

INSTITUTIONAL CODE OF PRACTICE FOR

The logo for REF2021, featuring the word 'REF' in orange and '2021' in white, set against a dark blue rectangular background.

BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

DOCUMENT VERSION HISTORY		
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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Summary of Institutional Context: Background for EDAP

Birmingham City University (BCU) is a post-92 university with a 175-year heritage rooted in art, design, creative and professional practice. In 1843 the Birmingham Society of Artists opened the Birmingham Government School of Design, which became the Birmingham College of Art in 1884 and was joined by the Birmingham School of Jewellery in 1888. The Birmingham School of Music developed around 1859 and the School of Architecture was established within the College of Art in 1909, winning Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) recognition in 1923 and 1930. The Birmingham College of Commerce was formed in the early 20th century.

These foundation institutions formed the City of Birmingham Polytechnic designated in 1971 and which incorporated the Anstey College of Physical Education; Bordesley College of Education and City of Birmingham College of Education in 1975 and the Bournville College of Art in 1988.

The Further and Higher Education Act gave all polytechnics the power to adopt the title of 'university' and the renaming of "The City of Birmingham Polytechnic" to "The University of Central England in Birmingham" was approved by the Privy Council on 16 June 1992. In 2007, the University changed its name to become Birmingham City University.

The historic focus of our predecessor institutions and the ongoing focus of the University on practice-based and professional subjects is an intrinsic part of our institutional DNA. As the self-styled "University for Birmingham" we believe we have an inherent responsibility to act as a "regional anchor institution" and "civic university" for the benefit of the citizens and private, public and third sectors organisations, locally, regionally, nationally and globally. We discharge this responsibility by creating employable graduates to meet local, regional and national demands for a skilled workforce and through knowledge transfer, knowledge exchange and knowledge co-creation in partnership with the private, public and third sectors to drive economic and social innovation and contribute to the cultural prosperity of our region.

Our academic workforce by necessity comprises both staff who have followed a "traditional" HE career pathway and academic staff who have been recruited from the professions and thus enter an academic career pathway later in their careers. Whilst a proportion of our academic staff carry out research, which is internationally recognised, many engage instead or as well in knowledge transfer, knowledge exchange, collaborative and contract research and innovation activities which lead to national rather than international recognition.

Given our multi-faceted mission, the University does not expect all academic staff will carry out research that is internationally recognised. This is recognised within our academic staff job descriptions which contain a portfolio of expectations of research, enterprise and scholarship activities which academic staff can undertake to various degrees, to complement their teaching and learning responsibilities.

Birmingham City University is organised academically as four faculties within which all academic resources are managed and our students are taught. Each faculty is led by a Pro-Vice Chancellor / Executive Dean and each has an Associate Dean with designated responsibility for Research and Enterprise. Our four faculties are:

- Faculty of Arts, Design and Media
- Faculty of Business, Law and Social Sciences
- Faculty of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment
- Faculty of Health, Education and Life Sciences

1.2 Need for Code of Practice Defining Staff with Significant Responsibility for Research

The Guidance on Submissions for REF2021 requires institutions to submit for assessment all Category-A eligible staff with significant responsibility for research. Birmingham City University does not expect 100% of academic staff with a “teaching and research” employment function to be engaged in independent research or to be resourced in their academic workload to deliver research that is recognised internationally for quality, significance and rigour.

The “teaching and research” academic employment function alone does not, therefore, describe accurately the subset of academic staff who are expected to deliver internationally excellent research and who are resourced accordingly. The University has therefore developed this Code of Practice for REF2021 which includes an explanation of how we identify and evidence the subset of our pool of Category-A eligible staff who we identify as having a “*significant responsibility for research*”.

1.3 REF2014 SUBMISSION AND OUTCOMES

The historic research assessment exercises (RAE) and previous research excellence framework, REF2014 provided the flexibility for institutions like Birmingham City University to be selective in their submission. We had the flexibility to submit for assessment only the best research undertaken by staff who were expected and resourced to deliver internationally excellent research.

Between 2008 and 2013 the University invested significantly in revitalising research, ensuring that historic excellence was protected within the Panel D subjects, whilst broadening support across Panel A to Panel C. The submission to REF2014 was significantly increased in size and discipline coverage, encompassing 11 (of 36) units and the submission of 122 FTE / 151 FPE.

The overall results showed an improvement of institutional GPA from 2.31 to 2.64 and an increase in research power of 60%. The highest rated units were Panel D subjects: English (GPA 2.99), Art and Design (GPA 2.88) and Music (GPA 2.85). Panel D subjects represented 60% of our FTE submitted and 65% of our REF2014 research power.

The 122 FTE submitted were selected from 739 FTE (16.5%) Category-A eligible staff in the 11 units submitted, with an additional 127 FTE Cat-A eligible staff in units to which BCU did not submit. The overall submission for Birmingham City University was calculated as 14.1% of Category-A eligible staff.

Analysis of the entire submission to REF2014 from the REF1 forms and comparison with the institutional context data provided by HEFCE to accompany the REF2014 results demonstrates the significant difference between university Mission groups, which can be interpreted as proxy indicators for institutional mission and research intensity.

Table 1 shows for each of the UK university mission groups the overall percentage submission of eligible Category-A staff. As expected, submission of staff in research-intensive Russell Group was the highest, followed closely by the ex-1994 group, the smaller research intensives, with a similar submission rate. The research intensives submitted more than three quarters of eligible staff to REF2014. Note that included in the data are Category-A staff in units that institutions chose not to submit to, i.e. where there was a 0% submission rate at UoA level by individual institution. The Million+, University Alliance and Guild HE university mission groups submitted approximately one quarter of eligible staff to REF2014. The non-aligned universities are a diverse group of institutions including small specialist institutions and modern universities that feel neither Million+ nor University Alliance best reflects their institutional aspirations and priorities.

Mission Group	%FTE Submitted
Guild HE	23.0%
University Alliance	25.5%
Million+	26.6%
Non-Aligned	46.3%
ex 1994 Group	78.9%
Russell Group	82.8%

*Table 1: % Submission of Category-A Eligible Staff to REF2014 by Aggregated Mission Group
(From REF1 and HESA Context Data)*

This highlights the need for many institutions which are not research intensive to define an institutional code of practice that will define staff who have Significant Responsibility for Research as a subset of their Category-A eligible academic staff base.

1.4 POST REF2014 INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH STRATEGY FOR REF2021

Encouraged by improved outcomes from REF2014, the University under new leadership committed significant additional resource to investments in academic staffing; research facilities and doctoral student support and funding. Developed during 2015-16 under the leadership of the newly appointed Pro Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Enterprise (later promoted to Deputy Vice Chancellor), the University's five-year research strategy planned for REF2021 to further increase discipline coverage from 11

to 13/14 submitted units and to a doubling of submitted FTE to around 250 FTE, driven by a new strategy for research investment summarised as “*Better, Bigger, Broader, Bolder*”.

New UoAs for REF2021 were planned to include a first-time submission of Psychology, enabled by significant recruitment of research-active academic staff to deliver new taught programmes accredited by the BPS and the submission of staff in Engineering into a distinct UoA, rather than combining these with Computing as was done in our submission to REF2014. There was also a possibility of first-time submissions to Sociology, as a result of new staff recruited in the Faculty of Business, Law and Social Sciences and of first-time submissions to Biological Sciences and Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism as a result of new staff recruitment in the Faculty of Health, Education and Life Sciences, although it was envisaged these UoA may be a longer-term investment for the REF following REF2021.

One requirement of the planned investment in research growth was a need to define how the University’s academic staff could collectively deliver excellent learning and teaching; research of international excellence and contribute to innovation, KE/KT and enterprise activities.

The revision of academic job descriptions; the introduction of the Academic Workload Planning Framework (AWPF) and the electronic Workload Allocation Management System (WAMS), together with guidance on allocation of research allowance, provided the ideal opportunity for staff to identify with their Line Managers and Faculty research leadership where appropriate, their nominated academic development pathway. Through their Individual Performance Review (IPR), staff would negotiate which elements of their academic job descriptions would be prioritised and subsequently resourced through explicit allocation of tariffs defined in WAMS, linked to level and normal discipline expectations.

1.5 INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PROCESS FOUNDATIONS OF OUR CODE OF PRACTICE

The opportunity to create an institutionally-relevant Code of Practice to define in a REF2021 context staff who have *Significant Responsibility for Research* allows the University to present for external review, practices developed for academic workload management and resource allocations. These are codified internally in accepted policies and processes already in place across the University and which have been developed in full consultation with employees and the Unions.

Building our Code of Practice for REF2021 on policies and processes that have been already consulted upon, agreed, accepted and put into practice is, we believe, the most likely explanations for the relative lack of concerns identified during the development of and consultation with all staff on our Code of Practice for REF2021.

1.5.1 Review of Job Descriptions: Requirement to Undertake Research, Enterprise and Scholarship

The University offers opportunities for academic staff to follow one of three parallel career development pathways. The job descriptions at each level allow staff to select the most appropriate pathway for their personal ambitions: teaching and research focused; teaching and learning focused or research focused. Academic progression through the grades is governed by our Policy for the Progression of Academic Staff (Appendix A1) and staff can progress within a given pathway or switch to a different pathway.

All academic job descriptions were comprehensively reviewed in 2015 and graded between Level 1 (the most junior) and Level 5 (the most senior). Irrespective of their chosen pathway, all academic staff are encouraged to engage actively in scholarship; independent research including grant-funded and contract research; innovation; knowledge exchange and enterprise activities. These expectations of each activity increase with progression through the levels, and are defined within the Research, Enterprise and Scholarship section of each job description.

Level	“Teaching and Learning” focused	“Teaching and Research” focused	“Research” focused
	Family of Job Descriptions	Family of Job Descriptions	Family of Job Descriptions
1	Assistant Lecturer	Assistant Lecturer	Research Assistant
2	Teaching Fellow	Lecturer	Research Fellow
3	Senior Teaching Fellow	Senior Lecturer	Senior Research Fellow
4	Associate Professor	Associate Professor	Reader
5	Professor	Professor	Professor

Table 1: Levels and Families of Academic Job Descriptions

A proportion of academic staff, normally those on the teaching and research pathway, focus on undertaking and disseminating research which is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour. They disseminate research findings to their subject community through academic publishing, conferences, performances and exhibitions and introduce new knowledge into our taught programmes to ensure academic rigour and distinctiveness. They, either individually or in collaboration with other academic colleagues who are more Innovation and Enterprise focused, also collaborate activity to couple excellent research to our user base of private, public, and third-sector organisations to accelerate impact.

Irrespective of their career pathway, all academic staff delivering learning and teaching are expected at minimum to contribute to cognate discipline-based or pedagogic research and innovation activities, either as an individual or collaborative activity. The University therefore returns almost all academic staff to the HESA staff survey with academic employment function “teaching and research”. The University has not in the past and has no current plans to transfer staff with a “teaching and research” academic employment function to “Teaching Only” contracts, which would take them out of scope of Category-A eligibility for REF purposes.

1.5.2 Allocation of Resource to Undertake Research: Academic Workload Planning Framework (AWPF) & Workload Allocation Management System (WAMS)

During 2016-2017 the University developed and implemented an Academic Workload Planning Framework (AWPF) to support the allocation of duties to academic staff. Details can be found in Appendix B1. The AWPF provides the guidance and tariffs to be applied for all elements of the academic workload to ensure:

- i) Academic staff can engage in the breadth and range of activity which will support their own development and career progression aspirations, and
- ii) The University can manage academic resources effectively to deliver the best quality teaching and learning experience and employability outcomes for our students, and
- iii) The University can manage effectively the resourcing of the Research and Enterprise activities, outputs and outcomes including ensuring new knowledge is transferred effectively to the user base.

To enable effective application and monitoring of the AWPF, the University has also implemented an electronic Workload Allocation Management System (WAMS) for all academic staff. WAMS holds details of each of the AWPF tariff elements that have been allocated to individual staff to enable them to carry out the academic expectations of their role. Individual objectives and targets linked to these expectations are agreed annually through the University's Individual Performance Review (IPR) process, details of which are found in Appendix B3.

1.5.3 Research, Enterprise and Scholarship Allowances in WAMS

The total time allocated to research, enterprise and scholarship activities within an individual academic workload includes a wide range of activities. In addition, further allocations can be made for a more specific research allowance, with additional allocations for externally or institution self-funded research.

1.5.3.1 Scholarly Activity Allowance (SAA)

All academic staff delivering learning and teaching programmes are expected to contribute to cognate discipline or practice based scholarly activities, either as an individual or collaborative activity, as identified in their academic job description. This responsibility is resourced through a common time tariff in WAMS designated Scholarly Activity Allowance (SAA), which is allocated to all academic staff.

1.5.3.2 Research Allowance (RAv3)

A proportion of our staff will be resourced to undertake research leading to outcomes that will be internationally recognised in terms of originality, significance and rigour. WAMS contains a specific tariff designated "Research Allowance" or RAv3, which is designed to resource research activity that will result in outputs of the highest quality, suitable for assessment by the Research Excellence Framework.

Staff who receive RA in WAMS will be designated as Band 1, Band 2 or Band 3 researchers for the purposes of RA allocation:

- Band 1 (normally Early Career) researchers receive a pro-rata allocation of 226 hours of Research Allowance
- Band 2 researchers receive a pro-rata allocation of 388 hours of Research Allowance (RA)
- Band 3 researchers receive a pro-rata allocation of 632 hours of Research Allowance (RA)

Researchers in Band 1 to Band 3 receive the Scholarly Activity Allowance allocated to all academic staff in addition to the Research Allowance tariffs identified above.

The guidance on allocation of Research Allowance was developed jointly by the four Faculty Associate Deans for Research and Enterprise to provide a common framework and set of principles which govern the allocation of Research Allowance to Band 1 to Band 3 researchers across the University. This guidance was approved by the University's Research Committee and details can be found in Appendix B2. The guidance makes explicit for each of the three researcher bands, Band 1 to Band 3, the obligations of staff who receive RAv3 in their academic workload. Individual research objectives and targets will be negotiated annually and recorded during the staff member's Individual Performance Review (IPR) and linked explicitly to the allocation of RAv3 in WAMS.

1.6 REFERENCE TO BROADER UNIVERSITY POLICIES SUPPORTING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Our Code of Practice for REF2021 builds primarily of our suite of academic job descriptions, the institutional Academic Workload Planning Framework (AWPF), the institutional Workload Allocation Management Systems (WAMS) and the Guidance on Research and Scholarship Allowances. The implementation of the above were underpinned by principles contained within the broader suite of the University's policies that support Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. These include policies related to academic employment and progression and to policies which ensure that employee behaviours align with our institutional core values to support a more diverse and inclusive workforce. Individual policies that are relevant are listed in Table 2.

NOTE: these policies have been included as appendices in Section 5 as embedded Adobe Acrobat documents rather than Microsoft Word documents. Only the first page of each is visible in this document until mouse-clicked, when the embedded .pdf document will open if Adobe Reader has been installed.

University Policy	Section 5 Appendix
Academic Progression	Appendix A1
Career Break	Appendix A2
Dignity at Work	Appendix A3
Equality and Diversity in Employment	Appendix A4
Family Related Leave	Appendix A5
Flexible Working Policy	Appendix A6
Staff Resourcing	Appendix A7
Grievance Policy	Appendix A8
Academic Workload Planning Framework v3	Appendix B1
Guidance on Applying Research Allowance in WAMS	Appendix B2
Individual Performance Review (IPR)	Appendix B3

Table 2: Selected University Policies Relevant to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

A short summary of the scope of each policy is provided below. Please note that a number of these policies are undergoing review in 2019. Once approved, the revised policies will be referenced within our Final Code of Practice that will be published on our intranet and website.

1.6.1 Appendix A1: Academic Progression: This identifies the process by which academics can develop their careers, with progression through the five levels from Level 1: Assistant Lecturer / Research Assistant to Level 5: Professor. There are three parallel pathways with relevant pathway job descriptions for each role at each level, which make explicit the generic expectations of contributions to all aspects of academic activity including research, enterprise and scholarship which is linked to determination of Independent Researcher (IR) status within the subsequent section of this Code of Practice.

1.6.2 Appendix A2: Career Break: The University recognises that career breaks can be valuable for staff requiring an extended period away from the workplace, resuming their careers later. Career breaks can be for between 3 months and 3 years during which staff remain employed by the University. Time away will count toward their continuous service, but all rights under their contract of employment are suspended. This is relevant to the inclusion in the REF2021 submission of staff who have been away from the University for extended periods, where consideration of individual circumstances, and potential for reductions in Pool output count, can be supported by the Individual Circumstances processes outlined in Section 4.7

1.6.3 Appendix A3: Dignity at Work: We are committed to building and sustaining a community of staff who value each other and work together in a spirit of respect and professional courtesy whilst pursuing a common purpose. We recognise that bullying, harassment, discrimination, victimisation and any other unacceptable behaviour in the workplace can impact on health, wellbeing and work performance. This policy i) explains the behaviours expected ii) helps to identify and challenge unacceptable behaviours and iii) explains what individuals should do if they are being harassed, bullied or victimised. The Dignity at Work policy applies to all university employees, agency workers, contractors and anyone else engaged to work for the University on and off University premises.

1.6.4 Appendix A4: Equality and Diversity in Employment: The University is committed to eliminating discrimination and creating an inclusive culture based on merit, where everyone has an equal chance to succeed. The purpose of the Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy is to provide equality and fairness for all of our staff and prospective staff and to demonstrate our commitment not to discriminate in any area of our employment practices because a protected characteristic such as age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The University's employment practices aim to be fair, objective and allow staff to feel valued, respected and engaged in their work.

1.6.5 Appendix A5: Family Related Leave: The University is committed to embracing opportunities that give our staff who are parents or prospective parents greater choice in the way they can balance the demands of their personal lives with the demands of their working lives in a way that is mutually beneficial. Family Related Leave Policy includes maternity leave, adoption leave, paternity leave, parental leave, shared

parental leave and dependent leave. The policy incorporates all relevant employment legislation and is underpinned by the University's core values and commitment to equality and diversity.

1.6.6 Appendix A6: Flexible Working Policy: The University is committed to creating working arrangements that benefit both staff and the University. We recognise Flexible working practices which allow variation in working hours, days and/or place of work can help staff achieve an acceptable balance between work and personal commitments. The Flexible Working Policy incorporates all relevant employment legislation and is underpinned by the University's core values and commitment to equality and diversity.

1.6.7 Appendix A7: Staff Resourcing Policy: The University recognises importance of ensuring staff resourcing requirements are met through a range of routes by attracting and selecting a diverse group of people with the skills and experiences we need and who share our values. The University will ensure that all staff, current or prospective are treated at every stage of the recruitment and selection process solely based on their merits, abilities and potential. The policy incorporates all relevant employment legislation.

1.6.8 Appendix A8: Grievance Policy: The University is committed to building and sustaining a community of staff who value each other and work constructively in partnership and in a spirit of respect and trust to build successful working relationships. We are also committed to creating a culture and climate that is a supportive and employs good day-to-day management practices where staff are listened to without fear of reprisal. The University expects that minor work issues will be resolved informally, however we recognise that this may not always be possible. The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and transparent framework that will enable us to address any concerns staff may have in a timely, fair and consistent way. The Grievance Policy incorporates all relevant employment legislation and is underpinned by the University's core values and commitment to equality and diversity. Please note that the University's Grievance Policy is referred to within the Appeals Process of subsequent sections, because it is the common process through which staff can appeal most issues related to their academic workload.

1.6.9 Appendix B1: Academic Workload Planning Framework v3: contains the overall guidance on the University's Academic Workload Planning Framework and an explanation of different tariffs. This document refers to B2: Guidance on Applying Research Allowance in WAMS for a detailed explanation of the Research Allowance (RA) tariff linked to research of international standards of quality, significance and rigour. It is worth explaining here that the process for individual appeals related to implementation of AWPF and individual's allocations of time tariffs in WAMS is through the Grievance Policy at Appendix A8. There is no separate process for appeals against the allocation of time in WAMS outside the grievance policy.

1.6.10 Appendix B2: Guidance on Applying Research Allowance in WAMS: Builds on the explanation of the AWPF, identifies the three research bands Band 1, Band 2 and Band 3 and defines the expectations of research performance in each of the three bands which attract Research Allowance. This document was created and developed by the Associate Deans responsible for Research and Enterprise and was approved by the University's Research Committee.

1.6.11 Appendix B3: IPR Guidelines for all staff: The annual IPR appraisal process is an important part of managing performance and supporting personal effectiveness by clearly establishing individual objectives and performance requirements. The process ensured the University can focus staff at all levels on meeting the expectations of the University Corporate Plan and on the achievement of appropriate workplace outcomes that are aligned to our Core Values and University Mission, Vision and Goals and Objectives. The IPR is also to reflect and learn from past experiences, to recognise and celebrate successes and to determine individual development needs in the future.

1.7 SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE REF2014

This section summarises some actions that have been taken post REF2014. Some of these relate directly to our REF2014 submission or to the development of our REF2021 Code of Practice. Other actions address the underpinning research environment which support research or relate to changes in leadership that have led to new research priorities and investment.

1.7.1 REVIEW OF OUTCOMES REF2014 CODE OF PRACTICE

The outcomes of applying our REF2014 Code of Practice on Selection of Outputs were reviewed as part of development process for the Code of Practice for REF2021. The detailed analysis is reported formally in our Equality Impact Assessment section, where we compare the actual submission to REF2014 with our potential submission to REF2021. The summary information on our REF2014 submission is provided below:

- BCU submitted 151 individuals / 122 FTE with 442 outputs to 11 REF2014 units of assessment
- The submission was 60% male and 40% female by both FPE and FTE
- The 122 FTE submitted was drawn from 739 FTE Cat-A eligible in the 11 units submitted (16.5% submission overall) and from a wider Cat-A population of 866 FTE in all units including those not submitted (14.1% submission overall)
- In calculating eligible FTE it should be noted that Birmingham City University has historically returned all academic staff with a teaching and learning responsibility to HESA with academic employment function “teaching and research” with HESA field *ACEMPFUN* = 3, recognising that all academic staff have an intrinsic obligation to research, enterprise and scholarship activities as part of their academic responsibilities, although their individual degree of focus on different parts of this portfolio may differ, as will the quality of assessable resource outputs produced.

1.7.1.1 Analysis of Inclusion of Early Career Researchers

- 32 individuals (21%) were submitted to REF2014 as Early Career Researchers (ECR) with a total of 53 individual outputs. The total output count reduction of 75 (from the nominal 128) was attributable both to ECR status and to some ECR staff also being fractional contract holders.

- It is worthy of note that a number of staff returned as ECRs were in fact highly experienced professionally qualified staff who had been recruited to the University for their experience of practice. Although they joined the University with significant professional standing, they were early in their academic research careers, only becoming research active at the point of joining the University or in some cases after first completing a PhD at the University or another HEI.

1.7.1.2 Analysis of Inclusion of Staff on Fractional Contracts

- 96 of 151 individuals submitted held full-time contracts of 1.0 FTE
- 6 of 151 individuals submitted held contracts of 0.80 FTE
- 15 of 151 individuals submitted held fractional contracts of between 0.60 and 0.79 FTE
- 19 of 151 individuals submitted held fractional contracts of between 0.30 and 0.59 FTE
- 15 of 151 individuals submitted held fractional contracts between 0.20 and 0.29 FTE
- Overall 36% of individuals returned held fractional contract of 0.8 FTE or smaller

1.7.1.3 Analysis of Inclusion of Staff with Periods of Maternity / Paternity / Adoption Leave

- 3 staff had one or more periods of maternity leave, resulting in a total output count reduction of 4

1.7.1.4 Analysis of Inclusion of Staff Complex Personal Circumstances

- 9 individuals submitted complex circumstances resulting in a total output count reduction of 21

1.7.1.5 Analysis of REF2014 E&D Panel Appeals

- 9 individuals submitted appeals with further supporting evidence for consideration by REF2014 E&D Panel, including 4 x ECR, 4 x part-time contracts and 1 complex circumstances

1.7.2 Overall Conclusion on Effectiveness of REF2014 Code of Practice and Supporting Processes

The overall conclusion was that our REF2014 Code of Practice had worked very effectively in providing opportunities for inclusion of staff with fractional contracts and ECRs through the standard reductions in outputs allowable. This allowed the University to submit for assessment staff some highly experienced professionally qualified staff who were early in their academic research careers and who could otherwise have been disadvantaged by non-inclusion. Many of these will be submitted to REF2021 as staff with significant responsibility for research.

The output reduction allowable for staff with complex circumstances allowed 9 staff to be included, with a total reduction of 21 outputs from 36 to 15. Complex circumstances included significant periods of ill-health; absence from the University and significant caring responsibilities, all of which materially impacted on the productivity of individual researchers over the REF2014 assessment period. The flexibility provided by the Complex Circumstances Process allowed staff who had experienced very serious impediments to their research productivity to be included in the submission to REF2014.

1.7.3 INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

This section identifies key changes in senior staffing, systems and processes that have occurred since REF2014. Many of these have enabled and informed the development our Code of Practice for REF2021 and / or have provided building blocks for the implementation of our Code of Practice or clarified accountability for different elements of the REF2021 submission.

1.7.3.1 Senior Staff Appointments

- Professor Phillip Plowden, Vice Chancellor appointed August 2017
- Professor Julian Beer, Pro Vice Chancellor Research, Innovation and Enterprise, appointed February 2015, later becoming Deputy Vice Chancellor in June 2016
- Professor Clare Mackie, Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic appointed January 2018
- Mark O'Dwyer, Director of Human Resources, appointed May 2018
- Professor Alison Honour, Pro Vice Chancellor and Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts, Design and Media, appointed June 2018
- Imogeen Denton, Head of Equality Diversity & Inclusion, appointed Sept 2018
- Alan Fitzgerald, Deputy Director of Human Resources, appointed Nov 2018
- Professor Hanifa Shah, Pro Vice Chancellor and Executive Dean, Faculty of Computing Engineering and the Built Environment, appointed August 2019

1.7.3.2 Introduction of New Processes and Systems

- Review of academic job descriptions and new policy for academic progression, 2015
- Updated Individual Performance Review process for all university staff, 2015
- Introduction of the Academic Workload Planning Framework (AWPF) to support the allocation of duties to academic staff, 2015-16
- Implementation of the electronic Workload Allocation Management System (WAMS) for all learning and teaching staff, 2017 onwards
- Research and scholarship guidance for WAMS tariffs including explicit Research Allowance (RA) tariffs for Band 1 to Band 3 researchers who have significant responsibility for research, 2017 onwards
- Introduction of integrated Oracle ERP system to replace previously separate Finance, HR and Payroll systems, Jan 2018 onwards

1.7.3.3 New Research Strategy and Increased Research Investment

- Updated research strategy planned a pre-Stern Review doubling of the institutional submission to REF2021 of c. 250 FTE and 14 Units of Assessment, 2015-16
- Introduction of ePrints Open Access Repository, November 2016
- Institutional investment in fully-funding 70+ PhD full-time studentships (fees and RCUK stipends) commencing September 2016 and ongoing

- Investment in “routes out” funding of research fellowships for PhD students, initially as part of Midlands 3 Cities AHRC funded DTP, 2017-19

1.7.3.4 Revision of Research Committees, Policies, Processes and Governance

- Revision of Terms of Reference for Research Committees and sub-committees, improving representation of PGR students, post-doctoral researchers and research leaders, 2016-17
- Revision of Terms of Reference and membership of University Research Environment and Training Committee (RETC) and Faculty “feeder” committees
- Formation of Research Ethics, Governance and Compliance Committee (REGCC) 2016-17
- Designation of HELS Pro Vice Chancellor Executive Dean to oversee submission to REF2021, 2018
- Implementation of Elsevier Pure CRIS systems, Jan 2019 ongoing

1.8 TRANSPARENCY, CONSISTENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY

The University has made extensive efforts to ensure that the principles contained within our Draft Code of Practice for REF2021 consulted upon had been well socialised across the academic community during development. This ensured that any significant concerns identified could be addressed during the development process and prior to all-staff consultation. Through the University’s Research Committee, chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor, we shared the general principles of the Draft Code of Practice in the context of the Guidance on Submissions REF2019/01; the Panel criteria and working methods REF2019/02 and the expectations of the Code of Practice defined in REF2019/03, which were cascaded down to the four Faculty Research Committees.

1.8.1 TRANSPARENCY

Transparency of underpinning policies and processes has been assured by building the Code of Practice around the University’s Academic Workload Planning Framework (AWPF); Workload Allocation Management System (WAMS) and associated guidance and policy documents, which have been approved by the University’s Academic Board, following full consultation with the University’s Employee Forum and with the Unions. Within Faculties, each Faculty Research Committee (FRC) has discussed fully the Draft Code of Practice and consulted locally with academic and research staff and with those responsible for managing research activity, to identify any local or generic concerns.

The implementation of the WAMS also provided a significant opportunity for feedback, both from academic staff receiving Research Allowance (RAv3) to resource their Significant Responsibility for Research and from Heads of School and other staff who have been applying the AWPF workload tariffs in WAMS and negotiating with academic staff both with and without Research Allowance.

1.8.2 CONSISTENCY

The University uses the same employment practices across all organisational units. We have developed a single Code of Practice for REF2021 which will be applied consistently across all Faculties and their constituent sub-units and across all Units of Assessment. We have built our Code of Practice on policies, processes and systems that are already accepted and already in use for the management of all aspects of academic workload including research. By building on these existing and in-use cross-university foundations we have ensured consistency in the application of the Code of Practice for REF2021. Building on these processes also allows the existing processes to be employed where staff have any concerns about how the underlying processes have been implemented.

1.8.3 ACCOUNTABILITY

- Vice Chancellor, Professor Phillip Plowden is accountable to the University's Board of Governors for the University's submission to REF2021.
- Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Julian Beer is accountable to the Vice Chancellor for all aspects of the institution's research, innovation and enterprise portfolio. Professor Beer also chairs the University's Research Committee.
- Pro Vice Chancellor and Executive Dean Professor Ian Blair is responsible to the Vice Chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor for oversight of the institutional submission to REF2021 and chairs the REF2021 Steering Board. Professor Blair is also the Deputy Chair of Research Committee.
- The Director of Research, Professor Keith Osman is responsible to Professor Ian Blair and Professor Julian Beer for coordination and management of the institutional REF2021 submission and for management of the institutional data that will be submitted to REF2021. Professor Osman also chairs the University's Research Ethics, Governance and Compliance Committee.
- The Director of Human Resources, Mark O'Dwyer is responsible to the Vice Chancellor for all policies and processes related to employment of staff by the University and for data held in the University's HR systems.
- The four Faculty Associate Deans for Research are responsible to their respective Pro Vice Chancellor / Executive Dean for all aspects of faculty research, including the faculty-hosted Units of Assessment that will be included in the University's collective submission to REF2021. The Associate Deans for Research and Enterprise chair their Faculty Research Committee and are members of the University Research Committee.
- The four Faculty Associate Deans for Research have designated faculty-local Unit of Assessment leads and deputies to coordinate the UoA level submissions within their respective faculties.

1.8.4 REF2021 STEERING BOARD

The University has constituted the REF2021 Steering Board to provide institutional oversight and ensure good governance of all aspects of the University's submission to REF2021. The REF2021 Steering Board is chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor with responsibility for REF2021 and the membership includes the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Enterprise; Pro-Vice Chancellors / Executive Deans, Director of

Human Resources, the Director of Research, the Director of the Research and Innovation Gateway and external members. The REF2021 Steering Board will:

- Maintain oversight of the development of the University's collective submission to REF2021, ensuring that the submission is optimised and that all necessary compliance obligations are met.
- Oversee and quality assure, through an examination of evidence presented, the implementation of the University's Code of Practice for REF2021.
- Review Equality Impact Assessments undertaken on staff with significant responsibility for research; independent researchers and the selection of outputs, at both Institutional level and Unit of Assessment level, identifying any remedial actions that might be required.
- Review the results of Mock REF2021 submissions in September 2019 to be updated in April 2020 and December 2020.
- Receive advice on and approve any requests made to Research England for aggregate output pool reductions based on cumulative reductions from individual circumstances disclosed to, considered by and upheld by the REF2021 Individual Circumstances Panel.
- Receive advice on and approve any requests made to Research England for permission to submit individual with zero outputs based on exceptional circumstances disclosed to, considered by and upheld by the REF2021 Individual Circumstances Panel.
- Agree the institutional research environment statement that will accompany all Unit of Assessment Environment Templates (REF5).

1.9 Staff Consultation Process and Subsequent Changes to Draft Code of Practice

The formal staff consultation phase on the Draft Code of Practice for determining staff with Significant Responsibility for Research and staff who are Independent Researchers ran from 28-March to 31-May 2019. We provided a range of cross-institutional opportunities and mechanisms available to all staff to access the Draft Code of Practice and underpinning documents. We provided opportunities for staff to provide feedback and identify any potential concerns through a variety of mechanisms:

- A consultation meeting with Union (UCU) representatives was held 27-Mar-19 to discuss the Draft Code of Practice prior to commencing the open staff consultation.
- The University's intranet (iCity) provided for all staff the background to the Code of Practice and enabled simple access to the Draft Code of Practice and associated guidance documents. These included a flowchart for determining IR and SRR. To ease access to related policy documents, the University's Workload Allocation Model and the Guidance on Allocating Research Allowances in WAMS were also included to ensure all relevant documents were grouped together (although they were also available elsewhere on the University's intranet). 28-Mar-19 ongoing.
- Staff were invited via iCity and reminded via our regular staff bulletin - Tiger Talk to submit their feedback on the Draft Code of Practice through an online survey form developed using Microsoft forms. The survey was open from 28-Mar-19 to 31-May-19.

- Staff were invited via iCity and reminded via the Tiger Talk daily staff bulletin to submit feedback on the Code of Practice to a dedicated email inbox, open from 28-Mar-19 to 31-May-19.
- The Draft Code of Practice was presented to the University's Employee Forum, 01-Apr-19
- Four open staff Q&A sessions on the Code of Practice were held, with staff alerted through iCity and the daily Tiger Talk bulletin. Meetings were held on four consecutive days from 14-May-19 to 17-May-19.
- Through use of the University's intranet, iCity, we shared a contextual summary (Appendix C1), the Draft Code of Practice (Appendix C2), the flow-chart explaining the process for determining Significant Responsibility for Research and Independent Researchers (Appendix C3) and the Guidance on Allocation of Research Allowance (Appendix B2).
- Staff were encouraged to provide feedback online and by email. In addition, consultation meetings were held with the UCU Union, the Draft Code of Practice was presented at the University's Employee Forum and all staff were invited to attend one of four Open REF2021 Code of Practice Q&A sessions held 14-17 May.

Following feedback received from staff, the draft Code of Practice was modified slightly in respect of determination of research independence for Assistant Lecturers, Research Assistants and Research Fellows.

The principles determining staff who have Significant Responsibility for Research are unchanged. The section on Selection of Outputs has been included in the final policy but did not form part of the original draft consulted on with staff, as this was not required.

Based on feedback from staff, the language of the draft was simplified for the Final Code of Practice by removing some technical details, primarily related to HESA staff data definitions. We focused on communicating clearly the underlying principles of transparency, consistency and accountability and how these are accommodated within our existing processes for assigning academic workload and objectives and assessing individual performance. We have also added to the Final Code of Practice details of the Appeals Processes available to staff.

Some feedback was noted from the consultation on the degree of technical details included in the Draft Code of Practice consulted upon. To improve communication to academic staff of the key principles of our final Code of Practice for REF2021, we created a short form "Code of Practice for REF2021: Essentials". The intention was that this would provide staff with the fundamental elements and principles contained within our full Code of Practice for REF2021 but would omit many of the Appendices included (which are available to all University staff through our intranet, iCity) and much of the background and explanatory information included in the full Code of Practice. It would also provide staff with details of the various appeals processes open to them. The "Code of Practice for REF2021: Essentials" is found in Section 5 as Appendix F1 and the text from opening page is found in Figure 1.

1.9.1 Staff Agreement on Processes to Determine Staff with Significant Responsibility for Research

The University and College Union (UCU) is the appropriate staff representation body at Birmingham City University and was consulted prior to the start of the all-staff consultation. UCU has now confirmed it is in general agreement with the definition of and processes for determining staff who have Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR), as detailed in the University's Code of Practice for REF2021.

A copy of the letter from Birmingham City University UCU Branch Committee confirming this agreement can be found in Appendix F3.

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR REF2021 ESSENTIALS

Governing Principles of Our Code of Practice for REF2021

The principles governing our Code of Practice for REF2021 are underpinned by our core values and aim to ensure that research and researcher development in the University, of which our submission to REF2021 is an integral part, reflects our commitment to:

- Excellence;
- A people focused approach;
- Partnership working;
- Fairness and integrity.

As such, all decision-making in relation to identifying staff who meet the definition of an independent researcher, identifying staff with significant responsibility for research and the fair and transparent selection of the best outputs for submission to REF2021 will be:

- based upon transparent, evidence-based, externally-validated expert peer review, appropriate to the diversity of research disciplines within the University;
- governed, protected and assured by our existing HR processes relating to Individual Performance Review professional goal setting, evaluation of performance and processes support appeals and grievances;
- inclusive, focused on placing independent producers of research at the centre of the process, engaging them in identification, self-assessment and selection of outputs;
- focused on the collaborative production of a collective 'body of work' that values the many different ways that individuals may contribute to the three dimensions of REF as authors, doctoral supervisors, income generators or good research citizens who provide the complex structures and support mechanisms that are so crucial to sustaining enabling research environments;
- focused on profiling and evidencing the performance of research groups rather than individuals and mindful of the fact that making the best possible return to REF2021 involves both strategic and tactical decision-making.

Decisions about the nature of an individual's contribution to the REF return will not be used as indicative of, or a proxy for, individual performance. This information will not be disaggregated, analysed or used or recorded beyond requirements of REF2021. Extrapolations about 'degree' of contribution will not be made.

Figure 1: Governing Principles from Code of Practice for REF 2021: Essentials

PART 2: IDENTIFYING STAFF WITH SIGNIFICANT RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESEARCH

The explanation to our staff of our principles for Identifying Staff with Significant Responsibility for Research which appears in our Code of Practice for REF2021: Essentials is found in Figure 2 below:

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR REF 2021 ESSENTIALS

PROCESS FOR IDENTIFYING STAFF WITH SIGNIFICANT RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESEARCH (SRR)

Category-A staff eligible staff include academic contract holders whose primary employment function is to undertake either “teaching and research” (TR) or “research only” (RO). This is recorded in the academic employment function field of the University’s HESA staff return. Significant Responsibility for Research will also be recorded in the HESA staff record for 18-19 and 19-20.

Academic staff with significant responsibility for research are drawn from a larger group of academic staff who are identified as independent researchers employed on “teaching and research” and “research-only” contracts. These could include staff with Lecturer, Research Fellow, Teaching Fellow, Senior Lecturer, Senior Research Fellow, Senior Teaching Fellow, Associate Professor, Reader and Professor job descriptions. Some Research Assistants whose duties require independent research as defined in REF 2021 guidelines could also be included. The procedure for identifying Research Assistants who are working as independent researchers is set out in Section 2: Research Independence. The Job Description for Associate Lecturers does not include an expectation of independent research.

Significant responsibility for research is assigned through the University’s Individual Performance Review (IPR) process through the setting of linked IPR Goals relating to various aspects of independent research and dissemination activities. This status is recognised by including a Research Allocation in the individual’s academic workload at one of three levels.

We recognise that not all staff who are identified as independent researchers, will have a significant responsibility for research. In making decisions on staff who have significant responsibility for research, and who must therefore be submitted to REF 2021, the University’s UoA REF 2021 panels will use the list of academic staff with a Research Allocation (RAv3) tariff recorded in the University’s Simitive Workload Allocation Management Systems (WAMS) IT platform.

Appeals Process: Significant Responsibility for Research

Appeals on the allocation of Significant Responsibility for Research and of allocation of workload through the three levels of Research Allowance (RAv3) tariff are made through the University’s Individual Performance Review Process and Grievance Policy. Appeals are evaluated using information on contract status, the conduct of Individual Performance Reviews, individual performance as evidenced against IPR goals, and the Research Allocation for the individual concerned, and with due regard to equality legislation and the University’s HR policies.

For appeals relating specifically to REF 2021, if the initial appeal through the Individual Performance Review Grievance process are exhausted without resolution, staff can appeal for consideration of their case by the University’s REF 2021 Appeals Panel.

Figure 2: Overview of Identification Staff with Significant Responsibility for Research from Code of Practice for REF 2021: Essentials

Birmingham City University has an expectation that all academic staff, whether they meet the REF definition of Category-A eligible staff or otherwise, will be undertaking a portfolio of activities within the broad spectrum of activity categorized as Research, Enterprise and Scholarship to complement and reinforce their teaching and learning activity. This is an expectation of their academic job description and is reflected in their academic workload through the allocation of Scholarly Activity Allowance (SAA) in WAMS to all staff engaged in learning and teaching. These activities inform their teaching and learning practice; contribute to the development of new subject knowledge or professional practice and support their engagement in innovation, external collaboration and Knowledge Transfer activities necessary to further the wider aims of the University.

We do not, however, given the breadth of institutional purpose, expect that all staff will be undertaking internationally excellent research. We have therefore created an institutional policy that defines which of our academic and research staff are deemed to have Significant Responsibility for Research.

We have based this definition around our core institutional expectations, systems and process and have aligned these with REF definition of staff with significant responsibility for research, contained in the Guidance on Submissions REF2019/01 paragraph 138:

“REF2019/01 138. The funding bodies require institutions to submit all eligible staff with 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.”

This section outlines the existing institutional policies and processes on which we have built our Code of Practice and any new policies and processes created specifically to support the Code of Practice.

2.1.1 Policies and Procedures Built Upon

As reported in the Consistency section, the University had already put in place as part of business as usual, many of the building blocks needed to define and evidence staff who meet the definitions of *Independent Researchers* and who will be identified as *Staff with Significant Responsibility for Research*. These were subsequently incorporated as enabling and evidential elements of our Code of Practice for REF2021:

- Academic job descriptions were revised in 2015 and all contain explicit expectations of staff to engage in research, enterprise and scholarship at all academic Levels 1 to 5.
- The University’s Academic Workload Planning Framework (AWPF) identifies the different tariffs allocated for all elements of academic responsibility.
- The Workload Allocation Management System (WAMS) records the different elements of individual academic workloads and the allocated resource tariffs selected from AWPF.
- The University’s Individual Performance Review (IPR) system records the objectives and targets associated with each aspect of an individual’s portfolio of academic responsibility. Staff who are

independent researchers and who have Significant Responsibility for Research have this recorded in their Individual Performance Review (IPR) documents.

- The resource to undertake research of internationally recognised quality in terms of originality, significance and rigour is resourced through a specific allocation, Research Allowance (RAv3) in WAMS.

2.1.2 Approach to Defining and Evidencing Significant Responsibility for Research

The starting point for the University when developing our Code of Practice for REF2021 was to examine carefully how the definition of Significant Responsibility for Research contained within the final Guidance on Submissions to REF2021, REF2019/01 aligned with the current policies and processes defined and embedded across the University and to identify what, if any, additional policies and process would be required:

*“REF2019/01 138. The funding bodies require institutions to submit all eligible staff with 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.**”*

We noted also the evidential requirements of REF2019/01 paragraph 135b: *“... The onus will be on institutions to provide evidence that ‘**Category A eligible**’ staff on ‘teaching and research’ contracts **who are not submitted do not have significant responsibility for research.** Further guidance on this approach is set out in paragraphs 138 to 143.”*

We considered this as a “triangle of evidence”, illustrated by Figure 3 and considered carefully how this related to core institutional systems and the policies and processes associated with AWPF, WAMS, IPR, etc. that have already been explained.



Figure 3: Determining, Resourcing and Evidencing Significant Responsibility for Research

We concluded that:

- The evidence that “*explicit time and resources are made available*” would be provided from WAMS, specifically from the allocation of the Research Allowance (RAv3) tariff used only to resource research recognised internationally in term of originality, significance and rigour. Additional supporting evidence, for example funding for conference attendance or research equipment might be evidenced within the researcher’s IPR record.
- The evidence of “*expectation to undertake independent research*” would come primarily from the researcher’s IPR record, including both prior performance and objectives and targets for the coming year.
- The evidence of “*expectation of job role*” would be drawn from the generic academic job descriptions and from objectives, targets and longitudinal performance records in the IPR system.

We concluded that these evidence requirements could be readily met for staff who had *Significant Responsibility for Research*.

We further concluded that the same systems would also be able to justify why staff who met the definitions of Category-A staff but who did not have *Significant Responsibility for Research* were not submitted to REF2021, as required in the Guidance on Submissions, REF 2019/01 paragraph 135b:

“The onus will be on institutions to provide evidence that ‘Category-A eligible’ staff on ‘teaching and research’ contracts who are not submitted do not have significant responsibility for research.”

2.1.3 Relationship to Other University Systems and HESA Staff Survey

We also considered carefully the inter-relationship between core employee data held within the University’s HR system (including both the legacy PWA Empower HR system and our newly implemented Oracle Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system) and the new and existing data fields required in the HESA staff survey (ACEMPFUN, RESAST, SIGRES and REFUOA2021) with the addition of the early career researcher indication (ECRSTAT) in 2019-20.

The relationship between these records and the evidence of Category-A staff, research independence and SRR is shown in the “staff pyramid” in Figure 2. The light blue arrows to the right of the diagram indicate data that will be submitted to HESA in the staff survey in 2018-19 and 2019-20. The determination of IR for research-only staff (which informs RESAST) and for “teaching and research” staff defines the subset of Category-A eligible staff. We observe also that a REF2021 UoA will need to be indicated for every staff member who is “teaching and research” or “research-only” and an independent researcher, in 2019-20, irrespective of their contract fraction, as explained in

<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c19025/a/refuoa2021>

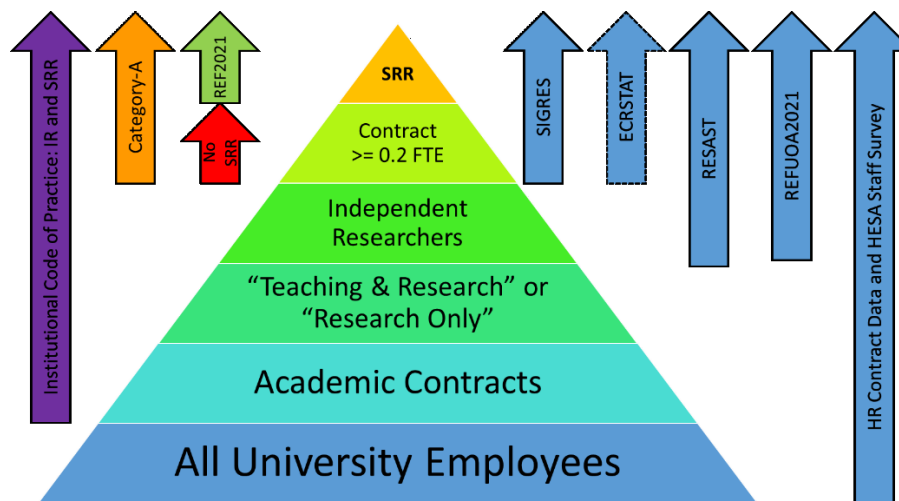


Figure 4: Relationship between HESA Staff Survey Data and Code of Practice for REF2021

2.2 Determination of Research Independence: “Teaching and Research” Staff

Whilst all academic staff with a teaching and learning responsibility at the University have an explicit responsibility within their job description to undertake a portfolio of research, enterprise and scholarship activities, it is not necessarily the case that all our “teaching and research” staff meet the definition of independent researchers. This possibility is recognised within the Guidance on Submissions: REF2019/01 paragraph 119:

“REF2019/01 119. The funding bodies recognise that staff on ‘teaching and research’ contracts cannot always be assumed to be independent researchers. Where this is the case, staff who are not independent researchers should be identified as part of the process for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research.”

The expectations of “independent researchers” are defined in REF2019/01 paragraphs 131

“REF2019/01 131. For the purposes of the REF, an independent researcher is defined as an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual’s research programme”

2.2.1 Level 2 – Level 5 “Teaching and Research” Academic Job Descriptions

From Level 2: Lecturer/Teaching Fellow through to Level 5 Professor academic staff are expected to engage in individual research and/or work on collaborative research projects. As staff progress through the grades, there are increasing expectations of the quality of their research outputs and of their involvement in research leadership, research strategy formulation, grant capture and mentoring of more junior researchers.

Staff following the Teaching and Learning focus pathway are expected to undertake pedagogic research and innovation, often related to their professional practice, in addition to sector practice. They may also

contribute their specific expertise to research activities undertaken by other staff and may collaborate with other colleagues on the development of KE activities, etc.

As a result, within the Birmingham City University Code of Practice for REF2021:

Academic staff with a “teaching and research” academic employment function appointed on Level 2 Lecturer/Teaching Fellow or above will be classed as Independent Researchers

2.2.2 Level 1: Assistant Lecturers

The generic job description for Assistant Lecturers defines an expectation of their Research, Enterprise and Scholarship activity as “To reflect on practice and the development of own teaching and learning skills.”

We concluded that this does not meet the REF definition of independent researcher contained in REF2019/01 paragraphs 131-133. As a result, within Our Code of Practice for REF2021:

Academic staff with a “teaching and research” academic employment function appointed on the Level 1 Assistant Lecturer job description will not be classed as Independent Researchers

2.2.3 Determination of Research Independence: “Research-only” Staff

The University has a very small number of academic staff on job descriptions that would normally be considered to indicate a “research only” academic employment function, around 40 within an academic workforce of more than 1,100. Table 3 shows the generic job titles relevant to “research-only” staff, starting with Level 1 Research Assistant, progressing to Level 2 Research Fellow; Level 3 Senior Research fellow to Level 4 Reader. The Level 5 Job Description for Professor is common across the Teaching and Research, Research and Teaching and Learning Pathways and appointment to this grade is also subject to conferment by the University’s Academic Conferment Committee.

The Draft Code of Practice consulted upon proposed that Level 1 Research Assistants would not be classed as Independent Researchers (as is common across the sector). This provided parity for Research Assistants with the Level 1 Assistant Lecturer, which lack indicators of researcher independence in the Assistant Lecturer job description.

In the Draft Code of Practice, we further proposed that Research Fellows (Level 2 equivalent grade to Lecturer and Teaching Fellows) would be examined on a case by case basis, to determine if they met the definition of Independent Researcher.

In the Draft Code of Practice, Level 3 Senior Research Fellows (Level 3 equivalent to Senior Lecturer / Senior Teaching Fellow) and Reader (Level 4 equivalent to Associate Professor) would be classed as independent researchers, based on the expectations of independent research in their job description.

2.2.4 CONSULTATION WITH STAFF ON DRAFT CODE OF PRACTICE

The draft policy on determining Independent Researchers and Significant Responsibility for Research can be found in Appendix C1 with a flowchart which explains how Independent Researcher status and Significant Responsibility for Research relates to various elements of the academic workload found in Appendix C2. Note that the University did not consult with staff on the processes for Selection of Outputs, as this was a matter for academic judgement and was not a requirement within the Guidance on Submissions: REF2019/01.

As explained in Section 1.9, consultation with staff involved a combination of faculty-based dissemination through the Faculty Research Committees and wider consultation through the University's intranet, open meetings and meetings with the Unions and the University Employee's Forum.

2.2.5 Consultation Responses Received

- Twelve responses were received via the Microsoft forms online survey. Eight were from staff not submitted to REF2014 and four from staff submitted to REF2014 by Birmingham City University. Nine of the twelve responders anticipated they would be submitted to REF2021.
- No email feedback was received by 31-May-2019
- There was a total attendance of 15 staff at the four open Q&A meetings:
 - 14-May: 7 attendees
 - 15-May: 1 attendee
 - 16-May: 2 attendees
 - 17-May: 5 attendees
- The small number of responses submitted via the online survey and the low level of engagement with the Open Q&A Sessions was attributed to prior socialisation of the underpinning principles of the Code of Practice, which had been well established and discussed with faculty committees led by the Associate Deans for Research and Enterprise.

The processes associated with the AWPf and WAMS for workload allocation and the IPR process through which academic objectives were agreed and resources allocated, were already in use before the requirement to document a Code of Practice for REF2021. Building on these existing policies and processes using terminology already familiar to staff in the context of academic workload management was therefore relatively uncontentious. The small number of comments received during the consultation related to three areas:

1. Determining the research independence of Research Assistants
2. Process for recognition of Early Career Researchers
3. A request that the University would commit to not returning to REF2021 for assessment outputs attributed to staff who had been made compulsorily redundant.

The responses to each of these concerns is included in the relevant sections of the Code of Practice, including small modifications introduced to the Draft Code of Practice in response to concerns 1 and 2.

2.2.6 Modifications Made to Final Code of Practice post Consultation: “Teaching and Research” Staff

The evidencing of Significant Responsibility for Research by the allocation of Research Allowance (RAv3) in WAMS was uncontentious. This policy had been well socialised in faculties and builds on previous practice of allocating specific time for research to staff carrying out internationally excellent research, in many instances funded through re-investment of QR funding derived from REF2014 or from internal investment in research.

Some issues surfaced related primarily to clarity in the designation of Early Career Researchers and the allocation of research resource to them through different tariffs in WAMS. It was subsequently clarified that, where ECRs have significant responsibility for research, this is reflected in the allocation in their academic workload of Research Allowance (RAv3), normally at Band 1 researcher level. Within WAMS there are also specific tariffs to support Emergent Researchers, who are on the development path to becoming ECRs. Academic staff who achieve doctoral qualifications are supported for one year to become independent researchers through the allocation of a post-doctoral researcher tariff of 162 hours per year in addition to their standard allocation of 180 hours per year Scholarly Activity Allowance.

2.2.7 “Research-Only” Staff

Some concerns were expressed during the consultation over the potential difficulties of determining researcher independence for some staff who had a “research-only” employment function. Birmingham City University has a very small population of “research-only” staff, numbering some 40 staff within a wider academic population of approximately 1,100. Research-only staff include those with job titles of Research Assistant; Research Associate; Research Fellow; Senior Research Fellow and Senior Researcher, the majority of whom will have some degree of research independence.

The categorisation of Research Assistants / Research Associates was highlighted in the consultation process as an area worthy of closer scrutiny. Research Assistants in STEM subjects are commonly employed to deliver research activity under the supervision of a Principal Investigator and / or Co-Investigator and may have no opportunity to pursue independent and self-guided research. However, Research Assistants employed in the Arts and Humanities subjects may have more research autonomy.

It was proposed initially that staff employed as Research Assistants would not be classed as Independent Researchers and that the RESAST flag would be set to 1 in their HESA staff record to indicate this.

It was also proposed initially that, whilst Senior Research Fellows would be independent researchers in all cases, the University would look closely at the individual roles and responsibilities of Research Fellows to determine on an individual basis if they satisfied the definition of Independent Researcher.

Following a review of the Research Assistant and Research Fellow job descriptions and the expectations of researcher independence, it was concluded that all Research Fellows should be classified as Independent

researchers by nature of their academic contract, which was at Level 2 equivalent to Lecturer and Teaching Fellow.

For Research Assistants, at Level 1, equivalent to Assistant Lecturers who were not classed as Independent Researchers, it was agreed that whilst the default position in line with sector norms would be that Research Assistants would not normally be classed as Independent Researchers, the University would examine closely the nature of their role on a case by case basis to determine whether there was sufficient degree of independence and self-guided research for an individual to be classed as Independent Researcher.

2.2.8 FINAL POLICY ON INDEPENDENT RESEARCHERS AND STAFF WITH SIGNIFICANT RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESEARCH

As indicated in the preceding sections, there was minimal change required to the Draft Code of Practice following staff consultation. The main change was to introduce a researcher independence test for Research Assistants, to define Research Fellows as Independent Researchers in all cases and to improve clarity of the situation regarding Early Career Researchers, who could be included as Staff with Significant Responsibility for Research where they were receiving Research Allowance in WAMS, normally as Band 1 Researchers.

The amended flow-chart to determine IR and SRR is included at Appendix D1, where the revised checks for “research-only staff” are found on the right of the document.

2.2.9 FINAL INSTITUTIONAL DEFINITION OF “STAFF WITH SIGNIFICANT RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESEARCH

Based on the preceding sections we can define within the context of Birmingham City University staff who have a “*Significant Responsibility for Research*” will be defined as:

- *Academic staff with a “teaching and research” academic employment function, who are graded Level 2 Lecturer / Teaching Fellow or above and who receive the Research Allowance (RAv3) tariff for Band 1, Band 2 or Band 3 researchers in their academic workload, or*
- *Academic staff with a “research only” academic employment function, who meet the definition of independent researchers and who receive the Research Allowance (RA) tariff for Band 1, Band 2 or Band 3 researchers in their academic workload*

Note that, as per HESA guidance, “research-only” staff who undertake 6 or more hours per week teaching on average will be returned to HESA with a “teaching and research” rather than “research only” academic employment function. This is most likely to apply to Senior Research Fellows and Readers but might be the case for some Research Fellows. Again, this would be determined from the academic workload in WAMS and from the personal IPR objectives.

2.2.10 Additional Clarification on Early Career Researchers (ECR)

Early career researchers are defined in REF2019/01 as follows:

“148. 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 purposes of the REF, an individual is deemed to have started their career as an independent researcher 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 (paragraphs to 131 to 133) as those “who have become independent researchers and who started their careers as independent researchers on or after 1 August 2016.”

- Where an ECR has *Significant Responsibility for Research* they will receive Research Allowance (RAv3) in WAMS, normally as a Band 1 researcher, guided by the principles contained within Appendix B2.
- ECRs who do not have *Significant Responsibility for Research* will not be allocated Research Allowance (RAv3) in WAMS.

ECR status is not material to the determination of *Significant Responsibility for Research* but it is important that this is recorded accurately for the HESA Staff Survey in 2019/20 when the ECRSTAT flag will be added to indicate staff who are classed as Early Career Researchers. Support for ECRs also forms an important part of the Environment statement at University and UoA level.

2.3 COMMUNICATION OF SRR AND IR STATUS TO INDIVIDUAL STAFF

The allocation to individual staff of academic and related duties with associated objectives and targets is negotiated annually through the University’s Individual Performance Review (IPR) cycle. This is normally undertaken by the individual’s Line Manager with input on research objectives and research performance from the relevant Associate Dean for Research and Enterprise and relevant Unit of Assessment Coordinator, etc. A review of individual performance against objectives set in the previous year is used to guide objective setting for the coming academic year. The resource needed to ensure that each objective can be achieved is then allocated through the appropriate tariffs in WAMS.

Where staff have a significant responsibility for research linked to their allocation of Research Allowance (RAv3) their ongoing research progress is verified from records of their research activity; resulting publications and other dissemination activities, applications for research funding, etc.

The University adopts a consistent approach to allocation of resource across all Units of Assessment, guided by the over-arching AWPf and WAMS policies and processes and the associated Guidance of Research Allowances.

The allocation of resources is a negotiation process and is reliant on agreement being reached between the academic staff member and their line manager. If agreement cannot be reached on IPR objectives or the allocation of appropriate resources through WAMS, this is escalated for resolution within the faculty's management structure.

2.4 Staff, Committees and Training

- The University's Research Committee, chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Enterprise is responsible to the University's Academic Board for all aspects of research. The Terms of reference for Research Committee are included as Appendix E1. Membership includes each of the Associate Deans for Research and Enterprise and each of the Unit of Assessment leads. Research Committee is the primary accountable body for implementation of the University's REF strategy.
- The Faculty Research Committee (FRC) is responsible to the Faculty Academic Board (FAB) and the University's Research Committee (RC) for oversight of the research undertaken by the staff and students of the faculty; the implementation and monitoring of progress in delivering the University's research strategy and targets; the implementation of the University's research policies and procedures, and the co-ordination of research in collaboration with other faculties and organisations outside the University. The Terms of Reference for faculty Research Committees are included as Appendix E2. The Faculty Research Committee is chaired by the relevant Associate Dean for Research and Enterprise and includes in its membership each Faculty REF Unit of Assessment Lead, Faculty Director of Research and Associate Directors of Research, as appropriate. The FRC is responsible for all aspects of research within the cognate disciplines supported by the faculty and within all the REF UoAs for which the faculty has lead responsibility
- Associate Deans for Research, Unit of Assessment leads and other senior researchers provide guidance and training to researchers in all aspects of carrying out research; publishing their research finding and applying for research funding
- Each faculty, via the respective Faculty Research Committee and associated bodies, ensures that academic staff understand fully their research obligations, where they have Significant Responsibility for Research and receive specific resource for this through the Research Allowance (RAv3) tariff in their academic workload
- Line Managers who carry out Individual Performance Reviews receive comprehensive training in all aspects of the University's IPR process and the setting of meaningful objectives
- Training in the use of the Workload Allocation Management System (WAMS) through which the academic workload tariffs are allocated has been provided to all managers who will be undertaking IPRs

- Training in the application of the Research and Scholarship Allowances in WAMS is provided within faculties by the Associate Deans Research and Enterprise to all managers who will assign Research Allowance
- Early Career Research and mid-career researchers receive mentoring from senior researchers to ensure they are fully aware of the expectations of their research performance at different career stages

2.4.1: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training

All staff involved in decision making concerning the University's submission to REF2021 will be required to attend the University's mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training for REF2021 followed by Unconscious Bias training, in the form of two facilitated workshops of two hours duration each.

Required Attendees

- Pro Vice Chancellors / Executive Deans
- Research Committee members involved in the REF process, including external members
- Faculty Research Committee members involved in the REF process, including external members
- Unit of Assessment leads
- UoA Output Peer Review Panel members, including external reviewers
- Members of the University's REF Action Teams
- REF2021 Circumstances Panel members
- REF2021 Appeals Panel members including any co-opted members
- Professional Services colleagues involved in administering and optimising REF submission

The training will be delivered by a team including the Deputy Director of Human Resources, the Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, the Director of Research and specialist external facilitators and trainers as required. The workshop comprises two separate sessions of two-hour duration that will normally run back to back, but which can be offered stand-alone as required to ensure all those required to undertake the training can complete it by 20-Dec-2019.

Session 1 focusses initially on the more general aspects of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and then on the REF-specific requirements, including the University's Code of Practice for REF2021. Session 2 focusses on more general unconscious bias training which will explore how individuals can overcome unconscious biases to improve decision making. More details of the mandatory training for all staff involved in REF2021 decision making can be found in Appendix G1.

2.5 Appeals Process: Significant Responsibility for Research

In developing our Code of Practice for REF2021 we have built upon the existing policies, processes, systems and mechanisms used across the University to manage the allocation of academic workload to all academic staff. This includes processes used to resolve differences of opinion between academic staff and line managers relating to the IPR process or to the allocation of resources in the academic workload.

Appeals relating to the allocation of Significant Responsibility for Research and of allocation of workload through the three levels of Research Allowance (RAv3) tariff are made through the University's Individual Performance Review Process and Grievance Policy. Appeals are evaluated using information on contract status, the conduct of Individual Performance Reviews, individual performance as evidenced against IPR goals, and the Research Allocation for the individual concerned, and with due regard to equality legislation and the University's HR policies.

If appeals relating to the allocation of Significant Responsibility for Research cannot be resolved within the informal or formal stages of the University's Grievance Policy, they shall be referred to the REF2021 Appeals Panel for consideration.

The University has created a REF2021 Appeals Panel and associate process to consider all issues related to REF2021 including identification of Significant Responsibility for Research; Researcher Independence; Early Career Researcher status and Selection of Outputs.

This REF2021 Appeals Process can only be used once the University's Grievance Policy (Appendix A8) has been exhausted and resolution at faculty level, overseen ultimately by the Pro Vice Chancellor / Executive Dean has not proved possible. The REF2021 Appeals Process, like the University's Grievance Policy, does not cover:

- Complaints arising from the application of other policies that include an appeal mechanism
- Complaints that are covered by the Whistle-blowing Policy
- Collective Disputes

2.5.1 The REF2021 Appeals Panel

The REF2021 Appeals Panel will hear all appeals related to REF2021 including identification of Significant Responsibility for Research; Researcher Independence; Early Career Researcher status and Selection of Outputs.

The REF2021 Appeals Panel will not review applications by staff for consideration of Individual Circumstances. These can be considered only by the REF2021 Circumstances Panel for reasons of confidentiality.

The REF2021 Appeals panel is constituted as follows:

- Deputy Director of Human Resources (Chair), Alan Fitzgerald
- Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Ms Imogeen Denton
- Pro Vice Chancellor responsible for REF2021, Professor Ian Blair*
- Director of Research, Professor Keith Osman
- Co-opted members on an as-required basis to provide specific expertise

* Where the appellant is from the Faculty of Health, Education and Life Sciences, Professor Blair will be substituted by a PVC / Executive Dean from another faculty or by a Deputy Vice Chancellor.

2.5.2 The REF2021 Appeals Process

Staff who wish to raise a formal grievance for consideration by the REF2021 Appeals Panel must do so in writing to the Chair of the REF2021 Appeals Panel. The appeal must:

- Be sent without unreasonable delay and within one month of exhausting the faculty process under the University's Grievance Policy.
- Set out clearly the grounds for the complaint and the contributing factors and specific examples that contribute to the complaint.
- State why this could not be resolved through the University's Grievance Policy within the Faculty process.
- Provide any supporting evidence that may be useful to the REF2021 Appeals Panel.
- Identify the resolution sought.

The Chair of the REF2021 Appeals Panel will consider each appeal received and determine if further investigation or fact-finding is required. An investigation into the grievance and the subsequent report should usually be completed within ten working days.

Once it has been confirmed by the Chair that the faculty process under the University's Grievance Policy has been exhausted, the REF2021 Appeals Panel will meet formally with each appellant. During the meeting the appellant will have an opportunity to set out their complaint and to present their evidence. The appellant may be accompanied if they so choose, as per normal University policy.

Formal notes will be taken at the Panel Meeting and a copy of the notes will be sent to the appellant, normally within five working days of the meeting.

The range of possible outcomes following a formal REF2021 Appeals Panel are:

- Appeal Upheld
- Appeal Partially Upheld
- Appeal Not upheld

The appellant will be notified of the outcome either verbally at the end of the meeting with written confirmation within five working days or in writing within five working days of the meeting.

Where an appeal is upheld or partially upheld, the relevant faculty Pro Vice Chancellor / Executive Dean will be informed of the decision of the REF2021 Appeals Panel and must respond within 10 working days to identify the remedial action that will be undertaken.

If the outcome of the REF2021 Appeals panel is disputed by the Faculty then it will be escalated to a Deputy Vice Chancellor for adjudication.

2.6: Communication about the REF2021 Appeals Process

Communication to staff about the Appeals Process for REF2021 will be through inclusion of the Appeals processes in the final Code of Practice for REF2021 and through information on the University's intranet iCity. Details of the Appeals Processes will also be disseminated through faculty mechanisms, including the Faculty Research Committee. The Appeals Process is included in the Code of Practice for REF2021: Essentials and will be made available within the University's intranet, iCity on the specific pages concerning the Final Code of Practice for REF2021 which will be updated once the final version of our Code of Practice has been approved by EDAP.

2.7 Equality Impact Assessment: Significant Responsibility for Research

The University has created a standard template used to conduct Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) on all new processes and procedures that the University has plans to introduce. A blank EIA Template can be found in Appendix F2.

Currently, however, it has not proved possible to conduct a full EIA on our Code of Practice for REF2021 and to compare this with REF2014 for several technical and operational reasons:

1) We have yet to complete the mapping of all Category A staff to REF2021 Units of Assessment, including mapping of staff on contract fractions below 0.2 (although these are outside the scope of REF2021, they are required to be mapped by the HESA staff survey. All staff that have an FTE less than 20% will need to complete this field, as the FTE definitions within the REF are not applied to the HESA fields.) The addition of the REFUOA2021 field is detailed at <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/records/reviews/staff-2018-19>. The 2018-19 HESA census date is 31/7/2018. This data has not been required in previous HESA staff returns. It could be determined from the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS 3.0) code for the academic discipline(s) currently being taught and/or researched by the member of staff held in the CURACCDIS field of the staff record mapped the REF2021 UoAs. Alternatively, it could be mapped from the academic disciplines related to the School/Department where the staff member is currently located.

2) We have yet to complete the full mapping of staff with Significant Responsibility for Research for the Category-A eligible academic staff population and to map these into the planned Units of Assessment for REF2021. The UoA planned for submission to REF2021 may differ from the nominal "home UoA" recorded in REFUOA2021, as part of the optimisation of the submission to REF2021 is the units into which staff with Significant Responsibility for Research should be most effectively returned

3) We will be submitting to Units of Assessment in REF2021 to which we did not submit in REF2014. It is therefore not possible to compare the entirety of our REF2014 submission with the likely REF2021 submission at Unit of Assessment level, given we did not return to Psychology; Engineering or Sociology in REF2014 but plan to in REF2021.

4) Without an accurate mapping of the baseline academic staff population by REF2021 Unit of Assessment, it is not possible to determine accurately the proportion of staff with Significant Responsibility for Research in each Unit of Assessment. Given many of our planned Unit submissions are likely to be < 10% of Cat-A eligible staff, comparing the characteristics of SRR to non-SRR staff at UoA level could be misleading.

It will, however, be possible to undertake a full EIA on our REF2021 Code of Practice following the finalisation of the HESA staff data for 2018-19. The HESA census date is 31/7/19 and the return date is 20/9/19 with a commit date of 05/10/19. Note that as of 03-Sep-2019 the mandatory requirement to return REFUOA2021 and SIGRES in HESA C18025 was removed, with the return of these fields now being optional.

The University commits to undertake a full EIA on our Code of Practice for REF2021 in November 2020, once the HESA staff data return C19025 has been finalised.

PART 3: DETERMINING RESEARCH INDEPENDENCE

The explanation to our staff of our principles for Identifying Staff with who are Independent Researchers which appears in our Code of Practice for REF2021: Essentials is found in Figure 3 below:

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR REF 2021 ESSENTIALS

PROCESS FOR IDENTIFYING STAFF WHO MEET THE DEFINITION OF INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER

The University's Job Descriptions for all academic staff on "teaching and research" and "research-only" contracts at Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor, Research Fellow, Senior Research Fellow, Reader and Professor grades identify independent research as one of the duties they are required to undertake. This is identified within the Research, Enterprise and Scholarship section of the generic academic job descriptions.

Those staff deemed to be undertaking independent research are identified in their annual Individual Performance Review and agree IPR Goals from a library of independent research activities. Their performance against these goals is reviewed annually through the IPR process.

The University's Job Descriptions for academic staff on "research-only" contracts at Research Assistant level allow for independent research as one of the duties they might be asked to perform. Research Assistants deemed to be undertaking independent research are identified in their annual Individual Performance Review and agree IPR Goals from a library of independent research activities. Their performance against these goals is reviewed annually through this process. Research Assistants identified as independent researchers and reported formally to HESA classed as independent researchers for the purposes of REF 2021.

3.1 Appeals Process: Independent Researcher Status

Appeals on the status of independent research status are undertaken through the University's Individual Performance Review Process and Grievance Policy. Appeals are evaluated using information on contract status, the conduct of Individual Performance Reviews, individual performance as evidenced against IPR goals, and the Research Responsibility Allocation for the individual concerned, and with due regard to equality legislation and the university's HR policies.

For appeals relating specifically to REF 2021, if initial appeals through the Individual Performance Review Grievance process are exhausted without resolution, staff can appeal to University's REF 2021 Appeals Panel for consideration of their case.

Table 3: explanation to our staff of our principles for Identifying Staff with who are Independent Researchers which appears in our Code of Practice for REF 2021: Essentials

As explained in Section 2, all "teaching and research" staff employed on Level 2 Lecturer / Teaching Fellow or above grades are judged to be Independent Researchers, based on the expectations of Research, Enterprise and Scholarship contained within the generic job descriptions. However, Level 1 Assistant Lecturers are not

judged to be independent researchers and there is no explicit expectation of independent research in the Assistant Lecturer job description.

For “*research-only*” staff, namely those employed as Level 1 Research Assistants; Level 2 Research fellows or Level 3 Senior Research Fellows, the situation needs more careful handling. In the original Code of Practice consulted upon (Appendix C1 and flowchart in Appendix C2), it was initially proposed that:

- Level 1 Research Assistants would not be classified as Independent Researchers (the sector norm).
- Level 2 Research Fellows would be considered individually with examination of their research, enterprise and scholarship duties to determine their individual researcher independence or otherwise.
- Level 3 Senior Research Fellows would in all cases be classed as Independent Researchers.

3.1 Review of Research Assistant Job Descriptions for Indicator of Research Independence

As reported earlier, several staff who responded to the online consultation and one attendee at the Open Q&A sessions expressed concerns that the researcher independence of Research Assistants might not be fairly determined simply from their academic contract. It was highlighted that, whilst in STEM disciplines, Research Assistants were almost exclusively appointed to deliver research grants and contracts under the direct supervision of a PI, CI or project manager, Research Assistants may have more research independence in other disciplines, and particularly in the Arts and Humanities. Furthermore, it was reported that there was a lack of uniformity across the sector in the use of the term “Research Assistant”, as some could hold bachelor’s or master’s qualification whereas others may hold doctoral qualifications, having already completed a PhD.

Our starting point had been that Research Assistant job descriptions were graded Level 1, equivalent to the Assistant Lecturer job description, but on the research focus career pathway. Assistant Lecturers had already been determined not to be Independent Researchers in all cases, based on the expectations within their academic job description.

The University therefore agreed to review the academic job descriptions for Research Assistants, and in particular the elements related to expectations of Research, Enterprise and Scholarship. This revealed that there could be cases where Research Assistants may have sufficient degree of self-directed research, and in some cases be applying for research funding for a fellowship or even acting as a Co-Investigator, that could mean they met the definitions of Independent Research.

To avoid possible inadvertent disadvantage to Research Assistants, it was decided that the default position would be changed. Instead of assuming Research Assistants were not independent researchers, it was agreed that all staff on the Level 1 Research Assistant grade would have their portfolio of research responsibility examined. If they met the definition of Independent Researcher, they would be identified as

Independent Researchers for the purposes of the Code of Practice and the RESAST flag in their HESA staff record would be set to 0.

3.2 Examination of Research Fellow Job Descriptions

As a result of examining the Research Assistant job descriptions, the University also reviewed closely the job descriptions for Research Fellows, and in particular the expectations of Research, Enterprise and Scholarship. This demonstrated that, aligned with the expectations of the Lecturer job description also at Level 2, there was indeed a requirement for researcher independence and an expectation that Research fellows would be carrying out independent research and could be expected to be applying for research funding as a PI or CI. It was therefore decided that Research Fellows would be classified by default as Independent Researchers, aligned with their counterparts on the Teaching and Research pathway.

3.3 Revised Definition: Research Independence for “research-only” staff

3.3.1 Senior Research Fellows will be classed as Independent Researchers, based on the expectations of independent research contained within their Level 3 Senior research fellow job description [This aligns with the research independence of Level 3 Senior Lecturers / Senior Teaching fellows who are “teaching and research”].

3.3.2 Research Fellows will be classed as Independent Researchers, based on the expectations of independent research contained within their Level 2 Research Fellow job description [This aligns with the research independence of Level 2 Lecturers / Teaching fellows who are “teaching and research”].

3.3.3 Research Assistants could in some cases satisfy the definition of Independent Researcher. This will be examined on a case by case basis for all research-only staff employed on the Level 1 Research Assistant job description. Where research independence is determined, the individuals HESA staff record will have the RESAST flag set to 0.

These changes from the original Draft Code of Practice for Research Assistants and Research fellows were attributable to feedback received from staff during the processes and demonstrated the value of the consultation.

3.4 Staff, Committees and Training

The reader is referred to Section 2.4 Staff, Committees and Training in the context of determining SRR. The same Staff and Committees will be determining researcher independence or otherwise as a precursor to determining SRR

3.5 Appeals on Researcher Independence

The reader is referred to 2.5 where the REF2021 Appeals Panel is explained, and the appeals process is documented. This will be used also for appeals against determination of independent researcher status, including appeals from “research-only” staff

3.6 Equality Impact Assessment

The University has a very small population of staff on “research-only” contracts. Some of these, by dint of their teaching and learning obligations are returned to HESA as “teaching and research”. As highlighted in Section 2.7, there are currently challenges in conducting a full EIA until the HESA data for 2018-19 has been finalised. Given the small numbers of research-only contracts and the fact that these are split across four job descriptions: Research Assistant / Research Fellow / Senior Research Fellow and Reader job descriptions, further analysis is problematic. This will be a particular focus in September 2020 once the HESA data is complete and the individual determination of research independence of our research assistants / research associates has been completed

PART 4: SELECTION OF OUTPUTS

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR REF 2021 ESSENTIALS

PROCESS FOR THE FAIR AND TRANSPARENT SELECTION OF OUTPUTS FOR SUBMISSION

Outputs will be selected for each UoA return with the aim of achieving the best Output GPA and provide supporting evidence for Environment and Impact. Selection of outputs is based upon an internal and external expert peer reviewed scoring against REF criteria for Outputs of originality, significance and rigour. The total number of outputs required per UoA is calculated as 2.5 x the submitted FTE and REF 2021 requires a minimum of one and maximum of five outputs per submitted researcher. In very exceptional circumstances the University can request that an individual be submitted with zero outputs.

Academic staff with significant responsibility for research will:

- maintain an up-to-date output list and deposit in-scope outputs into our institutional repository within three months of acceptance.
- work with their UoA leaders to self-assess their work and identify appropriate outputs for consideration as part of the UoA submission.

UoA Peer Review Panels will:

- support staff with significant responsibility for research in identifying appropriate outputs for consideration as part of the UoA submission to REF 2021.
- use externally-verified, expert peer review to assigning preliminary grade of 4* to Unclassified to all outputs considered for submission.
- make a recommendation for the planned outputs to be selected for submission to REF 2021 and align with any Research Groups that are planned within the UoA submission, based upon transparent, externally-verified ranking of outputs based on predicted quality.

External Reviewers Will:

- evaluate a sufficient sample of outputs under consideration to provide assurance and evidence of an externally-verified, expert peer reviewed decision-making process.
- offer contributions to decisions on “complex” or disputed output grading.

Appeals Process: Selection of Outputs

Appeals related to the selection of outputs are made to the UoA Panel and, if exhausted without agreement, are considered by the faculty Associate Dean for Research (ADR). In the most exceptional circumstances, where resolution cannot be achieved within the faculty processes, individuals may appeal to the University’s REF 2021 Appeals Panel. The University’s REF 2021 Appeals Panel will not challenge the quality assessment of individual outputs but will ensure that these judgements have been arrived at in the fair and transparent manner required.

Table 4: Explanation to our staff of our principles Selection of Outputs for Submission which appears in our Code of Practice for REF 2021: Essentials

Outputs will be selected for each UoA submission with the strategic aim of achieving the best Output GPA and provide supporting evidence for Environment and Impact. Selection of outputs is based upon an internal and external expert peer reviewed scoring against REF criteria for Outputs of originality, significance and rigour.

The nominal total number of outputs required per UoA (Pool size) is calculated as 2.5 x the submitted FTE and REF2021 requires a minimum of one and maximum of five outputs per submitted researcher. Individuals with clearly-defined circumstances or complex circumstances can declare these voluntarily for consideration in confidence by the REF2021 Circumstances panel through the process outlined in Section 4.7.

For individuals with clearly-defined circumstances, the identity of the individual, but no details of the nature of their circumstances, will be disclosed to the faculty together with an indication of the possible Pool reduction, irrespective of whether the University applies to Research England, or is granted, a Pool reduction based on the significant impact of multiple individuals with circumstances. This will allow the UoA Panel to make an appropriate adjustment to the expectations of individual contributions to the Output Pool whether or not the Output Pool size can be reduced.

In complex cases of individuals with the most severe circumstances, the REF2021 Circumstances Panel could conclude that an individual was unable to research productively for the entire REF2021 period. In such cases the University can seek permission from Research England that the individual be submitted with zero outputs. Where such an application is approved, the identity of the individual, but no details of the nature of their very complex circumstances, will be disclosed to the faculty, with confirmation that the individual can be submitted to REF2021 with zero attributed outputs.

4.1 Academic staff with significant responsibility for research have an annual IPR goal to:

- Maintain an up-to-date output list.
- Deposit in-scope outputs into our institutional repository within three months of acceptance (REF2021 Open Access requirements).
- Work with their UoA leaders to self-assess their work and identify appropriate outputs for consideration as part of the UoA submission.

4.2 UoA Peer Review Panels will:

- Calculate the total number of outputs required for the UoA submission, based on the FTE of staff with Significant Responsibility for Research within the cognate UoA.
- Note decisions made by the REF2021 Circumstances Panel in regard of individuals with the most severe circumstances who could be submitted to REF2021 with zero attributed outputs and with a reduction made to the output pool.
- Note decisions made by the REF2021 Circumstances Panel in regard of individuals with individual circumstances that could justify a reduction to the output pool but where the individual must be still

meet the minimum requirement of one attributable output, making appropriate adjustments to expectations of the individual's contributions to the UoA Output pool.

- Support staff with significant responsibility for research in identifying appropriate outputs for consideration as part of the UoA submission to REF2021.
- Use citation data, where appropriate and relevant to the UoA, obtained from Elsevier Scopus for Journal Articles and Conference Proceedings with ISSN.
- Identify former staff who previously held SRR at BCU from 2014, use their relevant employment dates and publication dates to verify eligibility for submission and use externally-verified, expert peer review to identify appropriate outputs for consideration as part of the UoA submission.
- Verify that relevant Open Access obligations have been met, eliminating non-compliant outputs from consideration for submission.
- Note proposals for double-weighting and reserve outputs.
- Use externally-verified, expert peer review to assigning preliminary grading 4* to Unclassified to all outputs considered for submission.
- Make a recommendation for the outputs to be selected for submission to REF2021 and align to any Research Groups that are planned within the UoA submission, based upon transparent, externally-verified ranking of outputs based on predicted quality.
- Provide a quarterly update based on new outputs that have been published and reviewed.
- Consider any recommendation for a possible request to Research England for reduction in the number of Pool outputs required for submission to REF2021, in light of information provided by the REF2021 Circumstances Panel.

4.3 External Reviewers Will:

- Evaluate a sufficient sample of outputs under consideration to provide assurance and evidence of an externally-verified, expert peer reviewed decision-making process.
- Offer advice on ways in which the rigour of the process could be sustained and improved.
- Offer contributions to decisions on “complex” or disputed output grading.

4.4 Staff, Committees and Training

The reader is referred to Section 2.4 Staff, Committees and Training in the context of selection of outputs. The same Staff and Committees will be involved in selection the highest outputs for submission to REF2021.

4.5 Appeals Process: Selection of Outputs

Appeals related to the fair and transparent selection of outputs are made to the UoA Panel and, if exhausted without agreement, are considered by the appropriate Associate Dean for Research (ADR) taking a full external review and assessment based upon the overall objectives of the selection process. In the most exceptional circumstances, where resolution could not be achieved with the faculty processes, individuals may appeal to the University's REF2021 Appeals Panel for consideration of their case. The University's REF2021 Appeals Panel will not challenge the quality assessment of individual outputs but will ensure that these have been arrived at in the fair and transparent manner required.

4.6 Equality Impact Assessment

As highlighted in 2.7, there are currently challenges in conducting a full EIA on staff with significant responsibility for research until the HESA data for 2018-19 has been finalised.

Given that there are still more than 15 months remaining of the REF2021 publication window, only partial data is currently available on outputs currently planned for submissions to REF2021. Until the review of these and assignment of a quality grading has been completed it will not be possible to assess the characteristics of the planned Pool of 2.5 x FTE output required at UoA level.

Given the decoupling of individual from outputs, there is no simple method for comparing output attribution in REF2014, which by and large mirrors the characteristics of the submitted staff, with the attribution of potential outputs for REF2021.

The University will undertake an EIA on planned outputs once the HESA staff data for 2019-20 has been confirmed and data on outputs currently under consideration for submission has been submitted to the Mock REF in December 2020.

4.7 PROCESS FOR CONSIDERATION OF STAFF WITH INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Where the productivity of a researcher has been affected by their individual circumstances and the cumulative effect of individual circumstances for a number of staff is significant at UoA level, the University could, exceptionally, request a reduction in the UoA Pool Output count from the nominal count calculated from 2.5 x FTE.

For individuals with exceptional circumstances, the severity of which has meant they could not produce a single research output during the assessment period, the University can exceptionally request permission to submit that individual with zero outputs, to avoid the potential career impact of not being submitted to REF2021

The University will not consider, in proposing Pool count reductions or individual reductions to zero, any individual circumstances that staff have not consented to declare voluntarily.

4.7.1 Confidential Disclosure Process for Individual Circumstances

It is essential that individuals are free to declare voluntarily any individual circumstances that they wish to be considered but they do not feel pressurised to declare circumstances which they wish to keep confidential. To support staff in disclosing any individual circumstances, the University has implemented a confidential disclosure process which operates entirely outside of the academic faculty structures where the UoA submissions are managed and outputs are selected.

This confidential process, which does not involve faculty-based staff, ensures that all information considered in the context of personal circumstances, which could include highly personal information, is held in complete confidence within the REF2021 Individual Circumstances Team

4.7.2 REF2021 Individual Circumstances Panel

The REF2021 Individual Circumstances Panel will consider all voluntary disclosure of individual circumstances, and will be constituted as follows

- Deputy Director of Human Resources (Chair)
- Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Director of Research
- Director of Disability Services or another co-opted (non-faculty based) member as required

To reiterate, all members of the REF2021 Individual Circumstances Panel are based outside of the faculty structures within which Unit of Assessment Panels are constituted.

The identity of the individual and any potential adjustments to Pool output size that could be justified by the circumstances will be communicated back to the relevant UoA but without disclosing the nature of the circumstances to maintain full confidentiality. This is necessary so that the UoA Panel can make a commensurate adjustment to the expectations of the individual's contribution to the Pool, irrespective of whether a request for a pool reduction is submitted to Research England

Where a staff member has circumstances of such severity that the University will request to Research England they be submitted with zero outputs, this information will be communicated to the UoA Panel with the identity of the individual, but no details of the circumstances will be disclosed. This is necessary so that the UoA Panel can identify a potential zero output requirement for that individual.

4.7.3 Voluntary Disclosure Process for Staff with Individual Circumstance

The process through which individuals will be supported to voluntarily disclose any circumstances they wish to be considered and the process for consideration of circumstances and communicating the outcomes are as follows:

4.7.4 All staff with Significant Responsibility for Research will receive an explanation of the definitions of Individual Circumstances for REF2021. They will be invited to complete pro-forma if they believe they have circumstances that they would wish to disclose voluntarily that could justify either a Pool output count reduction or, exceptionally, their inclusion in the REF2021 submission with zero outputs.

4.7.5 It will be made clear to all staff that there is no obligation to disclose personal circumstances and that the University will not use for the purposes of seeking UoA Pool count reductions, information that has not been disclosed voluntarily by the staff member.

4.7.6 Staff who wish to disclose personal circumstances will complete and return a REF2021 Individual Circumstances Declaration Form for review under strictest confidentiality by the REF2021 Individual Circumstances Panel.

The final deadline for individual applications will be 11-Jan-2021 to allow sufficient time for internal processing, meetings with individuals where required and communication of reductions upheld back to Unit of Assessment leaders who will need reconsider the selection of outputs.

4.7.7 Clearly-defined Circumstances such as career breaks, parental leave, absence from the University, Early Career Researcher status, etc that could justify a Pool output count reduction will be considered by the REF2021 Individual Circumstances Panel. This process will use the information disclosed by the staff member and relevant supporting information from the University's HR systems to verify the required contract fractions, start dates, periods of parental leave, sick leave, etc.

4.7.8 From prior experience of REF2014 complex circumstances evaluations, full consideration of staff disclosing the most complex individual circumstances, which could justify a request they can be returned to REF2021 with zero outputs, is in many cases likely to require further supporting evidence. The staff member will also be invited, but will not be required to attend, an individual interview if they would find this supportive. Prior experience has shown that this ensures the entirety of the case can be considered by the REF2021 Individual Circumstances Panel in the light of all supporting evidence, and with personal testimony from the staff members. Those attending a personal interview can be accompanied by someone of their choosing, but who is not connected with their host faculty to ensure complete confidentiality.

4.7.9 Adjustment of Expectations of an Individual's Contribution to the Output Pool

General expectations of individual researcher productivity are framed within Appendix B2 of our Code of Practice: "Guidance on Applying Research Allowances in WAMS". Staff with significant responsibility for research fall into three researcher bands from Band 1 (typically ECR) to Band 3 (most senior), with an increasing resource allocation for research. General expectations of researcher productivity are commensurate with resource allocation, contract fraction and career stage. Individual in-year expectations are framed within the University's Individual Performance Review (IPR) process, as found in Appendix B4.

The University does not, however, formalise expectations of individual contributions to the UoA Output Pool for REF2021 from staff with significant responsibility for research, so there can be no formal adjustment of expectations of contributions from staff who declare voluntarily individual circumstances.

We believe this is consistent with the principles and process for Selection of Outputs as explained in Section 4 of this Code of Practice and with the decoupling of individuals from outputs which was introduced as part of REF2021, allowing an individual to be returned with between one and five attributed outputs.

Where an individual chooses to declare individual circumstances through the confidential process outlined in section 4.7 of this Code of Practice, any potential allowable adjustment at UoA Pool level attributable to the individual will be communicated to the relevant UoA Leader and to the Associate Dean for Research by the REF Circumstances Panel. No details of the nature of the circumstances disclosed to the REF Circumstances Panel will be shared, but the identity of the individual will be communicated to ensure an appropriate adjustment can be applied to an expectation of their individual contribution to the UoA Output Pool during the Selection of Outputs.

Where staff declare voluntarily circumstances of such severity that could justify their submission with zero outputs, the Pool reduction and possibility to submit the individual with zero outputs will be communicated to the relevant UoA Leader and to the Associate Dean for Research by the REF Circumstances Panel. No details of the nature of the circumstances disclosed will be shared but the individual will be identified to ensure that the normal individual REF2021 expectation of at least 1 attributable output is reduced to zero during the Selection of Outputs, to ensure that the individual can be included in the institutional submission.

4.7.10 The REF2021 Individual Circumstances Panel will maintain all auditable records necessary to ensure that required applications and justifications for Pool reductions or individual submission with zero outputs. Any information to be entered into the REF submission system related to individual circumstances will be entered by a designated member of the Human Resources team and access to these forms in the REF2021 submission system will be restricted to maintain confidentiality.

4.7.11 Following the REF submission deadline in March 2021, the REF2021 Individual Circumstances Panel will prepare a report reflecting on their experience of supporting staff with circumstances. This will include a breakdown of the circumstances declared, using the categories in the 'Guidance on submissions' Annex L and the number of requests for the removal of requirement for a minimum of one output.

4.7.12 Consideration of Cumulative Output Count Reductions by Unit of Assessment Panels

The Unit of Assessment panels will sum the potentially allowable reductions at Pool level attributable to circumstances disclosed, considered, upheld and notified by the REF2021 Individual Circumstances Panel. The total allowable output count reduction will be considered in the context of the total required output count calculated from 2.5 x FTE.

Where the potentially allowable output count reduction exceeds a certain threshold percentage (to be agreed), the Unit of Assessment Panel will ask REF2021 Steering Board to consider whether the University should request a formal consideration of a pool output count reduction. This will be most relevant in small submitting units with a significant proportion of staff with individual circumstances.

In each very exceptional case where the REF2021 Individual Circumstances Panel considers that an individual staff member had circumstances of such severity that they could not produce a single output during the REF2021 assessment period, that the University will in all cases request permission from Research England to submit the individual to REF2021 with zero outputs.

PART 5: APPENDICES

Appendix A1: Academic Progression



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

Policy for the Progression of Staff through the Academic Structures

1. Introduction

The University recognises and values the contribution made by our staff to the overall success of the organisation, and we appreciate the importance of clear career development opportunities to reward staff. From 2015, the University introduced new academic structures the levels of which are produced below:

Level	Job Titles
1	Assistant Lecturer Research Assistant
2	Lecturer Research Fellow Teaching Fellow
3	Senior Lecturer Senior Research Fellow Senior Teaching Fellow
4	Associate Professor Reader
5	Professor

The standard job descriptions and person specifications for each level can be found here <https://hub.bcu.ac.uk/sites/hr/Documents/Forms/Job%20Descriptions.aspx>

Professorships, Associate Professorships and Readerships are awarded through the conferment process <https://hub.bcu.ac.uk/sites/hr/APC/SitePages/Home.aspx>

Appendix A2: Career Break



Career Break Policy

1. Introduction

The University recognises the value that a career break can offer to staff who require an extended period of time away from the workplace to deal with personal matters or to pursue other interests and resume their career with the University at a later date.

The Career Break Policy sets out the circumstances in which a career break will be considered and the University's approach to dealing with such requests. This policy incorporates all relevant employment legislation and is underpinned by the University's Core Values and commitment to equality and diversity.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and may be amended from time to time.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Birmingham City University Employees who meet the relevant eligibility criteria unless the terms and conditions of a member of staff's right to work in the United Kingdom do not allow a career break.

3. Principles

- The University will give careful consideration to all requests for a career break.
- There is no entitlement to a career break and the needs of the University will take priority.
- If you take a career break there is no guarantee that you will be able to resume your original job on your return.
- A career break may be taken in addition to maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, parental leave or shared parental leave.
- Where a request for a career break is refused you will be informed of the reason for the decision.
- You will be consulted about any workplace changes that may prevent you returning to your substantive job.

Appendix A3: Dignity at Work



Dignity at Work Policy

1. Introduction

At the University we are committed to building and sustaining a community of staff who value each other and work together in a spirit of respect and professional courtesy whilst pursuing a common purpose. We value our staff and recognise that bullying, harassment, discrimination, victimisation and any other unacceptable behaviour in the workplace can impact on health, wellbeing and work performance. You have a right to be able to do your job and be treated with dignity and respect by those with whom you come into contact and we will not tolerate behaviour that impinges on that right.

The purpose of this policy is to i) explain the behaviours you are expected to demonstrate when engaged in University business ii) help you to identify and challenge unacceptable behaviours and iii) tell you what you need to do if you think you are being harassed, bullied or victimised.

The Dignity at Work Policy incorporates all relevant employment legislation and is underpinned by the University's Core Values and commitment to equality and diversity.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and may be amended from time to time. It supersedes all previous Dignity at Work procedures and guidance.

2. Scope

The Dignity at work policy applies to all Birmingham City employees, agency workers, contractors and anyone else engaged to work at the University on and off University premises. The Grievance Policy provides the framework and mechanism for you to formally address unacceptable behaviour and have complaints resolved.

3. Principles

- The University will take appropriate steps to prevent unacceptable behaviour by staff (regardless of the seniority of those involved) and third parties including provision of training and awareness raising activities.

Appendix A4: Equality and Diversity in Employment



Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy

1. Introduction

The University is committed to eliminating discrimination and creating an inclusive culture based on merit where everyone has an equal chance to succeed. We recognise that by attracting, recruiting and developing staff with different life experiences and perspectives we can generate greater creativity in anticipating and meeting the needs of all our staff, students and other customers.

The purpose of the Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy is to provide equality and fairness for all of our staff and prospective staff and to demonstrate our commitment not to discriminate in any area of our employment practices because a protected characteristic such as age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The University's employment practices aim to be fair, objective and allow staff to feel valued, respected and engaged in their work.

This policy incorporates all relevant employment legislation and is underpinned by the University's Core Values. It does not form part of your contract of employment and may be amended from time to time. This policy supersedes the previous Equality in Employment Policy.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all current and prospective staff working at Birmingham City University.

3. Principles

- Every member of staff is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment including direct or indirect discrimination or victimisation or any other form of unacceptable behaviour will be tolerated
- The University aims to have a workforce that reflects the local community and/or students
- Staff development and promotion opportunities are available to all members of staff

Appendix A5: Family Related Leave



Family Related Leave Policy

Appendix A6: Flexible Working Policy



Flexible Working Policy

1. Introduction

The University is committed to creating working arrangements that benefit both staff and the University. We recognise that having flexible working practices that allow you to vary your working hours, days and/or place of work can help you achieve an acceptable balance between your work and personal commitments. We also recognise that flexible working practices can help the University to organise its services to better respond to the varying needs of students and other stakeholders.

The Flexible Working policy provides a mechanism to consider requests to make a permanent or temporary change to working arrangements in a fair and transparent way.

Requests to work flexibly will always be carefully considered. However, there may be occasions when the University needs to modify or restrict the use of flexible working practices to effectively manage organisational service priorities or not to agree to a request where a manager considers that a job can only be carried out effectively under current arrangements.

The Flexible Working Policy incorporates all relevant employment legislation and is underpinned by the University's core values and commitment to equality and diversity.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and may be amended from time to time. It supersedes all previous flexible working policies, procedures and guidance.

2. Scope

The Flexible Working Policy applies to all Birmingham City University employees who have completed their probation or have a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service.

3. Principles

- The University will deal with requests for flexible working as quickly as possible and, in any event, within a calendar month of the application.
- Requests for flexible working will be considered in the order they are received.
- Decisions will be handled objectively and fairly and you will not be treated less favourably because you have asked for flexible working arrangements.

Appendix A7: Staff Resourcing



Staff Resourcing Policy

1. Introduction

The University recognises the central and crucial importance of ensuring it is able to meet its staff resourcing requirements through a range of routes by attracting and selecting a diverse group of people with the skills and experiences we need and who share our values. The University will ensure that all staff, current or prospective are treated at every stage of the recruitment and selection process solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential.

The Staff Resourcing Policy is designed to be responsive to the University's changing needs and to provide a framework for attracting and selecting applicants to our jobs (and deterring, identifying and rejecting prospective applicants who are unsuitable), in a fair, transparent and efficient way. It should be read in conjunction with all relevant guidance provided by the University's Human Resources Department which provides detail on key steps at each stage of the resourcing process.

This policy incorporates all relevant employment legislation and is underpinned by the University's Core Values and commitment to equality and diversity. It is not contractual and may be amended from time to time. This policy supersedes all previous recruitment and selection policies, procedures and guidance.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the resourcing of all members of the University's workforce including casual workers, agency workers, self-employed workers, consultants or contractors. It also applies to internal and external resourcing.

This policy does not apply to the internal Academic Promotions and Conferment Process for which separate arrangements are in place.

3. Principles

- Staff Resourcing will be undertaken in a way that is fair, transparent and in accordance with relevant employment, equality, procurement and any other legislative requirements to include the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Appendix A8: Grievance Policy



Grievance Policy

1. Introduction

At the University we are committed to building and sustaining a community of staff who value each other and work constructively in partnership and in a spirit of respect and trust to build successful working relationships. We are also committed to creating a culture and climate that is a supportive one and one which employs good day-to-day management practices where you are listened to without fear of reprisal. The University expects that minor work issues will be resolved informally, however we recognise that this may not always be possible. The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and transparent framework that will enable us to address any concerns you may have in a timely, fair and consistent way.

The Grievance Policy incorporates all relevant employment legislation and is underpinned by the University's core values and commitment to equality and diversity.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and may be amended from time to time. It supersedes all previous grievance policies, procedures and guidance.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Birmingham City University employees. It will deal with

- Individual grievances relating to general work issues, e.g. working arrangements, conditions, working relationships.
- Grievances relating to complaints of discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation (either as the subject of such treatment or as a witness to unacceptable behaviour on the part of a colleague)

The Grievance Policy does not cover

- Complaints arising from the application of other policies that include an appeal mechanism
- Complaints that are covered by the Whistle-blowing Policy
- Collective Disputes

Information about matters of bullying, harassment, unlawful discrimination and victimisation is available in the Dignity at Work Policy.

Appendix B1: Academic Workload Planning Framework v3

ACADEMIC WORKLOAD PLANNING FRAMEWORK



INTRODUCTION

1. The University has developed the Academic Workload Planning Framework (AWPF) to support the allocation of duties to academic staff. This document outlines the framework which will be used for the introduction and development of the associated processes and will be reviewed annually.
2. This document provides the guidance and tariffs that should be used for workload allocation.
3. The importance of efficiently and effectively managing the University's primary resource, its staff, is fundamental to delivering the University's strategic and operational goals. The AWPF will provide a mechanism that enables the fair, balanced and transparent distribution of workloads, so that there is an explicit and shared understanding of how academic staff contribute to the success of the University. It will also provide a mechanism to model the impact of proposed policy and procedure changes before these are implemented at a strategic level.
4. The workload allocation process is linked closely to staff performance review (IPR) so that we develop and support our staff as we develop and share a common understanding of how everyone contributes to the success of the University.
5. The AWPF was developed by drawing on sector "norms" in collaboration with Simitive (the software developer), and aligns with the University contract, and all relevant University policies and guidelines.

Purpose and Aims

6. The purpose of the University AWPF is to:
 - i Ensure that we give all academic staff the opportunity to engage in the breadth and range of activity which will support their own development and career progression;
 - ii Effectively manage the academic resources of the University to deliver the best quality education and teaching and learning experience to students across the full academic and calendar years;
 - iii Ensure we are able to effectively manage the resourcing of the Research and Enterprise outputs of the institution;
 - iv Provide a systematic approach and structure to workload allocation which will provide the University with a standard and agreed process to deliver its organisational strategic objectives;
 - v Provide a series of clear and consistent principles which will enable the University, through its Faculties, Schools, and Departments to address the allocation and management of academic workloads in an equitable, transparent, and consistent way;
 - vi Provide parity and consistency of treatment to all categories of academic staff, taking account of discipline specific characteristics;
 - vii Be inclusive ensuring that there is proper recognition of individual strengths and dispelling perceptions that some staff matter more than others;
 - viii Extend inclusiveness to include all broad categories of academic endeavour;
 - ix Assist the University to address its obligations to manage staff health and safety, particularly with regard to well-being and work-life balance;
 - x Assist the University to meet its equality and diversity obligations, particularly for staff with protected characteristics and staff working on a part-time or flexible basis;

Appendix B2: Guidance on Applying Research Allowance in WAMS

Research and Scholarship Workload Planning

Guidance 2019/20

Author/Owner: Cham Athwal, Alex Kendall, Maxine Lintern,
Tim Wall



Appendix B3: IPR Guidelines for all staff



INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW (IPR) GUIDANCE NOTES FOR REVIEWERS AND REVIEWEES



1. Introduction

The annual IPR appraisal process is an important part of managing performance and supporting personal effectiveness by clearly establishing individual objectives and performance requirements.

The IPR process is designed to ensure that the University is able to focus staff at all levels on meeting the expectations of the University Corporate Plan and on the achievement of appropriate workplace outcomes that are aligned to our Core Values and University Mission, Vision and Goals and Objectives. To that end the University expects a sustained level of good performance from all members of staff.

The process is also concerned with personal development, enabling managers and staff to reflect and learn from past experiences over the review period, recognise and celebrate successes and determine individual development needs in the future.

2. IPR Principles

Effective and meaningful IPRs are a central pillar of staff engagement, ensuring that our staff understand what is expected of them and how they can contribute to the success and distinctiveness of the University. The principles of the IPR process are that it should:

- Be delivered simply and effectively.
- Be fairly and consistently applied to all staff.
- Be based on the needs of the University and how these translate to the day to day activity of individuals.
- Provide open and honest constructive feedback to enable improvement and development.
- Be focused on a two-way professional dialogue between staff and their managers.
- Give all employees an annual appraisal and a 6 monthly interim review, supported by regular one-to-one meetings.
- Support the principles of Investors in People.
- Enable staff to reflect on their achievements, development needs and experiences and how they personally contribute to the University Core Values and to celebrate successes.

3. IPR Participation Requirements

All substantive members of staff are contractually obliged to participate in the University appraisal process. The IPR process does not apply to VT's, Specialist Lecturers and Students employed via the Opportunity scheme where the employment is envisaged to last less than 6 months.

Appendix B4: IPR Personal Research Review

Personal Research Review 2018/19

Authors/Owners: Cham Athwal, Alex Kendall, Maxine Lintern,
Tim Wall



Appendix C1: Overview Document for Staff Consultation

THE RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2021 [REF21]

A STAFF CONSULTATION ON: "Staff with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR)"

- ✓ This exercise and document is only relevant to you if you hold an academic contract and your employment function is 'Teaching and Research' or 'Research Only'
- ✗ This document IS NOT relevant to you if you are an academic colleague with a Teaching Only function or if you are not employed on an academic contract

Measurement of Research Excellence

REF21 will assess the excellence of research completed by academic staff who meet the 'Category A' [Cat-A] definition i.e. those who are:

- employed to do "Teaching and Research" or "Research Only" (but not "Teaching Only")
- are employed by the University on a contract of 0.2 Full Time Equivalent or greater
- are independent researchers

Staff submitted to previous exercises were selected from the pool of Cat-A eligible staff, based solely on the quality of their best research outputs, selected in compliance with our published Code of Practice. The University submitted 122 FTE (151 individuals) staff with a total of 441 high quality outputs to REF14.

However REF2021 is Different ...

Following a review by Sir Nicholas Stern the rules have changed¹. Universities can no longer select individual Cat-A staff for submission based on their personal research outputs. Instead we must either:

- Submit 100% of Cat-A staff (appropriate for institutions where all Cat-A staff do research), or
- Submit only those Cat-A staff who have *Significant Responsibility for Research* as defined by a Code of Practice that has been consulted upon with staff and externally reviewed by the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) a sub-committee of the REF administration team
- The University must evidence why Cat-A eligible staff who are not submitted to REF21 do not have SRR.

The University must therefore define an Institutional Code of Practice that defines staff with SRR and apply this to identify who must be submitted for assessment for REF21.

Implementation of the Workload Allocation Model (WAM)

The University recognises that all academic staff are engaged in high quality Teaching and Learning delivery but that not all colleagues do research for REF and many undertake equally valuable duties, such as Business Engagement, Knowledge Exchange, CPD, etc. These staff will make a valued contribution to TEF and to the future KEF but not to REF.

All academic activities are captured by the University WAM. All academic staff have an individually appropriate allocation of time in their WAM for the whole gamut of academic related duties they undertake and their goals set with their line manager in their IPR. Responsibility to undertake research is recognised through negotiation of career-stage appropriate research targets, including REF outputs. Appropriate WAM tariff is allocated to Band 1, Band 2 or Band 3 researchers² in their Research Allowance (RA) component. Only independent researchers who have a responsibility to deliver excellent research outputs for REF will receive RA. Early-career researchers; colleagues undertaking doctoral studies or those in the first two-years of completing a doctoral qualification will receive WAM tariff in other elements of WAM but will not receive RA.

¹ REF2018/01: Draft Guidance on Submissions https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1016/draft-guidance-on-submissions-ref-2018_1.pdf

² Appendix A: The core principles of how we will define and evidence the allocation of Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) to individuals was approved by the University's Research Committee and is available at the following online address:

Appendix C2: Original Code of Practice for Staff Consultation: IR and SRR

DRAFT: REF2021 Institutional Code of Practice: SRR, IR v1.01 08-Oct-2018

INSTITUTIONAL CODE OF PRACTICE FOR REF2021

Keith A Osman, Research Office

BACKGROUND

The outcomes of the Stern Review require **all** Category-A (Cat-A) staff with significant responsibility for research (SRR) to be submitted to REF2021 for assessment. Cat-A staff are employees who have an academic employment function of Teaching and Research (TR) or Research-Only (RO); who are classed as independent researchers (IR) and have a contracted fraction of 0.2 FTE or greater. This is a significant change from REF2014 where institutions could decide which Cat-A staff to submit based on the quality of their individual outputs.

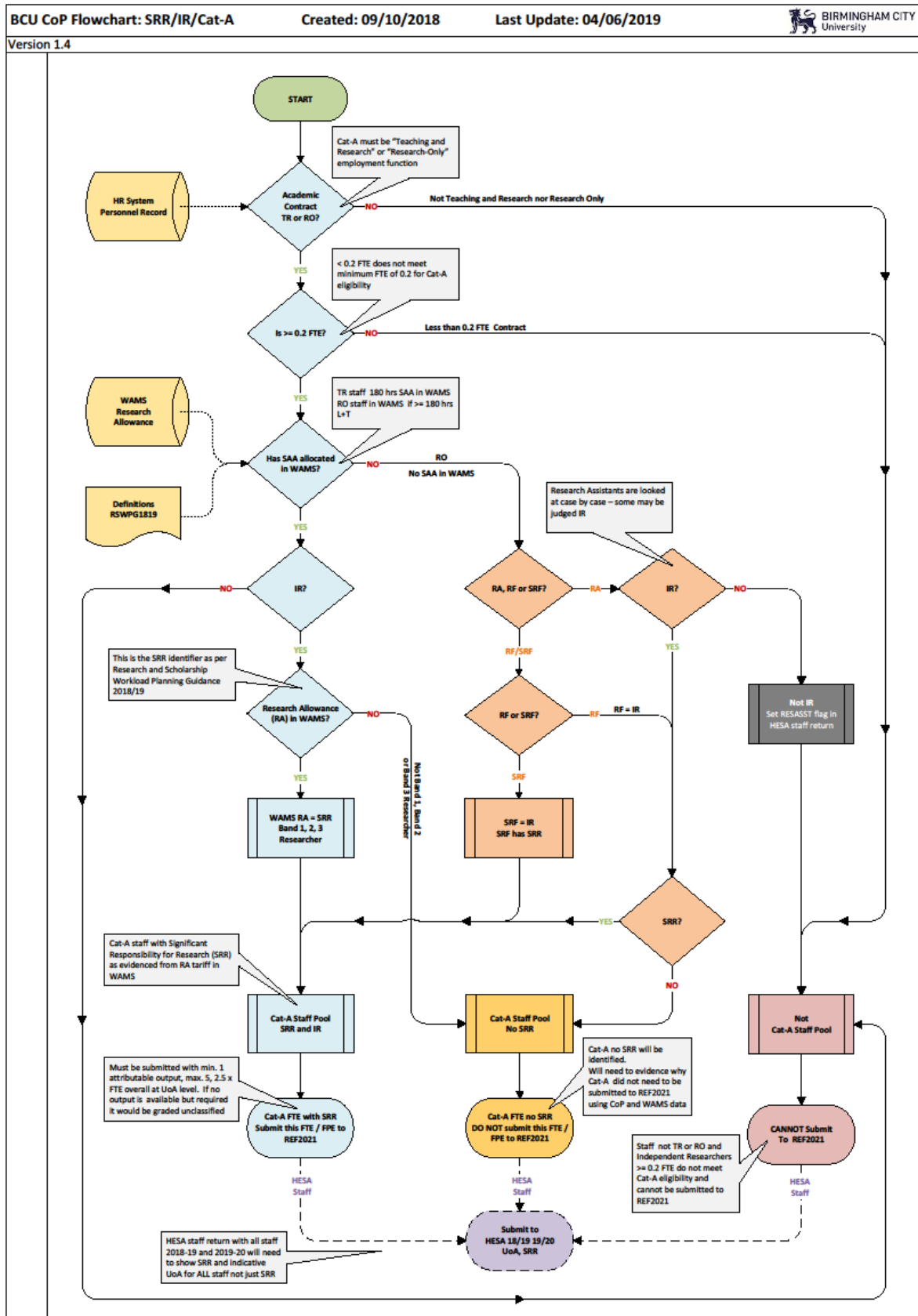
Institutions, such as Birmingham City University planning to submit fewer than 100% of Cat-A staff will be required to define and consult on an Institutional Code of Practice (CoP) which identifies the institutional policy on defining SRR and IR in a contextually-relevant manner. Post-REF, institutions may be audited by Research England and be required to evidence why Cat-A staff who were not submitted to REF2021 do not have SRR.

For context, the University submitted 151 individuals / 122 FTE from 866 eligible Cat-A staff to REF2014 and is likely to submit some 25-30% of Cat-A staff to REF2021. The University must therefore define how Cat-A staff who have SRR and must as a consequence be submitted to REF2021, will be differentiated from Cat-A staff who do not have SRR and who will not, therefore, be required, or indeed could not be submitted to REF2021.

Cat-A staff would normally be returned in the HESA staff survey with Teaching and Research (TR) or Research Only (RO) academic employment function (ACEMPFUN). Staff returned as Teaching Only (TO) do not meet the Cat-A definition and therefore cannot be submitted to REF2021. The University has historically returned all academic staff to HESA as TR, irrespective of whether they are or are not research active and has made minimal use of the Teaching Only (TO) status to date. The University has very few staff on research-only contracts and only those deemed to be independent researchers would meet the Cat-A definition. Typically Research Assistants are not independent researchers but Research Fellows normally are. This is indicated in the HESA staff data by the use of the RESASST flag to indicate Research Assistants and other non-independent RO staff.

This document presents a draft Institution Code of Practice (CoP) for REF2021 covering identification of Category-A staff with significant responsibility for

Appendix D1: IR and SRR Determination Flow-Chart for Staff Consultation Amended Post Consultation



Appendix E1: Terms of Reference for University Research Committee

Birmingham City University

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference Updated: September 2017 V2

1. Purpose

The Research Committee is responsible to Academic Board for general issues relating to research, research degrees and scholarship; the implementation, monitoring and updating of the University's research strategy and policies and for the co-ordination of research activity across the University. It is also responsible to Academic Board for the oversight of the University's standards for research degree awards and the quality assurance and enhancement of research degree programmes.

The Research Committee provides direction for the University to apply research and knowledge development to practice through and across the Faculties, the development of the University's links with partners across the region and with the University's research students.

The Research Committee is responsible for the oversight of the performance of research across the University, ensuring that established, formal targets are met.

It is also responsible for the physical infrastructure of the University for supporting research, including both shared and faculty-based resources.

The Research Committee is also responsible to the Academic Board for considering matters relating to research ethics as appropriate.

2. Terms of Reference

- 2.1 Responsible to Academic Board for the development, of the University's Research Strategy, and for the development of policies and procedures to support and ensure the implementation of the Research Strategy across the University and to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness;
- 2.2 To ensure that the University's REF Strategy is an intrinsic part of the University's Research Strategy, and that the REF Strategy is also fully implemented across the University.
- 2.3 To ensure that the physical environment for research (in terms of infrastructure, resources and space) is appropriately supported and promoted.
- 2.4 To advise on and develop the University's research capacity and the research capability of individual staff;
- 2.5 To oversee research career development, including the provision of training for staff involved in research and to make recommendations for further staff development;

Appendix E2: Terms of Reference for Faculty Research Committees (FRC)

Birmingham City University

FACULTY RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference Updated: September 2017

1. Purpose

The Faculty Research Committee (FRC) is responsible to the Faculty Academic Board (FAB) and the University's Research Committee (RC) for oversight of the research undertaken by the staff and students of the faculty; the implementation and monitoring of progress in delivering the University's research strategy and targets; the implementation of the University's research policies and procedures, and the co-ordination of research in collaboration with other faculties and organisations outside the University.

It is also responsible for the oversight of the performance of research across the Faculty (ensuring that established, formal objectives are met), for the management and monitoring of the Faculty's postgraduate research students, the implementation of University policy in respect of research degree provision, the enhancement of the postgraduate student experience and the quality assurance and enhancement of the Faculty's postgraduate research programme.

It is also responsible for the physical infrastructure of the Faculty for supporting research, including both shared and faculty-based resources.

The Faculty Research Committee is also responsible for working co-operatively with its sub-committee and working groups.

2. Terms of Reference

- 2.1 Responsible to the Research Committee for the Faculty's delivery of the University's Research Strategy and adherence to appropriate policies and procedures for research; to ensure that the University's Research Strategy is fully implemented across the Faculty.
- 2.2 Ensure that the University's REF Strategy is an intrinsic part of the Faculty's research operations, and that the REF Strategy is also fully implemented across the Faculty.
- 2.3 Ensure that the Faculty Research Committee is fully appraised of all external benchmarks pertinent to research and research degrees, and that appropriate actions / procedures are in place to monitor these within the Faculty.
- 2.4 Monitor and record external research income generation and receive progress reports on the development of applications to research funding organisations.
- 2.5 Monitor and record progress on major research projects against agreed milestones
- 2.6 Allocate and monitor of the (internal and external) funding available for research as well as for any income generated by research activity.
- 2.7 Responsible to the Faculty Research Committee for ensuring that the physical environment for research (in terms of infrastructure, resources and space) is appropriately supported and promoted.

APPENDIX F1: Code of Practice for REF2021: Essentials

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR REF 2021 ESSENTIALS

Governing Principles of Our Code of Practice for REF 2021

The principles governing our Code of Practice for REF 2021 are underpinned by our core values and aim to ensure that research and researcher development in the University, of which our submission to REF 2021 is an integral part, reflects our commitment to:

- Excellence;
- A people focused approach;
- Partnership working;
- Fairness and integrity.

As such, all decision-making in relation to identifying staff who meet the definition of an independent researcher, identifying staff with significant responsibility for research and the fair and transparent selection of the best outputs for submission to REF 2021 will be:

- based upon transparent, evidence-based, externally-validated expert peer review, appropriate to the diversity of research disciplines within the University;
- governed, protected and assured by our existing HR processes relating to Individual Performance Review professional goal setting, evaluation of performance and processes support appeals and grievances;
- inclusive, focused on placing independent producers of research at the centre of the process, engaging them in identification, self-assessment and selection of outputs;
- focused on the collaborative production of a collective 'body of work' that values the many different ways that individuals may contribute to the three dimensions of REF as authors, doctoral supervisors, income generators or good research citizens who provide the complex structures and support mechanisms that are so crucial to sustaining enabling research environments;
- focused on profiling and evidencing the performance of research groups rather than individuals and mindful of the fact that making the best possible return to REF 2021 involves both strategic and tactical decision-making.

Decisions about the nature of an individual's contribution to the REF return will not be used as indicative of, or a proxy for, individual performance. This information will not be disaggregated, analysed or used or recorded beyond requirements of REF 2021. Extrapolations about 'degree' of contribution will not be made.

APPENDIX F2: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Equality Impact Assessment: Draft Template.

Section 1: About the Proposal	
<small>Areas to consider: does this affect primary or high level functions of the University; Is it relevant to the promotion of equality; could interested parties reasonably expect an EIA to have been completed; the EIA should be carried out at the early stage of the proposal before the project is finalised.</small>	
1.	Brief description of policy/project/ practice/service/function being analysed (summarise aims, objectives, purpose, main beneficiaries/ stakeholders etc.)
2.	Is this a new policy/practice or a review of an existing process?
3.	Department and/or Faculty
4.	Team and/or School
5.	Name, job title and contact details of person completing this assessment

APPENDIX F3: Letter from Birmingham City University UCU Branch Committee

To whom it may concern,

This letter confirms that the following mechanisms were employed to gather feedback from all University staff on the proposed processes for determining significant responsibility for research:

- All proposed processes were published on the University's iCity intranet, together with the University's Workload Allocation Model and the Guidance on Allocating Research Allowances, which provided the foundation principles and evidence base for the IR and SRR determination processes.
- A consultation meeting was held with UCU representatives on 27th March 2019, immediately prior to the launch of the 8-week staff consultation.
- Staff were encouraged to read and provide feedback or questions as part of the consultation through the University's "Tiger Today" staff communication channel and the iCity intranet.

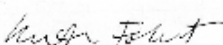
It is understood that the staff-wide consultation led directly to two revisions of the initial proposal, alongside more minor revisions designed to improve readability and clarity. These revisions were:

- Revision of IR status of Research Assistants (RA). As a result of feedback, RAs would be reviewed individually case-by-case to determine independent researcher status rather than the default assumption they did not meet the definition of an independent researcher.
- Revision of IR status of Research Fellows. As a result of feedback, RFs would by default be classed as meeting the definition of independent researcher, rather than the preceding requirement to verify their research independence on a case by case basis.

UCU, as a representative body for academic staff at Birmingham City University, did not view the finalised and revised Code of Practice based on feedback received, prior to its submission to Research England on the 7th June 2019. UCU is nonetheless in general agreement with the definition of and processes for staff who have Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR), as embedded in the University's Code of Practice.

Based on discussions between UCU and the University since, it has been agreed that a meeting at the end of the staff consultation process to discuss proposed revisions to the code of practice based on feedback received would have been beneficial to confirm agreement. The University has therefore committed to developing a codified model consultation to be used in the future, which will include the early and regular engagement of UCU.

Kind regards



Kirsten Forkert
BCU UCU Branch Chair
on behalf of BCU UCU Branch Committee

APPENDIX G1: Outline of Equality and Diversity Training for Staff Involved in the REF Process

Mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training for REF2021

All staff involved in decision making concerning the University's submission to REF2021 will be required to attend the University's mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion briefing for REF2021 followed by Unconscious Bias training. This takes the form of two two-hour facilitated workshops that will run normally back to back. The training must be completed by 31/12/2019.

Required Attendees

- All Pro Vice Chancellors / Faculty Executive Deans
- Research Committee members involved in the REF process, including external members
- Faculty Research Committee members involved in the REF process, including external members
- Unit of Assessment leads
- UoA Output Peer Review Panels including external reviewers
- Members of the University's REF Action Teams
- REF2021 Circumstances Panel members
- REF2021 Appeals Panel members including co-opted members
- Professional Services colleagues involved in administering and optimising REF submission including Director of Research and Director of the Research and Innovation Gateway

Code of Practice, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Briefing for Staff Involved in the REF Process

Briefing overview: (2 hours)

The briefing will bring to the forefront of the committee the REF Code of Practice and the Equality Act 2010 legislation including the implications of getting things wrong.

The briefing will cover:

- What Equality Diversity and Inclusion means
- The requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and the University's obligations
- Look at the importance of EDI to the Research Excellence Framework
 - Code of Practice
 - Equality Impact Assessment
 - Appeals Process
- Selection of Outputs and Individual Circumstances
- Lessons from REF 2014
- How Metrics can be affected by Protected Characteristics e.g. gender and ethnicity
- Athena Swan, Disability Confident, Stonewall, Race Equality Charters
- The University's responsibilities
- Guidance and Support available

Following this briefing staff will undertake a 2 hour Unconscious bias workshop (page 2)