

## RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2021 CODE OF PRACTICE

### Table of Contents

Foreword.....	2
Part 1: Introduction.....	3
Part 2: Training and Development.....	9
Part 3: Staff and Committees .....	10
Part 4: Identifying Staff with Significant Responsibility for Research.....	12
Part 5: Determining research independence .....	13
Part 6: Selection of outputs .....	17
Part 7: Disclosure of Individual Staff Circumstances .....	21
Part 8: Equality Impact Assessment of University REF submission.....	25
Part 9: Appendices.....	27
Contact Points.....	27

This REF 2021 Code of Practice can be found in word format on the REF intranet <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/ref/equality/code-of-practice/>

Alternative formats are available on request. Please contact the Research Policy Manager:

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## Foreword

1. Each institution making a submission to the Research Excellence Framework process in 2021 (REF2021) is required to develop, document and apply a University specific Code of Practice in relation to the identification of staff and the selection of outputs for submission. The University's REF Code of Practice will be submitted to the Research England REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) by 7<sup>th</sup> June 2019, examined and approved as appropriate and ultimately published at the end of 2019. Following approval by EDAP, the University REF Code of Practice will also be published on our external research website.
2. The University's REF Code of Practice has been developed in line with the Research England REF Guidance on Submissions and takes into account the Panel Criteria and Working Methods published by Research England in January 2019.
3. The Code of Practice will support the University's aim to ensure the highest standards of research and impact from its eligible staff are submitted to REF2021, with particular consideration of those individuals whose research outputs may have been significantly constrained by their personal circumstances during the assessment period.
4. This document sets out the principles, roles, responsibilities and procedures to be used by the University in the selection of staff for REF2021. It is intended to assist you in finding information relevant to you whether you are:
  - a research active member of staff whose work is eligible for submission
  - seeking guidance on individual circumstances (for example you may be an Early Career Researcher or as someone whose work may be affected by a period of absence or ill-health)
  - a Research group lead, Head of Department, Dean, or other member of staff involved in preparations, seeking confirmation of the policies on submission

### Key Principles of University's REF 2021 Code of Practice

- Diversity considerations and equality impact assessments will inform all preparations, decision-making processes and governance procedures. **All decisions will be subject to scrutiny** to ensure the Code of Practice has been correctly applied.
- The University **will seek to maximise the quality of the profile** in each of the Units of Assessment to which it will submit.
- The identification of potential outputs for submission to the REF is based **solely on judgements of quality**
- Final decisions on selection and submission of outputs **will take account of the wider strategic benefits to the department, unit or institution and a decision not to return particular work should be seen in this context.**
- The **inclusion or not of the work of individual members of staff to the REF2021 exercise will not in itself influence career progression nor reflect the value of those staff** to the overall performance of the University.
- Where individuals apply for progression or promotion, **REF data will only form part of the broader evidence base** for decision making on these issues.
- The University is a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) - **we do not permit the use of journal-based indicators** when making judgements about research quality.
- Quantitative indicators and systems are used only to **supplement and not displace** peer review, recognising the diversity of disciplines and research agendas that we encompass.
- The University **will not include in its REF2021 submission the outputs of any former members of staff who were made redundant** whilst on a permanent contract or part-way through a fixed-term contract.

5. Research and Impact Strategy Committee (RISC), chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Impact is the group charged with leading the University's REF2021 preparations. All Faculty level recommendations will be subject to scrutiny by RISC. RISC's decisions and progress on the REF2021 submission will be reported to, and subject to approval by, the University Senior Management Team and the University Research and Impact Committee (see **Appendix 1 and 2**).
6. All University REF2021 processes and decisions are subject to robust governance to ensure transparency, scrutiny and rigour. Within Faculties, local level decisions will be considered by REF Unit of Assessment groups, with endorsement as appropriate by Faculty REF groups holding REF specific responsibilities (see **Appendix 3**).
7. Further information and detail on REF2021, its importance to the University and the approach to managing preparations can be found on our dedicated REF internal intranet <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/ref/>.
8. This Code of Practice relates specifically to REF2021; however, its consultative development and commitment to Equality and Diversity link to wider University initiatives and commitments to enhance transparency and diversity in all decision-making practices as a University.

## Part 1: Introduction

9. At the University of Liverpool, we take continuous action to embed the principles of fairness, inclusion and equality of opportunity for all. This Code of Practice will ensure the following commitments are continuously demonstrated in our REF preparations:

**Transparency:** the application of open and transparent decision-making processes for REF selection and submission

**Consistency:** this Code of Practice is applicable to all REF eligible staff and the Research and Impact Strategy Committee will ensure its consistent application at all levels of decision-making.

**Accountability:** The principles of decision-making, methodologies and roles and responsibilities for REF submission are set out in this Code of Practice. Roles and responsibilities are based on consideration of expertise, diversity and underpinned by REF specific training.

**Inclusivity:** We are committed to providing an environment within which we recognise and value people's differences and aim to capitalise on the strengths that these differences bring to the institution. We support all staff and students in the pursuit of the fulfilment of their potential to succeed and the REF Code of Practice reflects these commitments.

10. These commitments, in relation to our staff, and our ambition for consistency and sharing of good practice to ensure that fairness and equality of opportunity inform our organisational structures and processes, are expressed and governed in a series of key documents:
  - People Strategy
  - Equality Framework.

### People Strategy 2026

11. [Strategy 2026](#) sets out the direction and priorities of the University; it was developed after intensive consultation with staff and students. It affirms our commitment to being an institution driven by strong values and ethics including high expectations for equality and diversity. Our commitment is reflected in planning and governance; for example, diversity indicators are included in our Strategic Performance Indicators used in reporting to

University Council and regular reports are received through the committee structure at all levels including Council and Senate, all of which are engaged in progressing our equality and diversity objectives.

12. The People Strand of Strategy 2026 specifically identifies the people related actions being taken to support our strategic ambitions. The specific activities relating to equality and diversity are captured in the Equality Framework.

#### Equality Framework 2016-2026

13. The Equality Framework sets out the University's key diversity and equality objectives in support of Strategy 2026. It complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty and sets out how the University works to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different groups.
14. There are six Staff Strategic Objectives covering staff recruitment, retention and progression, diversity competence and representation, employer of choice, and family friendly culture.
15. The Framework sets out roles and responsibilities in relation to the implementation of the Framework and principles of equality of opportunity. This starts with clear leadership by University Council, the Vice-Chancellor and the Senior Executive Team, and includes each and every member of staff, and members of our student community.
16. This Framework is an important document in identifying the areas of diversity, equality and inclusion we are focussing on and helps to frame the type of organisation we are striving to be. The staff survey results from 2016 indicate that staff feel that the University is fulfilling their commitments with 82% supporting the following statement: 'I believe the University is committed to equality of opportunity'. Also, 96% supported the statement: 'I am satisfied with my level of awareness of diversity issues and how to react appropriately with colleagues'. Ratings above 89% were also received for statements as to whether the University respects people regardless of protected characteristics.

#### **Update on actions since REF 2014**

17. The University submitted an Equality Impact Assessment of its practices to HEFCE in January 2014, as part of its submission to the Research Excellence Framework in 2014 (REF2014). This identified the following key issues:
  - The University had a relatively low proportion of staff within minority groups with regard to the eligible population.
  - The analysis of equality data provided an opportunity to identify any areas of concern and to remind those responsible for selection that decisions were based purely on quality assessment.
  - Staff selection rates for women and for certain age groups were comparatively low. Analysis of gender of age groups showed that there was a significant difference between the gender selection for the 50-59 age group (48% women selected, and 66% of men), the age group with the lowest rates of submission. These issues in particular warranted further investigation in terms of the circumstances that led to a reduction in productivity of high-quality research.
18. As a result, the University committed to undertake the following priority tasks to assess and improve upon the effectiveness of the REF2014 Code of Practice:
  - Gathering evidence on the effectiveness of preparations at Faculty and University level including an all-staff survey on personal experiences, used to inform future policy.

- Further assessment at Unit of Assessment (UoA) level to address imbalances in the submission, particularly the issue of gender balance via a concentration on Athena SWAN activity.
  - Supporting the Female Early Career Researcher network, established in September 2013 to explore the unique challenges and opportunities of for women at their career stage as well as providing a networking and knowledge sharing environment. The network meets 3 times a year, has over 100 members with the topics addressed decided by the members (e.g. writing successful research grant applications).
  - The development of bespoke Athena SWAN staff data functionality (covering staff experience stages from recruitment through to leaving) to allow greater monitoring and analysis of our staff profile.
- The incorporation of disclosure of individual circumstances in Annual Review application forms (for all levels of academic promotion) to ensure time away from research is taken into consideration by review panels when assessing the evidence submitted in support of applications.
- The implementation of further Equality awareness raising and improvement activities.

19. These tasks have been considered and addressed via ongoing activity since 2014 in the ways set out below.

#### Athena SWAN

20. The University joined the charter in 2009 and received an Institutional Silver award in 2016.

21. Achieving a University Silver award enables the University to apply for a Gold award and this is planned for 2020. The efforts of all our departments who have achieved awards were acknowledged by Athena SWAN, including the Gold award achieved by the Institute of Integrative Biology in 2017 and the five departmental Silver and Bronze awards. Having recently joined the scheme, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences already have two areas with Bronze awards (Histories, Languages and Cultures and Law and Social Justice).

22. A lot of activity that has taken place through Athena SWAN action plans has contributed to equality and fairness in the working environment for staff particularly in relation to creating a family friendly environment. For example, the introduction of family friendly advisors at the University to provide an initial point of contact for staff with questions on maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental leave within academic schools, policy and support for carers and for those undergoing fertility treatment.

23. Moving forward, the University will be focusing on how gender intersects with other equality characteristics – especially race and disability – working with network members and staff with experience in these areas to progress this activity. REF2021 places additional emphasis on diversity and equality and the Athena SWAN teams as well as the University's Diversity and Equality team will be working closely together to support activity in this area.

#### Professional Development and Review (PDR) / Annual Review / Incentivising research excellence

24. The University has a long-embedded Professional Development Review that optimises the opportunity for a meaningful and substantial dialogue between an individual member of staff and their reviewer. While the PDR helps the University in its planning in a number of ways, the central focus is always the individual staff member.

25. The PDR process applies to all categories of staff and promotes equality of opportunity by ensuring a consistent approach to performance review, reward, access to training and development opportunities. An extensive training programme supports this development.

26. Work to incentivise research excellence via annual review aims to develop a clearer, open route to promotion and to defining excellence across the University. Promotion criteria are defined in a way that ensures equity of opportunity across the University with locally focussed definitions of success that are clear enough to allow easy interpretation by annual review panels.

#### Workforce Planning

27. The University Planning & Resources Committee monitors the following internally generated statistics to ensure that our policies are effective and to enable action to be taken when necessary:
- Enquiries, applications and appointments
  - Workforce analysis
  - Promotions.
28. The Committee oversees activity to address these issues via the Equality Framework described above.

#### Research Concordat Action Plan

29. The University's Research Concordat Action Plan defines the key priority areas with which we will engage and be formally evaluated against in our aims to implement the UK Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.
30. The Action Plan is substantiated by the University's Statement of Expectations for Principal Investigators and Research Staff. The Statement of Expectations defines responsibilities of research staff and principal investigators with an emphasis on embedding professional practice. It presents a bold declaration of intent regarding our commitment to supporting researchers. The Statement is embedded within key processes such as PDR and critically, allows the delivery and effectiveness of the Statement to be reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis.
31. The Concordat Actions and associated success measures are aligned to the delivery of Strategy 2026 and the University's Research and Impact Strategy which is 'first and foremost about our people; creating the right environment and supporting our researchers at every career stage'. Embedded initiatives include improving the quality and impact of research and contributing to University strategies to appoint, develop and retain excellent staff and preparing researchers for a spectrum of employment opportunities.

#### Researcher and Leadership Development

32. The University has inaugurated the Leadership, Organisational, Staff and Academic Development Academy (The Academy) to enable organisational excellence through the development of the University's people and practices. The Academy's activities support the development of high performance in leadership and management, research, education and professional practice, working with partners across the institution and beyond. One of its key aims is to foster collaboration and innovation, providing a broad range of inclusive opportunities for continuous improvement across all stages of the academic and professional life cycle.
33. As a key example, the University of Liverpool is leading an innovative new project, 'Prosper: Enhancing first-time postdoctoral career development and success' primarily funded via the first award from Research England's RED fund, to boost the success of postdoctoral researchers outside of academia. The project will develop researchers with the broader capabilities and attributes needed to thrive in multiple careers. The University is working

with a range of partners and investors across industry and local leadership in the design and delivery of the project.

34. The University have clarified our expectations and processes surrounding internal research and impact assessment as reflected in the following two key documents:

#### Research Policy Principles: update 2015

35. In 2015 the University updated its Research Policy Principles by defining the expectations for individual researchers, to be achieved by fostering a collegial research environment that enables researchers to achieve their potential.

#### Internal Code of Practice on Individual Research Performance

36. The internal Code of Practice on Individual Research Performance sets out the parameters and operational principles associated with the annual assessment of research quality, allowing us to monitor progress in achieving objectives, and to ensure individual researchers are supported in their research plans, outcomes, and career development.
37. The policies and principles for research assessment described above are agreed by the University Senate following consultation with all staff and representative groups in order to provide clarity to research staff and managers.
38. The University is a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and our protocols on assessment explicitly state that we do not permit the use of journal-based indicators when making judgements about research quality. More widely, our use of indicators in relation to research assessment, performance and planning is based on the use of quantitative indicators and systems being used to **supplement and not displace** more meaningful and engaging forms of qualitative review, such as peer review, recognising the diversity of disciplines and research agendas that we encompass. We continue to work toward improving our data infrastructures and on a shared understanding of the usefulness and limits of the underlying data.
39. Where individuals apply for progression or promotion, research data will only form part of the broader evidence base for decision making on these issues.
40. Clarity and openness in all University REF decision making is integral to our processes and a natural extension of the Equality and Diversity principles and activities outlined above.
41. The Research Policy Principles and the Internal Code of Practice on Individual Research Performance are internal University policies and therefore distinct from the REF2021 Code of Practice.

#### Equality Impact Assessment

42. Equality and Diversity Training Plans (**see Appendix 4**) in relation to the REF2021 submission are informed by best practice within the sector and are developed, reviewed and monitored in consultation with all staff.
43. Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is embedded within University planning and operational practices and at all relevant stages of University REF2021 preparations to inform decision-making and future planning. RISC will ensure that all staff with REF2021 decision making responsibilities receive appropriate training via a mixed portfolio of content and delivery, including the commissioning of REF2021 specific equality training for over 100 staff.

## REF 2021 Code of Practice Development

44. Agreement of the University REF2021 Code of Practice took place via the University's Governance structure over a 6-7 month period, with iterative development and dialogue with staff groups and representative bodies. A consultative 'green' paper to Senate in January 2019 posed key questions for input and initiated a period of open consultation with all relevant staff. An update to Senate on key developments in March 2019 provided the opportunity for feedback and input on progress. The incorporation of valuable input from the consultation in the form of agreed amendments or additions informed a further 'white' paper to Senate in April 2019 for final endorsement prior to submission to the Research England Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel in June 2019.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Input and dialogue with staff groups, representative bodies and expert offices	October – December 2018
'Green' paper to Senate	30 January 2019
Consultation with all staff, including specific meetings with staff representative groups	February - March 2019
Update on progress to Senate	27 March 2019
'White' paper to Senate	30 April 2019
Review and approval by Council	22 May 2019
Deadline for submission to EDAP	7 June 2019

## Communication

45. Consultation and communication on REF2021 within the University is led by the PVC Research and Impact. A dedicated University REF Communication Plan (see **Appendix 5**) is in place to ensure effective practice across the institution and to promote ownership of the University REF processes within the research community. It addresses the following key areas:

- Awareness raising for all staff of the national and University REF2021 processes, the importance of the REF2021 to the institution, and the key activities to be undertaken.
- Communication with all eligible staff, regardless of location and attendance (including personal letters home to those on leave of absence) on key University REF2021 processes, timescales, expectations and contacts for advice and guidance.
- Ensuring key messages for relevant audiences at the key stages of the national and University processes.
- Use of mixed media and platforms to ensure successful delivery of messages.
- Ensuring consultation touch-points with staff networks and representative bodies throughout Code of Practice development.
- Ongoing reviews of effectiveness and measures of success.

46. While we assess research and impact quality on an ongoing basis, REF2021 preparations are reported via RISC and University Senior Management Team. This provides a comprehensive picture of progress and priorities in relation to the key elements of our REF2021 submission, including research outputs, impact case studies and environment



statements as well as associated issues of staff eligibility and research data. Reporting on progress informs practice and University actions leading up to submission.

## **Part 2: Training and Development**

### General REF Training

47. All individuals, groups and committees involved in University REF2021 preparation receive training on the relevant national REF2021 guidance and criteria via Faculty and UoA leads, working with the University's Research and Impact Strategy and Policy (RISP) team. Training is delivered across a variety of fora including Faculty groups, UoA group briefings, Departmental Meetings and staff Faculty Forums. For decision-making roles particular focus is given to the importance of transparent and consistent processes.

### Independent Researcher Training

48. Training on the understanding and application of national REF2021 criteria was rolled out to Faculty REF Management groups between September-December 2018 via RISP and Faculty leads. Further training was delivered (prior to any decision-making activity) in spring 2019 in line with the agreed processes described in the Code of Practice.

### Output Selection Training

49. An annual output assessment exercise is conducted on a departmental basis in line with our University structure and the internal Code of Practice on the Assessment of Individual Research Performance. Each department selects appropriate reviewers based on expertise and with due regard to equality and diversity considerations.

50. In line with the internal Code of Practice on the Assessment of Individual Research Performance, members of review panels receive training on identifying the quality of outputs in relation to subject specific best in class examples using updated national REF2021 criteria via a range of local workshops and utilising the advice of ex-panel members and external experts as appropriate. In particular our processes seek to ensure that:

- Assessments based on journal placement, ranking or citation measures will not be deemed valid.
- The peer review process encompasses the reading of all outputs agreed suitable for assessment – partial reading, sampling, or judgements based on extrapolation will not be viewed as sufficiently robust.

51. UoA groups responsible for the selection of outputs for REF will receive additional support in identifying output quality in relation to any decisions that may need to be taken with regard to output selection from the wider pool of outputs (see criteria for output selection below).

### Equality and Diversity Training

52. The University's dedicated Equality and Diversity Team oversee delivery of a comprehensive programme of general and bespoke training on a host of topics relating to equality. These vary from generic introductions to the law to specific training related to a particular protected characteristic such as disability or sexual orientation and include specific HE leadership focused courses.

53. The University requires all staff to complete and refresh training via an Obligatory Training framework. All staff involved in recruitment are required to complete specific equality and diversity training. In addition the University provides specific leadership focused courses to address HE sector related challenges.

54. In 2013 the University introduced an online obligatory training module, Introduction to Diversity and Equality, to underpin ongoing training and development needs in this area and since 2016 EQIA training has been rolled out to staff and decision makers encompassing the principles of Positive Action.
55. All staff involved in REF2021 selection and decision-making, appeals and Individual Circumstances review, will receive dedicated REF Equality and Diversity training with regard to equality law, protected characteristics and the application of national REF2021 guidelines and tariffs in relation to any constraints on individuals' ability to engage in research.
56. This training has been specially commissioned by the University and will be delivered by Advance HE, the body responsible for advising Research England and EDAP on equality and diversity issues for REF2021. Over 100 staff with key REF decision-making roles will have received this face-to-face half-day training in May and June 2019 in advance of any internal staff or output selections.
57. The University's internal Equality and Diversity Team have also been trained by Advance HE and will ensure further roll-out and updating of training as appropriate throughout the REF2021 preparations.
58. The REF Equality and Diversity Training Plan is attached at **Appendix 4**. Additional training encompasses a range of effective measures including:
- Obligatory Equality and Diversity on-line modules
  - Online unconscious Bias training
  - REF specific Equality and Diversity training using Advance HE materials
  - Instructional material on decision making in groups and unconscious bias.

### **Part 3: Staff and Committees**

#### Identification of designated staff

59. University REF2021 decision-making will be a process of recommendation and ratification across local, Faculty and University levels. Local UoA recommendations will be balanced by Faculty and University scrutiny and challenge in relation to the principles of the Code of Practice.
60. Membership of REF decision-making groups is based on suitability to undertake required duties and will reflect experience and familiarity with relevant guidance and criteria. Membership will be open to appropriate scrutiny, challenge and review.
61. As with all other aspects of REF2021 preparation, the proposals for identification of designated staff and allocation to specific local UoAs, Faculty and University committee membership will be subject to appropriate scrutiny, challenge and review.

#### Diversity of decision-making

62. The formation and proposed membership of all groups involved in University REF2021 outputs and staff selection have been subject to review by RISC and the University Equality and Diversity team to ensure due consideration of equality across all areas of responsibility. Membership of these groups will be analysed by the University Equality and Diversity team on an ongoing basis. This information will be published on the University REF2021 intranet

and will further inform practices in relation to increasing the diversity of decision-making in research assessment.

63. Recognising that increased diversity may be constrained by the current staffing complement in certain areas, the following additional measures will be put in place to ensure transparency and consistency of processes:

- i. Membership of all Faculty REF groups will include a local Athena SWAN specialist and a Faculty member of the University's Equality Network.
- ii. All Local UoA REF groups will include an Early Career Research Member (where appropriate staffing levels allow).
- iii. Each Faculty and Local UoA REF group will incorporate an Observer drawn from the membership of another Faculty / Local UoA group to provide scrutiny of and comments on the application of Code of Practice processes and principles.

64. As the lead body for University REF2021 preparations, RISC maintains oversight of all terms of reference, membership and record keeping.

#### Responsibilities

- i. Heads of Department - closest to work of individuals - will consult with individuals / research groups and project leads as appropriate to determine aspects of UoA submissions relevant to their department (**advisory role to UoA groups**)
  - ii. Unit of Assessment groups – operating to national and University REF2021 criteria will make recommendations on identification of staff and selections of outputs to relevant Faculty Management groups (**recommending role to Faculty groups**)
  - iii. Faculty level REF2021 Management groups– will have responsibility for oversight of UoA recommendations and monitor adherence to the Code of Practice (**decision making / recommending to RISC**)
  - iv. RISC – has responsibility for REF preparation and ensuring consistency of processes and practice across the institution along with strategic decisions on submission configuration (**ratification / sign-off**).
65. **Appendix 1** sets out all of the groups and committees involved in REF2021 preparations and decision-making and **Appendix 2** their relationship to the wider University management structure.
66. The structures, membership and terms of reference for these groups and committees can be found in **Appendix 3** and on the governance section of the University REF2021 intranet.

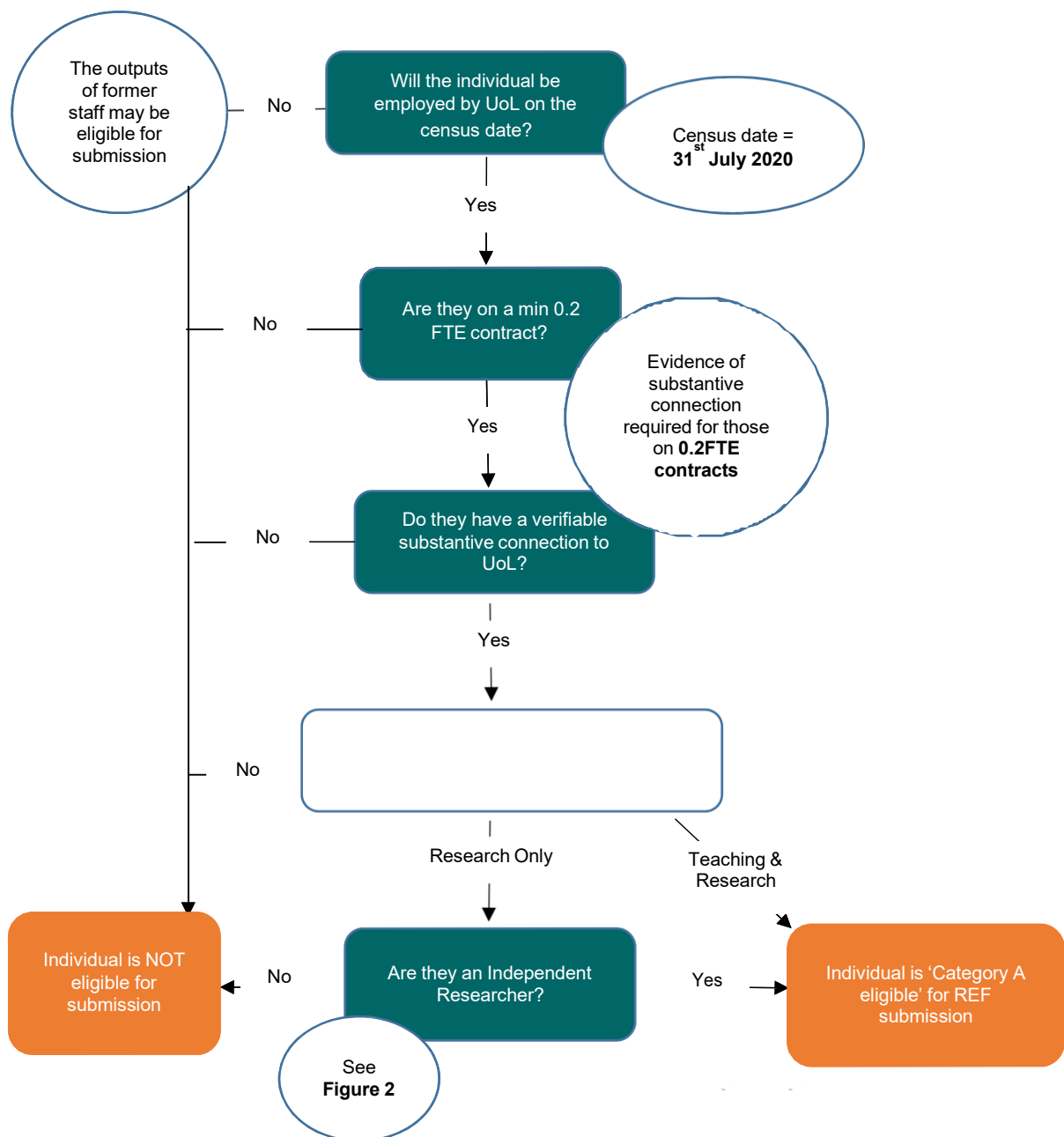
## Part 4: Identifying Staff with Significant Responsibility for Research

67. The University of Liverpool will be submitting 100% of REF2021 eligible staff, defined as those with either:

- i. Teaching and Research contracts
- ii. Research Only contracts who have been identified as 'Independent Researchers' via the processes set out in Part 5.

68. Both of these staff groups are considered to have significant responsibility for research with active engagement in independent research being an expectation of their job role. See **Figure 1** on the identification of eligible staff.

**Figure 1: Staff Eligibility**



## Part 5: Determining research independence

69. While the University considers all staff on Teaching and Research contracts as having significant responsibility for research, further investigation and consideration is required to determine which of our Research Only staff would fall into the same category. The University has over 900 staff on Research Only contracts but only those considered as being **independent researchers** will be eligible to have their work submitted for REF.
70. In line with the national REF2021 Guidance on Submissions, the University views research independence as applying to those staff who are 'self-directed' in their research activity rather than carrying out or supporting another individual's research programme.
71. The REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions provides the following possible indicators of research independence. It is important to note that each indicator may not individually demonstrate independence, and where appropriate multiple factors may need to be considered:
- Leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project
  - Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement. An illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of independent fellowships can be found at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk), under Guidance
  - Leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package.
72. In addition, Main Panels C and D (corresponding to Units of Geography and Planning and all Units within our Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences) consider that the following attributes may generally indicate research independence in their disciplines:
- 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.
73. The process to ensure appropriate determination of research independence is set out below.
74. Using the national REF2021 Criteria on possible indicators of research independence above, each Faculty has defined the criteria to be applied in order to best reflect discipline specific considerations. Each indicator may not individually demonstrate independence and where appropriate multiple factors may need to be considered.
75. Faculty level criteria have been reviewed and approved by RISC and are attached at **Appendix 6**.
76. Process for determining research independence:
- i. The PVC for Research and Impact will write to all Research Only staff via email, setting out the process and timescale for decisions and appeals, along with details of local contacts to provide advice and guidance.
  - ii. The criteria for identification will be communicated to all Research Only members of staff in advance of any consideration of eligibility.
  - iii. Initial recommendations at local level will be based on review of evidence of fit with agreed criteria, augmented by local / departmental discussion (on the basis of greatest knowledge of individual activity and responsibility) as required. Initial recommendations will then be considered by relevant Unit of Assessment groups.
  - iv. Unit of Assessment recommendations will be ratified via Faculty REF Management groups with proposals considered and endorsed as appropriate by RISC.
  - v. The PVC for Research and Impact will write via email to all those Research Only staff who have been identified as Independent Researchers to formally confirm the outcome of the exercise to individuals.

- vi. Faculty REF Management groups will then confirm decisions to those who have been identified via Unit of Assessment Leads.

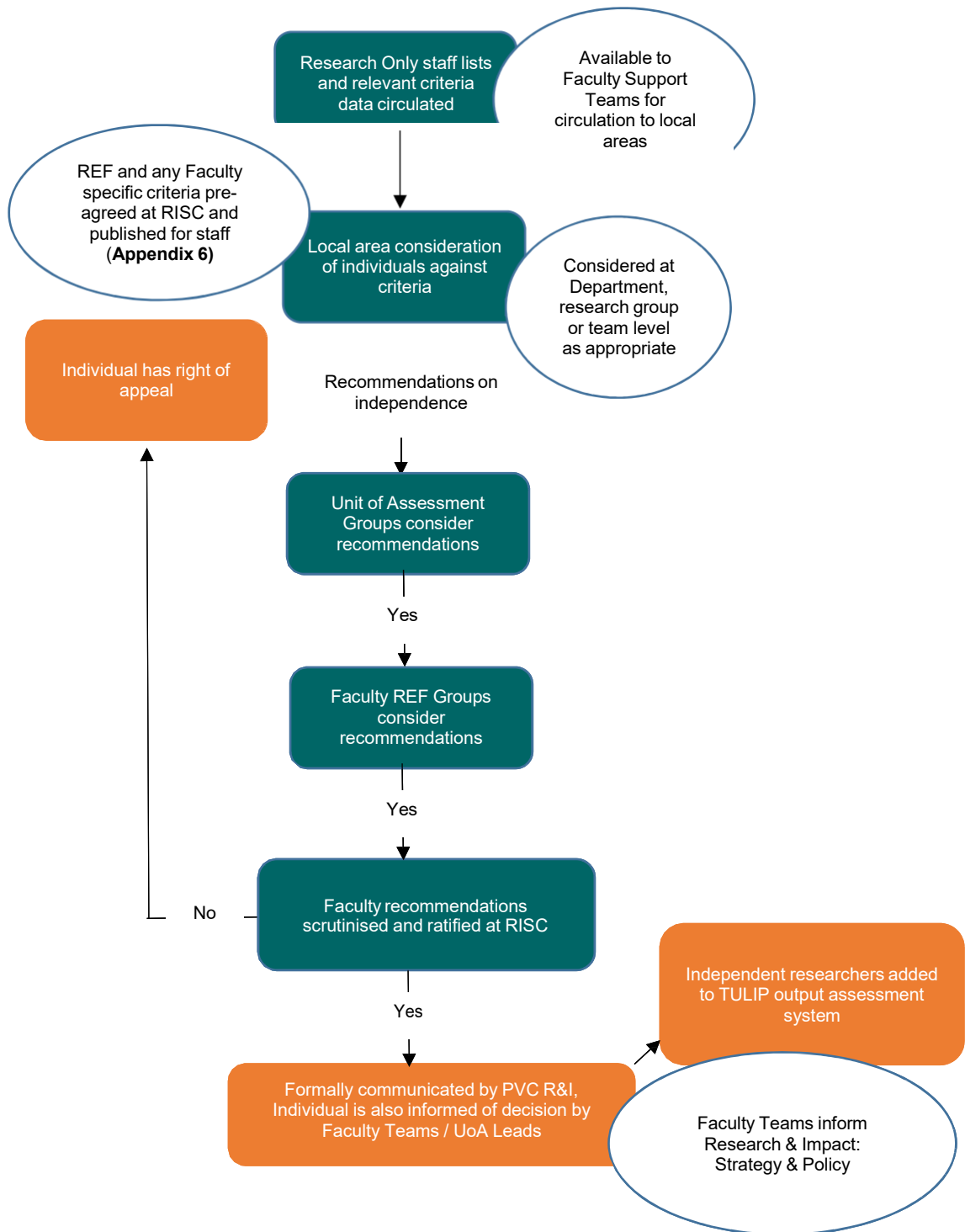
77. Timescales for communications and decisions:

- Initial communications to all Research Only staff will be issued in June 2019 (following agreement of the REF CoP) with the first phase of determination of research independence being completed by October 2019.
- A second phase for new starters and to ensure comprehensive coverage will take place in early 2020.

78. Criteria, timescales and key contacts will also be published on the University REF2021 Intranet.

**Figure 2** illustrates how the University will ensure a robust process for determining research independence.

**Figure 2: Independent Researchers**



## Appeals

### Communication

79. The PVC for Research and Impact will write to all Research Only staff via email in June 2019 and again in early 2020 outlining the processes in relation to identifying independent researchers. This communication will also include details of the appeals procedure. Details will also be included on the University's REF2021 intranet and communicated via standard internal practices. In addition, the processes for determining independence and appeals procedures will be communicated to the Research Staff Association (the University's Research Only staff representative body) and existing Faculty Early Career Researcher networks for dissemination to members.

### Process for Appeal

80. Staff may appeal decisions in relation to determining research independence as follows:
- Individuals may raise concerns **over any failure to follow the process outlined** in the University REF2021 Code of Practice, including failure to consider equal opportunity issues and perceived acts of discrimination
  - Staff should initially raise concerns to their Head of Department, Dean or APVC for Research and Impact
  - Concerns raised at a local level, requesting clarification of decisions or remedial action, will be considered by Faculty REF Management Groups
  - Staff may contact the Research Policy Manager for advice in relation to any considerations for progressing appeals
  - In the event of failure to reach agreement at Faculty level individuals may submit a written appeal to the University level appeals body via the Research Policy Manager using the dedicated REF information email account [ref2021@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:ref2021@liverpool.ac.uk).
81. Any such appeals will be considered at University level by an Independent Appeals Panel consisting of:
- Chair, Policy Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education (senior academic independent of REF2021 decision-making)
  - The Director or a senior member of Human Resources
  - A lay member of Council.
82. No members of the Independent Appeals Panel will have previous involvement in decision making in relation to determining research independence.

### Timescale and Communication

83. All appeals will normally be submitted within one month of communication of initial decisions. Where special circumstances constrain an individual's ability to meet this timescale, they should notify the Research Policy Manager who will advise on an appropriate extension via the appeals panel.
84. Decisions on appeals cases will be communicated within one month of receipt of appeal. The Research Policy Manager will write to individuals confirming the outcome of any appeals process.



## **Part 6: Selection of outputs**

### Approach to output assessment

85. The University will seek to maximise the quality of the profile in each of the UoAs to which it will submit, with a view to maximising the benefit of the REF2021 exercise to the University as a whole. Final decisions on the selection of potential outputs will be based entirely on judgements of quality and the final submission of outputs will take account of the wider strategic benefits to the Department, Unit or institution. A decision not to return particular work should be seen in this context.
86. Final selection will need to incorporate analysis of the overall profile of an individual's outputs and their relationship with the profile of the relevant submitting UoA. As such, the selection of research outputs for submission will be determined based on recommendations made through the process described below.
87. All relevant research outputs will be subject to a robust and transparent internal peer review. While it is recognised that such internal assessments cannot be a guarantee of eventual outcomes it is extremely important that the University's submission strategy is based as far as possible on an informed judgement of expected quality levels.
88. The University has undertaken an annual output assessment process since 2011. This exercise is a key component in our efforts to enhance the quality of research outputs across all areas. The internal Code of Practice on Individual Research Performance (endorsed by Senate) sets out expectations and processes by which the exercise operates to ensure it is fair, open and transparent. The exercise utilises the University's Elements and Tulip research information systems and operates as follows:
  - All staff with significant responsibility for research nominate outputs for assessment
  - Outputs are assigned for review to a known panel of University staff in each area
  - Each output is reviewed by a minimum of two reviewers, with reviews taking place independently from each other
  - Output scores and feedback are then moderated by a Chair of the review panel in each area
  - Output scores and feedback are communicated to authors and form part of research planning discussions, with scores and feedback then released to individuals for archive purposes.
89. The data on research outputs from this annual exercise also provides a continually updated pool of outputs for selection for REF2021. By the time of REF submission, the internal exercise will have provided over five years of expertise in relation to assessment of REF2021 eligible outputs. Additionally, researchers may re-submit outputs for assessment at any point in the period to allow for re-appraisal of work in changed contexts and local areas may undertake external calibration as appropriate to benchmark the accuracy of internal review.

### Principles for REF output selection

90. Recommendations on the submission of individual outputs will be made on the basis of academic peer review and judgement, as described above, underpinned by strategic oversight from RISC. Submission of research or impact work to the REF2021 is one aspect of the wide-ranging contributions made by staff to the University's Strategic 2026 Plan. The University is committed to recognising all aspects of contribution made by staff and to supporting their efforts within the context of the University's Research and Impact Strategy.
91. The strength of the contribution of individual members of staff in terms of inclusion of outputs for submission to the REF exercise will not in itself influence career progression nor reflect

the value of those staff to the overall performance of the University. Selection of potential outputs for the REF is based entirely on judgements of quality.

92. The University ensures that a suitable dialogue has occurred in relation to matters of research contribution. As such a specific discussion related to the inclusion of an individual's outputs in the REF2021 submission should take place between all individuals and their line managers (or delegated others as agreed) at an appropriate point in the submission preparations. Discussion will normally occur as part of the Professional Development Review (PDR) process; but separate discussions, specific to REF2021, can be used on request as an alternative arrangement. In all instances, such discussions should be documented and make use of all relevant information.

#### Process for output selection

93. The pool of assessed outputs provides a solid foundation for the transparent selection of outputs to be submitted to REF2021. The annual output assessment exercise provides a thirteen-point grading scale to provide granularity and consistency with relevant national REF2021 UoA guidance.

94. With a focus on maximising the volume of world leading research, the following methodology for output selection will be applied for each UoA:

- The strongest output for each eligible individual will be selected based on annual output assessment score, satisfying the minimum requirement of one output per individual
- The balance of the required outputs for submission will be selected based on the highest quality outputs as scored in the annual output assessment until the required threshold is met (recognising the maximum of 5 outputs attributable to any one individual)
- It is recognised that some outputs within a UoA scope may have received identical internal scores. Where UoAs need to select from a range of outputs with identical scores, ranking will be informed by additional considerations including:
  - Strategic decisions in line with research environment or UoA submission strategies
  - Use of citation data (where permitted by sub-panels as per the REF Panel Criteria and Working Methods)<sup>1</sup>
  - Re-assessment
  - External calibration.

95. Each Faculty has set out the criteria by which it will make further assessment or judgment (**see Appendix 7**). These criteria have been considered and approved by RISC and will be widely communicated to all staff via the University REF Code of Practice, University REF governance structures and publication on the University REF intranet.

96. The process for selection of outputs for REF2021 is set out in **Figure 3** and described below:
- The criteria to be used by Faculties and any related REF guidance, will be communicated to all eligible staff in advance of any selection via communication channels within the Faculty (e.g. via UoA REF leads and Deans)
  - UoA groups will make initial recommendations on selection utilising existing annual output assessments
  - UoA recommendations will be ratified via Faculty REF Management groups with proposals endorsed by RISC as part of University UoA configuration modelling

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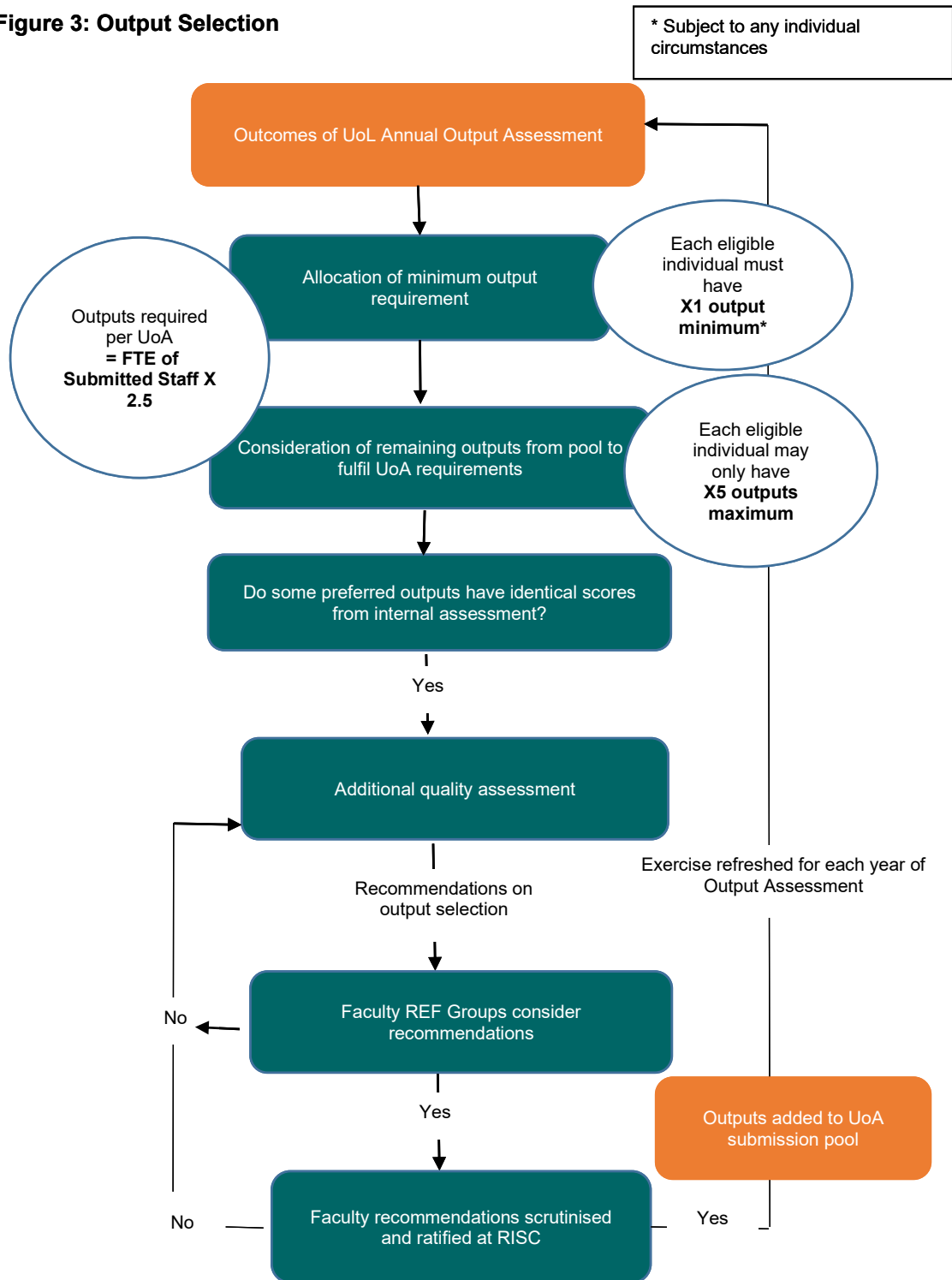
<sup>1</sup> Main Panel A: UoAs 1-6; Main Panel B: UoAs 7-9 and 11; Main Panel C: UoA 16; Main Panel D: None

- RISC will publish the final list of selected outputs (but not related staff names) following the REF2021 submission to Research England in November 2020, recognising that this information will be made public by Research England on completion of the national REF assessment.

#### Outputs of Former Staff

97. The REF 'Guidance on Submissions' (paragraphs 211-216) states that the outputs of former staff that were first made publicly available while the staff member was employed by the institution as Category A eligible can be submitted to REF 2021.
98. The University **will not include the outputs of any former members of staff who were made redundant whilst on a permanent contract or part-way through a fixed-term contract.**
99. Aside from the above principle, the eligible outputs of all former staff including those whose contracts ended as per a scheduled date will be considered for submission alongside those of current staff. Outputs co-authored jointly by current staff and those made redundant remain eligible for submission from current staff.
100. Timescales for communications and decisions:
  - Initial modelling of output selection will take place in June 2019 following completion of the 2018 output assessment exercise
  - Final selection of REF2021 outputs will take place in mid-2020 following completion of the 2019 output assessment exercise and consideration of any outputs to be published towards the REF2021 submission deadline
  - Criteria, timescales and key contacts will be published on the University REF2021 Intranet.

**Figure 3: Output Selection**



## **Part 7: Disclosure of Individual Staff Circumstances**

### Ongoing consideration of individual circumstances

101. The University's annual output assessment exercise provides the opportunity for all eligible staff to indicate individual circumstances that may have constrained their volume of research. Categorisations of circumstances are based on national REF2021 criteria (see paragraph 95). This process operates at local level, with Human Resources advice and guidance as appropriate, and staff are able to reach agreement within their line-management structures on reducing the number of outputs expected in the annual assessment. Reductions are recorded on the relevant assessment pages of the Elements / Tulip research information system (from Spring 2019).
102. This process provides an indication of the individual circumstances affecting staff output and allows for more robust research planning and the application of reasonable adjustments for individuals. It also provides a University overview of circumstances to help inform policies and interventions to improve staff welfare.
103. Research Planning discussions and the PDR process provide an opportunity for a meaningful and substantial dialogue between individuals and managers, with a particular focus on:
  - Developing a shared understanding of how the individual's role functions within their department and the wider University
  - Allowing for an open and constructive dialogue on the nature of the individual's contribution across all areas of research - outputs, impact and environment
  - Providing an opportunity to discuss any issues or personal circumstances that have impeded progress and agreement on how to overcome or manage these
  - Identifying and implementing appropriate support and development opportunities where required.

### REF Specific Processes

104. For the purposes of REF2021 we will build on these activities to ensure a robust mechanism for the consideration of individual circumstances. Changes to the REF2021 exercise compared to REF2014 in relation to the submission of a Unit of Assessment level of outputs provides greater flexibility in building the portfolio of outputs for submission.
105. As a key measure to support equality and diversity in research careers, the funding bodies have put in place processes to recognise the effect that an individual's circumstances may have on their productivity:
  - All HEIs are required to establish safe and robust processes to enable individuals to declare voluntarily their individual circumstances and have the impact of those circumstances reflected in the HEI's expectations of their contribution to the output pool.
  - Where required, UoAs may optionally request a reduction, without penalty, in the total number of outputs required for a submission where the cumulative effect of circumstances has disproportionately affected the unit's potential output pool. However, given the flexibility in building the portfolio of outputs as described above, the funding bodies do not expect that reductions in the number of outputs required by UoAs will routinely be requested.
  - In all UoAs, an individual may be returned without the required minimum of one output where the nature of the individual's circumstances has had an exceptional effect on their ability to work productively throughout the period, so that the staff member has not been able to produce the required minimum of one output.

106. The University will ensure the application of these measures via the following process – see **Figure 4**:

- i. The PVC for Research and Impact will write via email to all eligible staff (including measures to contact those currently absent from the University) inviting them to **voluntarily disclose** individual circumstances as appropriate. This communication will outline the processes and timescales for disclosure and consideration.
- ii. Staff wishing to disclose circumstances will be invited to do so via standardised templates in line with published national REF2021 guidance.
- iii. Disclosure will be made directly to the Research Policy Manager and a dedicated HR member to remove potential barriers to disclosure that may exist at local levels and to ensure robust data protection and sensitivity in relation to handling disclosure in compliance with current data protection legislation.
- iv. Cases that require straightforward application of REF criteria and tariffs will be assessed by the Research Policy Manager and a dedicated HR member and potential reductions recommended. Cases requiring a more complex judgement will be prepared in line with national REF2021 guidance and taken forward **on an anonymised basis**.
- v. A University Individual Circumstances Review Panel will be convened with the following membership:
  - a. Chair, Policy Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education (senior academic independent of REF2021 decision-making),
  - b. Senior Human Resources representative,
  - c. Independent academic representative from each Faculty,
  - d. Research Policy Manager.
- vi. The Individual Circumstances Review Panel will make judgements on potential reductions with regard to any **anonymised cases** in line with REF guidance, tariffs and national training materials / case studies.
- vii. The Panel will have no other responsibilities in relation to REF selection or submission.
- viii. The Research Policy Manager will provide secure feedback directly to individuals on the outcomes of cases.
- ix. Feedback on **staff names and associated eligible reductions only** will also be provided to relevant UoA leads, Deans and Heads of Department. This will allow local areas to ensure any consideration of application of reductions is reflected in the expectations of affected researchers' contributions to the output pool via research planning discussions and Professional Development Review.
- x. No details of cases will be disclosed to any party outside of the process set out above and the information provided will not be used for any other purpose, unless the individual themselves asks for further University support via HR or where an individual declares a disability, serious health condition or harassment issue that has not previously been recorded in Core HR. In the latter case individuals may be contacted by the Senior HR representative only, to offer further discussion on reasonable adjustments in line with our duties in the Equality Act 2010.
- xi. UoAs will consider whether their available output pool has been disproportionately affected by the confirmed individual circumstances. This will typically be where there are very high numbers of staff whose circumstances have affected their productivity over the REF period, either in small units or in disciplines where fewer outputs are traditionally published.
- xii. UoAs will provide a report to RISC on any intention to apply unit level output reductions, comparing equality-related reductions with the size of the available output pool and the total number of outputs required for submission. Where such reductions are supported, RISC will work with UoAs to produce requests to the funding bodies.
- xiii. UoAs will also provide a report to RISC detailing how reductions relate to the

expectations placed on individuals and how the effects of any circumstances have been taken into account. This feedback will be used to inform future planning for the provision of welfare decisions in relation to internal and external assessment.

107. Allowable circumstances will be as set out in the [REF Guidance on submissions - Annex L:](#)

- 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
- Any other exceptional reasons e.g. (and not exhaustive); bereavement, part-time working moving to FT working late in the census period, surrogacy, assault / harassment cases.

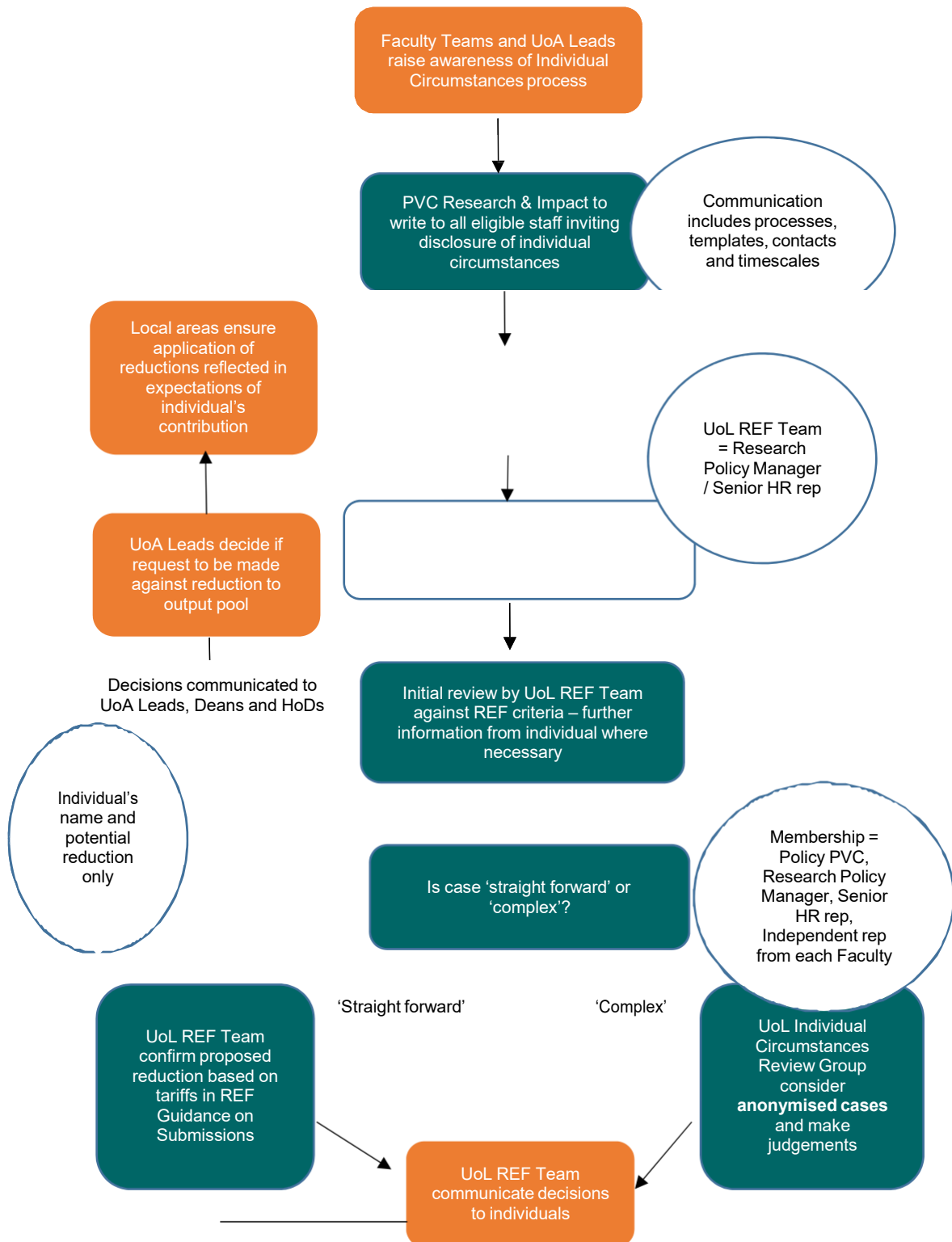
#### Timescale

108. The timescale for this process is included at **Appendix 8**

- Phase one of the exercise will see disclosure, panel judgement and feedback take place by Autumn 2019
- Unit of Assessment leads will consider and confirm the intention to apply reductions by December 2019
- The exercise will be repeated in a second phase in early 2020 to account for any new cases or new starters and allow submission of requests for reductions to EDAP by the March 2020 deadline.

109. Following decisions from EDAP (expected mid-2020) relevant adjustments will be made to Unit output selections by the end of October 2020.

**Figure 4: Individual Circumstances**





## **Part 8: Equality Impact Assessment of University REF submission**

### **Independent Researchers**

110. Consideration of equality and diversity issues in relation to identification of independent researchers has included EQIA screening of proposed procedures and consultation with the Diversity and Equality team and relevant staff networks. This has informed the University's procedures as described above in relation to ensuring:

- Clarity and communication of criteria for identification of independent researchers
- An iterative process with checks and balances between advisory and decision-making stages
- Diversity of groups involved in selection decisions, or (where this is not possible due to current local staffing profiles) having independent observers to monitor decision making
- Provision of appropriate training for all staff involved.

111. Following the initial identification of independent researchers, Human Resources and the University Equality and Diversity team will carry out an EQIA on the outcomes of the process. This will analyse the characteristics of the total Research Only staff population against those classified as independent researchers. The outcomes of this exercise will:

- Be communicated widely to staff and published on the staff intranet
- Inform any necessary changes to the procedures for the second round of identification
- Inform wider considerations of University practices in relation to recruitment, promotion and opportunity for Research Only staff.

112. As per the timetable attached at **Appendix 8**, the first REF2021 EQIA will be completed by the end of 2019 to inform any changes to processes for a second round of assessment in early 2020.

### **Selection of Outputs**

#### Ongoing Assessment

113. As an important part of the internal annual output assessment exercise, in April 2019 an EQIA was conducted on the spread of scores received by individuals against a variety of staffing data including protected characteristics and career stage. This impact assessment covered four years of internal assessment data across approximately 1,200 individuals and over 4,500 outputs.

114. This EQIA of our internal output assessment programme will be communicated to staff including publication on the University Elements intranet.

115. This exercise will be repeated again in the summer of 2019 following the outcomes of the 2018 output assessment.

#### REF2021 Specific Processes

116. With regard to the selection of outputs for REF2021, following the first iteration of output selection described above an EQIA will be undertaken in mid-2019 on the proposed selections within each UoA against eligible staff characteristics to assess whether there are

issues to be addressed. The analysis of the EQIA will be reviewed at RISC with recommendations on any remedial action for future selection implemented to inform the final selection processes for REF2021.

117. further EQIA on the proposed final REF selections will also be undertaken in 2020 and the outcomes and analysis of all EQIAs in relation to outputs assessment and selection will help inform future internal research assessment and Environment narratives at University and Unit of Assessment level

### **General**

118. Ongoing EQIA throughout the REF2021 preparations will focus on the continued relevance and effectiveness of the University REF Code of Practice along with analysis of intended submission data in relation to the effect of decisions. The outcomes will be used to debate and inform, where endorsed by the Research and Impact Strategy Committee, potential changes to activities and processes to avoid the possibility of discrimination.
119. The University will undertake a full EQIA of its submission following the submission deadline. This will include assessment of the spread of outputs submitted in relation to staff characteristics, to determine the effectiveness of preparation policies and to inform future priorities for equality and diversity activity in relation to research planning, support and assessment.

## Part 9: Appendices

- Diagrams / schematics of governance and decision making
  - REF group structures and University of Liverpool context (**Appendix 1 and 2**)
- Tables of Membership and ToRs
  - RISC (**Appendix 3**)
  - RIC (**Appendix 3**)
  - Faculty and Unit of Assessment groups (**Appendix 3**)
- Communications and Training
  - E&D Training (**Appendix 4**)
  - Communications Plan (**Appendix 5**)
- Independent Researchers
  - Faculty Criteria for Selection of Independent Researchers (**Appendix 6**)
- Selection of Outputs
  - Faculty Criteria for Selection of Outputs (**Appendix 7**)
- Timetables
  - REF Preparation Milestones (**Appendix 8**)
- Policies / Criteria
  - [Internal CoP on the Assessment of Individual Research Performance](#)
  - [Research Policy Principles](#)

### Contact Points

Queries regarding the REF Code of Practice should be directed to the Research Policy Manager:

[r.cooney@liv.ac.uk](mailto:r.cooney@liv.ac.uk), 0151 794 8550

or via the dedicated ref2021 email account:

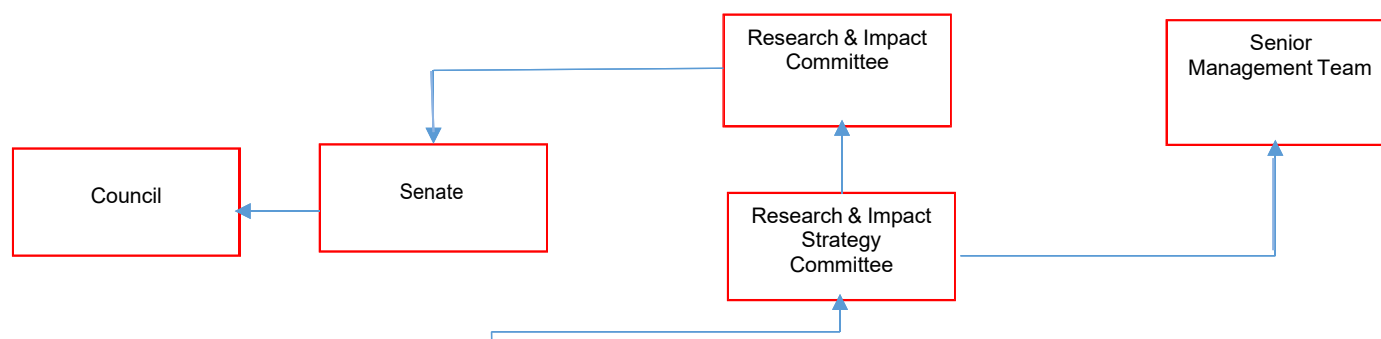
[ref2021@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:ref2021@liverpool.ac.uk)

For further information on the REF process and ongoing preparations for REF2014, please refer to the University of Liverpool REF intranet:

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/ref/>

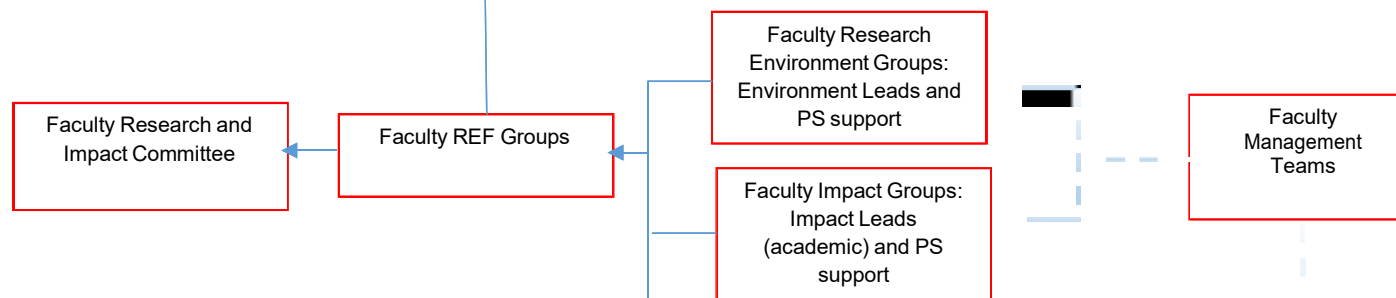
**UNIVERSITY**

- Oversight of REF governance and strategy
- REF Code of Practice monitoring and compliance
- Scrutiny and ratification of Faculty recommendations
- Sign-off of REF submission



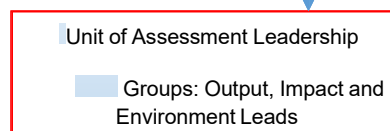
**FACULTY**

- Scrutiny and ratification of Unit of Assessment recommendations
- Recommendations on REF submission strategy



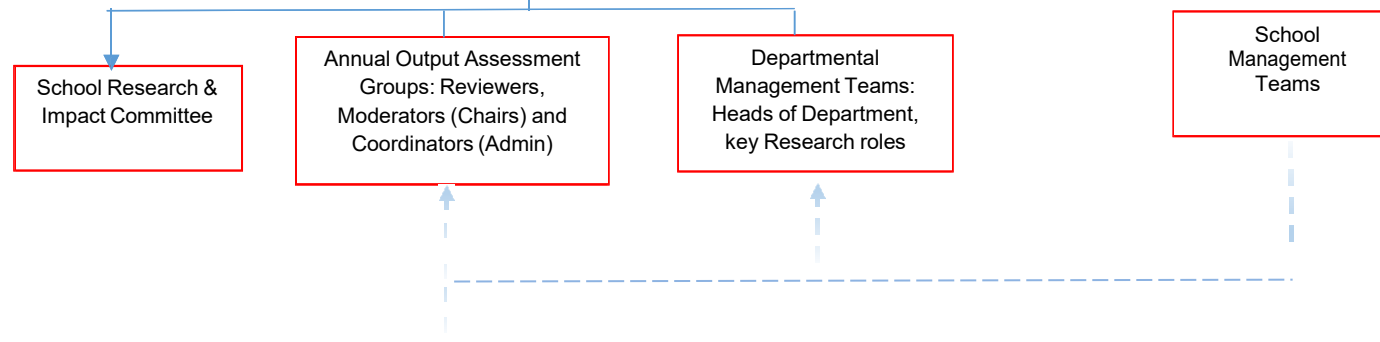
**UNIT OF ASSESSMENT**

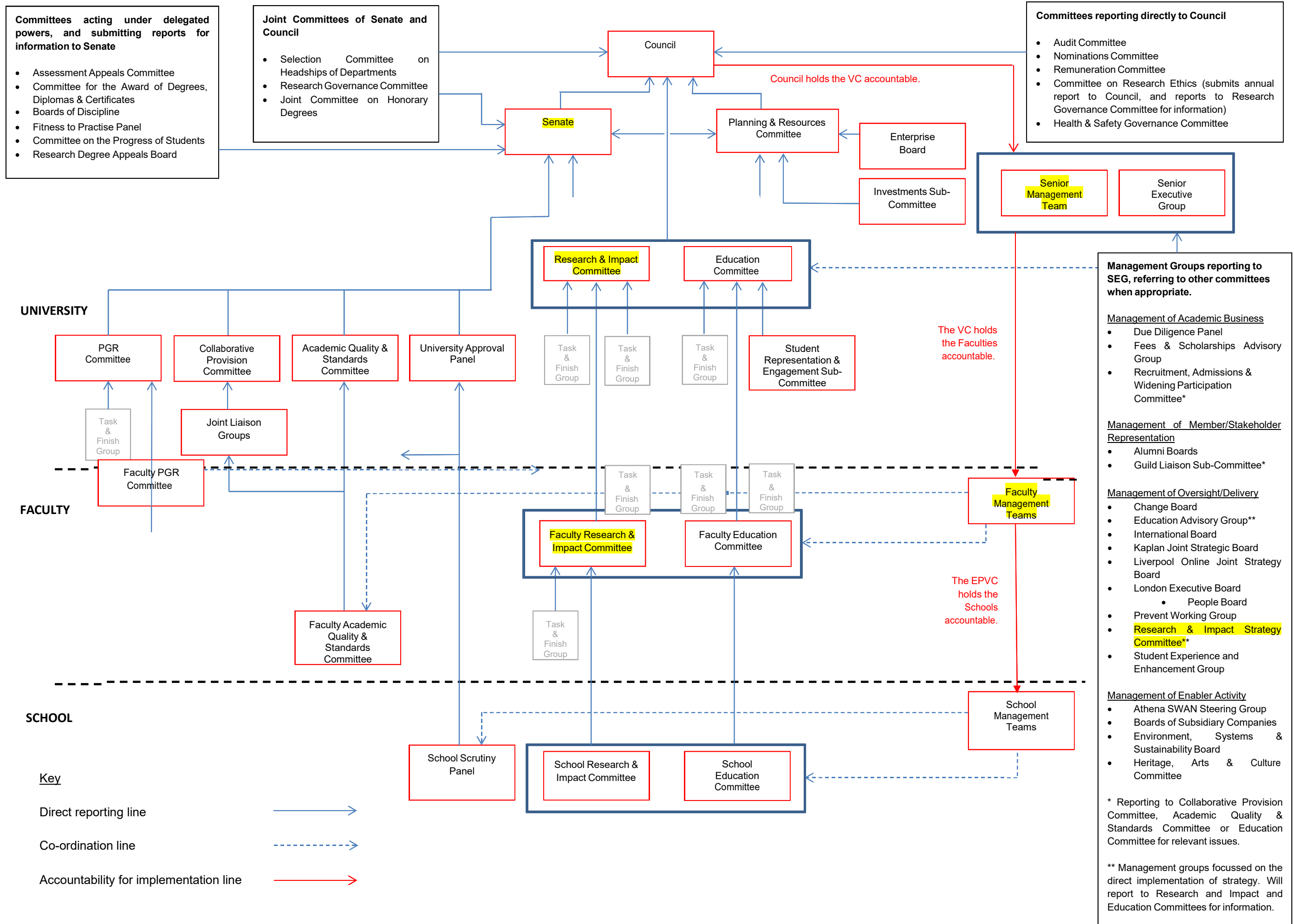
- Oversight and coordination of University activity in context of REF criteria
- Recommendations on REF submission strategy



**SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT**

- Subject level expertise and judgement
- Recommendations on aspects of REF Submission





## FACULTY AND UNIT OF ASSESSMENT GOVERNANCE

### FACULTY REF GROUPS

#### Terms of reference:

- To calibrate and ratify recommendations from Unit of Assessment Groups on the optimal Unit of Assessment configuration to support REF 2021 submission, covering Outputs, Impact and Environment
- To ensure fairness, equity and transparency of UoA REF Selection Panels' approaches and submission recommendations.
- To review and report finalised Unit of Assessment selection recommendations and submission material to RISC.
- To act as initial arbitrator for any appeals in relation to determining Independent Researchers
- To support effective communication and coordination across all Faculty Units of Assessment on matters relating to REF 2021
- To share best practice across the Faculty on REF 2021 preparation

#### Core Membership:

- Faculty APVC for Research and Impact
- Faculty Research and Impact Manager
- University Research Policy Manager
- Deans of Schools / Institutes
- Faculty Athena SWAN member
- Faculty member of University Equality and Diversity Steering Group
- An independent observer from another Faculty REF Group

#### Supplementary Membership

Each Faculty to supplement their core membership subject to local arrangements / expertise, to include e.g.:

- Faculty EPVC
- Professional Services leads for REF activity
- Staff members with current or prior national REF Panel experience
- Unit of Assessment Group leads or members

### UNIT OF ASSESSMENT REF GROUPS

#### Terms of Reference

- To support the detailed REF 2021 preparations for each of the Faculty's Units of assessment with reference to Faculty and University timescales
- To ensure fairness, equity and transparency of approaches and submission recommendations in line with the agreed REF Code of Practice
- To provide recommendations to the Faculty REF Groups (and report via School/Institute structures where appropriate) on planning the optimal configuration to support the REF2021 submission, covering Outputs, Impact and Environment
- To recommend identification of independent researchers against agreed Faculty criteria
- To review and oversee assignment of individuals to the Units of Assessment

- To recommend the final selection of outputs, including outputs by independent researchers and staff no longer employed by the University
- To recommend the final selection of impact case studies and maintain oversight of their preparation
- To consider and recommend as appropriate, reductions in the number of outputs required by the Unit based on the outcomes of the individual staff circumstances exercise.
- To oversee the preparation of the UoA environment statement and associated data

#### **Core Membership**

- Unit of Assessment academic lead for Outputs
- Unit of Assessment academic lead for Impact
- Unit of Assessment academic lead for Environment
- An Early Career Researcher (subject to local staffing arrangements)
- An independent observer from another Unit of Assessment Group (related disciplines where applicable)

#### **Supplementary Membership**

Each Faculty to supplement their core membership subject to local arrangements / expertise, to include e.g.:

- Heads of Department
- School / Institute Equality and Diversity Committee member
- Professional Services support for REF activity
- Staff members with current or prior national REF Panel experience
- Staff members with expert input on aspects of the REF submission (e.g. current or previous REF panel members)

### **ONGOING COMMUNICATION OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Governance structures for REF preparation are detailed in the REF Code of Practice and are agreed and overseen by the University Research and Impact Committee. It is recognised that roles and responsibilities in relation to governance membership may change during the preparation period. Additionally there are a wide range of supporting roles for REF preparation that lie beyond the requirements of the Code of Practice.

The most current list of REF roles and responsibilities across University, Faculty and Units of Assessment can be found on the University REF intranet <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/ref/governance-and-roles/>

## RESEARCH AND IMPACT COMMITTEE

*Secretary:* Ms Lauren King, Extension 51157

### Terms of Reference

The Committee is a committee of Council and should act on Council's behalf to do detailed work and thinking in the following relevant areas:

- a) To be responsible to the Senate and the Council for the implementation of the Research and Impact key priorities of the University's Strategic Plan and for this purpose to liaise with other relevant committees.
- b) To oversee the development and implementation of strategies, policies and frameworks within planning units designed to promote research at international and world-leading standards across all disciplines in the University. To oversee the enhancement of the University research environment in support of these objectives, including research staff development and consideration of the PGR student experience.
- c) To oversee the implementation and roll-out at Faculty level of the University of Liverpool Research and Impact Strategy - to be proactive in supporting and identifying research areas or themes in which the University might further develop capacity.
- d) To monitor detail and comment on performance and risk in relation to research and impact.
- e) To contribute to the setting of strategic direction and institutional planning parameters as part of the Planning and Performance Cycle. To comment upon planning unit strategies in respect of their contribution to achieving institutional research and impact ambitions.
- f) To continue to raise the profile of impact and knowledge exchange as a core activity of the University and to develop and promote policies to enhance the University's activities in this area in line with Strategy 2026.
- g) To advise the Planning and Resources Committee on resourcing issues related to the resourcing of research, impact and knowledge exchange.

### Constitution and Membership for Session 20/21

The Vice-Chancellor  
 The President of the Council  
 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Impact (Chair)

The Executive Pro-Vice-Chancellors  
 Health and Life Sciences  
 Humanities and Social Sciences  
 Science and Engineering

The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellors for Research and Impact  
 Health and Life Sciences  
 Humanities and Social Sciences  
 Science and Engineering

Professor J Beer  
 Mrs Carmel Booth  
 Professor A Hollander

Professor L Kenny  
 Professor F Beveridge  
 Professor Wiebe van der Hoek

Professor M Jackson  
 Professor G Endfield  
 Professor R Williams



Two lay members of the Council, appointed by Council

Dr R Platt (2020-23)

Student Representative Officer

Pending

A post-doctoral colleague representative

Ms C Field

Subramaniam

Dr Krishanthi

The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the Research

Professor S Yates

Environment and Postgraduate Research

The Director of Research, Partnerships and Innovation

Ms S Jackson

The Head of Research and Impact Strategy and Policy

Miss J Keyton

The University Librarian

Mr P Sykes

*At the request of the Chair, the following members will be asked to attend meetings of the 2020/21 session as and when required:*

The Director of External Relations,

Mr T Seamans

Marketing and Communication

Director, The Academy

Dr J Howard

Other members may be co-opted or invited to attend for specific meetings at the discretion of the Committee.

### **Reporting Relationships**

The Research and Impact Committee reports to Senate and Council and to the Planning and Resources Committee in relation to planning and resource allocation matters.

### **Frequency of Meetings**

The Research and Impact Committee usually meets on four occasions during the academic year.

### **Quorum**

The quorum for meetings of the Research and Impact Committee shall be one quarter of the membership, including at least one lay member of the Council.

## **RESEARCH AND IMPACT STRATEGY COMMITTEE: REF PLANNING TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Research and Impact Strategy Committee, chaired by the PVC for Research and Impact will be the responsible University body for consulting with Faculties and making recommendations to SMT about REF planning, preparation and submission.

RISC will ensure an evidence-based approach to decision making by utilising scenario modelling of Faculty proposals, to agree an optimum strategy for submission. The evidence base will draw upon key criteria including:

- Eligible FTE
- Number of outputs required
- Output quality – current and projected
- Number of impact case studies required
- Impact Case Study quality – current and projected
- Environment data: Research Income and PGR completions per FTE

Relevant key inputs such as planned FTE numbers, PGR completion progress and income forecasts will be incorporated from other work streams such as the Planning and Performance Cycle with a mutual understanding of the implications of major changes.

Additionally, RISC will review ongoing activity, including full annual assessment, in relation to the three main aspects of REF activity:

- Research Output assessment
- Impact Case Study preparation
- Research Environment statements

As such, while REF project management will reside with Research Policy, planning and preparation will need to draw upon dedicated Faculty academic roles (REF Coordinators, Impact Leads etc.) as well as expert offices such as Strategic Planning, Research Support Office, HR and Business Gateway.

Research and Impact-Strategy and Policy will oversee the detailed project plan for REF preparation. The detailed plan will ensure the timeliness of activity and accountability of activity and provide the basis for RISC oversight of preparations, assessment of risk and agreement of remedial actions.

### **REF Governance**

The Vice Chancellor, guided by expert advice from RISC based on academic peer review and judgement, as well as from SMT, will be responsible for final decisions regarding the University submission and the inclusion of research to the REF. However, it is expected that RISC will be responsible for the overall management of the strategy for the University's submission to the REF, in particular with relation to:

- i. Consulting with Faculties and Schools/Institutes on configuration of Unit of Assessments with the intention of modelling scenarios and deciding on the optimal configurations to ensure the strongest possible submission for the University. The University will seek to maximise the quality of the profile in each of the Units of Assessment to which it will submit, with a view to maximising the benefit of the REF

- exercise to the University as a whole. Final recommendations to SMT will take account of the wider strategic benefits to the department, unit or institution and must be seen in this context.
- ii. Working with APVCs and Professional Services staff to ensure that the Faculty REF submission processes are aligned with University strategy as above.
  - iii. Working with APVCs and Professional Services staff to ensure effective performance monitoring at Level 3, including support for the annual stocktake of progress against outputs, impact and environment, and implementing actions for remedial action where appropriate.
  - iv. Supporting Faculties in planning their REF submission strategies at Level 1 and 2 and specifically:
    - a. Making decisions where necessary on the assignment of individuals and groups of staff to Units of Assessment to ensure an optimum submission return
  - v. Considering and approving communication to relevant staff in relation to REF activity and awareness raising regarding REF preparation and expectations

This activity is planned into RISC monthly meetings with input from all key stakeholders. Key strategies and decisions will be tested with Faculty Management Teams with the intention of reaching mutual agreement on an institutional basis.

#### RISC / REF Planning Membership:

For the purposes of REF Submission Preparation the following staff will be standing members of the RISC:

PVC for Research and Impact (Chair)	Anthony Hollander
Associate PVCs for Research and Impact	Malcolm Jackson (HLS) Ric Williams (S&E) Georgina Endfield (HSS)
Associate PVC for the Research Environment and Postgraduate Research	Professor Simeon Yates
Academic REF Deputy for Science and Engineering	Ronan McGrath
Academic REF Deputy for Health and Life Sciences Williamson	Paula
Academic REF Deputy for Humanities and Social Sciences	Bruce Gibson
Director of Research Partnerships and Innovation	Sarah Jackson
Assistant Director of Research Partnerships and Innovation	Lynsey Keig
Head of Research Partnerships and Development	Jane Rees

Head of Business Partnership

Ms Fran Hardistry

Faculty Research and Impact Managers

Christine Campbell (S&E)  
Kate Jones (HLS)

Nicky Schofield (HSS)

Head of Research and Impact-Strategy and Policy

Julia Keyton

Research Policy Manager

Bob Cooney

Research and Impact Marketing and Communications  
Manager

Sabina Frediani

Additional staff may be co-opted on to the Committee as required e.g. Director of Athena Swan, Director of Strategic Planning, Business Intelligence Manager, Director of HR etc.

#### Reporting Relationships

RISC will report to SMT and at appropriate points in the preparation timetable will submit proposals to SMT and RIC for endorsement and implementation.

Title	<b>University of Liverpool: REF 2021 Equality and Diversity training plan</b>
Prepared By	Nicola Pugh

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the document is to outline the strategy for embedding the principles of Equality and Diversity into the preparations for the University of Liverpool's Research Excellence Framework (REF) submission. The plan will ensure that all those involved in the REF preparations have access to Equality and Diversity training which will enable them to fulfil their role in line with the University of Liverpool's Diversity and Equality of Opportunity Policy.

### **1.2 Background**

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is a periodic peer review of research and impact carried out at UK Higher Education Institutions. Administered by the four UK higher education funding bodies, expert panels are appointed to review research in three distinct categories: Outputs, Impact and Environment.

The last REF was held in 2014, and each iteration of the assessment exercise (held approximately every six years) seeks to reflect the quality of UK research in a changing research environment.

All research and professional services staff involved in research administration have a role to play in supporting REF preparations, helping the University of Liverpool's REF submission reach its maximum potential. The Equality and Diversity training plan considers the differing training needs associated with each role and provides development opportunities accordingly. In conjunction with the University of Liverpool REF 2021 Code of Practice which outlines fair and transparent processes, the Equality and Diversity training plan will allow those carrying out these processes to do so with due consideration of Equality and Diversity issues.

## **2. Aims and Objectives**

### **Aims**

- To ensure that those involved in the REF submission have an awareness of how potential bias may affect how they fulfil their work and strategies to mitigate it.
- To ensure awareness of Equality and Diversity issues amongst staff involved in the REF submission at all levels.
- To ensure that all stakeholder groups have completed the appropriate training option.

### **Objectives**

- An evaluation of the different roles within REF, and the training needs associated with each one.
- The provision of a number of different, internal and external Equality and Diversity training options that meet the range of training needs for each stakeholder group.
- Regular monitoring of the plan via RISC.

## 3. Stakeholder groups

Role	Description of role	No. of staff in role	Training Commitment
Research Impact Strategy Committee (RISC) membership	Research Impact Strategy Committee is responsible for operational planning decisions regarding all aspects of REF submission strategy	14	Completion of obligatory E and D training module Instructional material on unconscious bias training Advance HE half day training: face to face sessions delivered by Advance HE staff on Equality, diversity and inclusion and unconscious bias
Faculty REF groups	To make final recommendations on all aspects of submissions across relevant Units of Assessment	~ 50	Completion of obligatory E and D training module Instructional material on unconscious bias training Unconscious Bias on line training Advance HE half day training: face to face sessions delivered by Advance HE staff on Equality, diversity and inclusion and unconscious bias
Individual Circumstances Review group	To make decisions on potential reduction of outputs due to individual circumstances	Tbc ~6/8	Completion of obligatory E and D training module Instructional material on unconscious bias training Specialist training on judging individual circumstances Advance HE half day training: face to face sessions delivered by Advance HE staff on Equality, diversity and inclusion and unconscious bias
Heads of Department	Making recommendations on research independence	45	Completion of obligatory E and D training module Instructional material on unconscious bias training

	<p>Advising on initial output selection</p> <p>Considering first stage appeals</p>		
Deans	<p>Making recommendations on research independence</p> <p>Advising on initial output selection</p> <p>Considering first stage appeals</p>	16	<p>Completion of obligatory E and D training module</p> <p>Instructional material on unconscious bias training</p>
Unit of Assessment leads	To make recommendations on the submissions profile of Units of Assessment	~24	<p>Completion of obligatory E and D training module</p> <p>Instructional material on unconscious bias training</p> <p>Advance HE half day training: face to face sessions delivered by Advance HE staff on Equality, diversity and inclusion and unconscious bias</p>
Output reviewers	To peer review a colleague's output	401	<p>Obligatory E&amp;D Training module</p> <p>Instructional material on unconscious bias training</p> <p>Unconscious Bias on line training</p>
Output chairs/moderators	To oversee the annual output assessment programme in area. Assigning reviewers to outputs.	71	<p>Completion of obligatory E and D training module</p> <p>Instructional material on unconscious bias training</p> <p>Unconscious Bias on line training</p> <p>Advance HE half day training: face to face sessions delivered by Advance HE staff on Equality, diversity and inclusion and unconscious bias</p>



Output admins/coordinators	To assist the smooth running of the outputs assessment processes	42	Completion of obligatory E and D training module
Environment leads	To write the narrative that will form part 5b of the Unit environment statement.	31	Completion of obligatory E and D training module Instructional material on unconscious bias training Advance HE half day training: face to face sessions delivered by Advance HE staff on Equality, diversity and inclusion and unconscious bias
Institutional environment lead	To develop the narrative that will form part 5a of the Institutional environment statement	1	Completion of obligatory E and D training module Instructional material on unconscious bias training Advance HE face to face training on Equality, diversity and inclusion and unconscious bias
Impact leads	To support selection and development of Impact Case Studies	35	Completion of obligatory E and D training module Instructional material on unconscious bias training Advance HE half day training: face to face sessions delivered by Advance HE staff on Equality, diversity and inclusion and unconscious bias

### Description of training options

1. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Unconscious Bias training – delivered by Advance HE
  - Understand the legislative and policy drivers and context for embedding consideration of equality and diversity in REF2021
  - Understand the potential for implicit bias to play out in decision-making around selection of staff and outputs in REF 2021
  - Begin to develop individual and institutional actions and strategies to minimise the potential for bias in REF decision-making
2. Obligatory E and D training module:
  - Equality and diversity
  - Unlawful behaviour and discrimination,
  - Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment
  - University Policies and Expectations
  - Public Sector Equality Duty
3. Unconscious Bias on line training
  - Overview of key concepts
  - Current version to be upgraded to include:
    - Explaining the relevance of bias and how many different groups are affected.
    - Highlighting the benefits of Diversity and how it is a competitive advantage.
    - Advice on how to tackle unconscious bias and help you become more aware of your own biases, and how they impact your decisions.
4. Instructional material on unconscious bias training, available from [the Royal Society website](#):
  - Animation and briefing on unconscious bias adapted by [Professor Uta Frith DBE FBA FMedSci FRS](#)
  - Introduces the key concepts and current academic research around unconscious bias re the potential biases that can arise when making judgments or decisions.
5. Instructional material on decision making in groups, available from [the Royal Society Website](#):
  - Animation and briefing on making better decisions in groups is based on the research work of Dr Dan Bang and Professor Chris Frith FRS, ([Making better decisions in groups](#))
  - Introduces the key concepts around improving decision making in groups including how by pooling diverse information and different areas of expertise, groups can make better decisions than individuals.

## **4. Project Delivery**

### **4.1 Responsibilities & duties**

#### Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research & Impact

As Chair of RISC, the PVC for Research and Impact will bear responsibility for:

- Reviewed and approval of the Equality and Diversity plan via the RISC membership. RISC will monitor the delivery of the plan.

#### Research and Impact: Strategy and Policy

Support for the REF 2021 Equality and Diversity training plan is co-ordinated by the Research and Impact: Strategy and Policy team and the Equality and Diversity Team in Human Resources. These teams have responsibility for:

- Identifying the relevant groups involved in the REF submission, and the responsibilities each group holds.
- Ensuring that training options are provided, communicated to and undertaken by the relevant groups
- Liaising between appropriate Professional Services departments and Faculties to ensure training options are suitable for each group

#### Faculty Research and Impact Teams

- Working with Research and Impact: Strategy and Policy team to ensure relevant training options are communicated to and undertaken by relevant groups

#### Human Resources

- Providing specialist advice and guidance to aid the development of the Equality and Diversity plan.

#### Web addresses for references:

1. University of Liverpool Diversity and Equality Policy  
<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/media/livacuk/hr/diversityandequality/policiesandactionplans/D&E,Policy,April17.pdf>
2. Royal Society Instructional material on unconscious bias training  
<https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/publications/2015/unconscious-bias/>
3. Royal Society Instructional material on decision making in groups  
<https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/publications/2018/making-better-decisions-in-groups/>
4. Royal Society Research on decision making in groups  
<https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rsos.170193>

Title	<b>University of Liverpool: REF 2021 Internal Communications strategy</b>
Prepared By	Nicola Pugh
For Review by	Simeon Yates
For Approval by	RISC

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the document is to outline and agree the internal communications strategy for REF 2021 preparations. It will specifically focus on ensuring that all staff have confidence in, and understanding of, REF governance structures and processes

The remit of this plan does not cover the gathering of the management information which informs decision-making for REF, or preparing the REF submission itself. Review of submission preparations, annual output assessment programme and identification of impact case studies are processes which are governed within the Research Impact Strategy Committee (RISC) which makes decisions regarding the milestones of the REF submission. Information relating to the key decisions made at this committee, and operational information relating to the REF submission will be communicated via Faculty structures.

The internal communications strategy aims to ensure all staff are aware of key developments and any decisions that may involve them, in line with principles of fair and transparent governance which underpin the University of Liverpool's REF 2021 Code of Practice. Communications relating to the co-ordination and support that is provided by the Research and Impact: Strategy and Policy team relating to each aspect of the REF submission is outlined within this plan.

### **1.2 Background**

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is a periodic peer review of research and impact carried out at UK Higher Education Institutions. Administered by the four UK higher education funding bodies, expert panels are appointed to review research in three distinct categories: Outputs, Impact and Environment.

The last REF was held in 2014, and each iteration of the assessment exercise, held approximately every six years, seeks to assess the quality of UK research in a changing research environment.

The University of Liverpool preparations for REF 2021 are overseen by the Research and Impact Strategy Committee (RISC), chaired by Professor Anthony Hollander the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research & Impact. RISC makes recommendations to Senior Management Team (SMT) and also reports key developments to Research Impact Committee (RIC). REF preparations are informed by multiple strands of activity for each element (outputs, impact and environment) which are subject to regular reporting timetables.

All research and professional services staff involved in research administration have a role to play in supporting REF preparations, working together to achieve the best possible submission for the

University of Liverpool. The communication strategy seeks to accommodate a wide range of stakeholder perspectives, tailoring communications to meet the needs of different groups.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

### Aims

- To engender a feeling of engagement and positivity towards the University REF submission amongst staff and students
- To raise awareness of both internal and external REF updates
- To ensure those affected by REF related decisions are aware of how decisions are made
- To ensure that all those involved in REF are aware of what the roles and responsibilities are in the submission process and who carries out each role in their area
- To ensure that support provided to each section of REF submission by the R.I.S.P. team is communicated effectively, usually via the Faculty structures

### Objectives

- The creation and maintenance of REF 2021 intranet containing up to date information on:
  - Support and guidance
  - Key contacts
  - Governance structures
  - Timetable of activity
  - REF 2021 Code of Practice and Consultation
  - Equality and Diversity
- A proactive approach to communicating information i.e. a state of readiness as and when new updates become available
- Utilising the staff news intranet to communicate key internal REF submission updates and external updates from Research England
- Transparent and open REF governance in which decisions, and rationale them, are freely available to those who are affected by them
- Timely communications concerning REF support for different stakeholder groups
- The creation and maintenance of a REF 2021 email account for queries

## 3. Audience

Audience	Needs	Communication channels and actions
All research staff	<p>An understanding of REF eligibility</p> <p>To be consulted with at relevant points of decision making: Code of Practice Development</p>	<p>REF intranet content: diagrams, animations</p> <p>Roadshows/Attendance at Faculty Forums</p> <p>For those who are currently absent from work due to maternity leave, sickness, alternative methods of communication should be sought e.g. letters to home address</p>
All eligible staff	<p>An understanding of the output selection processes.</p> <p>An understanding of how impact case studies are selected</p> <p>An understanding of how people are classified as independent researchers</p> <p>Knowledge of how decisions are made, and the governance of those decisions.</p>	<p>REF Intranet, all staff communications (email)For those who are currently absent from work due to maternity leave, sickness, alternative methods of communication should be sought e.g. letters to home address</p> <p>Roadshows/Attendance at Faculty Forums</p> <p>Surgeries allowing staff to make enquiries about specific issues e.g. Code of Practice development, how people are classified as independent researchers etc</p> <p>REF intranet: governance section</p>
Those who may consider disclosing individual circumstances	<p>To be confident that any information provided about individual circumstances (that may result in to a reduction in outputs) will be treated with appropriate confidentiality. Potential (reduced output) applicants will be informed of who will have access to the information they provide and the mechanisms are in</p>	<p>REF Intranet, all staff communications (email)For those who are currently absent from work due to maternity leave, sickness, alternative methods of communication should be sought e.g. letters to home address</p> <p>REF intranet: F.A.Q.s – who will see my info?</p>

	place to ensure it is protected. Assurance that enquiries they make relating to individual circumstance will be dealt with in a confidential and discreet fashion	Surgeries where people can make enquiries about declaring individual circumstances and the outcome of this.  Roadshows to raise awareness of what is in place to support the process of declaring individual circumstances/ Attendance at Faculty forums
Professional services staff in supporting REF preparations	Knowledge of REF processes and decision-making, communications to research staff and the support that is available to accompany them e.g. surgeries	Additional communications to be cascaded via Faculty structures  Bespoke events for PS staff on particular REF topics
Organisations and groups who advocate on behalf of their members e.g. Trade Unions, Equality and Diversity Forum and Researcher Staff Networks	To be consulted with at key points during the development of REF processes i.e. whilst drafting Code of Practice	Meetings with and regular updates from those drafting the Code of Practice

## 4. Project Delivery

### 4.1 Responsibilities & duties

#### Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research & Impact

The PVC for Research and Impact has responsibility for:

- Chairing RISC, ensuring that decisions made by the Committee are recorded accurately.
- Approving institutional communications and where appropriate, communicating directly to, stakeholder groups

#### Research and Impact: Strategy and Policy (RISP)

Support for the REF 2021 Internal Communications Strategy is co-ordinated by the Research and Impact: Strategy and Policy team. It has responsibility for:

- Ensuring that the Internal Communications Strategy is exercised according to planned timescales.
- Liaising between appropriate Professional Services departments and Faculties to ensure communications are tailored to, and reach specific stakeholder groups
- The creation of a REF intranet which provides information to all staff about University of Liverpool REF preparations.
- Maintaining the REF intranet in order to meet the needs of various stakeholder groups throughout the REF cycle.
- Communications relating to the team's work in supporting the REF submission process including:
  - Environment data support
  - Proving a framework for environment statement reporting mechanisms for RISC
  - Annual output assessment programme coordination
  - Coordination of Impact support activity / Guidance on Case Study preparation

#### Faculty Research and Impact Teams

- Using the knowledge of Faculty structures to advise and inform the plans development.
- Working with RISP and other appropriate Professional Services departments to ensure that communications are tailored to, and reach specific stakeholder groups.
- Providing up to date information on roles and responsibilities in each Faculty

#### External Relations Marketing and Communications

EMRC support the REF 2021 communication plan with responsibilities including:

- Providing technical knowledge and expertise to the REF 2021 intranet development
- Assisting on internal news story production
- To facilitate the use of other internal communication channels where appropriate

#### Human Resources

- Providing specialist advice and guidance to aid the development of REF processes
- Utilising HR systems and information channels to communicate to various staff groups
- Working with RISP to ensure that the training needs of various REF groups are met and training options communicated to various group
- Working with RISP to ensure liaison with staff representative bodies (e.g. Unions, Staff Networks, Research Staff Association)



## Timescale

Action	Mechanism of communication	Responsible	Timescale	Additional comments
Ref 2021 intranet launched	News story to accompany and signposted from staff intranet homepage	RISP	28/1/19	With feedback and contribution from Faculty R and I teams, Library and ERMC
Code of Practice draft and accompanying consultation circulated to all research staff	Email (for staff in work) / personal letter (for staff who are currently absent from work) Uploaded on REF intranet Specific consultative meetings with staff representative groups (Unions, Research Staff Association, Equality Network) Consultation survey	PVC R & I	Feb – March 2019	After development by the Code of Practice Steering group, RISP and HR team. APVCs ensure local arrangements for effective dissemination. Accompanying news story including information on development to date. Online survey and collation by ERMC
Latest version of environment support document (summarising sources of data available to environment leads) circulated to Faculties	Resources shared with Faculty and UoA teams in line with Environment project plans / meetings	RISP	Jan 2019 & ongoing	Faculty R and I teams ensure effective dissemination
Environment reporting template circulated to Faculty (progress reporting)	Resources shared with Faculty and UoA teams in line with Environment project plans / meetings	RISP	February 2019	Approved by APVC for the Research Environment and Postgraduate Research. Circulated for feedback by Faculty R and I teams
Impact support to assist effective development and assessment of Case Studies	Resources shared with Faculty and UoA teams in line with Environment project plans / meetings.	RISP / Faculty Impact Officers	Ongoing	Materials, resource and staff to support best practice development.

	Face to face training for impact authors and impact leads. Online guidance and materials for Elements processes.	RISP		
Output assessment programme	Face to face training for researchers, reviewers, moderators and support staff. Online guidance and materials for Elements / TULIP processes.	RISP	Ongoing	Ensuring adherence to agreed internal protocols.
Draft Code of Practice and training available to research support staff to assist researcher queries	Relayed through Faculty coms channels	RISP	Jan – March 2019 and ongoing	Process supported by Faculty R and I teams
Awareness raising of final REF Guidance and Panel working criteria	Documents including main changes (from draft versions of July 2018) summarised and circulated to Faculty R and I teams to cascade as appropriate  Guidance docs and summary resources updated and circulated to Faculty R and I teams to cascade as appropriate	RISP	March 2019 - ongoing	Process supported by Faculty R and I teams  Links also provided on REF intranet
Communication to staff re declaration of individual circs (processes / timescales etc.)	Email to all eligible staff (personal letters for those absent from work)	PVC R & I	June 2019 – (phase 1)	Process supported by Faculty R and I teams
Support for staff in declaring circumstances	Roadshows Surgeries Contact details for queries  New intranet pages created to cover this including FAQs and diagrams/animations to include processes	RISP / Equality and Diversity Team	June 2019 and ongoing	Also signpost to REF intranet re info about eligibility.  Locations for surgeries should selected on the basis of being accessible and discreet given the potentially sensitive nature of info that may be disclosed during discussions on individual circs.

Communication to staff re defining Independent Researcher status	Email to all eligible staff (personal letters for those absent from work) outlining processes and outcomes	PVC R & I	June 2019 – Independent Researchers	Process supported by Faculty R and I teams
Communication to those who will be co-ordinating the process (of defining Independent Researchers) at U o A level	Email outlining processes, timeline and responsibilities.	RISP	June 2019	Process supported by Faculty R and I teams

## 5. Challenges

Various challenges have been identified, alongside strategies intended to mitigate them. These are issues that will require flexibility during the plan's execution

Challenge	Actions to mitigate
Units need to evidence new elements of environment statement previously viewed at institutional levels e.g. Equality and Diversity, Open Research, Concordat on Research Development.	These sections may need a particular amount of support and those who are involved in writing should have access to guidance which is informed by those who have professional expertise in these areas.
To ensure information received by all relevant stakeholders	Mixed portfolio of message delivery as described above.  Central contact point for all staff queries in relation to REF <a href="mailto:ref2021@liverpool.ac.uk">ref2021@liverpool.ac.uk</a>  Use of REF intranet as source of key information
Roles may change over the course of the REF period.	Working with Faculties to cross-check intranet relating to Roles and Responsibilities content regularly
Transparency of REF governance	To ensure that all those affected by decision making in the REF submission processes are confident in, and knowledgeable of the way decisions have been made.

## UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL: CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING INDEPENDENT RESEARCHERS FOR REF 2021 SUBMISSION

While the University considers all staff on Teaching and Research contracts as having significant responsibility for research, further investigation and consideration is required to determine which of our Research Only staff would fall into the same category. Only those considered as being **independent researchers** will be eligible to have their work submitted for REF.

In line with the REF Guidance on Submissions, the University views research independence as applying to those staff who are 'self-directed' in their research activity rather than carrying out or supporting another individual's research programme.

Using the REF Criteria on possible indicators of research independence, each Faculty has defined the criteria to be applied in order to best reflect discipline specific considerations as below. In all Faculties **each indicator may not individually demonstrate independence and, where appropriate, multiple factors may need to be considered.**

### Faculty of Science and Engineering

Possible indicators of research independence:

- Leading or acting as Principal Investigator on a substantial, externally funded research grant
- Holds an independently won, competitively awarded research fellowship, where research independence is a requirement (excluding post-doctoral / innovation fellowships). An illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of independent fellowships can be found at <https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/additional-guidance/>
- Individuals are leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package AND / OR can demonstrate national or international level leadership roles.

The following indicators may also generally indicate research independence in Main Panel C disciplines, such as Geography and Environmental Sciences (sub-panel 14):

- 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.

### Faculty of Health and Life Sciences

Possible indicators of research independence:

- Leading or acting as Principal Investigator on a substantial, externally funded research grant
- Holding a Fellowship from the list of eligible Fellowships published by Research England, which is externally funded and was achieved by competitive submission peer reviewed by external reviewers. An illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of independent fellowships can be found at <https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/additional-guidance/>
- Holding another externally funded Fellowship that was achieved by competitive submission peer reviewed by external reviewers with a duration of three years or more
  - Internally awarded Fellowships are not classed as independent
  - Academic Clinical Fellows are also not classed as independent

Publication record alone does not satisfy the requirements for research independence.

## **Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

Possible indicators of research independence:

- Leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project
- Being named as a Co-I on an externally funded research grant/award.
- Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement. An illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of independent fellowships can be found at <https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/additional-guidance/>
- Leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package.
- Having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research.

## UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL: CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF OUTPUTS FOR REF 2021 SUBMISSION

- The University **will seek to maximise the quality of the profile** in each of the Units of Assessment to which it will submit.
- The identification of potential outputs for submission to the REF is based **solely on judgements of quality**
- Final decisions on selection and submission of outputs **will take account of the wider strategic benefits to the department, unit or institution and a decision not to return particular work should be seen in this context.**
- The **inclusion or not of the work of individual members of staff to the REF2021 exercise will not in itself influence career progression nor reflect the value of those staff** to the overall performance of the University.

### Process for output selection

The pool of assessed outputs from the University's annual output assessment exercise provides a solid foundation for the transparent selection of outputs to be submitted to REF2021. The annual output assessment exercise provides a thirteen-point grading scale to provide granularity and consistency with relevant national REF2021 UoA guidance.

With a focus on maximising the volume of world leading research, the following methodology for output selection will be applied for each UoA:

- The strongest output for each eligible individual will be selected based on annual output assessment score, satisfying the minimum requirement of one output per individual
- The balance of the required outputs for submission will be selected based on the highest quality outputs as scored in the annual output assessment until the required threshold is met (recognising the maximum of 5 outputs attributable to any one individual).
- It is recognised that some outputs within a UoA scope may have received identical internal scores. Where UoAs need to select from a range of outputs with identical scores, ranking will be informed by additional considerations including:
  - Strategic decisions in line with research environment or UoA submission strategies
  - Use of citation data (where permitted by sub-panels as per the REF Guidance on Submissions)
  - Re-assessment
  - External calibration

Each Faculty has set out the criteria by which it will make further assessment or judgment. These criteria have been considered and approved by RISC and will be widely communicated to all staff via the University REF Code of Practice, University REF governance structures and publication on the University REF intranet.

## **FACULTY OF HEALTH AND LIFE SCIENCES**

The following methodology for output selection will be applied for each UoA:

- The strongest output for each eligible individual will be selected based on reading programme score and citation data, satisfying the minimum requirement of one output per individual
- All remaining 4\* outputs will be assessed together with citation data as assurance that the 4\* reading programme score remains appropriate
- The balance of required outputs in each UoA to comprise 3\* outputs, recognising that 3\* papers will be differentiated as low, medium and high. Decisions on selection to be devolved to UoA planning groups for best fit with strategies for each UoA and taking into account factors such as the following:
  - Reading programme score together with citation data
  - External calibration where available

## **FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

The following methodology for output selection will be applied for each UoA:

- UoA Groups will use outcomes from annual outputs assessment to inform the ranking and selection of outputs for submission
- The primary criterion will be the quality (star rating) of the outputs.
- School level committee oversight allows for interdisciplinary flagging where appropriate
- The strongest output for each eligible individual will be selected based on annual output assessment programme score, satisfying the minimum requirement of one output per individual
- The balance of required outputs in each UoA to be selected based on the highest scoring outputs in the annual assessment programme until the required threshold is met. Where the UoA has to select from a range of outputs with identical scores, ranking may be aided by:
  - Final judgements on the basis of strategic benefit to the overall submission
  - Re-assessment
  - External calibration

## **FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING**

The following methodology for output selection will be applied for each UoA:

- All 4\* outputs will be selected for submission
- The strongest output for each eligible individual will be selected based on reading programme score and citation data (in applicable panels), satisfying the minimum requirement of one output per individual
- The balance of required outputs in each UoA to be selected based on the highest scoring outputs in the annual assessment programme until the required threshold is met. Where the UoA has to select from a range of outputs with identical scores, ranking may be aided by:



- Use of citation data (where permitted by sub-panels as per the REF Guidance on Submissions)
- Re-assessment of outputs in that category (e.g. 3\* medium)
- External calibration of outputs in that category

**REF 2021: KEY MILESTONES**

The University's REF 2021 Code of Practice was submitted to, and approved by, the national Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel in 2019. Subsequently the COVID19 pandemic resulted in Research England pausing REF preparations between March and July 2020. The official REF preparation process began again on 31 July 2020 accompanied by [Research England Guidance on Revisions](#).

The University took appropriate steps to ensure alterations to internal REF preparations during the pause period including alterations to timescales and alternative delivery of activities. Processes and governance related to REF preparation, selection and decision making remained as described and approved in the Code of Practice. However, some changes to the timings of preparation activities and decisions were necessary to enable the full engagement of staff. These revised timings are set out below.

Confirmation of key personnel / roles and responsibilities (UoA Leads, Impact Leads, Environment Leads etc.)	December 2018 – March 2019
Publication of final Guidance on Submissions and Panel Criteria (Research England)	31 January 2019
REF Code of Practice: drafting and consultation with staff on submission intentions	November 2018 – April 2019
REF Code of Practice: submission to EDAP	June 2019
Process for determining Independent Researchers	June –September 2019
Appeals process for R ONLY staff (where process for determining independence not followed correctly)	October - November 2019
Process for voluntary disclosure of Individual Circumstances	June – September 2019
Mock REF: assessment by UoA of all elements using official templates and guidance - outputs, impact case studies and research environment	March – October 2019
Initial UoA selection of outputs for potential submission	March-July 2020
System preparation: alignment of UoL systems with Research England submission system	July – December 2020
Re-run processes for Independent Researchers (Round 2) and Individual Circumstances (Round 2 & Round 3)	January – October 2020
Progress reported to RISC on Impact (March), Environment (July) and selection of Outputs (July)	March – July 2020
<b>Census date:</b> eligible staff, impact evidence, environment data	31 July 2020

Appeals process for R ONLY staff (where process for determining independence not followed correctly – Round 2)	August – October 2020
Further Equality Impact Assessment (initial output selection, independent researchers)	August – October 2020
Preparation of submission: Outputs selection, Impact Case Studies, Environment Statements	August – November 2020
Review and re-implement processes for Individual Circumstances for any staff needing reduction of minimum of one due to COVID19 circumstance	September – November 2020
Collation of 'final' output selections, environment statements impact case studies	November 2020
System upload: upload of data from UoL systems to Research England submission system	September 2020 – January 2021
Validation and data checking	December 2020 – February 2021
Deadline for eligible research outputs	31 December 2020
<b>Submission Deadline</b>	31 March 2021