


University of
South Wales
Prifysgol
De Cymru

REF 2021 CODE OF PRACTICE

December 2019

Updated October 2020

SUMMARY

This code of practice sets out the University's approach to the fair and transparent identification of staff with significant responsibility for research, determining who is an independent researcher and the selection of outputs. This document also includes the University's approach to supporting staff with individual circumstances.

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Part 1: Introduction

Codes should address the following:

- How the code relates to broader institutional policies/strategies that promote and support E&D.
- An update of actions taken since REF 2014.
- How the institution is addressing the principles of Transparency, Consistency, Accountability, and Inclusivity in demonstrating fairness (see paragraph 39 guidance on submissions).
- Reference to these principles should also be made, as appropriate, in completing the sections below.
- How the code is being communicated to staff across the institution (including to those on leave of absence), through various mechanisms and channels, including the staff intranet.

Key points and legislative context

This document was developed according to the requirements in the REF 2019/03 'guidance on codes of practice', published in January 2019. All institutions that wish to submit to REF 2021 are required to apply a code of practice on the fair and transparent identification of staff with significant responsibility for research (SRR), determining research independence, and the selection of outputs, including approaches to supporting individual staff circumstances. The code of practice also includes details of our appeals processes and the equality impact assessments (EIAs) that will be conducted and subsequently used to inform the decision-making aspects of our preparations for REF 2021. Furthermore, this document also addresses the following four principles: transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity.

The code of practice frames the University's decision making processes in relation to REF 2021 and in the context of equality and diversity, and all relevant legislation, to ensure that it does not discriminate against any of the protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex (including breast feeding), sexual orientation. Caring responsibilities (children, older and disabled people), Welsh Language (Wales only), family-related leave, part-time employment status, early career researchers and junior clinical academics are also recognised in REF 2021.

The Code applies to all staff involved in preparations for REF 2021. This includes staff who are involved in decision-making and advisory roles, as well as all Category A eligible staff and Category A submitted staff employed by the University of South Wales (USW).

For the purposes of the REF, **Category A eligible** staff are defined as follows:

'Academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, on the payroll of the submitting institution on the census date, and whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'teaching and research'. Staff should have a substantive connection with the submitting institution. Staff on 'research only' contracts should meet the definition of an independent researcher. Staff meeting these criteria will form the total eligible staff pool but may not necessarily be submitted.'*

** Individuals whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'teaching and research' are staff returned to the Higher Education Statistics Agency Staff Collection with an academic employment function of either 'Academic contract that is research only' or 'Academic contract that is both teaching and research' (identified as codes '2' or '3' in the ACEMPFUM field).*

In USW, Category A eligible staff would be those who's primary employment function is 'teaching and research' and 'research only'.

For the purposes of the REF, **Category A submitted** staff are defined as follows:

'Category A eligible staff who have been identified as having significant responsibility for research on the census date.'

University context

USW is a large dynamic HEI at the vanguard of innovative change within Wales and beyond; it applies its knowledge and research to the real-life problems facing people, businesses and communities. It aspires to be unrivalled for professional, vocationally-focused education and research informed innovation and engagement. USW offers a full range of qualifications, from foundation degrees to PhD study and employs approximately 2,660 staff of which 747 are academic staff. The University is a member of the UK Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and gained accreditation via the HR Excellence in Research Award in 2014 (see below). We are committed to developing the next generation of researchers, and we do so in line with the seven principles of the Concordat. These principles ensure that institutions positively support the way that researchers are recruited, recognised and valued.

Academic Plan

The University Strategy 2014-20 outlines a vision for USW to be: *"The University of choice in Wales and beyond for students, organisations and communities who value vocationally focused education and applied research which provides solutions to problems that affect society and the economy."* The Academic Plan 2014-20 is a vehicle to *"bring the University Strategy to life"* by providing clarity to our strategic direction, for example, portfolio development, progression management, staff development and learning environments. The Plan is supported by three underpinning key enabling plans, namely the People Plan, Finance and Infrastructure Plan and Engagement Plan. Featured in the People Plan is a strategy to ensure that equality and diversity are embedded across the University and are built into our staff development and procedures – these are outlined in our Strategic Equality Plan.

Strategic Equality Plan

The University has a Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020 that provides a clear framework for promoting equality and diversity and embedding the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. A new plan will be developed in 2019, addressing our equality and diversity objectives for the period 2020-2024.

The current plan details eight strategic equality objectives:

- Culture and Governance;
- Collaboration, Communication and Engagement
- Diversity of Student Body and Student Experience
- Attracting, Retaining and Developing Staff
- Accessibility
- Inclusivity in Research
- Equal Pay

- Data Collection and Monitoring

The University's objective for inclusivity in research is to develop an inclusive approach to research conducted by USW Group staff, whereby the involvement of people from protected characteristic groups is promoted and barriers to the participation of people from diverse groups are removed.

Charter Marks

The University's commitment to achieving our equality and diversity objectives are evidenced by our Charter Marks, with examples provided below.

HR Excellence in Research

The University retained its HR Excellence in Research Award in 2018, acknowledging the support it provides to researchers. Our future strategy focusses on four broad areas; 1) Deepening our commitment to equality and diversity. 2) Leadership and management development, 3) Supporting academic career development, and 4) Professional development of research support staff. Of particular note is the launch of the Equality Champions Scheme, Fair Play 30/Chwarae Teg 30, designed to provide staff with a 'safe' person to ask questions relating to equality and diversity.

Fair Play 30/Chwarae Teg 30

Each Faculty and Corporate Department of the University have a Fair Play 30 Champion who have volunteered to be active and visible champions for equality, diversity and inclusion. They have all been provided with training, and are visible by special lanyards, badges and door signs. Anyone is able to engage with a Fair Play 30 champion to ask for advice on equality and diversity issues. Furthermore, we know from our work with the Women in Academia Network that many female academics are not comfortable discussing potential part-time working or flexible working with colleagues as it may be seen as a sign of weakness or a lack of commitment. The Fair Play 30 initiative seeks to address these concerns.

The scheme won the Advancing Staff Equality award at the Guardian University Awards in April 2019. It won recognition at this national level for *'having a profound impact on creating a culture of inclusivity'*.

Athena SWAN

USW has been a member of the Athena SWAN Charter since 2012. It successfully achieved a Bronze Institutional Athena SWAN Award in 2014, and will be resubmitting a bid in 2019.

update to the code of practice, October 2020

The University was successful in retaining the award in 2020.

end of update

Stonewall

We want to allow our staff to be themselves when they are at work. In 2016, the University was proud to join Stonewall Cymru's Diversity Champions Scheme to ensure that all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff (LGBT+) are accepted without exception in the workplace, promoting inclusion and supporting equality. In January 2019, USW made number 43 in the Stonewall list of the UK's Top 100 LGBT+ inclusive employers, one of seven new entries from the education sector to make it into the top 100. It is the only University in Wales to be a new entry in the list of top performers.

Research Strategy

The University Research Strategy was launched in 2018 after consultation with the research community. Our Research Strategy 2018-28 aims to be succinct, inclusive, supportive and encouraging, with high expectations on individuals and teams. It commits to bringing the impacts of our research insights and innovations into the lives of local, national and international communities and businesses we serve. Our public purpose means that we are committed to nurturing a pipeline of research talent and to creating a research environment that enables all our students and staff to thrive. Our commitment to develop the next generation of researchers is key to the strategy, and we ensure that our researchers are provided with pathways to promotion in line with the UK Concordat to Support the Career Development for Researchers.

Update of actions taken since REF 2014

The University's Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) on the final submission to REF 2014 showed that, of the 128 staff submitted to REF 2014, 36 (28%) were female. This compares with 62 females in the RAE 2008 (28% female). The EIA also showed that 8.5% of all academic staff identified as BME and 4% declared a disability, compared with 9.3% and 3%, respectively, of those submitted to REF 2014.

The University's REF 2014 Equality Impact Assessment reviewed this information for any unconscious bias, none was found and no appeals were made on the grounds of inequality in the selection process. The University's applications to the Athena Swan Bronze Award and the HR Excellence in Research Award each included a specific data on REF 2014 data and RAE 2008.

In preparing for REF 2021, gender and other protected characteristics are being considered throughout the process. To help increase the number of female academics submitted to REF, initiatives such as the Women Development Programme and Mentoring scheme have been developed. The bespoke, in-house Women Development Programme, is a year-long programme for 20 women, available only by application. The course is in its third year and has been oversubscribed for all three cohorts. Feedback from the previous cohorts has been overwhelmingly positive with 100 per cent of participants saying the programme has had a positive impact on their working lives.

As a member of the Concordat to support career development of researchers our accreditation via the HR Excellence in Research Award, a comprehensive range of support is available to academics via our Research and Business Engagement Department (RBE). CPD events take place across all campuses and are advertised via lunchtime roadshows hosted by Faculties that highlight support available to academics and provide networking opportunities.

In 2016, RBE launched a CPD survey for academics to understand support needed. The survey showed that 100 per cent of delegates thought the events were either very good or excellent, which is a 15 per cent increase on the previous year. Attendees also agreed that lunchtime bite-size courses were preferable to webinars or all-day courses. This information informs future CPD provision.

The CPD programme consisted of 20 workshops, delivered to 177 academic staff in the previous year. Workshops included a series of five one-hour sessions including:

- Understanding Impact
- Career Pathways
- Developing Collaborative Partnerships
- Developing Commercial Projects to Meet Client Needs
- Developing Successful External Funding Proposals

Workshops using external facilitators were provided to support the funding, intellectual property and impact agendas and one-to-one coaching for academics considering applications for Reader and Professorial titles was available. USW is a founding member of the Welsh Crucible, a Times HE award-winning programme that supports talented early to mid- career researchers working in any discipline. The University has supported 20 researchers through this, 10 of which are female.

Principles of the Code of practice

The University addresses the principles of transparency, consistency, accountability, and inclusivity in more detail in Parts 2, 3 and 4 of this code of practice. We will demonstrate fairness to our staff in the decisions and processes involved in the identification of SRR, researcher independence, the selection of outputs, and the process for the staff to support individual staff circumstances.

Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The code of practice will be subject to a consultation process with staff, a copy of the code of practice will be made openly accessible via the University intranet. • The final code of practice will also be made available to staff via the intranet. • Any decision making process will be transparent and justifiable against the criteria in this code of practice, and will be made in a timely manner.
Consistency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give due consideration whether we vary our approach to key decision making in the REF process based on different disciplinary practices, and ensure that they are non-discriminatory in their own right. • We apply the criteria in this code of practice consistently to all Category A eligible staff on the USW payroll regardless of any protected characteristic. • The University will provide clear and consistent communication to staff around key decisions. • That the University use their relevant data systems/ software consistently to manage the REF submission process.
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountable leadership is provided at both central and faculty level, and these staff will receive appropriate E&D training. • The University will also ensure that the systems used to manage the submission to REF 2021 have the correct governance to support the principles of the code of practice and data management considerations, specifically around GDPR and handing data of a sensitive nature. • Decisions will be justifiable, consistent and applied fairly and transparently with the opportunity for staff to appeal decisions where appropriate within the scope of the code of practice.

Inclusivity

- We will be clear about our focus on research excellence in REF 2021.
- Recognise the contribution from all Category A eligible staff and support the success of these staff, at all stages of academic and research career.
- We will use and be guided by any relevant Equality Impact Assessments throughout the REF 2021 submission period.
- Provide the opportunity for staff to contribute to the process to identify staff with SRR, determining research independence and the selection of outputs.
- Publish our code of practice in the mediums of Welsh and English.

Communication to staff

Prior to the development of this code of practice, the University applied the principles of the 'USW REF 2014 code of practice on the selection of staff for submission' as an overarching guide for preparations to REF 2021. As our preparations began in 2015, it provided the necessary confidence for the University to proceed with preparations for submission to REF 2021 fairly and transparently, and provided an opportunity for staff to contribute from the outset. Thus, we have openly communicated to staff about our preparations for the REF. In the same spirit, the University will actively communicate with staff on the code of practice for our submission to REF 2021 as follows:

The University intranet: all members of staff have access to the University intranet, 'The Hub', which will provide a space for REF specific information for staff and include the code of practice. The consultation on the code of practice was announced on the main 'The Hub' homepage so that it was openly visible for staff to access.

Direct email correspondence: in addition to the information provided on 'The Hub', staff will be advised about the code of practice via email correspondence from specific colleagues involved in the management of the REF submission process such as the PVC-R, Deans, Heads of Research, REF Leads, and colleagues from Research and Innovation Services (RISe – a department within RBE). A direct REF 2021 University email address also provides staff with an additional method of correspondence and managed by colleagues in RISe responsible for supporting the REF.

University bulletin: key announcements could be featured on the University weekly newsletter to staff, via email. This correspondence highlights the most 'important' news of the week featured on 'The Hub', including awards, surveys, and policy announcements.

Key University committees/groups: agenda items for discussion on key University Committees/Groups; Executive, Academic Board, Faculty Executives, Research Committees (University and Faculty), REF Working and Strategy Groups and the Equality and Diversity Steering Group. For many of these committees/groups, the REF is a standing item on the agenda.

One to one staff engagement: we will continue to offer one to one communication with staff and will be sensitive to ensuring that the advice given on the code of practice is accurate and informative. REF Leads and line managers will be the main contacts for staff, which provides a link with the development and performance review (DPR)/annual appraisal process. Staff will also be signposted to where they can access the further support required.

Staff who are absent from the University: line managers would identify these staff and maintain contact who are absent from the University. In such event, the line manager will have had a discussion with the staff member about the best way to maintain contact and the frequency of the contact they wish to have with the University.

Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

Part 2 need only be completed where the institution will not be submitting 100 per cent of Category A eligible staff in one or more UOA.

Grounds for decision-making

The REF 2021 guidance on submissions requires institutions to submit all eligible staff with SRR (paragraphs 138 to 144). To summarise, *'staff with significant responsibility for research are those for whom explicit time and resources are made available to engage actively in independent research, and that it is an expectation of their job role'*.

As a post-92 institution, anchored in its region and promoting our civic mission, it is of great pride to us that the University offers its rich and diverse expertise to communities, which value our vocationally focussed education and applied research, providing solutions that affect society and the economy. Thus, to deliver on our mission, the expertise of our academic staff can range from research, innovation and engagement, professional practice and learning and teaching - all equally valued. For example, we recognise four routes to Professor at USW. These are research and development, innovation and engagement, learning and teaching, and professional practice.

The nature of our institution, therefore, is such that our academic staff are not all 'significantly' focussed on conducting research as part of their role. In recognition of this, USW feels that it would not be pertinent to submit 100 per cent Category A eligible staff in one or more Unit of Assessment. We are anticipating, however, that in one or two Units of Assessment (UOAs), 100 percent Category A eligible staff could meet the criteria for identifying SRR.

Criteria for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

As the University does not intend to submit 100 per cent of eligible staff as SRR, it has developed a process whereby it can identify these staff in a fair and consistent manner and adhere to the principles underpinning this policy. The University have considered the indicators provided in the REF 2021 guidance on submissions (paragraph 141) to establish our criteria for identifying SRR.

To identify SRR, the following criteria will apply to all Category A eligible staff whose primary employment function is 'Teaching and Research' on the USW payroll on the REF 2021 census date for staff, 31st July 2020. For staff whose primary employment function is 'research only', they must be independent researchers to meet the definition of Category A eligible staff.

Criteria to identify SRR for staff whose primary employment function is 'teaching and research'

<p>Explicit time and resource made available for research</p>	<p>Staff identified as SRR will have a 20% minimum research allocation in the academic workload model.</p> <p>All Professors and Associate Professors on a Research and Development route are by default deemed to have SRR as they receive a minimum 30% and 20% respectively in their workload allocation for research.</p> <p>All other Professors and Associate Professors on Learning and Teaching, Innovation and Engagement and Professional Practice routes will be reviewed, determined on a case-by case basis through workload model allocations and/or appraisal objectives. This also applies specifically in relation to how the conservatoire (Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama) makes their arrangements.</p>
<p>To actively engage in independent research</p>	<p>All Professors/Associate Professor conferred on a Research and Development route are assumed that they are independent researchers.</p> <p>All other staff identified as SRR are assumed by default that they are independent researchers.</p>
<p>Exceptions</p>	<p>Staff who are undertaking a directed programme of research such as PhD. However, this exception will be reviewed on a case-by case basis to take into account variations in practices across different subject areas.</p>

Criteria to identify SRR for staff whose primary employment function is ‘research only’

To meet the definition of Category A eligible staff, these staff will need to satisfy the criteria for research independence as stated in Part 3 of the code of practice.

Where staff meet the definition of research independence, they will be considered as having SRR and thus, will be Category A submitted staff.

Small submissions

If there are cases where the University makes a decision to apply for exemption for a small submission, the University will attempt to align members of staff identified as SRR from these small submissions in another UOA, based on ‘fit’ of the research.

Variations in employment practices by the UOA

We have carefully considered our submission approach and have identified that some aspects of the criteria to identify SRR may vary across UOAs, particularly in the areas of social science, arts and humanities where staff who undertake PhDs may still be identified as SRR.

Decision-making process

The process to identify SRR is being applied consistently across the institution according to the stages and timeline provided below. The process utilises our research information management

system, Pure, which is synced with the University HR information management system and updated nightly. Thus, we receive consistent and up to date information on staff in order to assist with identifying SRR status and managing the development of our submissions to REF 2021.

Our approach to identifying SRR was approved by the University Executive in June 2019. This has followed discussions on identifying SRR at REF-relevant University Committees/Groups during 2018. The decision on the process to identify SRR will not lead to any changes in staff contracts as a direct result of the implementation of these criteria.

There may be instances where adjustments to the workload allocation model for some staff may be necessary, however, to ensure that part-time staff are treated equally compared to full-time staff. There may also be other instances where adjustments will be required, but they will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and monitored in the run up to our final submission. Such cases may include where staff have been asked to take on additional teaching duties that have impacted on their time allocated to conduct research.

In all instances, however, the identification of SRR will be based upon the expectations of staff as a function of employment, and not upon the quality or volume of what has been delivered as a result of that employment function. This adheres to paragraph 139 of the REF 2021 guidance on submissions.

Applying the criteria for SRR

We have used the term 'REF audit' to describe the process by which the University will identify SRR.

Stage	Responsibility	Date
1. Deans, Heads of Research (HoR), and relevant Heads of Corporate Departments are notified of the start of the REF audit to identify SRR.	PVC-R	January 2019
2. Notification of REF Audit to identify SRR, via email, to all faculty academic staff, and relevant corporate departments.	Deans, Heads of Corporate Departments	January 2019
3. Staff self-select their current FTE allocation in Pure for research and scholarly activity in Pure.	Academic staff	Early February 2019
4. Staff notify their line manager that they have completed the self-selection process in Pure.	Academic staff.	Early February 2019
5. Line Managers review the FTE allocations in Pure, and discuss where necessary with individual staff.	Line managers	Mid-February 2019
6. HoR, REF Leads and relevant Heads of Corporate Departments receive a report on FTE allocation for research and scholarly activity, and current alignment of UOA(s).	RISe	Late February 2019

7.	Initial review of the data by Faculties. Discussions with individual staff members occur, where necessary.	HoR, REF Leads and Heads of Corporate Departments	End of February 2019
8.	Faculties cross-refer the self-selected data to the workload allocations for staff in each of the following categories: Research and Scholarly Activity to the level of the three sub-headings of: Research; Enterprise, and Engagement; Learning, Teaching and Professional Practice.	Deans, HoR and other Faculty staff where appropriate e.g. Heads of Administration.	April – end May 2019
9.	Staff with a minimum 20% allocated to the sub-heading of 'research' will be identified as SRR and aligned with an appropriate UOA(s).	RiSe	May – June 2019
10.	Final 'sense check' of data and staff identified as SRR.	Faculties, RiSe	August – October 2019
11.	Feedback to staff on SRR status: - Initial correspondence from the University via an all staff email. - Individual email to all Category A eligible staff to notify them of the outcome of the REF audit process, and whether or not they have been identified as SRR and the rationale.	PVC-R Deans or HoR	October 2019 October 2019
12.	SRR status to be confirmed for all newly appointed members of staff who meet the Category A eligible criteria, on commencement of their role at the University. Staff will be aligned to appropriate UOAs and relevant REF Lead(s) informed, if staff are identified as SRR. Monitor any changes in duties for staff.	Line Managers (in discussion with Deans and HoR)	November 2019 – end of July 2020
13.	In the interests of transparency, individual staff will be aware of their current status with regards to SRR. This data will also be used to include staff in the Category A submitted pool of staff in the REF module in Pure. In both cases, the information will only be visible to the staff member and authorised users.	RiSe	November 2019 and August 2020
14.	Final confirmation ('sense check') of SRR and thus the University's Category A submitted staff pool.	Deans, HoR, RiSe, HR	August 2020

15. *	<p>Feedback to staff to confirm status in REF 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial correspondence from the University via an all staff email. - Individual email to all Category A eligible staff to notify them of the outcome of the REF audit process, and whether or not they have been identified as SRR and the rationale. 		August 2020 / September 2020
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* The University recognises the limitations of this stage on staff availability but are bound by the REF 2021 timetable; census date for staff, 31st July 2020. This means that the final feedback on the status with regards to SRR occurs at a time when academic staff typically take extended periods of annual leave following the completion of the teaching and examination commitments of the academic year (and prior to the commencement of the new academic year). It is necessary to advise staff of their status with regards to SRR at this time, to allow a sufficient period for any appeals, and make the necessary adjustments to final versions of the submissions if required.

Communication to staff

Throughout our preparations, we have sought to be inclusive in our approach and involve our staff in the process to apply the criteria for SRR. For our mock REF 2017/18 exercise, the University issued a call to all staff to ask whether they would like to contribute to the REF. Following the confirmation of the criteria for identifying SRR, we have continued to involve staff in the process as detailed below. This has had many positive effects, not only to ensure staff are more aware of the REF and its purpose but provide the opportunity for staff to consider their own career trajectory and encourage discussions with line managers.

The criteria to identify SRR will be communicated along with the development and consultation of the code of practice, as well as part of the REF audit process as described above. As our submission to REF is of importance to the University as a whole, we have sought to communicate our intentions to all staff at the institution, and not just those who are directly involved in the REF.

When we communicate the code of practice, however, we will draw attention to the criteria for identifying SRR, research independence (see Part 3), and the selection of outputs including the process for declaring staff circumstances (see Part 4) to 'teaching and research' and 'research only' staff.

Consultation on the Code of Practice

We conducted a University-wide consultation to staff in May 2019. The consultation was open to all staff via the following communication channels:

- **'All academic staff' faculty emails**, which include 'teaching and research' and 'research only' staff.
- Notification via the **University intranet**, 'The Hub', advertised on the main headlines of the home page, so that the consultation was accessible to all staff at the University.
- A copy was also provided to our key staff representative group for circulation to members.

Staff were invited to respond to a USW REF 2021 email address managed by RISE. In consultation with the PVC-R, all comments were considered, and amendments made to the code of practice where appropriate.

Feedback to staff on the consultation process and the submitted version of the code of practice will be provided via 'The Hub' and relevant University committees; University Executive, REF Strategy Group, REF Working Group, Academic Board, University Research Committee, Faculty Research Committees and the University Equality and Diversity Steering Group.

Feedback on SRR status

Mentioned above are the stages at which staff are notified of their SRR status as part of the 'REF audit' process. Feedback to staff on their SRR status will be provided by email from the Dean or Head of Research in autumn 2019 and summer 2020, after the census date for staff. As part of this feedback process, staff will be notified of the process of appeals and complaints.

Consultation with staff representative groups

The staff representative group the University has consulted with in order to seek agreement for the criteria to identify SRR in REF 2021 is **The University and College Union (UCU)**.

The University has consulted with UCU representatives on the code of practice, specifically on the criteria for identifying SRR. Discussions have also focussed on the inclusion of outputs of staff who have been made redundant (see Part 4).

The following consultations have occurred:

- **January 2019:** UCU representatives informed of the intention to conduct a REF audit process in January-April 2019.
- **April 2019:** The PVC-R and representatives from HR and RBE met with UCU representatives on the 4th April 2019. This was an initial meeting to discuss the University's approach to identifying SRR, submission of outputs from staff who have been made redundant and other matters relating to the REF and the development of the code of practice.
- **April 2019:** Further information requested by UCU was provided by the PVC-R to clarify the following points raised at the meeting on the 4th April 2019:
 - A summary of the REF 2021 guidance
 - Criteria for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research
 - Former staff, in particular including outputs of staff who have been made redundant
 - Equality impact assessments
 - USW REF 2021 UOAs
 - Appointment process of REF Leads to each UOA
- **June 2019:** UCU have been engaged and been involved in a number of discussions for the formulation of USW's Code of Practice.

Staff and committees

USW has maintained a 'rolling REF' approach since the submission to REF 2014. A governance structure has been in place during early stages of our preparations for REF but has evolved in order to support the key changes since REF 2014, and our overall approach to REF 2021. Below are the staff and committees involved in the University's REF 2021 preparations, their type of role and mode of operation. Annexes 1-9 provides the composition and membership of the committees/groups.

Staff

Staff	Responsibilities in REF 2021
<p>Pro-Vice Chancellor, Research (PVC-R)</p> <p>Decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of the Research Strategy. - Strategic management of REF 2021 preparations. - Develop and implement the REF 2021 code of practice. - Review and recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor for approval to submit in March 2021. - Chair the following committees: University Research Committee, REF Strategy Group, REF Working Group, REF Individual Staff Circumstances Group - Member of University Academic Board and Executive.
<p>Deans</p> <p>Decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for identifying SRR and determining research independence at faculty level. - Member of the REF Strategy Group and University Research Committee.
<p>Heads of Research (HoR)</p> <p>Decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with the Dean, responsible for identifying SRR and determining research independence at faculty level. - Oversight of the work of the REF Leads to develop submissions. - Chair of Faculty Research Committee. - Member of the REF Strategy Group and University Research Committee.
<p>REF Leads</p> <p>Decision-making and advisory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivery of REF submissions by managing the review of outputs, impact case studies and environment statements and appointment of external reviewers. - Recommendations on the selection of outputs. - Members of the REF Working Group and Faculty Research Committees.
<p>Human Resources (HR) (E&D Partner, Head of HR & Development, HR Information and Systems Manager)</p> <p>Advisory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advise on the development of the code of practice including the identification of SRR, EIAs, and appeals process. - Advice on the development of REF 2021 E&D training. - Verification of data using HR data systems. - Member of the REF Strategy Group (Head of HR & Development).
<p>Research and Business Engagement (RBE) (Director, Head of RISE, Research Excellence Manager and Strategic Research Projects Officer)</p> <p>Advisory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management of Pure to assist with the REF audit to identify SRR and the management of the submissions, which includes the selection of outputs. - Support the PVC-R in developing the code of practice and operational management of the submission to REF, supporting Faculties and individual staff. - Membership and support to REF related Committees/Groups, and University Research Committee. - Director of RBE is Chair and member of E&D related University Committees/Groups. These include the Equality and Diversity Steering Group, Gender, Gender Identity & Sexual Orientation Equality Group (Chair) Athena Swan Steering Group and HR Excellence in Research Steering Group (Chair).

Appointment of REF Leads

The appointment process for REF Leads is consistent across the institution, with a role description, and the process of appointment developed using the USW REF 2014 code of practice.

The process is as follows:

- Call sent to faculty staff, which includes the role description.
- Applications received by RISE (one page expression of interest and an accompanying CV).
- Applicants that meet the criteria in the role description are invited for interview.
- Interviews are conducted with a senior member of staff on the panel.
- Appointments made are ratified by the REF Strategy Group (formally ratified by University Research Committee prior to the establishment of the REF Strategy Group)

Committees

Committee [Annex]		Responsibility
Executive [1]	Role: Decision-making Level: University Chair: Vice-Chancellor Record-keeping: Notes	- Approval to submit to REF for each UOA, and the institutional-level environment statement. - Approval to submit code of practice.
REF Strategy Group [2]	Role: Advisory Level: University Chair: PVC-R Record-keeping: Minutes	- Strategic oversight of REF preparations. - Development of the code of practice. - Receive data on EIAs and take actions where necessary.
REF Working Group [3]	Role: Advisory Level: University Chair: PVC-R Record-keeping: Minutes	- Operational oversight of REF preparations, reporting to the REF Strategy Group. - Review and feedback on the development of the code of practice.
Academic Board [4]	Role: Advisory Level: University Chair: Vice-Chancellor Record-keeping: Minutes	- Notification of the development and final submission of the code of practice. - Academic oversight of REF preparations.
Research Committee [5]	Role: Advisory Level: University Chair: PVC-R Record-keeping: Minutes	- Academic oversight of REF preparations. - Receives minutes of the REF Strategy Group.
Faculty Research Committee [6]	Role: Advisory Level: Faculty Chair: HoR or nominee Record-keeping: Minutes	- Oversight of the preparations of UOAs at faculty level. - Oversight of applying the code of practice at faculty level.
Equality and Diversity Steering Group [7]	Role: Advisory Level: University Chair: University Secretary Record-keeping: minutes	- Consultation on the development of the code of practice. - Will be informed of outcomes of EIAs where appropriate.
USW REF Appeals Panel [8]	Role: Decision-making Level: University Chair: TBC Record-keeping: minutes (redacted for wider circulation)	- Consider appeals SRR and research independence status decisions. - Consider appeals around individual staff circumstances decisions.
USW REF Individual Staff Circumstances Panel [9]	Role: Decision making Level: University Chair: PVC-R Record-keeping: Minutes (redacted for wider circulation)	- Decision on reductions for staff circumstances. - Recommendations on the potential to submit a unit reduction requests and requests to remove the minimum of one requirement.

Internal output review teams	Role: Advisory Level: UOA Chair: REF Lead Record keeping: Actions	- Review of outputs proposed by staff.
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Training

The University must ensure that steps are taken to ensure that appropriate training is provided to staff/members of relevant University Committees who are involved in any of the decision-making processes to identify SRR, determine research independence and output selection for REF 2021.

Through discussion with HR, we have discussed the different approaches to provide E&D training, specifically focussed on unconscious bias as related to REF 2021. We will base our training around the provision offered by Advance HE, as follows:

- i. Commission of the bespoke workshop 'EDI, Unconscious Bias and REF 2021 Training' in October 2019 for all staff with decision making roles in our REF 2021 preparations.
- ii. Advice provided to internal output reviewers using the Advance HE annotated material on E&D and the REF, and activity on 'understanding the terminology of equality law'. Permission to use this training material has been granted by Advance HE due to our institutional membership and delegate attendance (Research Excellence Manager) at the Advance HE workshop for practitioners 'Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and the Research Excellence Framework 2021' (April 2019). Training will be credited to Advance HE, will only be used for REF purposes and will not be shared beyond the University.

Appeals and complaints

The University will consider appeals from staff on the outcome of the REF audit process to identify SRR. It will also consider appeals on outcomes to determine research independence (see Part 3).

The University has put in place a timely process to inform staff of their SRR status (including the rationale) so that an appeal can be considered before the final submission is made.

Appeals will only be considered from staff who are not considered SRR based due to:

- i. The criteria for identifying SRR was not applied in accordance with the code of practice.
- ii. Inaccuracy in the data used to applying the criteria for SRR.
- iii. Exceptions to the criteria for SRR where they are due to variations in employment practices by UOA.

In the event that staff wish to appeal on the grounds that they have been identified as SRR, then the appeals panel will also consider these appeals, on the same grounds as i to iii. above.

Staff may not appeal for the following reasons:

- i. The criteria to identify SRR or any other aspect of the REF 2021 criteria.
- ii. On the basis of academic judgement on output quality (see Part 3). .

Staff will be informed of the appeals process in the correspondence they receive from the Dean/HoR on their SRR status (October 2019 and August 2020). Should staff wish to appeal the

decision, they will have one month from the date at which they receive this correspondence. Details of the appeals process will also be made available via the University intranet. Successful appeals received will allow staff the opportunity to apply for a reduction in outputs for staff circumstances (see Part 4). The appeals process will remain open to new staff who will be able to appeal up to one month from notification of SRR status.

Staff are strongly advised to attempt to resolve any issues with their SRR status informally with the Dean and HoR who will attempt to resolve the matter. Where this has not been possible, staff may appeal by completing and sending a short proforma (Annex 10) to the Chair of the appeals panel. Supporting evidence relevant to the case may also be submitted if necessary.

To adhere to the REF code of practice requirements in paragraph 77b, the composition of the appeals panel **is independent of the staff involved in identifying SRR** (Annex 8).

The appeals panel will consider the case and the outcome will be communicated via written feedback detailing the rationale for the decision. The appeals panel will deliver their outcomes in a timely manner with respect to the REF preparations. The decision of the appeals panel is final, although staff may request face-to-face feedback from a member of the panel to discuss the outcome - if not in favour of SRR status. Where there are successful appeals on SRR status, the status of the staff member for REF 2021 will be aligned to the appropriate UOA.

Anonymised data will be reported to appropriate individuals/committees/groups involved in the oversight of the University's preparations to REF.

The funding bodies will enable individuals to make a formal complaint if the University's code of practice is not implemented fairly and consistently. A robust independent process to consider complaints where they cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the University will be offered. Further details on this complaints procedure will be published in autumn 2019.

Equality impact assessments (EIAs)

The funding bodies require the University to conduct EIAs to help ensure that we are not inadvertently discriminating against any particular groups by reference to one or more protected characteristic.

We are required to submit our final version of our EIA to the funding bodies after the REF 2021 submission deadline. This will reflect the final analysis of data submitted to REF. We will respect the GDPR regulation and will not identify any individuals when delivering the EIAs. Thus, due to the expected size of some of our UOAs, the data and narrative for the EIAs will be conducted at faculty level. A copy of the EIA will be published for all staff to consider. If a significant impact has been identified the University will publish the full information – this is a legal requirement in Wales.

The University will conduct a series of separate EIAs that cover each of these policies and procedures in the code of practice to:

- Identify SRR
- Determine research independence
- Select outputs.

At the following stages of our REF 2021 preparations:

- When preparing draft submissions (via University mock REF exercises)
- When selecting outputs, which includes the attribution of outputs and co-authorship.
- When preparing the final submission.

The University EIA template (Annex 11) will seek to understand the following:

- Characteristics of staff with SRR in comparison to the characteristics of all academic staff.
- Characteristics of staff who do and do not meet the definition of research independence.
- Distribution of outputs by the characteristics of staff within the output pool.
- If any, and what action should be taken to address diversity issues identified as a result of conducting the EIAs.
- Whether we have any accumulation of disadvantage by attempting to look at particular patterns of intersectionality in the EIA, for example age and gender.

Part 3: Determining research independence

Category A eligible ‘research only’ staff should meet the REF 2021 definition of an independent researcher as detailed in the guidance on submissions, paragraphs 128 to 134.

Paragraph 131 states that:

‘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.’

‘Research only’ staff who are independent researchers and on the payroll at USW on the census date will be returned by the University as Category A submitted staff. Not all ‘research only’ staff meet this definition, however, and so the University will implement a process to determine research independence.

Criteria for determining research independence

The University will determine research independence of ‘research only’ staff using role responsibility and evidence of independence based on the indicators that REF main panels have provided in the panel criteria and working methods, paragraphs 188 and 189.

A combination of indicators across arts, humanities and social sciences will be used to determine research independence. Thus, the University will ensure that it adheres to paragraph 133 of the guidance on submissions.

Paragraph 133 states that:

“A member of staff is not deemed to have undertaken independent research purely on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs.”

Determining research independence of staff whose primary employment function is ‘research only’

Grade D	Normally a research assistant and who’s job purpose is to undertake supervised research projects and provide support for researchers.	Not Category A eligible:
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		Does not meet the definition of an independent researcher.
Grade E	Normally a senior research assistant who's job purpose is to undertake and contribute to research activity.	Category A eligibility determined on a case by case basis: For these staff, evidence of independence must be provided from the list of indicators, applicable to main panel of the UOA.
Grade F	Normally a research fellow who's job purpose is to undertake and where appropriate lead research projects.	Category A eligibility determined on a case by case basis: For these staff, evidence of independence must be provided from the list of indicators, applicable to main panel of the UOA.
Grade G and above	Normally senior research fellow who's job purpose is to lead and manage research projects.	Independent researchers, and thus meets the definition of Category A eligible. Will be returned as Category A submitted staff.

Evidence of independence

<p>For all main panels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leading or acting as principle investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project. - Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship, where research independence is a requirement. - Leading a research group or a substantial or specialist work package.
<p>For main panels C and D, we will also consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being named as a Co-I on an externally funded research grant/award. - Having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research. <p>USW will also consider the indicators below for Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publishes independent research under their own name. - Publishes sole authored outputs emerging from their own independent research. - Able to undertake independent research as part of their role at USW. - They are allocated time in the academic workload model to conduct their own independent research.

Applying the criteria for determining research independence

The process to determine which 'research only' staff are independent researchers according to the definition as set out in this code of practice is provided below. The timetable for this process will coincide with the timescales for identifying SRR to ensure that staff have the ability to appeal on a decision on research independence and have the opportunity to apply for a reduction in outputs due to staff circumstances.

We have used the term 'research only' audit to describe the process by which the University will determine research independence.

Stage		Responsibility	Date
1.	All 'research only' staff on the payroll at USW identified via a report from the University HR system and according to HESA employment function.	HR and RISE	August 2019
2.	Deans and Heads of Research (HoR) are provided with the data on 'research only' staff in the faculty.	PVC-R / RISE	Early September 2019
3.	Data to be cross checked with each faculty to ensure all 'research only' staff have been identified for audit purposes.	Deans and HoR	Early September 2019
4.	'Research only' staff who are independent researchers will be identified against the criteria and aligned to a UOA(s).	Deans and Heads of Research	End of September 2019
5.	University approval of 'research only' staff as independent researchers or not.	REF Strategy Group	October 2019
6.	Feedback to staff and REF Leads on the outcome of the 'research only' audit.	Deans and Heads of Research	End of October 2019
7.	Research independence to be confirmed for all newly appointed 'research only' staff. If staff are identified as an independent researcher they will be aligned to appropriate UOA(s) and relevant REF Lead(s) informed.	Line Managers (in discussion with Deans and HoR)	November 2019 – end of July 2020
8.	Outcomes of the audit will be presented to the REF Strategy Group, chaired by the PVC-R, for review.	Deans and HoR	March 2020
9.	Final confirmation ('sense check') of 'research only' staff who are independent researchers.	PVC-R, Deans, HoR, RISE, HR	August 2020

10. *	Feedback to staff, via email, confirming research independence.	Deans and HoR	August 2020 / September 2020
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* The University recognises the limitations of this stage on staff availability but are bound by the REF 2021 timetable; census date for staff, 31st July 2020. This means that the final feedback on the status with regards to research independence occurs in the summer when staff typically take periods of annual. It is necessary to advise staff of their status with regards to research independence at this time, to allow a sufficient period for any appeals, and make the necessary adjustments to final versions of the submissions if required.

Staff, committees and training

The staff and committees to determine research independence are the same for identifying SRR, and thus, this section can be cross-referred to Part 2 of the code of practice.

Appeals

The process of appeals as described in Part 2 for SRR will be applied for appeals on determining research independence.

Appeals will be considered from staff who are not considered independent researchers due to:

- i. The criteria for determining research independence was not applied in accordance with the code of practice.
- ii. Misinterpretation of the statement and evidence provided by a 'research only' staff member used to apply the criteria to determine research independence.

Equality impact assessment

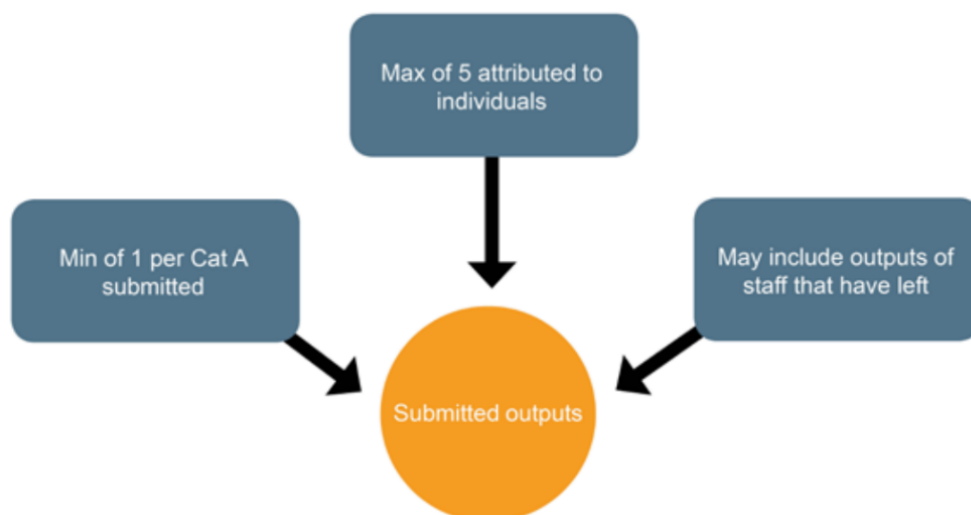
How an EIA will be used with regards to research independence is provided in Part 2.

Part 4: Selection of outputs

One of the key changes since REF 2014 is the decoupling of staff and outputs. Each submission will need to return a specific number of outputs (the 'output pool') determined by applying the following calculation:

FTE Category A submitted x 2.5 = Number of outputs required in the submission

A minimum of one output is required for each Category A submitted staff and up to a maximum of five. This provides flexibility in building the portfolio of outputs for submission and accounts for the many reasons why staff may or may not have the same number of outputs attributed to them. The output pool can also consist of outputs of former members of staff. Outputs may only be attributed to staff if they have made a substantial research contribution to the output, which varies between panels (see the REF 2021 panel criteria and working methods). Once the substantial research contribution is accepted by the REF, the output becomes decoupled from the author and assessed as part of the output pool for the submission. Figure 3 in the REF 2021 guidance on submission provides a helpful illustration of the output pool, as is provided below:



Former staff

The outputs of former staff are eligible for submission to REF 2021, provided they meet the criteria in the REF 2021 guidance on submissions, paragraphs 211 to 216, and the general eligibility of outputs in paragraphs 217 to 222. In summary, the REF have introduced a transitional approach to non-portability of outputs for this REF. Thus, submissions can include outputs of former staff who were Category A eligible staff at the date when the output was first made publicly available, as well as those currently employed.

The University will scope the contribution that the outputs of former staff can have on the output pool in all their potential submissions. The University does not intend to contact former members of staff who have left the institution.

Outputs of former staff who have been made redundant

The REF have confirmed that former staff can include those who were made redundant. The final REF 2021 guidance published in January 2019 was accompanied by a 'key decisions' document, which outlined the rationale for the inclusion of outputs of staff who have been made redundant.

With regards to this, we have carefully considered the options around submitting the outputs of former staff who have been made redundant. The University has also discussed our approach with UCU who are in support of the statement below. Our position is as follows:

USW will not be including the outputs of staff who have been made redundant.¹

Review of outputs

The assessment of outputs and mapping of the output pool at the University is being conducted through a series of mock REF exercises. The mock REF exercises are strategically managed by

¹ Considerations will be made if there is a staff member who has not been made redundant on the authorship and is being submitted to REF

the PVC-R with support of Deans and Heads of Research and operationally managed by staff in RBE and the REF Leads.

Staff have the opportunity to contribute by proposing their 'best' outputs for review. Should they wish to, they have also been able to discuss their output contribution with REF Leads and can also indicate their opinion on quality in Pure. Outputs proposed for submission by staff will be assessed by a process of internal and external peer-review.

Internal review

Internal reviews teams have been established to conduct internal reviews of outputs for potential submission to the REF. The internal review teams are subject to approval by the Dean and HoR. Training will be provided on the expectations as a reviewer and on equality and diversity in relation the review of outputs. As a minimum, at least two outputs proposed by staff should be reviewed internally by two members of the internal review team. Where there are discrepancies in the internal review outcomes, they may be moderated by a third reviewer. The REF Lead is expected to have an oversight of all the outputs proposed for submission.

External review

A minimum of one external reviewer is required per submission, but it is expected that each UOA will appoint at least two. Each reviewer is identified according to a standard set of guidance such as member of a REF 2014 panel or leader in the field. All external reviewer appointments are approved by the PVC-R. Due to the criteria set for external reviewers it is expected that they will have an acute understanding of both the REF and the equality and diversity agenda associated with the REF, and thus no formal training will be provided by the University. All reviewers, however, will be sent a copy of this code of practice and appropriate guidance materials in order to assist with their reviews. All outputs proposed for submission will be reviewed by at least one external reviewer with the outputs provided in a list, by ID, rather than by author.

Feedback to staff

The REF Leads are responsible for providing face-to-face feedback to staff on the status of the outputs they proposed for the REF. Feedback will be provided following each mock REF, and on the final selection of outputs for submission. The feedback will be conducted in a timely manner, and REF Leads will make every effort to accommodate meetings at a time suitable to the staff member. Feedback to staff may also occur as part of specific or general group meetings but will focus on the overall progress of the submission and not discussions around individual review outcomes.

Attribution of outputs

The primary criteria for the selection of outputs at USW is quality. The University is using Pure to manage the submissions to REF and we intend to apply the necessary upgrade to the system to utilise the attribution algorithm currently being developed by Elsevier (Pure providers). The attribution algorithm is provided in annex 12.

Submissions will also be subject to manual attribution, for validation purposes and to allow for the following indicators to be taken into consideration:

- Any applicable reductions for staff circumstances
- Open access compliance
- Additional factual information as required by the UOA

- Outputs with significant material in common
- 'Best fit' of the research to the submission (where only one output selection remains, but two outputs have received the same score)
- Substantial research contribution (where two or more authors share an output for attribution).

The mapping of the potential output pool will be conducted by the REF Leads and supported by RISE. Following a mock REF exercise in summer 2019, the REF Leads will make a provisional selection of outputs. This will be based on the outcomes of internal and external review and applying the method of attribution described above. REF Leads will adjust the output pool throughout the remainder of the period. When attributing outputs, all Cat A submitted staff will have an output attributed to them (unless a reduction in the minimum of one output has been approved by the REF). Staff will not be judged on the number of outputs attributed to them. Furthermore, staff will not be rewarded or penalised solely because they have a lower number of outputs.

Approval of the output pool for submission

The REF Strategy Group will review the output pools presented by the REF Leads for final submission. Final approval of the output pool for submission will be granted by the Vice-Chancellor following recommendation by the REF Strategy Group.

Outputs in the medium of Welsh

The REF and the University welcome the submission of outputs in the medium of Welsh. The outputs will be assessed equitably in a timely manner in line with the institutional timelines for any mock REF exercises. Appropriate external reviewers will be sought that are both specialist in the area of research to the proposed output, and who can translate competently for a full and equitable review to take place.

As stated in the REF 2021 guidance on submissions, paragraphs 285 and 286, the REF will normally require a short abstract in English (max 100 words) to describe the content and nature of the work which will assist the REF in providing an appropriate assessment for the output. Paragraph 286 makes particular reference to how outputs submitted in the medium of Welsh will be assessed by the panels in recognition of the legal status of the Welsh language in Wales.

Staff, committees and training

The staff and committees for the selection of outputs are the same for identifying SRR, and thus, this section can be cross-referred to Part 2 of the code of practice.

Part 4: Staff circumstances

The University supports the UK funding bodies' commitment to supporting and promoting equality and diversity in research careers. As set out in the REF 2021 guidance on submissions (paragraphs 151 to 201), we will provide a safe and supportive process for staff to declare equality-related circumstances that may have had an effect on research productivity. The impact on those circumstances will be reflected in the expectations of individuals contribution to the output pool and will be consistent across the University.

Applicable circumstances

The University has adopted the equality-related circumstances identified by the funding bodies, as set out in annex L of the REF 2021 guidance on submissions and provided in annex 13. A summary of applicable circumstances, as set out in paragraph 160, is as follows:

- Qualifying as an ECR (on the basis set out in paragraphs 148 and 149 and annex L, REF 2021 guidance on submissions).
- Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector.
- Qualifying periods of family-related leave.
- Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1–6 (as defined in paragraphs 162 to 163, REF 2021 guidance on submissions).
- Circumstances with an equivalent effect to absence, that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:
 - o Disability: this is defined in the 'Guidance on codes of practice', Table 1 under 'Disability'.
 - o Ill health, injury, or mental health conditions.
 - o Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of – or justify the reduction of further outputs in addition to – the allowances set out in annex L.
 - o Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member).
 - o Gender reassignment.
 - o Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed in the 'Guidance on codes of practice', Table 1, or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

Applications from part-time staff should only be made in exceptional circumstances, as part-time working has been taken into account in the calculation on the total output pool. Cases where an application for staff circumstances would be considered is when the FTE of an individual changed at a late stage in the assessment period and does not reflect their average FTE over the period as a whole.

The REF have also put measures in place to optionally request the following, without penalty:

- **A unit reduction request:** This is where a reduction in the total number of outputs required for submission is applied, where the cumulative effect of circumstances has disproportionately affected the units potential output pool. The University expects it will not routinely request a unit reduction due to the flexibility offered in the REF this time round. Where a case is put forward, it will be on the grounds that the size of the available output pool for the UOA will be in close proximity to the total number of outputs required.
- **Request to remove the 'minimum of one' requirement:** where a staff member has not been able to produce the minimum one requirement due to the exceptional effect the nature of the individual's circumstances has had on their ability to work productively throughout the period. Any of the following circumstances must have applied during the period 1st January 2014 to 31st July 2020:
 - o Overall period of a minimum of 46 months' absence from research (due to one or more applicable circumstances)
 - o Circumstances equivalent to 46 months or more absence from research
 - o Two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave.

In autumn 2019, the REF will invite institutions to submit these requests up to the deadline of March 2020, via a secure online system. The outcome of the requests will be provided before the census date. Applicable circumstances for staff who join the institution on or before the census date but following the original request will be added to the request form.

Update to the code of practice, October 2020

Removal of the 'minimum of one' due to COVID-19 related individual staff circumstances

The REF have described how and when institutions can remove the minimum of one requirement by combining individual staff circumstances earlier in the assessment period with exceptional effects of COVID-19 on the ability for a staff member to produce an eligible output. According to paragraph 21 of the '[Guidance on revisions to REF 2021](#)' where the following circumstances apply, the minimum of one output may be removed for a Category A submitted staff member:

- Output(s) in the process of being produced have been affected by COVID-19 during the assessment period (1 January 2014 and 31 July 2020). This includes effects due to the applicable circumstances related to COVID-19 (such as ill health, caring responsibilities); other personal circumstances related to COVID-19 (such as furloughed staff, health related or clinical staff diverted to frontline services, staff resource diverted to other priority areas within the HEI in response to COVID-19); and/or external factors related to COVID-19 (for example, restricted access to research facilities);
- and**
- The overall impact of the COVID-19 effects, combined with other applicable circumstances affecting the staff member's ability to research productivity during the assessment period, is deemed similar to the impact of the circumstances cases set out above. For example, where a staff member is an early carer researcher, or has held a fractional contract for a significant proportion of the assessment period, and has experienced COVID-19 related disruption to the production of an eligible output (please see earlier paragraph on individual staff circumstances and part-time working).

**end of update **

Individual staff circumstances panel

Staff circumstances will be managed centrally via the USW REF 2021 Individual Staff Circumstances (ISC) Panel. The composition of the panel will be as follows: PVC-R (Chair), a member of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group, and the Research Excellence Manager (RISe). Only members of this panel will receive and review applications for staff circumstances, which will be treated with the utmost confidentiality at all times. Further information on the composition and terms of reference of the ISC Panel is provided in Annex 9.

Process for staff declaration

All staff identified as SRR will be invited to declare circumstances. The decision on whether a staff member declares their circumstances is entirely voluntary and staff should feel under no pressure at any point in the process from any individuals or groups to make a declaration. Staff will be invited to declare their circumstances via an email in November 2019, and information will be added to the University intranet. Staff will be sent a reminder of the process within an appropriate time ahead of the deadline for submission to declare circumstances. The email will not be sent to individual staff, but to appropriate University 'group' email distribution lists.

A standard declaration of individual staff circumstances template will be included in the email correspondence. The email will also make it clear that staff are not required to complete and return the form where they do not wish to do so. A copy of the template is provided in Annex 14, which also contains detailed information about the process.

Further points to note are:

- A confidential email address will be established to receive applications and will only be accessed by the Research Excellence Manager, who is a member of the ISC Panel.
- The forms will be held securely and confidentially and only made available to members of the ISC Panel. It is anticipated that this information will be held on the University SharePoint site.
- Outcomes will be sent via the email address for staff circumstances applications.
- Outcomes will consist of the decision and the rationale for the decision on staff circumstances.

The appropriate REF Lead(s) will be informed of the outcome of an application where a reduction should be applied. The circumstances themselves will not be shared. Where it is necessary to report on data relating to staff circumstances, only anonymised data will be reported, for example, the number of applications. Any applications or other supporting information on staff circumstances will be destroyed once the results of the REF are published in April 2022.

Within the University, the applications will only be seen by the USW REF 2021 ICS Panel. We acknowledge that an individual may not have declared their circumstances to their line manager, and has only been disclosed for the purposes of the REF. Thus, regardless of whether or not the circumstances are already known to the institution, all applications will be treated equally.

There may be instances where additional information may be required to support applications:

- For circumstances up to 46 months, the ISC Panel will not require any further information to support the circumstances declared. For these decisions an adjustment in expectation is required, staff are still required the minimum of one output.
- For requests to remove the minimum of one requirement, the ISC Panel will ask for evidence of the circumstances which may be in the form of records held by HR (depending on the nature of the circumstances).

If the University applies to the REF for a unit reduction or a reduction in the minimum of one output, the ISC Panel will need to provide UKRI with data that staff have disclosed to show that the criteria have been met for reducing the number of outputs. The submitted data will be treated confidentially by the REF and will be destroyed on completion of the assessment phase, at the end of March 2022.

****Update to the code of practice, October 2020****

Staff will also be invited to declare their circumstances in October and November 2020 (revised from March – August 2020) via the same process as described above. The declaration form in Annex 14 has been updated to accommodate individual staff circumstances related to COVID-19 and it is this version that will be available to staff to complete.

All our Category A submitted staff will be invited to declare their circumstances if they:

- Commenced their employment with USW after the 6th March but before the census date and did not voluntarily declare their circumstances prior to joining.
- Did not notify the institution of their circumstances prior to the 6th March.

- Wish to provide an update to a declaration made before 6th March with additional circumstances including exceptional effects of COVID-19 as described above.
- Wish to notify the institution of individual staff circumstances as a result of COVID-19.

The ISC Panel will consider whether to amend or remove existing reductions, or apply new reductions by the submission deadline of 31st March 2021. Any such requests will be reviewed by EDAP during the assessment period, May 2021 to March 2022. At the November 2020 submission deadline HEIs can amend or remove existing reductions, or apply new reductions for staff circumstances (including where they concern staff in post on 6 March 2020). Any new or additional reductions applied at the submission deadline will be reviewed by EDAP during the assessment year.

**end of update **

Timetable for staff to declare staff circumstances

Stage		Date
1.	All staff identified as SRR or determined as independent researchers invited to declare staff circumstances by the Chair of the ISC Panel.	November 2019 – end of January 2020.
2.	ISC Panel will review all applications and come to a decision. The panel will also look across the applications and make an initial recommendation as to whether an application for unit reduction or a reduction in the minimum of one output should be made to the REF.	February 2020
3.	Outcomes of applications will be provided to staff, via email, from the ISC Panel, which will include a rationale for the decision.	February – March 2020
4.	REF Leads will be informed of any reductions in outputs for the UOA by the ISC Panel	February – March 2020
5.	Where there may be a case to apply to the REF for a unit reduction or reduction in the minimum of one output, the ISC Panel will inform the REF Lead of the application.	Early March 2020
6.	Where necessary, ISC Panel will apply to the REF for unit reductions and the removal of a minimum of one output.	6 th March 2020
7.	Staff circumstances application process open for all Category A submitted staff according to the guidance described above.	October and November 2020
8.	ISC Panel to review any new applications for staff circumstances to establish whether they should be added to any requests to the REF.	December 2020 / January 2021
9.	In discussion with the REF Lead, ISC Panel to amend request and resubmit to the REF.	31 st March 2021

Adjusting expectations

The University expects staff who have been identified as SRR to contribute a minimum of one output to the output pool. In the selection of outputs in Part 4, however, the REF Leads will be

expected to note any output reductions, by reflecting the output contribution from those staff when modelling the potential output pool.

Equality impact assessments

How an EIA will be used with regards to the selection of outputs and staff circumstances is provided in Part 2.

Annex 1: Executive Composition and Terms of Reference

Subject to final approval

Composition

Vice Chancellor

Deputy Vice Chancellors

Pro Vice Chancellors

Chief Finance Officer

Director of Organisational Development

Secretary to Executive

In attendance, as required, at Executive team meetings will be:

Deans of Faculty

Director of Marketing & Student Recruitment

Director of Strategic Development and Projects

Annex 2: REF Strategy Group Composition and Terms of Reference

Composition

PVC-Research (Chair)
Director Research and Business Engagement, RBE (Co-Chair)
Research Excellence Manager, RBE (Secretary)
Deans of Faculty
Faculty Heads of Research
Co-options as agreed with the Chair:
Head of HR and Development, HR

Delegates can attend on behalf of Dean's as needed

Aim

To provide a strategic lead on overarching institutional decision making on the submission to REF2021 and beyond. This group will also work with the REF Working Group to ensure continuity in REF planning.

Terms of reference

1. To make final decisions on whether to 'open' or 'close' Units of Assessment in this REF cycle and for future REF planning; and to ratify REF Lead appointments.
2. Strategic oversight at an institutional wide level of the planning and progress of REF submissions against the REF plan;
3. To oversee and advise on the development of the USW REF 2021 code of practice, which includes the recommendation to Executive to submit to the REF.
4. To have oversight and provide recommendations to the REF 2021 Equality Impact Assessments conducted as part of the requirements of the code of practice.
5. To make recommendations to Executive on final submissions to REF2021;
6. To receive the outcomes of institutional mock REF assessments;
7. To receive updates around financial outcomes related to the REF and which may affect one or more UOAs; and
8. To develop a strategy for REF2028.

Reporting

Minutes from the REF Strategy Group will be received by the REF Working Group, Research Committee and by Executive. Minutes of the REF Working Group will be received by the REF Strategy Group.

Annex 3: REF Working Group Composition and Terms of Reference

Composition

PVC-Research (Chair)
Director Research and Business Engagement, RBE (Co-Chair)
Research Excellence Manager, RBE (Secretary)
Strategic Research Projects Officer, RBE (Clerk)
REF Leads
Head of Research and Innovation Services, RBE
Knowledge Exchange and Impact Manager, RBE
Research Librarian
Co-options as agreed with the Chair

To be quorate, 40% of the total number of UOAs need to attend.

Aim

To lead, develop and submit quality submissions to REF2021 in line with our aspirations and agreed focus.

Terms of Reference

1. To develop the processes that will produce the best REF submission possible for University of South Wales.
2. To ensure all practices and processes relating to the selection of staff for submission are carried out in accordance with the USW REF Code of Practice for the selection of staff for submission.
3. To support the institution in the promotion of equality and diversity when preparing submissions.
4. To consider and agree methods of effective communication in relation to REF activity and raising awareness.
5. To effectively share intelligence gathered to inform the drafting of textual elements of the submission including output statements and institutional narratives in order to optimise the quality of submissions.
6. To agree and oversee internal review processes
7. To advise/make recommendations to the REF Strategy Group regarding use of human and physical resources to achieve the most effective outcome for REF

Reporting

Minutes of the REF Working Group will be received by the REF Strategy Group. Minutes from the REF Strategy Group will be received by the REF Working Group and Research Committee.

Annex 4: Academic Board Composition and Terms of Reference

Composition

Chairperson: Vice Chancellor

Chairperson: Vice Chancellor

Up to eight senior staff nominees of the Vice-Chancellor (8)

Deans of faculty (4) and the Principal of RWCMD or nominee (5)

Up to four heads of academic related areas nominated by the Vice-Chancellor (4)

Eight elected members of academic staff (8), normally two from each faculty

One member of non-academic staff elected by the non-academic staff (1)

One member of the professoriate elected by the professoriate (1)

Two students nominated by the Students' Union (2)

Up to three members co-opted by the Chair (3)

Secretary: Academic Registrar

Articles of Government

In accordance with the Articles of Government 4(1) the maximum membership is 35 and at least half shall comprise persons occupying posts at Head of Department level or above. Not less than four must be academic staff; not less than one member of the non-academic staff and not less than one student.

Responsibilities

Subject to the Articles, the Academic Board shall be responsible for:

1. General issues relating to the research, scholarship, teaching and courses at the University, including criteria for the admission of students, the appointment and removal of internal and external examiners; policies and procedures for assessment and examination of the academic performance of students; the content of the curriculum; academic standards and the validation and review of courses; procedures for the award of qualifications and honorary academic titles; and, the procedures for the expulsion of students for academic reasons;
2. Considering the development of the academic activities of the University and the resources needed to support them and for advising the Vice Chancellor and the Board of Governors thereon; and
3. Advising on such other matters as the Board of Governors or the Vice Chancellor may refer to the Academic Board.

Annex 5: Research Committee Composition and Terms of Reference

Composition

Chairperson – Nominee of the Vice-Chancellor (PVC Research)

Co-Chair Person – Nominee of the Chairperson (Director of RBE)

Deans

Chairs of Faculty Research Committees and/or Heads of Research

Chair of Research Programmes Sub Committee

Faculty Research Ethics Chairs or nominees

Head of Research and Innovation Services, RBE

Knowledge Transfer and Impact Manager, Research and Innovation Services, RBE

Director, Marketing and Student Recruitment or nominee

Four Postgraduate Research Student representatives

Secretary, from Research and Innovation Services, RBE

Clerk, from Research and Innovation Services, RBE

Co-opted members, dependent on the agenda.

It is expected that all members will attend the meetings.

Terms of Reference

1. To develop, implement and review the research strategy for the University to support the Corporate Plan.
2. To monitor and uphold good research practice and governance.
3. To monitor the research performance of the University and Research activity in terms of research quality, financial sustainability (generation of research income), impact and research integrity, drawing on national and international benchmarking data.
4. To monitor and influence the development of research policy and strategy of key national and international agencies in the interests of the University (eg HEFCW, Research Councils, European Union, and others).
5. To identify and foster the means by which the University can meet emerging research opportunities, with the particular goal of increasing and maximising research income, research quality, outputs and impact.
6. To advise/make recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor/Executive committees on research and scholarly activity, policy and performance.
7. To report to, and undertake any tasks allocated by Academic Board.
8. To support the University in its engagement with key external stakeholders relating to research, including business, industry, the government and funding agencies.
9. To provide scrutiny for the strategy for the allocation of QR, and provide feedback and recommendations to Executive Committees.
10. To consider any matters relating to research or scholarship raised by faculties.

Reporting

- Minutes of Research Committee will be received by Academic Board.
- A formal report will be received from the Chair of Research Programmes Sub Committee as a standing item on the agenda.
- Minutes from Research Committee should form a standing agenda item on Faculty Research Committees.

- Research Committee will also provide Academic Board with annual report summarising business dealt with over the last academic year.

Annex 6: Faculty Research Committees Composition and Terms of Reference

Currently under review due to changes in research organisation.

Historical composition

Dean of Faculty

Research Institute Director

Other Research Institute Director (rotational basis as neutral party from another Faculty):

Representative from Research and Business Engagement Office

Faculty Ethics Champion

REF Leaders

Heads of School (2-3 Heads on a rotational basis)

Up to 3 co-opted members: Professor from the Faculty, Early Career Researcher (members of a Research Institute) and Student Postgraduate Representative

Secretarial support from the Faculty

Terms of Reference

1. To promote interdisciplinary research with impact with the specific goals of increasing research income and the quality of research output as articulated in the University Academic Plan.
2. To advise and formulate recommendations to Faculty Executive on all aspects of research, education and policy encompassing guidelines, procedures and strategic plans including those to be co-ordinated in response to national research assessments.
3. To monitor and review the Faculty's research performance including regular monitoring and review of the Faculty Research Strategy and development and monitoring of criteria, including metrics to measure research performance and outcome of research initiatives.
4. To publicise research outputs including grants and publications, ensuring that the relevant research web pages are up-to-date.
5. To inform the University community on research issues through dissemination of minutes of its meetings and/or by reports or other appropriate methods.
6. To organise research talks for academic staff, external speakers and postgraduate students.
7. To promote and monitor Faculty research outside the University and develop links with industry.
8. To review and make recommendations on bids for capital works infrastructure where the proposals relate to research activities.
9. To monitor and oversee the KPIs that the Committee is responsible for in conjunction with the appropriate Research Institute(s) to maximise external research grant income, and other research-related income, in order to optimise overhead recovery and fEC grants.
10. To encourage and monitor the mentoring of Early through to Mid-Career Researchers in association with the relevant Research Institute(s).
11. To oversee and assist in the implementation of quality assurance processes in aspects of research including academic staff participation in staff development activities.
12. To review and monitor the processes and outcomes of research grant proposals and applications to ensure quality of the highest standard prior to (external) bidding submission.
13. To report to, and undertake any tasks allocated by Research Committee.

Annex 7: Equality and Diversity Steering Group Composition and Terms of Reference

Composition

Chairperson: Vice-Chancellor's nominee
Dean of Faculty or nominee at HoD level
Chairpersons of Race, Disability and Gender Equality Sub-Groups
Head of Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching
Directors of Human Resources, and Estates & Facilities
Disability and Dyslexia Manager, Student Services
Nominees of the Trade Unions Alliance
President of Students' Union or representative
Up to two members co-opted by the Committee

Terms of reference

1. To advise Executive, Board of Governors and other committees other internal groups to the University Group on all equality and diversity issues with particular reference to the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
2. To support the planning and development and review of policy and taking an overall coordinating responsibility for equalities issues through the monitoring of the Strategic Equality Plan.
3. To establish sub-groups/working groups as required to advise on specific equalities matters.
4. Monitor and evaluate University policies and procedures relating to equalities legislation for both staff and students, in particular for compliance with the Equality Act and other internal equalities policies and procedures.
5. To consider and make recommendations on equalities staff development opportunities and disseminate examples of good practice throughout the University.
6. To establish working partnerships with appropriate external bodies to further foster best equalities practice within the institution.
7. To receive and evaluate equalities impact assessment reports on University policies and procedures.
8. To establish the means and method of monitoring instances of harassment though the University group recommending action as appropriate.

Annex 8: USW REF Appeals Panel Composition and Terms of Reference

Subject to final approval.

Composition

A member of the University Executive (other than the PVC-R) (Chair)

A Dean (from a different faculty as the appellant)

A Director of a Professional Services Department (other than RBE)

Terms of Reference

1. To receive applications against appeals on the following:
 - a. Staff who are not identified as having a significant responsibility for research
 - b. Staff who have not been identified as independent researchers.
2. To review and make the final determination of any appeals, requesting further evidence where necessary to investigate the grounds for appeal.
3. To report the outcomes of appeals to the PVC-R and REF Strategy Group.
4. Ensure that the decisions are made in a consistent, fair and transparent manner in line with the USW REF 2021 code of practice.

Annex 9: USW REF ISC Panel Composition and Terms of Reference

Subject to final approval.

Composition

PVC-Research (Chair)

Equality and Diversity Advisor

Member of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group

Research Excellence Manager (Secretary)

Terms of Reference

1. To receive and make informed judgements on applications for individual staff circumstances specifically related to REF 2021 submission.
2. To provide the outcome to individuals, providing an rationale.
3. To report any recommended reductions to relevant colleagues involved in developing the submissions.
4. To make recommendations for unit reductions based on applications received.
5. To provide appropriate reports in line with the confidentiality statement to the PVC-R and REF Strategy Group.
6. Ensure that the decisions are made in a consistent, fair and transparent manner in line with the USW REF 2021 code of practice.
7. To maintain awareness of the equality and diversity agenda and legislation, and consider any impacts any changes may have on this process.

Annex 10: Draft Appeals Proforma

USW REF 2021 Appeals Proforma

This is a proforma specifically relates to the appeals process as documented in the USW REF 2021 code of practice. All applicants wishing to make an appeal are required to complete each section of the template below and submit to ref2021appeals@southwales.ac.uk.

1. Staff details

Name	
Faculty and School	
UOA(s) (if known)	

2. Please state the grounds for appeal (please tick)

Significant responsibility for research (SRR):

The criteria for identifying SRR was not applied in accordance with the code of practice.	
Inaccuracy in the data used to applying the criteria for SRR.	
Exceptions to the criteria for SRR where they are due to variations in employment practices by UOA.	

Date you were informed about your <i>Significant Responsibility for Research</i> status:	
--	--

Determining research independence:

The criteria for determining research independence was not applied in accordance with the code of practice.	
Misinterpretation of the statement and evidence provided by a 'research only' staff member used to apply the criteria to determine research independence.	

Date you were informed about your <i>research independence</i> status:	
--	--

3. Further details to support the appeal

Please expand as necessary

4. Declaration:

I confirm that the information provided above accurately reflects the grounds for lodging this appeal.

Signature:

Date:

Annex 11: EIA template

Equality Impact Assessment

- 1. Policy / Practice / Project / Procedure / Function / Decision to be considered:**

- 2. Name of Faculty or Department:**

- 3. Who is responsible for the policy / practice / project / procedure / function / decision?**

- 4. Please give brief details of what is to be assessed, including information on whether this is a new, revised or proposed policy / practice / project / procedure / function or decision.**

- 5. Who will be affected?**

For example – current or prospective staff / students, visitors or wider community? If possible, attach a diversity profile by protected characteristics of those that may be impacted by this policy / practice / project / procedure / function or decision.

- 6. Who has been consulted?**

Use section 5 of this form to consider who you need to consult with. Consider how you will consult with people from protected characteristic groups. Consider if you need to consult with Trade Unions, Human Resources, Welsh Unit, Student Services, Student Union, Student Voice Representatives etc.

- 7. Outline the actual or potential impact on those with protected characteristics. If the impact is negative, detail what will be done to mitigate this impact. Use the evidence base you have gathered through sections 5 and 6 of the EIA form to complete the below table.**

Decisions should be based upon evidence and consultation. Please see section 11 of the guidance to assess the types of evidence you need to make these decisions.
If you have insufficient data to help you to complete this section, the first actions in your action plan (section 12) will be to gather further data.

Protected Characteristic	Evidence
<p>Age</p> <p>Consider the impact upon people from all ages and age groups.</p>	
<p>Disability</p> <p>Please note that disability is a broad term encompassing physical, mental or sensory impairments, including long-term health conditions such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, depression etc.</p>	
<p>Gender Identity</p> <p>Consider the impact upon people who identify as Trans or Gender Non-Conforming, including people who have non-binary, agender, gender queer or gender fluid identities. Further information about this characteristic is available on the Trans Equality section of 'The Hub')</p>	
<p>Marriage & civil partnership</p> <p>Please note, people are protected from discrimination on the basis of marriage and civil partnership in relation to employment.</p>	
<p>Pregnancy & Maternity</p> <p>Maternity refers to up to 26 weeks after giving birth, or when the parent returns to work in an employment context, it includes protection from discrimination in relation to breastfeeding.</p>	
<p>Race</p> <p>Consider the impact upon people in relation to their race, nationality, ethnic or national origin.</p>	

Religion Consider the impact upon people with different religions, beliefs or non-beliefs.	
Sex Please consider the impact on people of different sexes.	
Sexual orientation Consider the impact upon people based upon their sexual orientation.	

8. Is there any evidence to indicate this policy / practice / project / procedure / function / decision will have a positive or negative impact on the use of the Welsh language within the University?

Please note the impact on Welsh-speaking staff, including the University's ability to provide a bilingual service, according to the requirements of the Welsh language Standards; the number of students studying through the medium of Welsh at the University, and the impact on the University's Welsh-medium targets, where applicable.

+ / - impact	Impact on the number of Welsh-speaking staff? Please include number and/or %	Impact on the number of Welsh-speaking students? Please include number and/or %	Impact on the bilingual academic provision or Welsh language services? Please note the specific areas, along with the impact to the course / service.	Evidence Please include any additional information or data.

9. Consider and note how the policy / practice / project / procedure / function / decision could be changed to have a positive effect on opportunities to use the Welsh language.

Have you sought views of staff, students, potential students, visitors, general public, Welsh Unit etc. on the effects (whether positive or adverse) the policy could have on opportunities to use the language?

10. Will this policy / practice / project / procedure / function / decision assist the institution in its ability to comply with the General Duty of the Equality Act 2010 as set out below?

Please use the information you have considered in section 7 to assess the impact of your policy / practice / project / procedure / function / decision upon our compliance with the Equality Act duties.

General Duty (see section 4 of the guidance for an explanation of the general duty)
1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act. If so, how?
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; If so, how?
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not If so, how?

11. When will the policy / practice / project / procedure / function / decision be reviewed?

12. What further actions need to be considered?

Actions Required	Staff Member Responsible	Timescale

13. What is the outcome of this Equality Impact Assessment?

EIA OUTCOME		Please Tick
OUTCOME 1	No major change: assessment demonstrates that the proposal shows no potential for discrimination or adverse impact on the basis of any protected characteristics.	
OUTCOME 2	Adjust the proposal: steps have been taken to remove or change aspects of the proposal that have the potential to have an adverse impact upon equality, detailing what these steps are.	
OUTCOME 3	Continue the proposal: the proposal will continue without change, despite potential for adverse impact upon equality. There must be clear justifications set out for doing this and you must be able to objectively justify why this is continuing. Please note, we have a legal duty to publish externally any Equality Impact Assessments that demonstrate potential for substantial adverse impact. Please seek further advice from the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Team.	
OUTCOME 4	Stop and remove the proposal: there are adverse equalities impacts that cannot be justified or mitigated therefore there is potential for the proposal to show unlawful discrimination.	

14. Contact:

Date:

Annex 12: Pure REF 2021 output attribution algorithm

Over all aim to get the highest GPA for the unit

Taking into account:

- UOA reduction in outputs required
- Any staff with a reduction to 0 outputs
- Attribute to Eligible/Submitted REF1
- Staff contribution to output
- Minimum of one and max of five outputs per REF1a
- Max of 5 outputs per REF1b
- Double weighting for outputs (e.g count as 2 outputs)

N.B: Algorithm should be seen as the first pass to optimise for GPA. Considerations such as use of former staff outputs, distribution across disciplines and E&D considerations should be made using the manual attribution functionality. Institutions may have very different approaches to managing these areas.

Basic steps:

1. Researchers with only 1 output in the pool, attribute this output to them. Remove the output from the pool.
2. Attribute top graded output for all researchers without an attributed output. Prioritising allocation by single author outputs over co-authored where the grade is the same
3. Once each researcher has been attributed one output, select the 'best of the rest', starting with the strongest outputs where there is only one attributable author to whom this output can be assigned. Include in this outputs by former members of staff

Would expect this to be

- Current staff 4+*
 - former staff 4+*
 - current staff 4*
 - former staff 4*
 - current staff 4-*
 - former staff 4-*
 - current staff 3+*
 - former staff 3+*.....
4. Where the number of remaining outputs to attribute are smaller than the number of outputs with the same grade the outputs should be selected to optimise spread across Cat A staff within the UOA.

Validation to highlight:

- staff with no outputs attributed
- 4* outputs not attributed

Annex L: Reductions for staff circumstances

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

Early career researchers

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

Table L1: Early career researchers: Permitted reduction in outputs

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

Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks

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

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

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

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

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

Qualifying periods of family-related leave

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

- a. Statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave taken substantially during the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020, regardless of the length of the leave.
- b. Additional paternity or adoption leave²², or shared parental leave²³ lasting for four months or more, taken substantially during the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020.

7. This approach to reductions for qualifying periods of family-related leave is based on the funding bodies' considered judgement following consultation in the previous REF exercise that the impact of such a period of leave and the arrival of a new child into a family is generally sufficiently disruptive of an individual's research work to justify the specified reduction.

8. While the above reduction of outputs due to additional paternity or adoption leave is subject to a minimum period of four months, shorter periods of such leave could be taken into account as follows:

- a. By applying a reduction in outputs where there are additional circumstances, for example where the period of leave had an impact in combination with other factors such as ongoing childcare responsibilities.
- b. By combining the number of months for shorter periods of such leave in combination with other circumstances, according to Table L2.

9. Any period of maternity, adoption, paternity or shared parental leave that qualifies for the reduction of an output under the provisions in paragraph 6 above may in individual cases be associated with prolonged constraints on work that justify more than the defined reduction set out. In such cases, the circumstances should be explained in the request.

Combining circumstances

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6

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

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

Circumstances requiring a judgement about reductions

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

Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances template

This document is being sent to all Category A staff who have been identified as SRR or have been determined as independent researchers. As part of the university's commitment to supporting equality and diversity in REF, we have put in place safe and supportive structures for staff to declare information about any equality-related circumstances that may have affected their ability to research productively during the assessment period (1 January 2014 – 31 July 2020), and particularly their ability to produce research outputs at the same rate as staff not affected by circumstances. The purpose of collecting this information is threefold:

- To enable staff who have not been able to produce a REF-eligible output during the assessment period to be entered into REF where they have;
 - circumstances that have resulted in an overall period of 46 months or more absence from research during the assessment period, due to equality-related circumstances (see below)
 - circumstances *equivalent* to 46 months or more absence from research due to equality-related circumstances
 - two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave.
- To recognise the effect that equality-related circumstances can have on an individual's ability to research productively, and to adjust expectations in terms of expected workload / production of research outputs.
- To establish whether there are any Units of Assessment where the proportion of declared circumstances is sufficiently high to warrant a request to the higher education funding bodies for a reduced required number of outputs to be submitted.

Applicable circumstances

- Qualifying as an ECR (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016)
- Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector
- Qualifying periods of family-related leave
- Junior clinical academics who have not gained a Certificate of Completion of training by 31 July 2020
- Disability (including chronic conditions)
- Ill health, injury or mental health conditions
- Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of the standard allowances
- Caring responsibilities
- Gender reassignment
- COVID-19 related circumstances (REF6a only¹)

¹ As well as effects due to applicable circumstances (such as ill health, caring responsibilities), this includes other personal circumstances related to COVID-19 (such as furloughed staff, health-related or clinical staff diverted to frontline

services, staff resource diverted to other priority areas within the HEI in response to COVID-19); and / or external factors related to COVID-19 (for example, restricted access to research facilities).

If your ability to research productively during the assessment period has been constrained due to one or more of the following circumstances, you are requested to complete the attached form. Further information can be found in paragraph 160 of the '[Guidance on Submissions \(REF 2019/01\)](#)', and paragraphs 20 to 27 in the '[Guidance on revisions to REF 2021 \(REF 2020/02\)](#)'. Completion and return of the form is voluntary, and individuals who do not choose to return it will not be put under any pressure to declare information if they do not wish to do so. This form is the only means by which the University will be gathering this information; we will not be consulting HR records, contract start dates, etc. You should therefore complete and return the form if any of the above circumstances apply and you are willing to provide the associated information.

Ensuring Confidentiality

All applications and decisions on staff circumstances will be reviewed by the USW REF 2021 Individual Staff Circumstances Panel (ISC Panel). The composition of the panel will be as follows: PVC-R (Chair), a member of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group, and the Research Excellence Manager (RISe) and who will demonstrate confidentiality at all times.

Completed forms and supporting evidence should be submitted to the ISC Panel by email to: ref2021staffcircs@southwales.ac.uk. Forms will be held securely [University SharePoint] and destroyed after the results of the REF are published. The outcome of an individual's application will be sent via email, from the above email address, providing both the decision and rationale.

Within the University, the applications will only be seen by the USW REF 2021 ICS Panel. For applications for a reduction in the minimum of one output, further evidence may be required to support your application, which may be in the form of records held by HR (depending on the nature of the circumstances). We acknowledge that an individual may not have declared their circumstances to their line manager, and has only been disclosed for the purposes of the REF. The REF Lead will be informed about the outcome of the application by the Research Excellence Manager, but the circumstances themselves will not be shared. Where it is necessary to report on data relating to staff circumstances, only anonymised data will be reported, for example, the number of applications.

If the institution makes an application to the funding bodies for either form of reduction of outputs (removal of 'minimum of one' requirement or unit circumstances), we will need to provide UKRI with data that you have disclosed about your individual circumstances, to show that the criteria have been met for reducing the number of outputs. Please see the '[Guidance on Submissions \(REF 2019/01\)](#)' (paragraphs 151-201) for more detail about reductions in outputs and what information needs to be submitted.

Submitted data will be kept confidential to the REF team, the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs. All these bodies are subject to confidentiality arrangements. The REF team will destroy the submitted data about individuals' circumstances on completion of the assessment phase.

Changes in circumstances

The University recognises that staff circumstances may change between completion of the declaration form and the census date (31 July 2020). If this is the case, then staff should contact the University REF Individual Circumstances Panel to provide the updated information.

To submit this form you should email: [\[ref2021staffcircs@southwales.ac.uk\]](mailto:ref2021staffcircs@southwales.ac.uk)

Name: Click here to insert text.

Faculty/Department: Click here to insert text.

Have you been identified as have a significant responsibility for research?

Yes

No

Do you have a REF-eligible output published between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2020?

Yes

No

Please complete this form if you have one or more applicable equality-related circumstance (see above) which you are willing to declare. Please provide requested information in relevant box(es).

Circumstance	Time period affected
Early Career Researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016) <i>Date you became an early career researcher.</i>	Click here to enter a date.
Junior clinical academic who has not gained Certificate of completion of Training by 31 July 2020.	Tick here <input type="checkbox"/>
Career break or secondment outside of the HE sector. <i>Dates and durations in months.</i>	Click here to enter dates and durations.
Family-related leave; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• statutory maternity leave• statutory adoption leave• Additional paternity or adoption leave or shared parental leave lasting for four months or more. <i>For each period of leave, state the nature of the leave taken and the dates and durations in months.</i>	Click here to enter dates and durations.

<p>Disability (including chronic conditions) <i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Mental health condition <i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Ill health or injury <i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of standard allowance <i>To include: Type of leave taken and brief description of additional constraints, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Caring responsibilities <i>To include: Nature of responsibility, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Gender reassignment <i>To include: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>COVID-19 (Applicable only where requests are being made for the removal of the minimum of one requirement) <i>To include: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i> <i>The overall impact of the COVID-19 effects should be considered in combination with other</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>

<p><i>applicable circumstances affecting the staff member's ability to research productively throughout the period.</i></p>	
<p>Any other exceptional reasons e.g. bereavement <i>To include: brief explanation of reason, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>

Please confirm, by ticking the box provided, that:

- The above information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances as of the date below.
- I realise that the above information will be used for REF purposes only and will be seen by the USW REF 2021 Individual Staff Circumstances Panel.
- For a removal of the minimum of one output, I understand that I may need to provide additional evidence of the circumstances, and that this may be provided by HR.
- I realise it may be necessary to share the information with the REF team, the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs.

I agree

Name: Print name here

Signed: Sign or initial here

Date: Insert date here