out for consultation by the University and College Union in February 2019.
- Sent out to all (HE) academic staff for consultation in February 2019 including those currently absent from the University.
- Further considered and approved by Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee in February 2019.
- Considered by Governors HR Committee on 5 March 2019.
- Considered and approved by Academic Board on 22 March 2019.
- Approved by the Governing Body on 11 April 2019.

7.0 Communication of Code to Staff

7.1 When approved by the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP), the Code of practice will be made widely available through the following channels in autumn 2019:

- Announcement email to all staff
- AUB intranet pages
- Published AUB website
- DVC updates/REF information meetings

7.2 The code will be made available in different formats on request from the Research Office.

8.0 REF published guidance

8.1 The REF has published the following guidance documents, which are available at www.ref.ac.uk

Guidance on submissions (REF 2019/01)

Panel criteria and working methods (REF 2019/02)

Guidance on codes of practice (REF 2019/03)

[Guidance on revisions to REF 2021 \(REF 2020/02\)](#)

Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

9.0 Policies and procedures

9.1 Each HEI participating in REF 2021 must return all eligible staff with significant responsibility for research.

9.2 Category A eligible staff are defined as:

- Academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater;
- On the payroll of AUB on the census date, 31 July 2020;
- Whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'teaching and research'.

9.3 Further details on the eligibility of staff are given in Annex 6.

10.0 Significant responsibility for research (rationale)

10.1 Staff with significant responsibility for research are those for whom explicit time and resources are made available to engage actively in independent research, and that it is an expectation of their job role.

10.2 AUB considers that all its (HE) academic staff are eligible for return to REF 2021 as meeting the definition for Category A staff but not all hold significant responsibility for research. AUB will therefore not return 100% of those who are eligible.

10.3 The rationale for this decision and the process by which AUB will identify those who hold significant responsibility for research and who are in scope for submission is set out below.

10.4 AUB's Strategic Plan 2014 -18 and AUB's Strategic Framework (2018 and beyond) considered the best staff model for the University was the concept of the *highly influential team* meaning that a course team should have a blend of staff with differing research, knowledge exchange and teaching interests and expertise. Each (HE) academic member of staff is allocated a proportion of time to realise activity within or across these areas.

10.5 The *Academic Career Framework* was introduced in June 2017 to encourage credibility and better reward academic leadership with clear progression routes to Associate Professor or Professor in either research, knowledge exchange or teaching. Job descriptions for the Professoriate were also introduced.

10.6 In December 2018, AUB consulted with its (HE) academic staff on the introduction of *Academic Career Pathways*. The *Pathways* enable a structure for (HE) academic staff to clarify how they might contribute to their *highly influential team* and progress their own professional development linked to the *Academic Career Framework*.

- 10.7 Each of the *Academic Career Pathways* set equivalent expectations and represent different routes towards the excellence expected of AUB's (HE) academic staff. The consultation was explicit about AUB's intention to use the *Pathways* as the means of identifying those with significant responsibility for research. Staff who wished to split their time across two or more *Pathways* to include research were also deemed to hold significant responsibility.
- 10.8 Staff on the Research Pathway are expected to:-
- Demonstrate new contributions to their discipline by engaging in academic research activities that underpins their teaching and have one or more research output/s a year, of at least 2*quality (Pro rata for staff on fractional contracts).
 - Demonstrate dissemination of their research e.g. published peer reviewed conference proceedings/journal papers; exhibitions; performances etc.
 - Demonstrate evidence of sharing of research activity to an external audience at national/international levels.
 - Actively engage in bids for external funding, following AUB protocols for this work.
 - There is an expectation that staff engaged in research degree supervision are on this Pathway.
 - Be an active member of one of the research groups.
 - Those on the Research Pathway(s) will be deemed to have significant responsibility for research and will be returned to REF2021.

There is an expectation that those on the research pathway(s) will have doctoral level qualifications, or demonstrate they are researching at that level or above, or have intentions of working towards that level.

- 10.10 *Academic Career Pathways* were confirmed in January 2019 when (HE) academic staff, including those on full time, part time and fixed term contracts, were invited to nominate their **primary** area(s) of interest.

11.0 Significant responsibility for research (identification of staff)

- 11.1 Staff holding significant responsibility for research have been identified as one or more of the following:
- i) Confirmed as being on an *Academic Career Pathway* that includes the Research Pathway.
 - ii) A member of the Professoriate who is eligible to be returned to the REF.
 - iii) A member of staff holding a 'Research only' contract.

- 11.2 The identification of staff with significant responsibility for research has been **AGREED** by staff.

12.0 Staff, Committees and Training

- 12.1 Annex 4 details membership and terms of reference for all committees involved in taking decisions regarding the identification of staff for return to the REF.

12.2 AUB REF 2021 Steering Group

12.3 The REF 2021 Steering Group will convene in December 2019 and May 2020 and at other times as required. Meeting dates will be advertised on the AUB Academic Calendar.

12.4 The Steering Group will determine which staff are eligible; who are considered to hold significant responsibility for research; and who are independent researchers and therefore will be returned to REF 2021. These staff will be informed via a confidential letter from the chair of the REF 2021 Steering Panel sent by HR within ten working days of the meeting confirming that they will be submitted to REF 2021.

12.5 All other (HE) academic staff will similarly be informed by email that they will not be returned and given the opportunity to appeal against this decision. Staff who are absent from work will be contacted via letter.

13.0 Appeals process

13.1 AUB will operate an appeals process that is tailored to REF 2021.

13.2 Staff have the right to appeal against a decision to exclude them from submission to REF 2021 where they believe that one or more of the following applies:

- Their non-submission was due to an administrative error.
- Their non-submission relates to any protected characteristic defined under the Equality Act 2010.
- They consider that they meet the eligibility criteria, hold significant responsibility for research and are an independent researcher.

13.3 Appeals must be made in writing to the Head of HR, outlining the circumstances giving rise to the appeal and providing any supporting evidence. This must be received within ten working days of the email confirming the decision about the staff to be returned to REF 2021.

14.0 REF 2021 Appeals Panel

14.1 All appeals will be considered by an independent Appeals Panel. The Panel will meet separately with the appellant and the chair of the REF 2021 Steering Group. The Panel may also seek external advice where appropriate. In the event of an appeal being upheld the chair of the REF 2021 Selection Panel will be informed that the member of staff must be returned.

14.2 The outcome of the Appeals Panel will be formally communicated in writing within ten working days. The decision will be final.

15.0 Equalities Training

15.1 All members of the REF Steering Group and Appeals Panel have received Equalities Training in respect of the Equalities Act 2010. They will receive further training in advance of their meetings to ensure they are cognisant of the legislative context (i.e. the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty of the Act

which came into force in April 2011) with which the University has to comply when preparing REF 2021 submissions.

16.0 Equalities Analysis (EA)

- 16.1 An Equalities Analysis on the identification of staff (in relation to their protected characteristics) was used to inform the final policy and procedures documented in the code. This was conducted by the Compliance Working Group of the Equalities Committee.
- 16.2 The chair of the REF 2021 Steering Panel will monitor the data of staff returned against an analysis of data on staff in respect of all the protected characteristics for which data is available and will request that the Panel reconvene if it is considered that the monitoring data gives cause for concern.
- 16.3 A final Equalities Analysis will be conducted in early 2021. This will consider AUB's return to REF 2021, including the spread of outputs across staff, and make recommendations for future actions to promote equality and diversity.

Part 3: Determining research independence

- 17.0 For the purposes of the REF, an independent researcher is identified as an individual who undertakes self-directed research, including collaborative research projects, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme.
- 17.1 All AUB (HE) academic staff who are on 'teaching and research' and 'research only' contracts are considered to be independent researchers and eligible to be returned.
- 17.2 Staff employed as postdoctoral researchers are also on 'research only' contracts but will be undertaking research directed by an (HE) academic member of staff. They do not meet the definition of Category A eligible staff and are therefore not eligible to be returned.
- 17.3 The REF 2021 Steering Group will confirm which staff hold research independence on the basis set out above.

Part 4: Selection of outputs

18.0 AUB submission

- 18.1 AUB recognises the overlapping boundaries in the sub-panel descriptors and that aspects of research are naturally interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary or span the boundaries between individual UOAs. The University will submit to Unit of Assessment (UOA) 32: Art and design: history, practice and theory and UOA 33: Music, drama, dance, performing arts, film and screen studies. Further detail is provided in Annex 7.
- 18.2 AUB will be required to return a number of outputs or 'output pool' for each UOA. The number of outputs is equal to 2.5 times the combined FTE of submitted staff. The number will be adjusted to take account of successful requests for staff circumstances. The output pool should include:
- i) A minimum of one output for each member of staff
 - ii) Further outputs up to the total required with a maximum of five outputs attributed to individual members of staff.

Outputs from former members of staff first made publicly available while the staff member was employed at AUB as a Category A member of staff may also be included.

- 18.3 The eligibility of research outputs is detailed in Annex 8.

19.0 Policies and procedures

- 19.1 In January 2020 all members of staff who are within scope for return, will be invited to put forward details of **all** their outputs that meet the definition of research (Annex 3) and have been or are pending publication within the REF publication period (1 January 2014 to 31 December 2020). This should include any co-produced or co-authored outputs, (whether produced with colleagues at AUB or at other institutions). There is no expectation on the number of outputs that an individual will contribute to the output pool.
- 19.2 The Research Office in consultation with the Dean of Graduate School and Research will identify and put forward outputs produced or authored solely, or co-produced or co-authored by former members of staff noting that there is a commitment not to submit outputs from staff made redundant involuntarily.

20.0 Staff, Committees and Training

- 20.1 Annex 4 details membership, terms of reference and working methods for all committees involved in taking decisions regarding the selection of outputs for return to REF 2021.

21.0 UOA Selection Panel

- 21.1 Outputs will be considered by a REF 2021 UOA Selection Panel for each UOA. The Selection Panels will confirm the outputs to be returned in accordance with the process set out in Annex 4. The academic judgement of the Panels will be final. Staff will be given individual feedback, on which of their outputs were returned, in April 2021. .

22.0 Equalities Analysis (EA)

- 22.1 An Equalities Analysis on the spread of outputs across staff (in relation to their protected characteristics) will be used to inform the final selection of outputs to be submitted. This will be conducted by the Research Office and Senior Equalities Officer.
- 22.2 The chairs of each UOA Output Selection Panel will monitor the data returned against an analysis of data on outputs from staff in respect of all the protected characteristics for which data is available and will request that the Panel reconvene if it is considered that the monitoring data gives cause for concern.

23.0 Reduction Requests for Individual Circumstances

- 23.1 In December 2019 all members of staff identified for return will be invited to **voluntarily and confidentially** complete a form about their individual equality related-circumstances. Staff will not be required to complete and return this form where they do not wish to do so. Forms will be returned to HR by 1 February 2020 where they will be held securely. Details of applicable circumstances and tariffs for guidance when considering reduction requests can be found at Annex 9.
- 23.2 Declaring their individual circumstances will allow staff to be returned without an output. It may also allow AUB to request a reduction in the total number of outputs it has to submit for one or more UOAs.
- 23.3 Staff who have declared circumstances will be invited to give permission for their line manager to contact them to discuss their disclosure and consider if adjustments to workload or additional support is required. Any adjustments must be in line with the University's employment policies. Further guidance and advice regarding adjustments to workload or additional support is available from HR.
- 23.4 In November 2020 all members of staff identified for return will be informed of the additional applicable circumstance i.e. COVID-19. They will be reminded that they may voluntarily and confidentially complete a form about their individual equality related-circumstances. Forms can be returned to HR at any time but no later than 1 January 2021.

23.3 Reduction Request Panel

- 23.4 Individual circumstances will be managed centrally through an AUB REF Reduction Request Panel that is independent of other AUB REF Panels. The Panel will convene in February 2020 and will determine which requests will be forwarded to Research England for decision. Reduction requests will be considered anonymously.
- 23.5 The Panel will meet to consider further reduction requests as required.

24.0 Staff with individual circumstances that mean they do not have the 'minimum' of one output

- 24.1 Staff may declare individual circumstances such that they do not meet the minimum requirement of one output. These reduction requests will be forwarded to Research England. Where the request is accepted, the member of staff may be returned with no outputs attributed to them. Staff will be informed of the outcome by letter within ten working days of the meeting.

25.0 Staff with individual circumstances that have affected the number of outputs they can contribute to the output pool

- 25.1 Staff may declare circumstances, which have affected the number of outputs they can contribute to the total number of outputs that each UOA has to return (output pool).
- 25.2 The REF Steering Panel will consider the cumulative effect of these circumstances on the output pool for each UOA and determine if a request to reduce the total number of outputs required should be made. AUB may optionally put forward a reduction request if the number of outputs available to a UOA (from which the UOA will select the outputs to be returned) is within 10% of the total number of outputs required. These reduction requests will also be forwarded to Research England to determine if fewer outputs can be returned. Staff will be informed if a reduction request will be put forward and EDAP's decision when received.

26.0 Confirmation of reduction requests

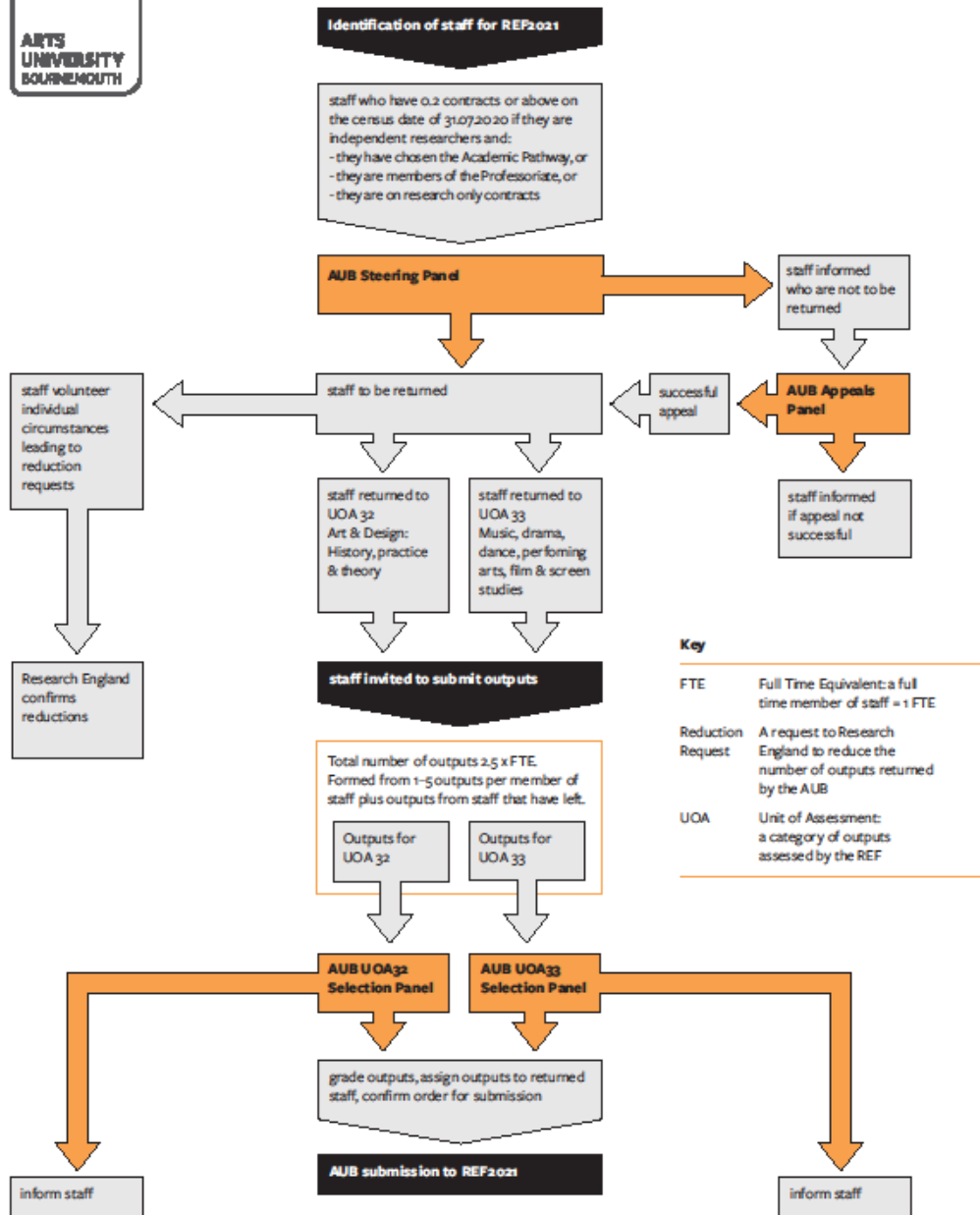
- 26.1 AUB will submit reduction requests to Research England by the March 2020 deadline for consideration by the Equality and Diversity Panel (EDAP) on a consistent basis.
- 26.2 When reductions requests are confirmed, the Research Manager will inform the chairs of the REF Steering Group and each UOA Selection Panel of the outcome. No information about the nature of individual circumstances will be forwarded.
- 26.3
- 26.3 AUB may apply **any** new or additional reductions at the point of submission.

27.0 Equalities training

- 27.1 All members of the UOA Selection Panel and the REF Reduction Request Panel have received Equalities Training in respect of the Equalities Act 2010. They will receive further training in advance of their meeting to ensure they are cognisant of the legislative context (i.e. the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector duty of the Act which came into force in April 2011) with which the University has to comply when preparing REF 2021 submissions.
- 27.2 The Reduction Request Panel will receive additional training on the implications of dealing with personal circumstances.

28.0 Data protection and confidentiality

- 28.1 Research England and AUB will collect, store and process all personal data submitted by HEIs to the REF in accordance with current data protection legislation – the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 28.2 AUB will adapt Research England's model privacy notice to provide further information on the collection, processing and retention of personal data submitted to the REF.
- 28.3 All those involved are bound by confidentiality undertakings in respect of all information contained in submissions.



Part 5 Annexes

Annex 1: Schematic

February 2019	Consultation with all eligible staff on code of practice
February 2019	Code of practice reviewed by RKT
March 2019	Code of practice reviewed by (HR) Governors Committee and Academic Board
April 2019	Code of practice approved by Governing Body
May 2019	Code of practice signed off by Vice Chancellor and Principal as Head of Institution Code of practice submitted to Research England
December 2019	REF Steering Group meet to confirm which staff will be returned
December 2019	HR notify staff, who are eligible for return and identified as holding significant responsibility for research, that they will be returned to REF HR notify staff, who are eligible, but who have not been identified as holding significant responsibility for research, that they will not be returned
January 2020	REF Appeals Panel meets
January 2020	Staff within scope for return invited to put forward outputs and reduction requests
February 2020	REF Reduction Request Panel meets to confirm reduction requests to be forwarded to Research England
February 2020	REF UOA Selection Panels meet to confirm outputs to be submitted and review impact case studies and environment statements
May 2020	REF Steering Group meets to review any new members of staff appointed between January and May
31 July 2020	Census date for staff; end of assessment period for environment, data about income and doctoral degrees awarded
Summer 2020	REF Steering Group and UOA Selection Panels meet, as required, to further review outputs
31 December 2020	End of publication period for outputs and impact
31 March 2021	Submission deadline
April 2021	Send physical outputs to REF Warehouse
30 July 2021	Deadline for submission of staff circumstances report, equalities impact assessment, and final codes of practice

Annex 2: Definitions

Term	
Assessment criteria	The panels will use the following criteria to assess the quality of each element of the submission: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outputs – ‘originality, significance and rigour’• Impact – ‘reach and significance’• Environment – ‘vitality and sustainability’
Assessment period	The research environment and data about research income and research doctoral degrees awarded must fall within the assessment period. This will run from 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2020. Impact will run from 1 August 2013 to 31 December 2020.
Census date	The date on which staff must be in post at the submitting institution and meet the eligibility criteria to be returned as Category A submitted staff is 31 July 2020.
Category A eligible staff	Academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, on the payroll of the submitting institution on the census date, and whose primary employment function is to undertake either ‘research only’ or ‘teaching and research’. Staff should have a substantive connection with the submitting institution. Staff on ‘research only’ contracts should meet the definition of an independent researcher. Staff meeting these criteria will form the total eligible staff pool but may not necessarily be submitted.
Category A submitted staff	Category A eligible staff who have been identified as having significant responsibility for research on the census date.
Codes of practice	Each institution making a submission is required to develop, document and apply a code of practice on determining who is an independent researcher and the selection of outputs in their REF submission. Those institutions not submitting 100 per cent of Category A eligible staff, will be required to include the criteria and processes, agreed with staff, for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research.
Double-weighting	Institutions may request that outputs of extended scale and scope be double-weighted (count as two outputs) in the assessment.
Early career researcher (ECR)	Category A staff who started their careers as independent researchers on or after 1 August 2016.
Expert panels (main and sub-panels)	In each of the 34 UOAs an expert sub-panel will conduct a detailed assessment of submissions. The sub-panels will work under the leadership and guidance of four main panels.
Impact	An effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia.

Independent researcher	Independent researchers undertake self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme.
Interdisciplinary research	For the purposes of the REF, interdisciplinary research is understood to achieve outcomes (including new approaches) that could not be achieved within the framework of a single discipline. Interdisciplinary research features significant interaction between two or more disciplines and/or moves beyond established disciplinary foundations in applying or integrating research approaches from other disciplines.
Individual circumstances	Measures to take account of the effect of individuals' circumstances on research productivity during the period. These measures will allow an optional reduction in the unit's output requirement. They also allow an individual to be returned without the required minimum of one output without penalty in the assessment, where the circumstances have had an exceptional effect on productivity, so that the staff member has not been able to produce an eligible output.
Output	The product of research, as defined in the REF. An underpinning principle of the REF is that all forms of research output will be assessed on a fair and equal basis.
Publication period	Outputs submitted to REF 2021 must have been first made publicly available between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2020.
Reduction request	A request to reduce the number of outputs to be submitted due to individual equality related circumstances.
Research	For the purposes of REF 2021, research is defined as 'a process of investigation, leading to new insights, effectively shared'.
Quality profile/sub-profile	The overall quality profile for the REF comprises of the scores for the three sub-profiles: outputs (60 per cent), impact (25 per cent), and environment (15 per cent).
Significant responsibility for research	Staff with significant responsibility for research are those for whom explicit time and resources are made available to engage actively in independent research, and that is an expectation of their job role.
Submission	A submission comprises a complete set of data about staff, outputs, impact and the research environment, returned by an HEI in any of the 34 UOAs.
Underpinning research	Impacts described in the impact case studies must be based on research of at least two-star quality that was produced during the period from 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2020.
Unit of Assessment	Submission in REF 2021 will be made in 34 discipline-based 'units of assessment'. There is an expert sub-panel for each UOA.

Annex 3: Definition of research for REF 2021 (Guidance on submissions Annex C)

For the purposes of the REF, research is defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared.

It **includes** work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, culture, society, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship*; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction. It **excludes** routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes such as for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques. It also **excludes** the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research.

It **includes** research that is published, disseminated or made publicly available in the form of assessable research outputs, and confidential reports.

*Scholarship for the REF is defined as the creation, development and maintenance of the intellectual infrastructure of subjects and disciplines, in forms such as dictionaries, scholarly editions, catalogues and contributions to major research databases.

Annex 4: REF Groups and Panel membership and terms of reference

REF 2021 Steering Group

Membership (drawn from members of Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee and holding responsibility for research)

- Vice Chancellor
- Deputy Vice Chancellor (chair)
- Dean of School of Art and Design
- Dean of School of Media and Performance
- Dean of Graduate School and Research
- Head of HR to advise on any matters that relate to staff contracts

Secretary: Research Manager

Terms of reference

With reference to the REF guidance on the selection of staff:

- i) to identify which staff meet the definition of Category A staff.
- ii) to identify which staff hold significant responsibility for research.
- iii) to identify which staff also meet the definition of an independent researcher.
- iv) to determine which Units of Assessment (UOA) AUB will return to.
- v) to document and record the decisions taken.

And therefore

- vi) to determine which staff are to be returned to each UOA on the census date (31 July 2020).
- vii) to determine the FTE of staff to be returned to each UOA.

The Steering Group will also:

- Provide oversight of AUB's return to the REF including:
 - i) Review the information provided in the institutional-level environment statement (REF5a) to ensure that this describes the excellence of the institution.
 - ii) Review impact case studies and unit environment templates (REF5b)

The REF 2021 Steering Group will not consider the number or quality of any of the outputs produced by staff during the REF publication period when determining which staff will be returned.

All REF 2021 Steering Panel members will be invited to declare any conflicts of interest to the Secretary in advance. Any member of the Selection Panel declaring a conflict of interest shall be required to withdraw from the discussion that pertains to that.

REF 2021 Appeals Panel

Membership (selected on the basis of independence from the Steering Group)

- Chief Operating Officer
- Full-time member of the Professoriate
- HR Partner
- Senior Equalities Officer

Secretary: Research Manager

Terms of reference

With reference to the Code of practice, REF guidance and seeking external advice from Research England as required:

- To consider all appeals against decisions taken in relation to the return of staff.
- To determine if appellant(s) are eligible for return to the REF; hold significant responsibility for research; and are independent researchers; and therefore
- To advise the REF 2021 Steering Panel which appellants must be included in the return to REF 2021.

REF 2021 Reduction Request Panel

Membership: to include the following who have been selected on the basis of holding a University leadership role in respect of equalities and diversity or a senior management role/experience in a relevant department:

- University Secretary (chair)
- HR Partner
- Head of Academic and Student Services

Secretary: Research Manager

Terms of reference:

- To consider all disclosures anonymously against the published tariff reductions, seeking advice from EDAP as appropriate, and referencing the published guidance.
- To review submitted reduction requests for staff who have individual circumstances and determine which should be forwarded to the REF audit and verification team.
- To review submitted reduction requests for staff who have individual circumstances such that they have not been able to produce on eligible output and determine which should be forwarded to the REF audit and verification team.
- To evidence its decisions and actions.

All Panel members will be invited to declare any conflicts of interest to the Secretary in advance. Any member of the Panel declaring a conflict of interest will be required to withdraw from discussion of the relevant submission.

REF 2021 UOA Output Selection Panel

Membership

- Dean of School
- Dean of Graduate School and Research
- Up to five members of academic staff drawn from members of the Professoriate and/or doctoral holding staff representative of the cohort of eligible staff, with subject expertise aligned to each UOA. Within the panel there will be expertise of both written and practice-based research.

Secretary: Research Manager

Terms of Reference

With reference to the REF 2021 guidance on submissions to:

- i) Grade outputs and rank them in order of quality as per the working method outlined below;
- ii) Assign an output to each member of staff to be returned, noting that some members of staff may be subject to reduction requests;
- iii) Confirm the order for submission of the remaining outputs up to the number required to be returned ensuring that no individual has more than five;
- iv) Confirm the order for submission of any additional outputs in case adjustments to the submission are required to reflect decisions made in respect of reduction requests;
- v) Review the writing and presentation of impact case studies (REF3) to secure the best possible case studies for the unit.
- vi) Review the information given in the UOA environment template (REF5b) to ensure that this describes the excellence of the unit.

Any member of the Selection Panel declaring a conflict of interest including having outputs considered for selection shall be required to withdraw from discussion of the relevant items.

Working methods

- i) The Selection Panel(s) will undertake a short calibration exercise to develop a common understanding of the quality levels.
- i) Each output will be reviewed by two members of the Selection Panel.
- ii) Each output will be considered against a 15-point scale. This will assess the output in terms of significance, originality and rigour and the five star REF 2021 classification from 4* to unclassified.
- iii) Double-weighted outputs will be identified and confirmed.
- iv) Co-authored or co-produced outputs from AUB staff will be allocated against an individual (in consultation with chairs of other UOAs where appropriate).
- v) Scoring patterns will be reviewed.

Selection of outputs

- i) Outputs will be ranked according to their score.
- ii) The highest scoring output from each individual will be allocated against each member of staff except where staff have no outputs.
- iii) Outputs will then be selected from the highest scoring output until the required number of outputs has been reached.
- iv) Outputs pending publication will be flagged.
- v) Reserve outputs will then be allocated for outputs that have been double-weighted or are pending publication.
- vi) The Panel will review the contribution from former staff and those on 0.2 contracts to ensure the selection reflects the sustainability of the research base. It may also adjust the final selection in light of the EA on outputs, without a diminution of the quality and representation of the research disciplines within a unit, in order to support inclusivity.

The academic judgement of the panel is final.

Annex 6: Eligibility of staff (Guidance on submissions paras 117 – 120)

Category A eligible staff are defined as:

- Academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater
- On the payroll of AUB on the census date, 31 July 2020
- Whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'teaching and research'

This also includes:

- Pensioned staff who continue in salaried employment contracted to carry out research and who meet the definition above.
- Academic staff that are on unpaid leave of absence or on secondment on the census date **and** are contracted to return to normal duties up to two years from the start of their period of absence or secondment, provided that any staff recruited specifically to cover their duties that meet the eligibility criteria are not also returned as Category A staff.
- Academic staff working on secondment as contracted academic staff at another UK HEI on the census date and meets the eligibility criteria. The two institutions should agree how the FTE is to be apportioned to each. The staff member's total FTE may not exceed their contracted FTE with their main employer. The FTE of any staff recruited to cover the secondment at the 'home' HEI who meet the definition Category A eligible staff should be added to the seconded staff member's FTE up to the lower of 1 FTE or the total contracted FTE of the post.
- Staff employed by more than one HEI will only meet the definition Category A eligible by more than one HEI if they have a contract with and receive a salary from more than one HEI. The two HEIs must ensure that the total FTE value of the individual sums to no more than the individual's total contracted FTE duties, and must not exceed 1.0 FTE in total.
- Where an individual holds a joint appointment across two or more submitting units within the same institution, the HEI must decide on one submission in which to return the individual.
- Where a staff member is serving a notice period at an institution, having started employment with a different institution on the census date, the individual will be deemed eligible for return by the first institution only.
- Staff whose salary is calculated on an hourly or daily basis are eligible **only** if they meet the definition **and** on the census date have a contract of employment of at least 0.2 FTE per year over the length of their contract.
- Staff that hold more than one contract for different functions within AUB are eligible if one of those contracts satisfies the definition of Category A staff.

- Staff who are working on secondment as contracted academic staff at another UK higher education institution on the census date and staff who have a contract with and receive a salary from more than one HEI should contact the Research Office to discuss their return.

Annex 7: Units of Assessment (UOAs or Sub-panels) (Panel criteria and working methods paras 127-128, 156-161).

The sub-panels are committed to applying criteria and working methods that reflect the distinctive character, methodologies and full breadth of these disciplines (including interdisciplinary research), and that facilitate the formation of a balanced range of judgements, without privileging or disadvantaging any particular form of research output, research methodology or type of research environment. The main and sub-panels will operate on the following principles:

- Panels will assess submission in the form that HEIs have chosen to present their research, within the REF framework.
- Panels will aim to identify excellence wherever they can find it.

UOA 32: will assess research from all aspects of the history, theory and practices of art and design, and disciplines where these relate to visual, material and spatial cultures. The sub-panel will consider outputs, in whatever genre or medium, that meet the definition of research (as given in Annex 3). The sub-panel acknowledges and welcomes a diverse range of methods and approaches to research, and therefore adopts an inclusive definition of its remit.

It is anticipated that outputs will span a range of texts, edited publications and creative practices as well as artefacts, events and curatorial outputs. The sub-panel expects to evaluate research that encompasses analytical, applied, ethnographical, experimental, historical, pedagogical, scientific, technological and theoretical approaches to the widest domains of the history, theory and practice of art and design, and covers the broadest understanding of the subject disciplines within any cultural, geographical or historical context.

UOA 33: The sub-panel will assess research from all areas of music, drama, dance, theatre, performance, live and sonic art, film, television and screen studies. It anticipates that outputs will span a range of artefacts, creative practices, curatorial outputs, edited publications, recordings and writings. The sub-panel expects to evaluate research that encompasses analytical, applied, critical, ethnographical, historical, interdisciplinary, pedagogical, practice-based, scientific, technological and theoretical approaches to all of the subject areas indicated above. It covers the broadest understanding of the subject disciplines within, between and across any cultural, geographical or historical contexts.

Annex 8: Eligibility of research outputs (Guidance on Submissions para 205)

Submissions must include a set number of items of research output, equal to 2.5 times the combined FTE of Category A submitted staff included in the submission, rounded to the nearest whole number.

The number will be adjusted, as appropriate, to take account of successful requests for staff circumstances.

Each output must be:

- a) The product of research, briefly defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared. (The full definition of research for the purposes of the REF can be found at Annex A.)
- b) First brought into the public domain during the publication period, 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2020. An exception request may be made where the dissemination of an output has been delayed by COVID-19
- c) Attributable to a current or former member of staff, who made a substantial research contribution to the output, which must be either:
 - i) Produced or authored solely, or co-produced or co-authored, by a Category A submitted staff member, regardless of where the member of staff was employed at the time they produced that output or
 - ii) Produced or authored solely, or co-produced or co-authored by a former staff member who was employed according to the Category A eligible definition when the output was first made publicly available.
 - iii) Available in an open-access form, where the output is within scope of the open access policy i.e. is a journal article with an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) or the output is a conference contribution in conference proceedings with an ISSN and the output is accepted for publication on or after 1 April 2016.

The submitted pool of outputs should include:

- a. A minimum of one output for each Category A submitted staff member, which has been produced or authored solely, or co-produced or co-authored, by that staff member (unless individual circumstances apply)
- b. Further outputs up to the total required for the submitting unit, taking into account any applicable reductions for staff circumstances. A maximum of five outputs maybe attributed to an individual staff member (both Category A submitted staff, as well as any former staff whose outputs are eligible for submission). The attribution of the maximum number of outputs to a staff member will not preclude the submission of further outputs on which the staff member is a co-author, where these are attributed to other eligible staff in the unit.

General eligibility of outputs

In addition to printed academic work, research outputs may include, but are not limited to: new materials, devices, images, artefacts, products and buildings; confidential or technical

reports; intellectual property, whether in patents or other forms; performances, exhibits or events; work published in non-print media.

An underpinning principle of the REF is that all forms of research output will be assessed on a fair and equal basis. Sub-panels will not regard any particular form of output as of greater or lesser quality than another per se. 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.

Reviews, textbooks or edited works may be included if they embody research as defined in Annex A. Editorships of journals and other activities associated with the dissemination of research findings and doctoral theses may not be listed as outputs.

Outputs may be double-weighted where the scale of academic investment in the research activity and/or the intellectual scope of the research output is considerably greater than the disciplinary norm.

Assessment criteria

The University's return to REF 2021 will be considered by Main Panel D and its sub-panels who will look for evidence of originality, significance and rigour and apply the generic definitions of the starred quality levels as follows:

- **Originality:** will be understood as the extent to which the output makes an important and innovative contribution to understanding and knowledge in the field. Research outputs that demonstrate originality may do one or more of the following: produce and interpret new empirical findings or new material; engage with new and/or complex problems; develop innovative research methods, methodologies and analytical techniques; show imaginative and creative scope; provide new arguments and/or new forms of expression, formal innovations, interpretations and/or insights; collect and engage with novel types of data; and/or advance theory of the analysis of doctrine, policy or practice, and new forms of expression.
- **Significance:** will be understood as the extent to which the work has influenced, or has the capacity to influence, knowledge and scholarly thought, or the development and understanding of policy and/or practice.
- **Rigour:** will be understood as the extent to which the work demonstrates intellectual coherence and integrity, and adopts robust and appropriate concepts, analyses, sources, theories and/or methodologies.

The assessment will be made using the quality levels below. The terms 'world-leading', 'international', and 'national' will be taken as quality benchmarks within the generic definitions of the quality levels. They will relate to the actual, likely or deserved influence of the work. There will be no assumption of any necessary international exposure in terms of publication or reception, or any necessary research content in terms of topic or approach.

- Four star** Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour. Sub-panels will expect to see evidence of or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics across and possibly beyond its area/field:
- a primary or essential point of reference
 - of profound influence
 - instrumental in developing new thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences
 - a major expansion of the range and the depth of research and its application
 - outstandingly novel, innovative and/or creative
- Three star** Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence. Sub-panels will expect to see evidence of or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics across and possibly beyond its area/field:
- an important point of reference
 - of considerable influence
 - a catalyst for, or important contribution to, new thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences
 - a significant expansion of the range and the depth of research and its application
 - significantly novel or innovative or creative
- Two star** Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour. Sub-panels will expect to see evidence of or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics across and possibly beyond its area/field:
- a recognised point of reference
 - of some influence
 - an incremental and cumulative advance on thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences
 - a useful contribution to the range or depth of research and its application
- One star** Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour. Sub-panels will expect to see evidence of the following characteristics within its area/field:
- an identifiable contribution to understanding without advancing existing paradigms of enquiry or practice
 - a useful contribution of minor influence
- Unclassified** A research output will be graded 'unclassified' if it is either:
- below the quality threshold for one star; or
 - does not meet the definition of research used for the REF

Annex 9: Reductions for Staff circumstances (Taken from Guidance on Submissions Annex L, Guidance on submissions paras 160-161, and [Guidance on revisions to REF 2021 \(REF 2020/02\) paras 20-27](#).)

A: Procedures for taking into account the effect of circumstances and the effects of COVID-19 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 (REF6a)

All Category A staff submitted staff must be returned with a minimum of one output attributed to them in the submission, including staff with individual circumstances. However, where an individual's circumstances has had an exceptional effect on their ability to work productively throughout the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020, so that the individual has not been able to produce an eligible output, a request may be made for the minimum of one requirement to be removed. Where the request is accepted, an individual may be returned with no outputs attributed to them in the submission, and the total outputs required by the unit will be further reduced by one.

Requests may be made where any of the following circumstances apply within the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020:

- a. an overall period of 46 months or more absence from research, due to one or more of the circumstances set out below (such as an ECR who has only been employed as an eligible staff member for part of the assessment period). This may include part-time working where this has had an exceptional effect on the ability to work productively throughout the period.
- b. Circumstances equivalent to 46 months or more absence from research where circumstances set out below apply such as mental health issues, caring responsibility, long-term health conditions)
- c. Two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave.

B: Staff whose circumstances have affected their ability to research productively throughout the period in relation to the Unit of Assessment's total output requirement (REF6b)

Reductions arising from the circumstances of individual staff should be determined according to the tables and guidance below, up to a reduction of 1.5 outputs per staff member affected where one or more of the following circumstances significantly constrained the ability of submitted staff to produce outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period.

- a: Qualifying as an early career researcher
- b. Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks
- c. Qualifying periods of family-related leave
- d. Circumstances equivalent to absence, that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:
 - i) Disability: this is defined in Annex 10

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 below.

- e) Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member)
- f) Gender reassignment
- g) Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed in Annex 10 or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.
- h) Effect of COVID-19

Early career researchers

ECRs are defined as members of staff who meet the definition of Category A eligible on the census date **and** who started their careers as independent researchers on or after 1 August 2016. For the REF, an individual is deemed to have started their career as an independent from the point at which:

- a: they held a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, which included a primary employment function of undertaking ‘research’ or ‘teaching and research’; with any HEI or other organisation, whether in the UK or overseas, **and**
- b: they first met the definition of an independent researcher

Table 1 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
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 or circumstances

167. Table 2 sets out the permitted reduction in outputs without penalty in the assessment 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 2 Secondments, career breaks, circumstances: permitted reduction in outputs

Total months absent between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2021 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

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

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

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

Any period of maternity, adoption, paternity or shared parental leave that qualifies for the reduction of an output under these provisions 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

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.

Where staff have other circumstances during the period including in combination with any circumstances with a defined reduction in outputs, AUB will make a judgement about the effect of the circumstances in terms of the equivalent period of time absent.

Annex 10: Summary of equality legislation

Age	<p>All employees within the higher education sector are protected from unlawful age discrimination, harassment and victimisation in employment under the Equality Act 2010 and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or if they are associated with a person of a particular age group.</p> <p>Age discrimination can occur when people of a particular group are treated less favourably than people in other age groups. An age group could be for example, people of the same age, the under 30s or people aged 45-50. A person can belong to a number of different age groups.</p> <p>Age discrimination will not be unlawful if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. However, in the context of the REF, the view of the funding bodies is that if a researcher produces excellent research an HEI will not be able to justify not selecting their outputs because of their age group.</p> <p>It is important to note that early career researchers are likely to come from a range of age groups. The definition of early career researcher used in the REF (see 'Guidance on submissions', paragraphs 144 to 147) is not limited to young people.</p> <p>HEIs should also note that, given developments in equalities law in the UK and Europe, the default retirement age has been abolished from 1 October 2011 in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.</p>
Disability	<p>The Equality Act 2010, the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) (Northern Ireland only) and the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 prevent unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment relating to disability. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to have a disability or if they are associated with a person who is disabled (for example, if they are responsible for caring for a disabled family member).</p> <p>A person is considered to be disabled if they have or have had a physical and/or mental impairment which has 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. Long-term impairments include those that last or are likely to last for at least 12 months.</p> <p>Cancer, HIV, multiple sclerosis and progressive/degenerative conditions are disabilities too, even if they do not currently have an adverse effect on the carrying out of day-to-day activities. An impairment which is managed by medication or medical treatment, but which would have had a substantial and long-term adverse effect if not so managed, is also a disability.</p> <p>The definition of disability is different in Northern Ireland in that a list of day-to-day activities is referred to.</p>

	<p>There is no list of day-to-day activities for England, Scotland and Wales but day-to-day activities are taken to mean activities that people, not individuals, carry out on a daily or frequent basis.</p> <p>While there is no definitive list of what is considered a disability, it covers a wide range of impairments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sensory impairments • impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as rheumatoid arthritis, depression and epilepsy • progressive impairments, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, HIV and cancer • organ specific impairments, including respiratory conditions and cardiovascular diseases • developmental impairments, such as autistic spectrum disorders and dyslexia • mental health conditions such as depression and eating disorders • impairments caused by injury to the body or brain <p>It is important for HEIs to note that people who have had a past disability are also protected from discrimination, victimisation and harassment because of disability.</p> <p>Equality law requires HEIs to anticipate the needs of disabled people and make reasonable adjustments for them. Failure to make a reasonable adjustment constitutes discrimination. If a disabled researcher's impairment has affected the quantity of their research outputs, the submitting unit may return a reduced number of outputs (see 'Guidance on submissions', Part 3, Section 1, 'Staff circumstances').</p>
<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 protect from discrimination, harassment and victimisation of trans people who have proposed, started or completed a process to change their sex. Staff in HE do not have to be under medical supervision to be afforded protection because they are trans and staff are protected if they are perceived to be undergoing or have undergone related procedures. They are also protected if they are associated with someone who has proposed, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment.</p> <p>Trans people who undergo gender reassignment will need to take time off for appointments and, in some cases, for medical assistance. The transition process is lengthy, often taking several years and is likely to be a difficult period for the trans person as they seek recognition of their new gender from their family, friends, employer and society as a whole.</p> <p>The Gender Recognition Act 2004 gave enhanced privacy rights to trans people who undergo gender reassignment. A person acting in an official capacity who acquires information about a person's status as a transsexual may commit a criminal offence if they pass the information to a third party without consent.</p>

	<p>Consequently, staff within HEIs with responsibility for REF submissions must ensure that the information they receive about gender reassignment is treated with particular care.</p> <p>If a staff member's ability to work productively throughout the REF assessment period has been constrained due to gender reassignment, the unit may return a reduced number of research outputs (see 'Guidance on submissions', Part3, Section 1, 'Staff circumstances'). Information about the member of staff will be kept confidential as described in 'Guidance on submissions,' paragraph 191.</p> <p>HEIs should note that the Scottish government recently consulted on, and the UK government is currently consulting on, reform of the Gender Recognition Act 2004, which may include streamlining the procedure to legally change gender.</p>
<p>Marriage and civil partnership</p>	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 as amended, individuals are protected from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of marriage and civil partnership status. The protection from discrimination is to ensure that people who are married or in a civil partnership receive the same benefits and treatment in employment. The protection from discrimination does not apply to single people.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not inadvertently discriminate against staff who are married or in civil partnerships.</p>
<p>Pregnancy and maternity</p>	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 women are protected from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p>Consequently, where researchers have taken time out of work, or their ability to work productively throughout the assessment period has been affected, because of pregnancy and/or maternity, the submitting unit may return a reduced number of research outputs, as set out in 'Guidance on submissions', paragraphs 169 to 172.</p> <p>In addition, HEIs should ensure that female researchers who are pregnant or on maternity leave are kept informed about and included in their submissions process.</p> <p>For the purpose of this summary it is important to note that primary adopters have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave.</p>
<p>Race</p>	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation connected to race. The definition of race includes colour, ethnic or national origins or nationality.</p>

	<p>Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular race.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not discriminate against staff based on their race or assumed race (for example, based on their name).</p>
<p>Religion and belief including non-belief</p>	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to religion or belief. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular religion or belief.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not discriminate against staff based on their actual or perceived religion or belief, including non-belief. 'Belief' includes any structured philosophical belief with clear values that has an effect on how its adherents conduct their lives.</p>
<p>Sex (including breastfeeding and additional paternity and adoption leave)</p>	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to sex. Employees are also protected because of their perceived sex or because of their association with someone of a particular sex.</p> <p>The sex discrimination provisions of the Equality Act explicitly protect women from less favourable treatments because they are breastfeeding. Consequently the impact of breastfeeding on a woman's ability to work productively will be taken into account, as set out in 'Guidance on submissions', Part 3, Section 1, 'Staff circumstances'.</p> <p>If a mother who meets the continuity of employment test wishes to return to work early or shorten her maternity leave/pay, she will be entitled to shared parental leave with the father or her partner within the first year of the baby's birth. Partners may also be eligible for shared parental leave or pay. Fathers/partners who take additional paternity or adoption leave will have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave and barriers that exist to taking the leave, or as a result of having taken it, could constitute unlawful sex discrimination. Consequently where researchers have taken additional paternity and adoption leave, the submitting unit may return a reduced number of outputs, as set out in 'Guidance on submissions', paragraphs 169 to 172.</p> <p>HEIs need to be wary of implementing procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 that would be easier for men to comply with than women, or vice versa. There are many cases where a requirement to work full-time (or less favourable treatment of people working part-time or flexibly) has been held to discriminate unlawfully against women.</p>

	<p>HEIs should note that there are no requirements under UK and Scottish legislation for public authorities (including HEIs) to report information on the percentage difference amongst employees between men and women's average hourly pay (excluding overtime).</p>
<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to sexual orientation. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person who is of a particular sexual orientation.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not discriminate against staff based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation.</p>