



**The Code of Practice for submission to the
Research Excellence Framework 2021**

Accepted by Research England in August 2019

Revised October 2020

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Part 1: Introduction

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the system for assessing research in UK higher education institutions carried out by the national funding bodies. The outcome of the REF informs the allocation of quality-related research funding. It contributes to the accountability for public funding and demonstrates the benefits of public investment in research and impact.

The deadline for the REF 2021 submissions is 31 March 2021. The REF panels will assess submissions during the course of 2021 and will publish the results in December 2021. The HE funding bodies will use these results to inform research funding from the academic year 2022–23.

a) What is the Code of Practice?

This Code of Practice (the Code) sets out how Royal Holloway University of London and Bedford New College (the College) will undertake the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF 2021) submission.

This Code has been written to enable the College to meet its responsibilities in respect of promoting equality and diversity, complying with legislation and avoiding discrimination when preparing its submission to REF 2021.

The Code outlines how the College will:

- undertake the fair and transparent identification and selection of eligible staff with significant responsibility for research;
- determine who is an eligible independent researcher, in REF terms; and
- select outputs for submission to REF 2021.

This includes our approach to supporting all eligible staff who have had individual circumstances that may have affected their research productivity.

It is unlikely that the College will make any joint submissions with other institutions. However, in the case of any joint submissions, the College will exchange their Code and request the same from the other institution in order to ensure compliance.

b) Principles

This Code has been written in line with the four guiding principles set out by Research England outlined below, which govern the conduct of the REF. All decision-making committees, groups or individuals will uphold these guiding principles, ensuring equality, transparency, consistency and accountability.

Transparency:

All processes, i.e. determining research independence and the selection of outputs, are fair and transparent

Consistency:

The principles governing the Code are consistent across the College

Accountability:

The roles of all staff with responsibility for REF 2021 are clearly defined in the Code

Inclusivity:

The Code promotes an inclusive environment for all including those in protected groups

c) The Legislative Context

Throughout all stages for the preparations for REF submission the College must meet its obligations as a public sector employer under the [Equality Act 2010](#) with respect to the following 'protected characteristics' and recognises that these obligations apply to all REF 2021 procedures:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- pregnancy and maternity

In 2011, the public sector duty of the Act came into effect. In each of these areas, the University has a legal responsibility to advance equality of opportunity, to eliminate all forms of unfair discrimination, and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

The College also recognises its obligations under the [Part-time Workers \(Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment\) Regulations 2000](#) and the [Fixed-term¹ Employees \(Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment\) Regulations 2002](#), namely that fixed-term and part-time staff have the right not to be treated by the College any less favourably than it treats comparable 'permanent' or 'full time' staff.

d) Our approach to Equality and Diversity

This Code sets out how the College will identify eligible staff with significant responsibility for research in a fair and transparent way, and how it will avoid discrimination when selecting outputs for REF 2021.

The Code is underpinned by our [College Strategy](#) which seeks 'to develop a high quality, diverse and professional workforce, who work together to achieve our strategic priorities' and in particular section 5.3 which seeks to 'promote and facilitate equality and diversity'.

The Code should be read in conjunction with, and does not replace, other relevant College policies. The Code has been developed in line with the [College's key E&D policies and strategies](#) and our Equality and Diversity (E&D) statement that:

- We create a positive, inclusive environment, free from prejudice, bullying, harassment and unlawful discrimination. We will take action to challenge inappropriate behaviour and discriminatory practice.
- Staff, students, applicants for employment or study, visitors and other persons in contact with the College are treated fairly, with dignity and respect.

¹ The Regulations confirm that the expiry or non-renewal of a fixed term contract is a dismissal in law on the grounds of redundancy.

- People and diverse groups with multiple identities and individual differences are recognised and valued.
- We provide our staff and associates with the knowledge and skills they need to understand and meet their E&D responsibilities.

All members of the College and any external advisers involved in preparation for the REF 2021 submission are expected to abide by this Code.

e) What actions have been taken since REF2014?

An Impact Assessment was conducted for the College REF2014 submission, which indicated that:

- the overall submission rate for all academic staff was 76.89%
- 78.19% of eligible men were submitted, and 74.29% of eligible women were submitted
- there was a relatively large percentage difference in eligible black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) staff submitted versus eligible white staff – 61.29% of BAME staff compared to 79.55% of white staff
- there was a drop-off in staff submitted in the 45-54 age group (71.69%) and the 55-64 age group (72.04%) compared to the 35-44 age group (80.53%)
- the percentage of part-time staff submitted was 71.43%, which is more than 5% below the overall submission rate (76.89%).
- 85.53% of Early Career Researchers were submitted

With this in mind, since REF2014, considerable further work has been undertaken to embed equality, diversity and inclusion practices across the College to ensure equality of opportunity for all research staff and to support them to produce innovative and high-quality work ready for REF submission. The College recognises that this is an ongoing process.

E&D is represented at an executive level - in 2013, a Vice Principal (Staffing) was appointed to cover the E&D agenda and since 2017 this role has been renamed as Vice Principal (E&D). This representation is mirrored in governance with a Council-led E&D Committee, a College-level E&D Steering Group (renamed Committee in 2017, which now reports to Academic Board). The College also agreed a four-year Equality Scheme in 2014 and has recently renewed this to provide a scheme for 2018-2021.

The College holds the Institutional Athena Swan award at Bronze level, and was one of the first Higher Education Institutions to be awarded bronze in the Race Equality Charter Mark.

The career development of research and research & teaching staff (including fixed-term and part-time) is encouraged through regular appraisals with line managers to review progress and identify development needs. All staff are also encouraged to attend College development events and the 'On Track' research development programmes provided through Organisational Development.

Career development programmes for different groups of staff have been implemented. We have developed a programme called "Enabling Women in the Promotions Process" to support women academics working towards promotion to Chair. Many participants have been promoted to Chairs at Royal Holloway and elsewhere, but the proportion of women in the professoriate remains around 30%. The College is engaged in further efforts to achieve parity of representation.

We have a similar programme for teaching-focused staff and we have just introduced the “Mandala” career development programme for BAME staff in 2019.

Biennial Equal Pay audits are conducted resulting in action plans to close pay gaps. The College is also encouraging all academic departments to develop core hours that are family friendly for key meetings. The College has extended extra time for research on return from maternity/adoption leave to all staff in 2018.

The College has monitored the gender and ethnicity balance of applications for, and success in, obtaining research grants. There are workshops on applying for grants available to all.

The College works closely with the Disability forum to embed and ensure support for staff with disabilities in their departments.

Anonymised promotion procedures and streamlined promotions processes with specified criteria have been introduced and improvements are ongoing. The appraisal process has been revised but has yet to be fully implemented. There is appraisal training for appraisers (which includes how to conduct appraisals and support staff development more effectively).

Unconscious bias training is mandatory for all members of appointment committees.

f) How has equality and diversity been considered in the decision-making process?

Preparations for the College REF 2021 submission will be carried out in a fair, transparent and consistent manner, and will be conducted in strict compliance with this Code of Practice and all other College policies and codes of practice, specifically the Equality Scheme.

The College will perform an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for all processes requiring due regard and consideration for E&D. The timeline for these is shown in Figure 1.

For the REF 2021 submission:

- 1) The College has a template, developed by the E&D team, which will be used to perform impact assessments throughout REF 2021 submission preparation.
- 2) The REF team will work with the E&D team to pick up any improvements made to this process during this period.
- 3) The template provides a framework from which robust decisions about E&D can be made in the College.
- 4) EIA template data for all Category A eligible staff (including fixed-term and part-time staff) is collected and analysed to assess the recordable ‘protected characteristics’ of staff involved in the process.
- 5) Where there is a discrepancy of more than 5% between staff with and without ‘protected characteristics’, an investigation will be undertaken to identify causes of that discrepancy.
- 6) REF-specific EIAs will be reviewed and finalised as appropriate, and then published on the College website after the REF 2021 submission.

Fig. 1 Timeline for EIAs

Activity	Responsibility	Timescale
Determining research independence	College REF team	May 2019/ November 2019
Selection of outputs: a) assessment of outputs b) disclosure of circumstances	College REF team HR	May 2019/ November 2019
Overall submission	College REF team/HR	April 2021

g) The College Context

It is relevant to the Code that the College is undertaking a major reorganisation of its academic structure, which came into effect from 1 August 2019.

The new structure saw the dissolution of faculties and the establishment of six new Schools in which the existing 21 academic departments were housed. At the beginning of the cycle (2014-18), REF 2021 preparations were led by the Deputy Principal (Academic) with support from four Vice Principals and the Associate Deans for Research from each Faculty.

In order to ensure consistency of preparation, it was planned that the Associate Dean for Research roles from each faculty would be maintained until the College REF 2021 submission in 2020. This became untenable following the announcement of a delay to the submission date, and the REF roles of the Associate Deans for Research were passed to the School Directors of Research with effect from 1st August 2020.

h) Who are the decision-makers and advisers for the College REF 2021 submission?

Membership and terms of reference for the following groups/panels can be found in Appendix 1.

All decisions, involving members of College and Faculty REF Groups, Heads of Department, Unit of Assessment (UoA) REF Leads and Chairs of Departmental Research Committees and which concern the inclusion of staff in the College’s REF 2021 submission, will be carried out in accordance with this Code.

The Principal: has overall responsibility for the REF 2021 process. This responsibility is delivered through the Deputy-Principal (Research), the Director of Research & Innovation and the Deans of Faculty/Heads of School/ UoA REF leads.

The College REF Steering Group: has responsibility for overseeing the planning and preparation of the College’s REF 2021 submission, bringing forward recommendations to the Principal and reporting to the College Research Committee and College Planning and Resources Committee on its activities. The Group will take a final view on the selection of outputs, of impact case studies, the submission to which UoA and on the text of the REF 2021 submission; advised by the Heads of School and UoA REF Leads. The Group was established by the Principal and is chaired by the Deputy Principal (Research). Group members were selected to represent areas of leadership in research and professional services.

UoA Advisory Group: will advise the UoA REF lead within the submitting unit. Group members were selected based on their responsibility for research leadership.

UoA REF Lead (or possibly REF Leads in the case of a joint submission to the same UoA): are senior academics from a discipline relevant to the UoA who will work with the relevant Heads of Department (some UoAs include staff from more than one department) to prepare the REF 2021 submission, including selection of outputs. UoA REF Lead responsibility is approved by the relevant Heads of Department.

Determining research independence appeals panel: will advise REF Steering Group on appeals received from academics about their determined research independence. Panellists will be selected on the basis of role, ensuring representation of subject specialisms but excluding those who were involved in the original assessment.

Individual Staff Circumstances Panel: this panel will consider all cases of individual staff circumstances and advise the College REF Steering Group on any reductions in outputs that may be requested from the national REF 2021 team. Panellists were selected based on role, providing a mix of research leadership and HR experience.

Individual Staff Circumstances Appeals Panel: this panel will consider any formal appeals from individual staff members on the decisions of the Individual Staff Circumstances Panel. Panellists were also selected based on role, providing a mix of research leadership and HR experience.

The College REF Operations Group: is responsible for co-coordinating and verifying the accuracy of the data returned in the College's REF 2021 submission and supporting the College REF Steering Group. REF Operations Group members were selected to represent areas of leadership in research and professional services.

The College REF team: is responsible for co-ordinating data collection, and organisation of planning and preparation of the College's REF 2021 submission. The team consists of a Project Manager, Manager and Project Support Officer, within the Research and Innovation Department.

The governance structure for the REF 2021 submission is illustrated in Appendix 3.

i) Do decision-makers and advisers for the College REF 2021 submission undergo training?

Electronic links to widely available national REF 2021 webinars are available on the College REF intranet pages, and are promoted at group meetings to encourage staff with decision-making and advising roles to access.

All College staff with decision-making and advisory responsibilities for the College's REF 2021 submission will be required to undertake tailored unconscious bias training. Previous College equal opportunities programmes will not be accepted as meeting this requirement.

Training session materials will include an introduction to the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and unconscious bias, followed by group sessions designed around REF 2021 specific examples. Training session attendance will be monitored, and will be recorded for those who cannot attend, or join the College later in the REF process.

The College recognises the limitations of unconscious bias training. There will be regular equality impact assessments throughout the REF 2021 preparation period to mitigate this.

j) How is the Code being communicated to staff across the institution?

The Code will be communicated to staff in two stages:

Stage 1: Consultation

Figure 2 depicts the timeline for the Code consultation. By way of an informal consultation, at the draft stage, the Code will be circulated to the College REF Steering group for comment and amendment. The principles will also be disseminated, at an annual REF briefing meeting 2019 for UoA REF Leads, for comments and questions.

For the formal consultation, the Code draft and instructions on how to respond will be published on the College Staff Intranet; the College REF Team will communicate to all staff the presence and location via internal communications.

There will be three methods to responding to the draft specified:

- 1) Academic staff: During the annual REF briefing meeting 2019, UoA REF leads will be informed as to their role in the consultation of the Code. The UoA REF leads will be responsible for collating questions and comments on the draft Code from academic colleagues within their UoAs and communicating the responses to the College REF team. For the purpose of consultation responses, a *pro forma* and link to an on-line survey will be circulated to UoA REF leads via email to collate responses from academic staff in their UoA. Instructions on the staff intranet will specify how academic staff can respond.
- 2) Non-academic staff: Instructions on the staff intranet will also specify how non-academic staff can respond. These staff will be asked to contact the College REF team who will provide a *pro forma* to be completed and returned.
- 3) Absent staff (through illness, injury, sabbatical, maternity, paternity or adoption leave, secondment, unpaid leave, or absence through other individual circumstances): These staff will be contacted via post with a letter that will include a link to the electronic version of the Code and an on-line survey, inviting them to respond.

The deadline for responses will be clearly stated on all response options. The Code draft will be revised based on the consultation responses.

Fig. 2 Timeline for The Code consultation

Activity	Responsibility	Timescale
(Informal) Circulate the Code draft to College REF Steering Group and address any amendments required	College REF Team	January 2019
(Informal) Disseminate principles of the Code draft to UoA REF leads and address any amendments required	College REF Team	February 2019
Attendance at national REF 2021 workshop for the Code	College REF Team/Chair of REF Steering Group	February 2019
Finalise draft Code in response to informal consultation and workshop	College REF Team/ Chair of REF Steering Group	February 2019

Draft published on the College Intranet pages	College REF Team	March 2019
The electronic location of this draft Code, and response options sent to all staff electronically	College REF Team/ College Communications Team	March 2019
Letters communicating electronic location of this draft Code, and online link to consultation survey, sent to all absent staff	HR	March 2019
Collate responses to the draft Code from academic staff, populate online consultation survey and return to College REF Team by specified date	UoA REF leads	March 2019
Discuss draft of the Code with the College University and College Union representative	College REF Team/Chair of REF Steering Group	April 2019
Deadline for the Code consultation	College REF Team	April 2019
Collate responses to the draft Code	College REF Team	April 2019
Revise Code draft based on the consultation responses	College REF Team/ Chair of REF Steering Group	April 2019
Revisions to the Code discussed by the REF Steering Group	Chair of REF Steering Group	April 2019
Code signed-off for submission	Principal	May 2019
Code submitted to national REF 2021 team	College REF Team	June 2019

Stage 2: Final draft:

Once the draft of the Code has been revised, where necessary, and finalised by the College it will be submitted to the national REF 2021 team. Once accepted by the national REF 2021 team, it will be published on the College public website as well as the Staff Intranet. The College REF team will communicate to all staff the presence and location via internal communications.

An electronic copy of the Code will be sent to all staff eligible or potentially eligible for submission to the REF 2021 via their College email address. Printed copies will also be posted to the home address (or other postal address registered by staff with HR) of all eligible or potentially eligible staff who are absent from College, at the date of the Code's publication.

Printed copies (including large print or braille version) will be available on request from the College REF team. Regular updates on preparations will be included in the College Research & Innovation intranet.

Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

What are the criteria for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research?

REF guidelines refer to two sets of staff – “Category A eligible” and “Category A submitted”. Eligible staff are submitted if and only if they have significant responsibility for research. Figure 3, which has been taken from the Guidance on Submissions, summarises REF eligibility.

Category A eligible

This term describes staff that meet the REF 2021 eligibility criteria and make up the potential staff submission pool. The REF 2021 guidance defines ‘Category A eligible staff’ as:

- academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater,
- on the College payroll on the census date (31 July 2020),
- whose primary employment function is to undertake either ‘research only’ or ‘teaching and research’.
- Staff should have a substantive research connection with the submitting unit
- Staff on ‘research only’ contracts who meet the definition of an independent researcher

Note that, in line with the guidance on submission, those on teaching-focused and professional-practice focused routes are ‘teaching only’ staff and thus do not have responsibility for research.

Former staff

The introduction of a transitional approach to non-portability of outputs will allow the College to return the eligible outputs of previously employed Category A eligible staff if the output was first made publicly available (between 1/1/14-31/12/2020) while the staff member was employed by the College as a Category A eligible member.

Research outputs of former staff made redundant² will not be submitted in the College REF 2021 submission, unless these staff wish to be considered for inclusion. Note that staff who undertook voluntary severance will still be eligible.

Category A submitted

This describes the staff whom we have identified as having a significant responsibility for research on 31 July 2020, and therefore must be submitted to REF 2021.

The definition of significant responsibility for research is those who:

- are given explicit time and resources
- engage in independent research
- are in a job role in which research is expected

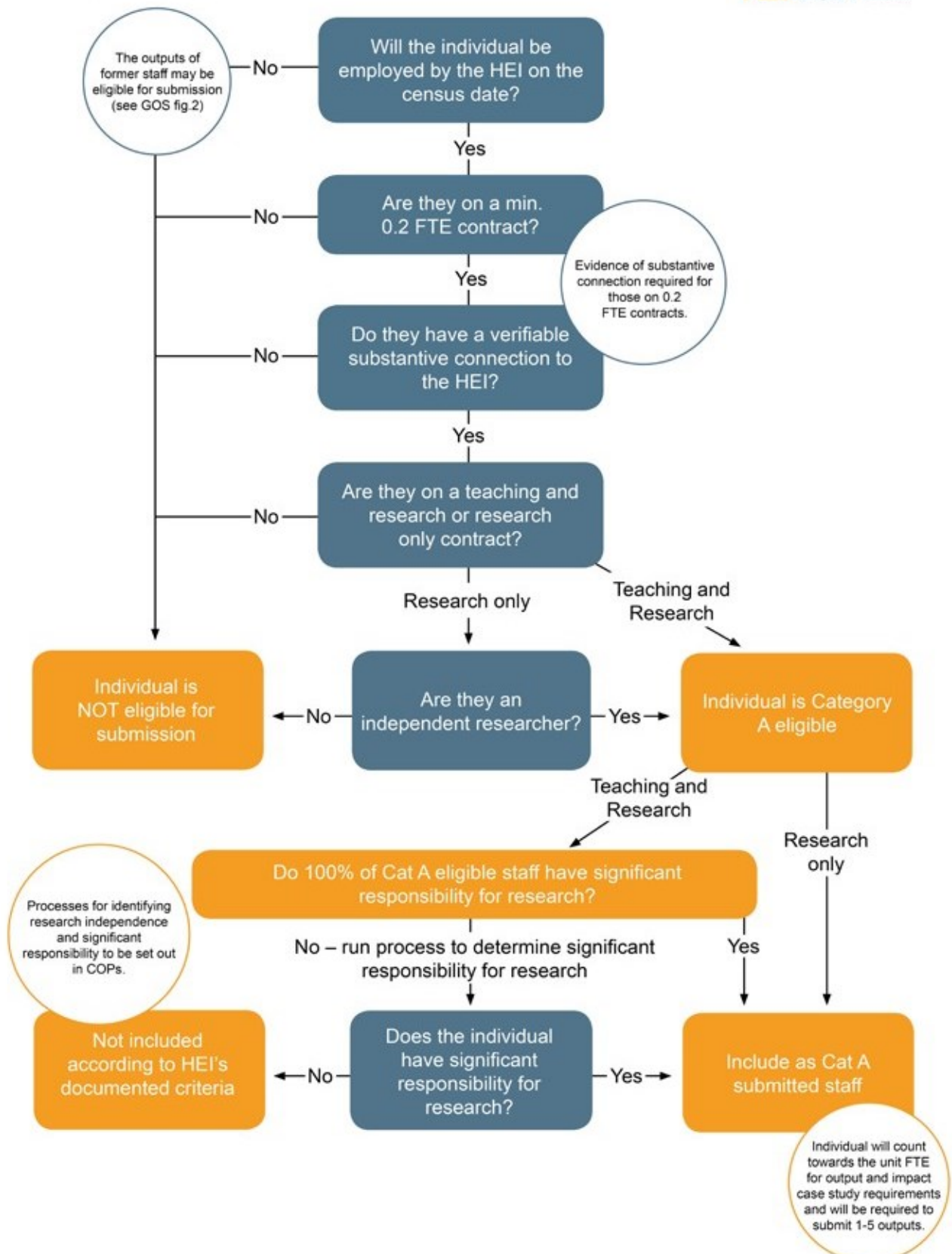
The funding bodies recognise that in many institutions the core eligibility criteria set out above will accurately identify staff with significant responsibility for research, in which case 100 per cent of ‘Category A Eligible’ staff should be submitted.

² Research outputs of fixed-term staff dismissed on the grounds of redundancy will be included as this is considered to be of benefit to their on-going career.

The College considers that, as a research-intensive institution, the core eligibility criteria accurately identify all staff with a significant responsibility for research. **The College submission of staff to REF 2021 will include 100% of Category A eligible staff.**

Decisions by the College on the workload, promotion or career progression of any individual member of eligible academic staff will not be affected by their projected performance in or contribution to the REF 2021 submission.

Fig. 3 Staff eligibility in REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions (GOS)



Part 3: Determining research independence

a) What are the criteria for determining research independence?

The College will be utilising the criteria laid out in the REF 2021 guidance on submissions to assess whether an individual on a 'Research and Teaching' or 'Research Only' contract meets the definition of an independent researcher, i.e. 'undertake self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme', on the census date 31 July 2020.

The guidance on submissions specifies three indicators of research independence:

- a) leading or acting as principal investigator (PI) or equivalent on an externally funded research project
- b) holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement
- c) leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package

There may be more than one indicator of research independence and there may be discipline specific indicators, as outlined in the REF 2021 Panel Criteria and Working Methods.

b) How are decisions made?

HR will provide a list of 'Research and Teaching' and 'Research Only' (research staff) to each UoA REF Lead. They will consult with the UoA Advisory Group REF to assess whether these have met the definition of an independent researcher as listed in the REF 2021 guidance on submissions.

The UoA REF Lead will then make a recommendation to the College REF Steering Group, who will assess the recommendation and will formally record the decision. The decision will then be communicated directly to the UoA REF Lead and the individual researcher via an e-mail containing a confirmation letter.

The College REF Steering Group will take final responsibility for determining research independence. The Group will be advised by the UoA REF Lead who will in turn seek advice from the UoA Advisory Group.

Fig. 4 Estimated timeline for determining research independence

Stage	Activity	Responsibility	Timescale
1	Assessment of College research staff list to identify independent researchers	HR	June 2019
2	Recommendations made on independent researchers in research staff list	UoA Advisory Groups	June 2019
	Report recommendations regarding staff on research staff list to the College Steering Group	UoA REF Leads	July 2019

3	Formal decision made about independent researcher status in the research staff list and recorded	Assess recommendations on research staff list and formally record the decision	College Steering Group	July 2019
4	Communicate the formal decisions made about independent researcher status in the research staff list	Communicate formally recorded decisions made on the research staff list to the UoA REF Lead and the individual researcher via e-mail	College Steering Group via Chair of REF Steering Group	August 2019
		Submit appeal to the Determining research independence appeals panel	Researchers	August 2019
		Communicate formally recorded decisions from determining research independence appeals panel meeting/s to College REF Steering Group and researcher	Determining research independence appeals panel	August – September 2019

c) How can you make an appeal?

Any researcher who wishes to appeal their status of classification as an independent researcher will be able to do so by stating the reasons for their appeal in writing no later than 15 working days after they have been informed about their status by the College REF Steering Group confirmation letter via e-mail. The confirmation letter will specify the process for the appeal in writing.

Grounds for appeal will include new evidence of:

- a) An award of new research grant or fellowship as PI;
- b) The researcher having independently won, been competitively awarded a fellowship where research independence is a requirement;
- c) The researcher leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package.

Once received, appeals will be heard by the determining research independence appeals panel who will reach their decision within 5 working days of meeting and will inform the Chair of the College REF Steering Group of the outcome. The Chair will consider the evidence and make a recommendation as to whether the researcher's independent status should be altered.

The outcome of appeal will be communicated to the researcher in writing via e-mail.

d) How has equality and diversity been considered in the decision-making process?

In accordance with the general principles for the Code, the College REF team will undertake EIAs prior to and following the decisions made concerning the independence of researchers:

- i) Protected characteristics of all those with research staff contracts by both UoA and across the whole College will be assessed

- ii) The impact of those selected as independent researchers will be assessed against the protected characteristics.
- iii) An investigation may lead to the College REF Steering Group requesting that some researchers are re-assessed for their independence, or it may lead to changes in policy and staff development approaches for post-doctoral research fellows who form that largest component of the research staff classification.
- iv) The College REF team will provide advice to the College REF Steering Group on any matters arising from the EIAs.

Part 4: Selection of outputs

a) Where are outputs selected from?

PURE is the current research information system used by the College. All members of the UoA with responsibility for research and assessed as independent researchers will need to ensure that their PURE profiles accurately list research outputs since 1 January 2014. Members should also ensure that for all research outputs within the scope of the policy meet the Open Access requirements, i.e. journal articles and conference contributions (with an International Standard serial Number (ISSN)) which are accepted for publication from 1 April 2016 and published on or before 31 December 2020. Given the aim of our REF 2021 entry is to ensure the highest quality, we will ask that within the REF modules (1a/c and 2) in PURE that they will nominate all five items they regard as having the potential to be assessed as research that is capable of being internationally excellent. Researchers will make available online versions of their outputs, or if not available in that format, hard copies.

b) What will be the procedure for the selection of outputs?

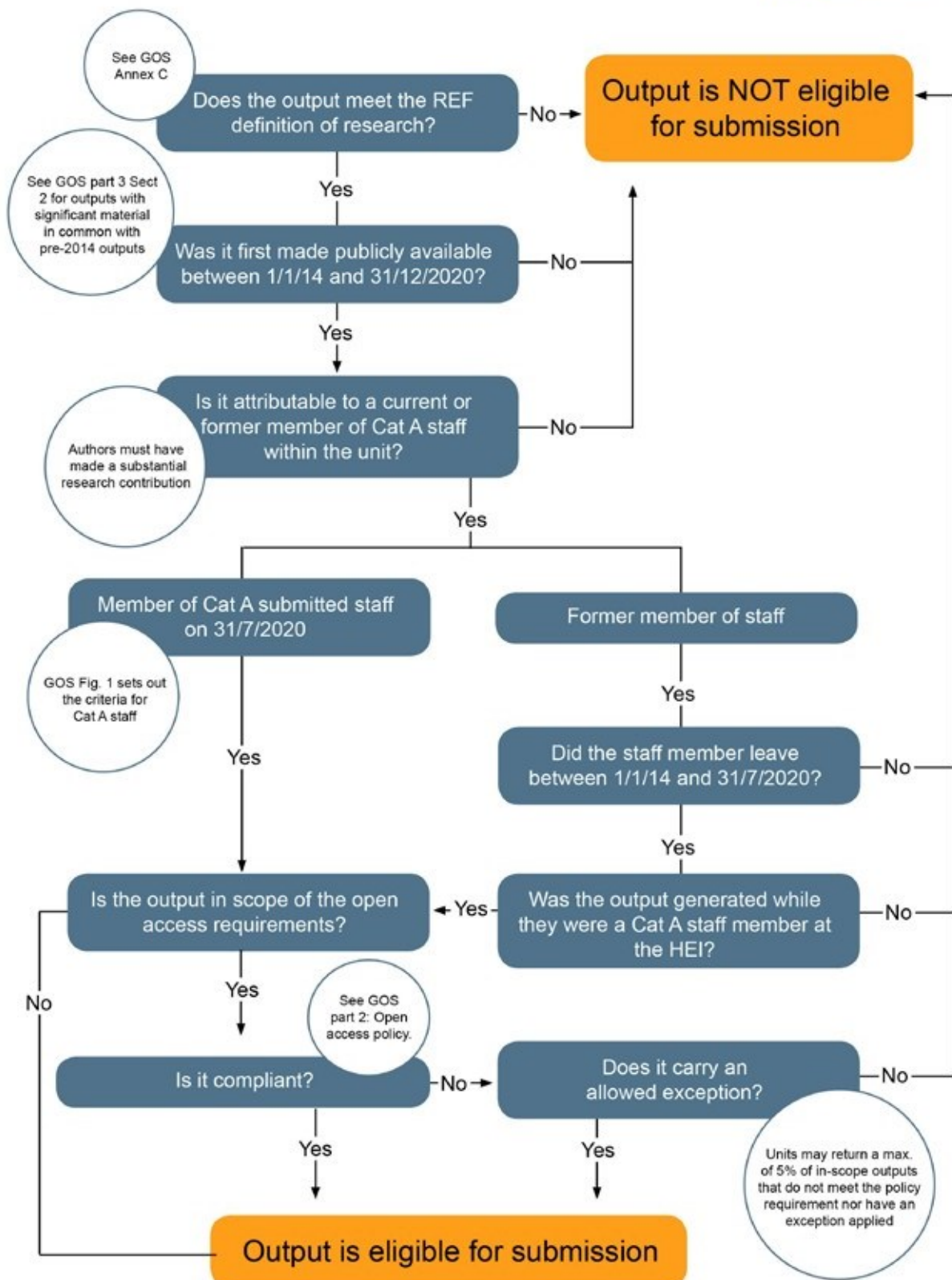
The definition of outputs eligible for submission is summarised in Figure 5.

The UoA REF Lead and appropriate Heads of Department (HoDs) will oversee a rigorous assessment of the quality of the outputs of each potential submitter.

Assessment will involve a critical engagement with the work by academic colleagues within the UoA/Department, i.e. all proposed outputs will be read and assessed internally by two reviewers.

If there are no suitably qualified academic staff to undertake this, or there is indecision around a 2/3* borderline output/s, within the UoA/Department the College will engage appropriate academics (external reviewers) from other institutions. UoA/Departments will be responsible for selecting external reviewers who have expertise in the field of work under review. Once identified, external reviewers may be appointed, with the explicit approval of the Chair of the College REF Steering Group.

Fig. 5 Output eligibility from REF 2021 Guidance on Submission (GOS)



Together with quality indicators in the REF 2021 Panel Criteria and Working Methods, assessments of outputs consider the originality, rigour and significance of the outputs. On this basis the UoA REF Leads and Heads of Department (HoDs) will recommend that the output be considered as world leading (4*), internationally excellent (3*), internationally recognised (2*), nationally recognised (1*) or falls below this threshold (unclassified).

All reviewers will provide opinions on their assessments to the UoA REF Leads and HoDs and records will be made in PURE of the recommendations made at all stages of the submission process.

The UoA REF Leads will report and justify the assessments of the quality profile of each individual's nominated outputs to College REF Steering Group. The UoA Advisory Group will advise UoA REF Leads where a decision is required between 3* outputs for submission to REF. In these cases, the UoA REF Leads will differentiate the pool by scoring the output as 3+, 3 or 3-.

This information will be confidential to the HoD, internal or external academics asked to judge outputs and the College REF Steering Groups, but individuals will have the right to see the records of any judgements in PURE made about their work and make corrections to any factual errors.

In the event of a difference of opinion between the UoA REF Leads and the College REF Steering Group, the latter's decision will take precedence.

Once a rating for the items has been agreed as above, the UoA REF Lead will select the highest rated item for submission from each independent researcher. The remaining items for selection to make up the number needed for the UoA entry will be chosen by selecting the highest rated outputs from current and previously employed staff utilising the 3+, 3, 3- guidelines. In the event of a draw between equally graded outputs then UoA REF leads will prioritise any imbalance identified in the most current EIA.

Fig. 6 Estimated timeline for determining outputs

Stages		Activity	Responsibility	Timescale
1	Update research outputs on PURE, abiding by open access requirement, and nominate for assessment	Ensure PURE profiles are updated to adequately reflect research outputs from Jan 14 to present	Researchers	January – February 2020
		Ensure Open Access requirements are met	Researchers	February-March 2020
		Nominate research outputs in PURE to be assessed	Researchers	March-April 2020
2	Assessment of nominated research outputs, internal and external	Review/ assess nominated research outputs on PURE internally	UoA REF Leads	April-May 2020
3	Recommendations about research outputs discussed and agreed	Request external review/ assessment of nominated research outputs on PURE where required	UoA REF Leads	May-June 2020
		Report recommendations from assessments to	UoA REF Leads	July 2020

		College REF Steering Group		
4	Selection of the highest rated research outputs for submission	Agree assessment	College REF Steering Group	July 2020
		Selection of highest rated research outputs from current and former staff for submission	UoA REF Leads	September-November 2020

In preparation for the submission, internal output audits will complete all activities in Figure 6 on an annual basis to assess the College readiness for the REF 2021 submission and enable interim EIAs.

Details of all REF submissions will remain confidential to those College staff identified as having specific roles in the development of REF submissions and those external advisers explicitly approved by the College REF Steering Group.

All College staff identified as having specific roles in the development of REF submissions in this Code will be granted access to all necessary data related to each UoA including research outputs and the results of output assessments.

External reviewers will be selected based on their experience of research assessment and their familiarity with world-class research and/or impact arising from excellent research in their field. They will often have experience of being a REF2014 panellist.

c) What is the policy and process if you have circumstances that have affected productivity?

The UK funding bodies have set out measures to recognise the effect that individuals' circumstances may have on their research productivity. The decoupling of staff and outputs provides increased flexibility to institutions in building the portfolio of outputs for submission, and it is not expected that all staff members will be returned with the same number of outputs attributed to them in the submission.

The College will take into account the circumstances of individual researchers in its output selection process, and provide appropriate support to individuals with such circumstances. To facilitate this, it will implement a safe and robust process to enable individuals to declare their individual circumstances voluntarily and confidentially. The impact of these circumstances will be reflected in the College's expectation of the individual's contribution to the output pool.

Where the cumulative effect of circumstances has disproportionately affected a unit's potential output pool, UoAs may request a reduction from REF 2021, without penalty, in the total number of outputs required for submission. Further guidance can be found in part 4, sections f and g.

d) How is information on individual staff circumstances collected?

To enable staff to disclose their circumstances voluntarily and in confidence, information on individual staff circumstances will be collected using a disclosure form based on a template provided by REF 2021. In July 2019, potentially eligible Category A staff will be invited, via e-mail and by post to the home address provided by the individual member of staff, to complete and return a form to declare individual circumstances. Individuals will have the option of whether to complete this form electronically or return a hard copy by post to the Director of HR as Chair of the REF Individual Staff

Circumstances Panel. The deadline for return of this form will be 31 August 2019. There will be an additional round of collection and review with an applications deadline of 31 August 2020.

Staff will not be put under any pressure to declare circumstances where they do not wish to do so. The College will only take account in the REF submission process of individual circumstances that staff have consented to declare voluntarily.

Information on individual staff circumstances will be kept strictly confidential and will not be published in any form, at any time. It will be used solely for the purposes of the REF 2021, unless a member of staff expressly indicates a wish for HR to register the information for other purposes, and will be stored in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

Members of the REF Individual Staff Circumstances Panel will be trained in accordance with the recommendations of REF 2021. The Staff Circumstances Panel will collate and review the information supplied from the Disclosure forms.

Individual circumstances that occur after 31 August 2019 will be considered by arrangement by the Individual Staff Circumstances Panel. Requests for consideration of such circumstances can be submitted to the Chair of the Panel via email to a generic email address set up for the purpose. The final deadline for receipt of such requests was 31 January 2020, but following Covid-19, there is a further round of applications with a deadline of 31 August 2020.

e) How are the effects of staff circumstances recognised?

All decisions relating to requests for a reduction in output expectations due to individual staff circumstances will be made in accordance with the principles and criteria for inclusion as detailed in this Code. They will be considered by the Individual Staff Circumstances Panel (see membership and terms of reference in Appendix 1 for details).

The process for supporting staff with special circumstances will be consistent across the College. The Individual Staff Circumstances Panel will consider the impact of declared circumstances and will comply with the tariffs for reductions (*Guidance on Submissions*, Annex L).

The Staff Circumstances Panel will decide the maximum number of outputs that can be expected of an individual member of staff with special circumstances using the matrix in Appendix 2. For circumstances, which require a judgement (see part 4, section c), and for combinations of circumstances, the Individual Staff Circumstances Panel will make a judgement about the effect of the circumstance and advise the staff member and the UoA of the appropriate adjustment of output expectation. Where an individual has multiple special circumstances, the appropriate output expectation will be established from adding together the implied unit output reductions for each special circumstance, as described in Appendix 2.

For staff with circumstances requiring a judgement, the Staff Circumstances Panel will use information supplied in the Staff Disclosure forms to draw up a brief statement (maximum 200 words) outlining how the circumstances have affected the staff member's ability to produce an eligible output in the period. This statement will be provided to the REF 2021 team if a Unit reduction request is made. The Panel will inform the member of staff of this decision in writing and provide the text of this proposed statement.

The HoDs and UoA REF Leads, who are responsible for the UoA's REF submission, will be informed of the Individual Staff Circumstances Panel decisions but not of any information on the nature of the circumstances. This information will be confidential to the Individual Staff Circumstances Panel and

its administrative support staff. The final maximum expectation of outputs will not exceed the maximum recommended by the Individual Staff Circumstances Panel.

Following communication of the decision, the staff member will then have a two-week period to appeal the decision of the Staff Circumstances Panel. The Individual Staff Circumstances Appeals Panel will hear appeals based on information not previously considered by the Individual Staff Circumstances Panel, or procedural irregularities. Appeals based on disagreement with the original decision will not be considered. The Appeals Panel will provide a written response to the appellant from the Chair of the Panel within ten working days of the appeal or the decision following receipt of any additional information that is requested, where possible.

All declared personal circumstances will be fully taken into account when assessing the contribution of individual staff to the REF submission.

f) Is it possible to remove the 'minimum of one' requirement?

Judgements related to the circumstances outlined in part 4, section c will not normally remove the minimum of one output attributed to each individual within the submission. However, where an individual's circumstances have had an exceptional effect on their ability to produce outputs throughout the period 1 August 2014 – 31 July 2020 to the extent that the individual has not been able to produce an eligible output, a request may be made to the REF Panel for the minimum of one to be removed.

Such a request may be made where the following circumstances apply:

- An overall period of 46 months or more absence from research during the assessment period, due to one or more of the circumstances set out in part 4, section c
- Circumstances equivalent to 46 months or more absence from research where circumstances set out in part 4, section c apply
- Two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave, as defined in *Guidance on Submissions, 2019/01*

This may include working part-time, where this has had an exceptional effect on ability to produce outputs throughout the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020, so that the individual has not been able to produce an eligible output.

Where there is an exceptional circumstance not previously covered, but the individual's circumstances are deemed to have resulted in a similar impact (including where there is a combination of circumstances that individually would not meet the thresholds set out), a request may still be made.

Where the Individual Staff Circumstances Panel judges that an individual's circumstances require the removal of the 'minimum of one output' requirement, a request will be made to the REF Panel using form REF6a. This request will include a description of how the circumstances have affected the staff member's ability to produce an eligible output in the period. This information will be based on verifiable evidence that may be audited following the REF submission deadline. The individual staff member will be notified in writing that a request for the removal of the minimum of one is going to be made, and including the text of the accompanying statement.

g) How does a Unit request reduction?

Where the cumulative effect of circumstances has disproportionately affected the unit's potential output pool, a reduction in the total number of outputs required for a submission can be requested

without penalty, using form REF6b. This may be appropriate when there is a very high proportion of staff in the unit whose individual circumstances have affected their productivity over the REF assessment period, including in very small units, or where disciplinary publishing norms make it likely that an individual will have generated a smaller number of outputs across the publication period.

The Individual Staff Circumstances Panel will provide each UoA REF Lead with a figure for the total potential reduction in the overall output requirements which could be granted in the event of an application being made. UoAs will then judge whether an application should be made, taking into account the size of the available output pool (from which selection will be made) and its proximity to the total number of outputs required.

The Individual Staff Circumstances Panel will complete form REF6b, applying the tariffs outlined in Appendix 2. All requests will be accompanied by a supporting statement that includes information on the context of the unit (size, proportion of those with declared circumstances) and how the circumstances affected the unit’s output pool and why this was determined to be disproportionate. All such requests will be submitted to REF 2021 by 06 March 2020. The outcome of requests will be provided before the census date.

The total reduction will be calculated as a sum of the reductions arising from individual staff in the unit with applicable circumstances. Reductions arising from the circumstances of individual staff will be determined according to the guidance in Appendix 2, up to a reduction of 1.5 outputs per staff member affected. This will include reductions, up to 1.5 outputs, arising from the circumstances of staff for whom a request is also being made to remove the minimum of one requirement (see part 4, section f)

Where multiple circumstances have affected individual staff, the guidance on combining circumstances in *Guidance on Submissions – Annex L* will be followed.

Reductions applying to individual staff within the unit will be summed. Rounding to the nearest whole number will be applied to give a whole number of outputs for reduction. The College will ensure that the proposed reduction does not result in a smaller total output requirement than the number of Category A submitted staff in the unit.

In making a request the College will take into account where an individual’s circumstances are ongoing up until the REF submission date in applying defined reductions, making a judgement on circumstances equivalent to absence, or removing the minimum requirement.

Fig. 7 Disclosure of circumstances timeline

Week beginning Monday 1 July 2019	All Category A staff invited by email/letter to home address to complete a form outlining special circumstances for which reductions in expectation are requested
Saturday 31 August 2019	Deadline for special circumstance reduction requests
September - October 2019	Meetings for Individual Staff Circumstances Panel to review requests
By 31 October 2019	Notify staff and UoA with outcome of Individual Staff Circumstances panel
21 November 2019	Staff circumstances appeals panel deadline
Early December 2019	Individual Staff Circumstances Appeals Panel meeting
December 2019 (before College closure)	Notify staff and UoA as appropriate with outcome of Special Circumstances appeals panel

January 2020	Confirm which UoAs will make an application to REF 2021 for a reduction in overall output submissions on the basis of disproportionate staff circumstances
31 January 2020	Final deadline for individuals to request consideration of individual circumstances occurring after 31 August 2019
February 2020	Panel and Appeals Panel meetings for circumstances occurring after 31 August 2019
06 March 2020	UoA reduction requests application deadline REF 2021
31 August 2020	Final deadline for individuals to request consideration of individual circumstances occurring after 06 Mar 2020, including Covid-19 circumstances
Sep - Dec 2020	Panel and Appeals Panel meetings
31 March 2021	REF6 requests application deadline REF 2021

UoA REF Leads, College REF Steering Group will be informed of the decisions of the Individual Staff Circumstances Panel relating to any reductions of outputs but only the Individual Staff Circumstances Panel and its administrative support staff will have access to the background information and data. The UoA REF Lead will be expected to consider individual staff circumstance reductions when recommending outputs for selection. For example, a member of staff with accepted individual circumstances should not have the maximum number of items (5) submitted.

h) Has equality and diversity been considered in the decision-making process?

In accordance with the general principles for the Code, the College REF Team will undertake an equality impact assessment of the decisions made concerning the selection of outputs and disclosure of circumstances:

The assessment of outputs component will include:

- i) As a baseline, data from a preliminary protected characteristics assessment of all Category A staff, by both UoA and across the whole College, has been undertaken during the development of this Code of Practice.
- ii) This preliminary assessment includes an equality profile of protected characteristics to show numbers of outputs submitted by groups with each characteristic.
- iii) The UoA REF Advisory Groups, Individual Circumstances Panel and the College REF Steering Group will examine the equality profile for imbalances, taking advice from equal opportunities experts in the HR Department.
- iv) Any imbalances giving rise to concern will be highlighted to the College REF Steering Group for review and advice sought from HR as to appropriate action.
- v) Additional equality profiles, at both the College and UoA levels, will be conducted prior to finalising all submissions.

The assessment of disclosure of circumstances will include:

- i) An analysis of the results from requests to have individual staff circumstances taken into account will be undertaken as part of the EIA.
- ii) Any imbalances that are identified will be investigated to determine the potential causes and findings will influence future College policies, such as staff development activities.

- iii) The College REF Team will advise the College REF Steering Group on any matters arising from the EIA.

Contacts

Further Information on this Code and contacts can be found at <https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/restricted/contensis/staff/research-and-enterprise/ref-2021/ref-2021.aspx>.

Information on the organisation of submissions within individual UoAs can be obtained from the relevant departmental UoA REF Leads – a list of UoA Ref Leads is available at <https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/restricted/contensis/documents/doc/ref-leads-2018-19.docx>.

For further information relating to Individual Staff Circumstances, in the first instance email REFcircumstances@rhul.ac.uk. This is a confidential email address.

Part 5: Appendices

Appendix 1: Membership and Terms of Reference for College REF Groups

Note regarding changes to the College REF Groups due to Covid-19 and staff changes

The College REF Groups and their respective terms of reference are unchanged. However, the need to redesign a partially online teaching and student experience journey and the extended timeframe for submission have necessitated a number of changes to the membership of some of the REF Groups.

The College response to Covid-19 meant that part of the *Deputy Principal (Academic)*'s time was taken up with redesigning the student experience and as a consequence a *Director of REF* role was created in order that the day-to-day oversight activities could be reassigned allowing the Deputy Principal adequate time to support the student experience journey. This role has been assigned to a current member of the REF Steering Group, the *Vice Principal for Research Impact*.

The membership of the REF groups had originally been aligned with the College structure of three Faculties, even though the College has been reorganised into six Schools with effect from 1st August 2019. The aim of selecting senior former Faculty staff was to provide continuity. However, following the onset of Covid-19, once it became clear that the submission deadline would be extended, the REF Steering Group agreed that it would no longer be tenable to continue to reflect the former College structure. This meant that the former *Deans* of the Faculties stood down. The *Associate Deans for Research* also stood down, and their place was taken by the *School Directors for Research*.

A further organisational change has resulted from the *Deputy Principal (Academic)* accepting a position at another university with effect from January 2021. From January 2021 the role of Chair of the REF Steering Group will be taken by the *Senior Vice-Principal (Academic Strategy and Research)*, an existing member of the Steering Group.

The *REF Project Manager* will be on maternity leave until April 2021, and it has been agreed that the role does not need replacing at this stage in the REF preparations. Other members of the REF project team are able to cover the requirements of that role at this stage of the preparation.

College Steering Group

1. Purpose

The role of the Steering Group is to act as the strategic body responsible for steering the shape quality and delivery of the REF 2021 submission.

2. Membership

(to 31st July 2020)

Chair

Deputy Principal (Academic)

Other members

Principal
 Senior VP (Academic Strategy, Partnerships & Resources)
 Vice Principal - Research Impact
 Vice Principal - Teaching Innovation
 Vice Principal and Dean of MEL
 Vice Principal and Dean of Arts
 Vice Principal and Dean of Science
 Associate Dean (Research) - MEL
 Associate Dean (Research) - Arts
 Associate Dean (Research) - Science
 Director Research and Enterprise
 Director of Human Resources
 REF Project Manager/ Strategic Initiatives Manager
 REF Manager

(from 31st July 2020)

Chair

Deputy Principal (Academic)

Other members

Principal
 Senior VP (Academic Strategy, Partnerships & Resources)
 Director of REF
 School Directors of Research and Knowledge Exchange
 Director of Research & Innovation
 Director of Human Resources
 REF Manager

(from 1st January 2021)

Chair

Senior VP (Academic Strategy, Partnerships & Resources)

Other members

Principal
 Director of REF
 School Directors of Research and Knowledge Exchange
 Director of Research & Innovation
 Director of Human Resources
 REF Manager

By invitation

The Chair may invite additional attendees where the nature of the agenda is such that the discussion would benefit from their advice or expertise

Secretary

REF Project Support Officer

3. Meeting frequency

Four meetings per year

4. Terms of Reference

The panel will:

- Provide high level advice on the effective implementation of the REF 2021 submission
- Agree, ratify and monitor the work and progress of the REF 2021 operations group
- Oversee the project risk register and propose mitigating action as appropriate
- Agree and ratify the membership of the project operations group
- Provide the operations group with timely decisions as required
- Provide a link to the university executive through its membership

5. Devolved powers

Budget approval

6. Reports to

Planning and Resources Committee

7. Groups reporting to this Committee

REF operations group

8. Effectiveness review

Annually, to review business covered and consider its effectiveness in developing and managing the College's REF 2021 submission

Unit of Assessment Advisory Groups

1. Purpose

Each Unit of Assessment has an associated advisory group. The role of the advisory groups is to support academic stakeholders in their submitting units in making timely and coordinated preparations for the REF submission, and to report to the REF Steering Group in its role as responsible owner of the project.

2. Membership

<i>Chair</i>	Head of Department
<i>Other members</i>	Unit REF Lead Director of Research Director of Impact At least one Professorial level colleague
<i>By invitation</i>	The Chair may invite additional attendees where the nature of the agenda is such that the discussion would benefit from their advice or expertise
<i>Secretary</i>	None

3. Meeting frequency

As frequently as necessary to deal with business

4. Terms of Reference

To advise the UoA REF lead in all matters related to their submitting unit preparations for the REF submission.

5. Devolved powers

None

6. Reports to

REF Steering Group

7. Groups reporting to this Committee

None

8. Effectiveness review

Annually, to review business covered and consider its effectiveness in developing and managing the College's REF 2021 submission.

Determining Research Independence appeals panel

1. Purpose

The role of the Appeals Panel is to hear and make timely decisions on appeals from academics about their determined research independence in the REF submission, and to report to the REF Steering Group in its role as responsible owner of the project.

2. Membership

<i>Chair</i>	School Director of Research (who has not been involved in the assessment of the independence of the researcher)
<i>Other members</i>	Senior academic in an allied area to the researcher (who has not been involved in the assessment of the independence of the researcher)
<i>By invitation</i>	The Chair may invite additional attendees where the nature of the agenda is such that the discussion would benefit from their advice or expertise
<i>Secretary</i>	None

3. Meeting frequency

As frequently as necessary to deal with business

4. Terms of Reference

The panel will:

- i) Convene meetings to consider appeals made by academics
- ii) Consider and make decisions on all appeals made by academics in relation to their determined research independence in the REF submission
- iii) Inform the Chair of the College REF Steering Group of decisions within 5 working days of the panel meeting

5. Devolved powers

None

6. Reports to

REF Steering Group

7. Groups reporting to this Committee

None

8. Effectiveness review

Annually, to review business covered and consider its effectiveness in developing and managing the College's REF 2021 submission.

Individual Staff Circumstances Panel

1. Purpose

The role of the Individual Staff Circumstances Panel is to oversee and make decisions in the process of inviting members of staff voluntarily to declare individual circumstances and to determine the appropriate output expectation for members of staff subject to such circumstances. The Panel will co-ordinate the application process to REF 2021 for requests for reductions in Unit of Assessment output requirements based on individual staff circumstances.

2. Membership

<i>Chair</i>	Director of Human Resources
<i>Other members</i>	Emeritus Professor Senior academic not involved in REF Senior academic Director of Research & Innovation Member of HR senior management team
<i>Secretary</i>	HR Representative

3. Meeting frequency

At least once per term, or as frequently as necessary to deal with business, time limit to be agreed once timeline is finalised.

4. Terms of Reference

The panel will:

- i) develop and agree a process for staff to disclose special circumstances voluntarily and confidentially
- ii) oversee a safe and robust process for the collection and management of information from individual members of staff relating to individual staff circumstances
- iii) based on information supplied to it and with reference to the REF 2021 published guidelines, consider all cases of individual staff circumstances, both clearly defined reductions and where a judgement is required about the effect of the circumstance, and determine the maximum expectation of outputs that can be made of individuals in each case
- iv) consider cases in accordance with REF 2021 guidance, where individual circumstances have had an exceptional effect so that an individual has been unable to produce an eligible output, and determine where a request should be made to REF 2021 for the minimum requirement of one output to be removed
- v) advise each individual of the outcome of each decision, including a brief rationale for the decision
- vi) advise the relevant Head of School and the REF Steering Group on the maximum number of outputs to be required of individuals in each case
- vii) record, retain and destroy information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and ensure adequate information is available to produce the final report on staff circumstances to REF 2021
- viii) co-ordinate applications to REF 2021 for reductions in UoA overall output requirements

- ix) oversee the organisation of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)
- x) provide advice to the REF Steering Group and Operations Group on any matters arising from EIAs

5. Reports to

REF Steering Group

6. Devolved powers

Decides on reductions in output expectations

Individual Staff Circumstances Appeal Panel

1. Purpose

The role of the Individual Staff Circumstances Appeals Panel is to review decisions on output expectations made by the Individual Staff Circumstances Panel, in light of appeals from staff members.

2. Membership

<i>Chair</i>	Senior Vice Principal (Academic Strategy, Partnerships and Resources)
<i>Other members</i>	Deputy Principal (Operations) Member of HR senior team not previously involved in the Individual Staff Circumstances Panel
<i>Secretary</i>	<i>HR Representative</i>

3. Meeting frequency

As frequently as necessary to deal with business

4. Terms of Reference

The panel will:

- i) Meet within 20 working days where possible from receipt of a written appeal by an individual member of staff against a decision of the Individual Staff Circumstances Panel.
- ii) Consider the evidence supplied to it in writing by the appellant. The Panel may request the attendance of the individual where necessary.
- iii) Seek further clarification of the case if the Panel considers this to be necessary
- iv) Provide a written response to the appellant from the Chair of the Panel within ten working days of the appeal or the decision following receipt of any additional information that is requested, where possible.
- v) Inform the Chair of the Individual Staff Circumstances Panel.

5. Reports to

REF Steering Group

6. Devolved powers

Decides on appeals against decisions related to individual staff circumstance

Operations Group

1. Purpose

The role of the Operations Group is to support academic stakeholders in making their preparations for REF submission, to support the REF steering group in its role as responsible owner of the project and to ensure that the REF 2021 submission is made in a timely and coordinated way.

2. Membership

<i>Chair</i>	Director of Research and Innovation
<i>Other members</i>	REF Project Manager [to April 2020] REF Manager Research Information & Analysis Manager Research Information Manager (Open Access) Strategic Planning Manager Representatives from HR Associate Deans [to July 2020]

<i>By invitation:</i>	Senior Information and Analysis Officer HR Systems and Information Officer Financial Analyst Financial Performance Manager IT Business Partner IT Project Lead Representative from Internal Communications Senior Governance and Data Protection Manager
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The Chair may invite additional attendees where the nature of the agenda is such that the discussion would benefit from their advice or expertise

<i>Secretary</i>	REF Project Officer
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3. Meeting frequency

Four meetings per year

4. Terms of Reference

The panel will:

- i) Provide management information to support the REF Steering Group in decision-making and management of risks.
- ii) Provide data to REF UoA Leads to support their local REF preparations. Identify interdependencies, risks and issues, and identify any duplication.
- iii) Develop and maintain effective communication channels with external and internal partners, stakeholders and staff groups and individual members of staff covered by the Project.
- iv) Consider all operational matters, and escalate to the REF Steering Group any that require their consideration / intervention.

- v) Develop a detailed Project Plan and ensure that all project actions are completed in line with the agreed plan and the Project Steering Group requirement.

5. Devolved powers

None

6. Reports to

REF steering group

7. Groups reporting to this Committee

Project working groups as required

8. Effectiveness review

Annually, to review business covered and consider its effectiveness in developing and managing the College's REF 2021 submission.

Appendix 2: Special Circumstances Reduction of Expectation Matrix

Permitted reduction in output requirements for Units of Assessment	0	0.5	1	1.5
Recommended maximum expectation of outputs for individual	5	4	4	3
1. Early Career Researchers				
Date at which the individual first met the REF definition of an ECR:				
Between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2016 inclusive	•			
Between 1 August 2016 and 31 July 2017 inclusive		•		
Between 1 August 2017 and 31 July 2018 inclusive			•	
On or after 1 August 2018				•
2. Secondments or career breaks				
Total months absent between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2020:				
Fewer than 12 calendar months	•			
At least 12 calendar months but less than 28		•		
At least 28 calendar months but less than 46			•	
46 calendar months or more				•

Permitted reduction in output requirements for Units of Assessment	0	0.5	1	1.5
Recommended maximum expectation of outputs for individual	5	4	4	3
3. Qualifying periods of family-related leave				
Each discrete period of statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave taken substantially during the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020, regardless of the length		•		
Each discrete period of additional paternity or adoption leave ¹ or shared parental leave ² lasting for four months or more, taken substantially during the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020		•		
Each discrete period of additional paternity or adoption leave of less than four months, which had an impact in combination with other factors – e.g. ongoing childcare responsibilities		•		
Each discrete period of additional paternity or adoption leave of less than four months, in combination with other circumstances – e.g. secondments or career breaks		•		
4. Circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6				
Category A submitted staff who are junior clinical academics – i.e. clinically qualified academics who are still completing their clinical training in medicine or dentistry and have not gained a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) or its equivalent prior to 31 July 2020.			•	

¹ Additional paternity or adoption leave refers to leave of up to 26 weeks that is taken to care for a child where the person's spouse, partner or civil partner was entitled to statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave, and has since returned to work. It may be taken by parents of either gender.

² 'Shared parental leave' refers to leave of up to 50 weeks that can be shared by parents having a baby or adopting a child. This can be taken in blocks, or all in one go.

For each of the following, the Individual Staff Circumstance Panel will make a judgement about the effect of the circumstances in terms of the equivalent period of time absent and apply the reductions set out in 2 (Career breaks) by analogy. A brief rationale will be provided for each judgement.				
Permitted reduction in output requirements for Units of Assessment	0	0.5	1	1.5
Recommended maximum expectation of outputs for individual	5	4	4	3
5. Disability (defined in the <i>Guidance on codes of practice</i>, Table 1)				
Fewer than 12 calendar months	•			
At least 12 calendar months but less than 28		•		
At least 28 calendar months but less than 46			•	
46 calendar months or more				•
6. Ill-health, injury or mental health conditions				
Fewer than 12 calendar months	•			
At least 12 calendar months but less than 28		•		
At least 28 calendar months but less than 46			•	
46 calendar months or more				•
7. Pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare circumstances that fall outside of defined allowances described above				
Fewer than 12 calendar months	•			
At least 12 calendar months but less than 28		•		
At least 28 calendar months but less than 46			•	
46 calendar months or more				•

Permitted reduction in output requirements for Units of Assessment	0	0.5	1	1.5
Recommended maximum expectation of outputs for individual	5	4	4	3
8. Other caring responsibilities (e.g. caring for an elderly or disabled family member)				
Fewer than 12 calendar months	•			
At least 12 calendar months but less than 28		•		
At least 28 calendar months but less than 46			•	
46 calendar months or more				•
9. Gender Reassignment				
Fewer than 12 calendar months	•			
At least 12 calendar months but less than 28		•		
At least 28 calendar months but less than 46			•	
46 calendar months or more				•
10. Other circumstances related to protected characteristics listed in REF 2018/03				
Fewer than 12 calendar months	•			
At least 12 calendar months but less than 28		•		
At least 28 calendar months but less than 46			•	
46 calendar months or more				•

11. For part-time working, the equivalent 'total number of months absence' should be calculated by multiplying the number of months worked part-time by the full-time equivalent (FTE) not worked during those months. For example, an individual worked part-time for 30 months at 0.6 FTE. The number of equivalent months absent = $30 \times 0.4 = 12$.
12. Part-time working is taken into account within the calculation for the overall number of outputs required for the unit. Therefore, reduction requests for the unit on the basis of part-time working hours should only be made exceptionally (for example, where the FTE of a staff member late in the assessment period does not reflect their average FTE over the period as a whole).
13. Where individuals have had a combination of circumstances that have a defined reduction in outputs, these may be accumulated up to the maximum expectation of the individual being reduced to one output. For each circumstance, the relevant reduction should be applied and added together to calculate the maximum reduction.
14. Where an Early Career Researcher has also taken a career break or been seconded, the period of time since 1 January 2014 up until the individual met the definition of an Early Career Researcher should be calculated in months, and the reduction outlined in 2 above should be applied.
15. When combining circumstances, only one circumstance will be taken into account for any period of time during which they took place simultaneously.
16. Where an individual's circumstances have had an exceptional effect on their ability to work productively through the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020 so that they have not been able to produce an eligible output, a request may be made for the minimum of one requirement to be removed. See part 4 section f for more information.
17. Where an individual has a combination of circumstances with a defined reduction in outputs **and** additional circumstances that require a judgement, a single judgement will be made about the appropriate reduction in outputs, taking into account all of the circumstances.

Appendix 3: Governance structure

