

Research Excellence Framework 2021 Code of Practice

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Note *blue text* in this document refers to guidance on codes of practice ([2019/03](#)) Annex A template

Part 1: Introduction

- How the code relates to broader institutional policies / strategies that promote and support E&D.

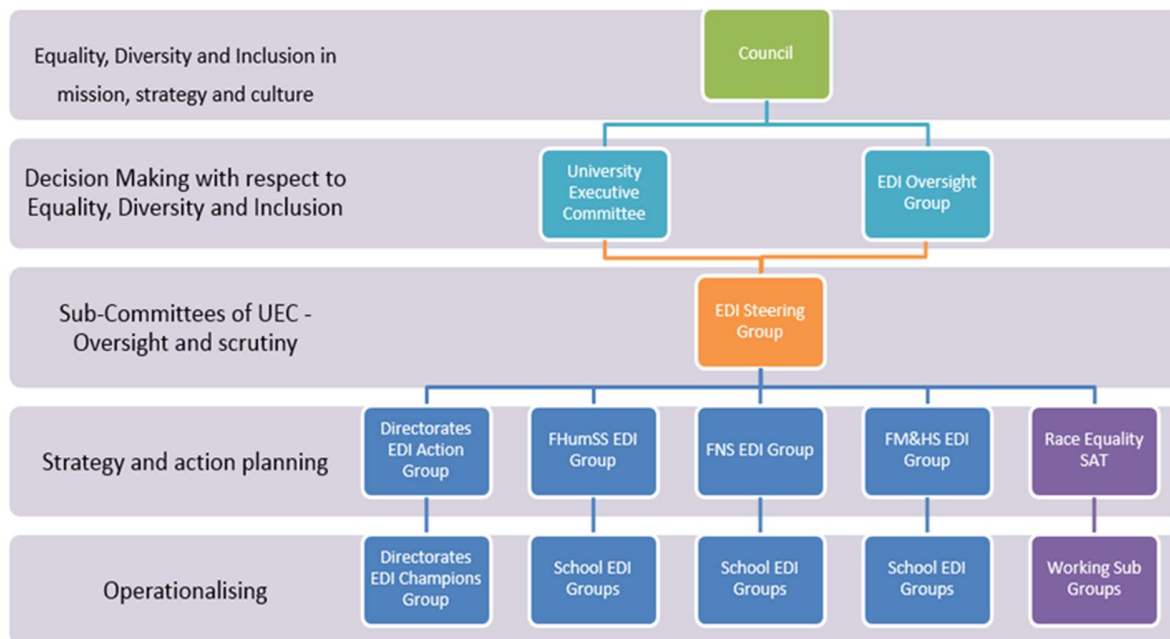
Keele University is a diverse, inclusive and professional community that respects individuals and enables them to strive for success in order to contribute positively and sustainably in the local region, wider society and the national and international economic, scientific and cultural domains. Research is a major route to that contribution. In pursuing research we value the rights, responsibilities and dignity of individuals through our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and place our community at the heart of everything we do. Keele strives to be one of the leading Universities in the country by creating a positive environment where everybody is valued and is able to reach their potential.

EDI are core values underpinning the University's mission. In February 2018, the Executive Committee approved the University [EDI Strategy](#) for the period 2018-2022 which sets out core principles and priorities for the University and provides an underpinning foundation for the development of a range of complementary policies, practices and procedures. The Strategy is structured under our equality objectives of:

1. Inclusive leadership and decision making at all levels of the organisation
2. Inclusive student experience/student lifecycle
3. Accessible and inclusive campus
4. Progressive, informed, diverse and supported workforce

Revised EDI governance arrangements (Figure 1) were implemented at the start of the 2018/19 academic year, to support progress against the new EDI strategy, facilitate a more joined up approach to EDI and work on intersectionality. These groups consider all matters pertaining to equalities, including progress against equality charter marks such as Athena SWAN and the Race Equality Charter. The EDI Steering Group and Faculty EDI Groups were consulted as part of the development of this Code of Practice.

Figure 1 - Keele University EDI Governance Structure



From September 2018, training on the University’s system of Equality Analysis (EA) has been rolled out, replacing the previous Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process. The refreshed approach embeds consideration of equality more thoroughly into practice and policy development, and emphasizes that consideration should be given as to how policy developers can enhance equality in addition to analysing and removing potential barriers or negative impact. The EA process has been used in the development of this Code of Practice.

Many institutions report high numbers of contract research staff on fixed-term contracts. Keele University has taken action over a number of years to reduce the number of fixed-term contracts through a robust post approval process which requires managers to consider the appropriateness of the contract. Data has been reviewed on the use of fixed-term contracts as part of our institutional Athena SWAN and Race Equality Charter submissions. The data shows that use of fixed-term contracts at Keele is low in comparison to benchmarks and does not highlight any disparity between men and women. Keele has lower proportions of non-BAME and BAME staff on fixed-term contracts in comparison to the sector, but we observe a slight disparity between non-BAME and BAME staff at Keele and have agreed actions to remove this. Our commitment to the Concordat and successive awards of Vitae’s HR Excellence in Research Award since 2013 underpin the actions we are taking and we have focused the support we provide to fixed-term staff to ensure they can access benefits and support at Keele in the same way as staff on open-ended contracts. A fixed-term contract will not be a factor to determine whether an individual has significant responsibility for research or is an independent researcher. Details of contractual status will not be provided to any of Keele’s REF decision making groups.

Part-time and flexible working is seen as a benefit for many and facilitates partnership working. There are a number of academic colleagues who work part time to balance their personal commitments/interests and many of our Clinical Academics have a part time contract with Keele

University and a part time contract with the NHS. In designing our processes and criteria for identification, we have been careful to ensure that they can be applied equally to part-time and full-time staff.

- [An update of actions taken since REF 2014.](#)

An EIA was undertaken on the University's 2014 REF submission which was reviewed at University Research Committee on 11 February 2014 and 13 May 2014. Below is an extract from minutes of those meetings.

University Research Committee 11th February 2014, Extract from the minutes

4.2 Equality and Diversity Analysis

The committee considered the [Equality and Diversity Analysis](#) on Keele's REF 2014 submission. The committee noted overall 58% of eligible staff (headcount) had been submitted, and the significant increase in the proportion of eligible female staff submitted from 41% in RAE 2008 to 52% in REF 2014. The Committee noted that in the 50-59 age group only 44% of staff had been submitted. The Committee agreed it would be useful to look at age by gender and specific Schools/discipline areas to see if this reveals any differences.

University Research Committee 13th May 2014, Extract from the minutes

The Chair reported that under 4.2 Equality and Diversity Analysis of the REF submission, further analysis had been undertaken following the discussion at the last meeting. When staff in the Schools of Nursing & Midwifery and Health & Rehabilitation, where very few staff had been submitted to the REF, are taken out of the analysis, exactly the same proportions of men and women (65.1%) had been submitted to the REF across the institution.

The University successfully renewed the Athena SWAN Bronze Institutional award in April 2018. There are two specific REF actions cited within our institutional action plan:

- Analyse REF audit results by protected characteristics.
- Secure RCUK-recommended unconscious bias training for all UoA leads.

These actions were agreed prior to the development of this Code of Practice, and have been further enhanced within this Code of Practice to ensure that equality analysis by all protected characteristics is undertaken at appropriate points and stages during the University's REF preparations. Unconscious bias will be incorporated into the REF specific training for key decision makers, including UoA leads, see section on 'Staff, Committees and Training'.

The EDI Steering Group (see Figure 1) regularly reviews progress against the Athena SWAN Institutional action plan and participated in the consultation processes for the development of this Code of Practice. The draft Code of Practice was reviewed at their meeting on 5 December 2018, and the Group have requested that they receive updates on REF actions including any equality analysis undertaken.

Keele made a submission to Advance HE's Race Equality Charter (REC) in February 2019. The Self-Assessment Team have analysed data relating to the 2014 REF submission by ethnicity and noted that the percentage of eligible staff submitted to the REF was lower for BAME staff and notably lower for non-UK BAME staff. We have set a target to reduce this difference which will be supported by the processes outlined in this Code of Practice.

The University launched its first [People Strategy](#) in September 2017 which supports a new and

enhanced approach to recruitment, retention, leadership, professional development, inclusion and wellbeing and encourages staff engagement and involvement.

Keele successfully retained the Vitae HR Excellence in Research award in May 2018.

- [How the institution is addressing the principles of Transparency, Consistency, Accountability, and Inclusivity in demonstrating fairness \(see paragraph 39\).](#)
- [Reference to these principles should also be made, as appropriate, in completing the sections below.](#)

The University is committed to ensuring that the following principles are embedded into this code of practice and implemented in practice:

- **Transparency** - the processes outlined in this code of practice will be made available in accessible formats and publicised to all academic staff across the institution, including to those who are absent from the University. A communication programme has been developed alongside this code of practice and is outlined below.
- **Consistency** - the University has developed processes which will be implemented across the institution in relation to identifying staff with significant responsibility for research, determining research independence and selection of outputs. We have sought to minimise the variation in the application of the criteria for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research across Units of Assessment.
- **Accountability** - this code of practice clearly sets out the roles and responsibilities of individuals, committees and groups who are involved in decision making relating to the application of criteria for research independence, significant responsibility, and selection of outputs, thereby making those decisions transparent and accountable. Members of the Committees and groups (UoA Staff groups, REF Strategy Steering Group, UoA Outputs groups) will receive training as outlined in the section on ‘Staff, Committees and Training’.
- **Inclusivity** - The processes set out in this code of practice have been developed to be inclusive and equality analysis has been a key feature within the development process. Analysis of the impact of the processes has been undertaken at appropriate stages.
- [How the code is being communicated to staff across the institution \(including to those on leave of absence\), through various mechanisms and channels, including the staff intranet.](#)

Our commitment to these principles is demonstrated by the extensive consultation we have undertaken with a variety of stakeholders across the institution. Details of the consultation undertaken on the CoP is summarised below:

Code of Practice consultation	Date
REF team release draft guidance on CoP	Late July 2018
Consideration of CoP requirements in REF Guidance by University REF Strategy Steering Group	14th August 2018
Following REF guidance and steer from RSSG, REF Code of Practice to be drafted	Late August, early Sept

with Human Resources	
REF outputs steering group review of initial draft processes	3rd October 2018
UoA leads consultation	5th/25th October
University REF Strategy Steering Group - review of current draft incorporating comments from REF outputs steering group (and UoA leads)	17th October 2018
University Executive Committee (UEC) review full draft CoP prior to consultation Heads of School and Unions	13th November
Consultation with Heads of School	November
Consultations with UCU	November (16th & 23rd)
UoA leads review latest draft	Mid November
University Research Committee	19th November 2018
EDI Steering Group	5th December 2018
Senate first 'review and comment'	5th December 2018
Consultation with the wider University	11th December 2018
Faculty Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) groups	HUMSS 27 February 2019 FNS 25 February 2019 MHS 6 December 2018 & 21st March 2019
Amend draft to incorporate comments from University wide consultation	January 2019
Amend draft to incorporate revised <u>Code of Practice Guidance</u> from funding bodies (published 31st January 2019)	February 2019
UEC review latest draft	27th February 2019
UCU consultation meeting	7th March 2019
Senate for second 'review and comment'	13th March 2019
Final draft CoP to be considered and APPROVED by UEC	April 2019
Council for information	3rd May 2019
Final version submitted to REF team	Before 7th June
REF team (EDAP) approval of Keele's REF Code of Practice	Summer/Autumn 2019
Published on Keele website	December 2019

Once approved by EDAP, this Code of Practice will be made available on our website, and it will be communicated to all academic staff by:

1. Email from Heads of School
2. Faculty Town Hall meetings
3. Posted on the intranet
4. Hard copies will be sent to those who are absent from the University (e.g. maternity or sick leave)

5. New members of academic staff will be made aware of this REF Code of Practice by their Head of School and/or Unit of Assessment lead

All staff, irrespective of their work location have access to Keele email and to the intranet. Alternative formats of this Code of Practice will be made available on request.

Part 2: identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

Policies and procedures – where not submitting 100% of eligible staff.

- Criteria used for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research, including information about how the criteria are being applied, and grounds for decisions taken.
- How decisions are being made and communicated to staff, including timescale.
- If the approach to identifying staff with significant responsibility for research varies, according to variation in employment practices by UOA, codes of practice should outline each process used.
- Codes of practice should describe stages of approval (diagrams, schematics & timelines might be included as an aid).

Definitions¹

1. Category A **eligible staff**: academic staff, with a contract of employment of 0.2FTE or greater, on Keele payroll (31st July 2020), whose primary function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'research and teaching.'
2. **Staff with significant responsibility for research** are those for whom explicit time and resources are made available to engage actively in independent research and that is an expectation of their job role
3. Category A **submitted staff**: those who have been identified as having significant responsibility for research on the census date (31st July 2020). Staff on research only contracts should meet the definition of research independence.
4. **Research independence**: an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme

These definitions may also include staff who have had a significant responsibility for research for some, but not all, of the REF period; or staff who have left the university. However, the definitions will not actively apply to the status of these staff members/former staff members on the census date.

Funding bodies have confirmed that a list of submitted staff will not be produced at end of REF.

¹ Source: REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions [2019/03](#) paragraphs 117, 138, 135, 131

Keele’s process for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research/independence

Annex A provides a process diagram to summarise the stages for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research or research independence, and the associated timescales. Keele University is using a standard process across all Units of Assessment to ensure consistency and transparency.

All academic staff (i.e. those with ‘teaching and research’ in their contract or ‘research only’ staff who are grade 7 or above, or who are principal investigator on a grant) are allocated to a Unit of Assessment (UoA) Staff group for consideration. The UoA is based on the staff members’ previous REF submission or mapping of their research area to Keele’s most appropriate potential Unit of Assessment²

UoA Staff Group, Autumn 2019 (i.e. 2019/20 academic year)

Members: PVC Research (Chair)
UoA lead(s)
Dean(s) for Research or equivalent role
Faculty Executive Dean/PVC(s)
Head(s) of School
EDI rep from Human Resources
Representative from [Research Operations](#) (secretary)

The composition of the groups will be reviewed prior to their meeting and consideration will be given to co-opting additional members to provide a better gender balance, if necessary.

The **purpose** of the UoA meeting is to:

1) Evaluate UoA suitability for each academic member of staff

2a) Evaluate and recommend if each academic member of staff has a significant responsibility for research, based on the criteria set out below (for teaching and research staff)

OR

2b) Evaluate and recommend if each member of contract research staff has independent researcher status, based on the criteria set out below

² List of Keele’s potential UoAs: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/raise/researchsupport/researchoperations/ref/>

2a Criteria to determine significant responsibility for research

2a) The proportion of time allocated to individual academic staff for research via workload allocation will be used as the criteria to determine whether academic staff have a significant responsibility for research. Workload allocations which allocate **20% or more of an individual's time for research are considered the indicator of significant responsibility for research at Keele University**. *For these purposes, time for scholarship should be distinct to research allocation. (Additional guidance has been provided to ensure consistency: see [Guidance and Resources: Planning Workload Allocations & SPRE](#))*

There are no Units of Assessment where this varies due to employment practices varying at the submitting unit level.

The 20% threshold will be considered as appropriate to an individual's time commitment to the University, i.e. it will be 20% of the workload, not 20% of a full-time equivalent.

Where the UoA staff group is assessing a member of the group, that individual will step out of the room for the discussion. If it is the Chair that is being assessed, the Faculty Executive Dean will take temporary Chairship of the meeting. For those exceptional instances where workload allocations are not available (e.g. Faculty Executive Dean, PVC/DVC or Head of School), the criteria will be their job description/appraisal objectives relating to research for 2019/20, which must demonstrate that undertaking their own research (rather than research management) is an expectation of their job role.

2b Criteria to determine research independence

2b) To determine if 'research only staff (grade 7 and above or those of any grade who are principal investigator on a grant) have research independence is dependent on whether they are leading a research project independently, rather than undertaking another principal investigator's research (under the PIs guidance). The group will need to see evidence of this research independence, such as details of researchers role in specific current/live research projects or grants (as detailed below in section 3). This evidence will be provided by the UoA lead with support from the research operations team. Research outputs are not considered as indicating research independence.

REF Strategy Steering Group (RSSG) (Winter 2019/20)

Members:

- Vice Chancellor (Chair)
- Deputy Vice Chancellor
- PVC Research & Enterprise
- Director of Research, Innovation and Engagement
- Head of Research Strategy Delivery
- REF 2014 panel member
- Head of Research Quality
- Head of Human Resources

The **purpose** of the RSSG is to consider the recommendations from UoA meetings and make decisions, whilst ensuring consistency of approach and application of the Code of Practice, across the University. The RSSG has strategic oversight of the University's REF submission and resolves any differences of opinion. RSSG will operate as a face to face meeting, with all members present. The Head of Research Quality will record actions and decisions.

The group will consider an equality analysis of the outcomes of each UoA staff meeting (undertaken by the Head of HR and Head of Research Quality). This analysis will review the profile of those identified as having significant responsibility for research against all academic staff by protected characteristic. An equality analysis will also be undertaken reviewing those identified as independent researchers against the pool considered.

Following approval from RSSG, there will be **individual communications to academic staff (February/March 2020)**. This will be in the form of a letter/email, confirming if they are deemed to have a significant responsibility for research or research independence (research only staff). If they do not, the letter will detail how they have not met the criteria and set out their right of appeal (see grounds for appeal below).

Development of processes (see paragraph 41 to 43).

- How processes to be followed have been consulted on and agreed with staff representative groups
- How the final agreed processes have been/are communicated to staff, if different to that described in part 1: Introduction

Consultation on this Code of Practice has been extensive to ensure that we have been open and transparent when developing the processes. The Code has benefitted from the input of a wide range of stakeholders; we have held open meetings and asked for feedback on the processes from a variety of groups. Key groups who have been consulted are; Heads of School, Unit of Assessment Leads, University Research Committee, EDI Steering Group, Faculty EDI Committees, University Executive Committee, University Leadership Group and the University and College Union (UCU). The consultation process is summarised in the table on page 6.

At each meeting, feedback and suggestions were documented and the Code of Practice was revised as appropriate to incorporate the feedback.

There have been 3 consultation meetings with the UCU, the second of which (23 November 2018) benefitted from the input of a regional UCU representative. In the final consultation meeting on 7 March 2019, UCU representatives confirmed that they endorsed the processes set out in this Code of Practice.

The University Executive Committee reviewed and approved this Code of Practice on 16 April 2019.

The communication of the Code of Practice is set out in part 1.

Staff, committees and training (see paragraphs 44 to 48).

- Procedures for appointing designated staff and committees / panels responsible for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research (distinguishing between those with advisory and those with decision making roles).

Staff are appointed to the UoA staff group, UoA outputs group and RSSG based on their role, this ensures consistent and transparent processes across the University. Support to the groups will be provided by the research operations team and HR EDI representative; these roles are advisory rather than decision making.

The Unit of Assessment leads were jointly nominated by Faculty Executive Deans, Deans for Research and Heads of School in late 2017, and were approved by the REF strategy steering group in January 2018. A list of UoA leads' names is published on the University [website](#) along with their remit (see annex G).

- Information provided should include role descriptions for individuals and terms of reference for committees / panels, modes of operation, and record-keeping procedures, as well as information about where these roles / committees / panels fit into the wider institutional management structure.

Included in annex E and F

- Details of training provided to individuals and committees involved in identifying staff, the timescale for delivery, and content (including how it has been tailored to REF).

Specific REF tailored training will be provided to all members of the UoA Staff Groups, UoA Outputs Groups, Appeals Committee and RSSG. The training is compulsory for members of these groups.

Training will be delivered before these members of staff are required to participate in any of the processes and the majority of the training will be delivered in the summer of 2019.

The training session is based upon Advance HE's EDI and REF workshop which was attended by the Head of HR (Strategy & Policy) on 17 April 2019 and has been developed to be relevant to the processes set out in this Code of Practice. The objectives for the training participants are to:

- Ensure that equality is considered in all REF 2021 decisions (at the level of individuals, UoAs and institutionally)
- Understand the concepts of conscious and unconscious bias and how these could impact on Keele's REF 2021 decision making
- Understand Keele's approach to Personal/Individual circumstances
- Understand their REF role

- Understand the equality analysis undertaken so far

The session is structured to cover the following areas:

1. EDI in REF
2. Conscious and unconscious bias in REF
3. Keele's strategies to mitigate against bias in our REF processes
4. Personal/Individual Circumstances
5. Understand your REF role
6. Equality Impact Assessments

Participants are required to complete the Harvard Implicit bias test prior to attending the session.

Appeals (see paragraphs 75 to 78).

- How the appeals process has been communicated to staff.

The appeals process will be communicated to staff within this Code of Practice (which as stated above will be widely publicised to staff once approved by EDAP/REF team), and will be referred to in the letter/email to staff, informing them if they are deemed to not have significant responsibility for research or research independence.

- Details of the process, including how cases are submitted, eligible grounds for appeal.
- Details of those involved in hearing any appeals (demonstrating their independence from earlier decision processes), timescales, and how decisions are being communicated to staff.

Appeal process:

The two possible grounds of appeal will be procedural irregularity e.g. criteria not applied correctly, or that there was relevant information not available to the group, at the time of meeting.

Staff will be notified of the deadline to submit an appeal and will have up to 30 calendar days to consider and submit any appeal, from the date of their letter/email.

The case for appeal must set out in writing the procedural irregularity, or the relevant information which was not available to the UoA meeting, and be submitted to the Human Resource Director's PA, who will service the panel.

All appeals will be considered by the same panel, based on the paperwork submitted. The REF tailored training will be made available to members of the appeal committee.

Membership:

Deputy Pro-Chancellor & member of Council (Chair)
PVC Education

Academic Registrar
HR Director
2 Professors from Keele University

Note the appeals panel is made up of individuals who are independent of the decision making process, and haven't been involved in the UoA meetings or RSSG. Members of Council don't ultimately report to the VC, and therefore have authority to 'overturn' RSSG decisions.

If the appeal is upheld, this decision is final, and will be reported to RSSG and the UoA outputs group.

If the appeal is rejected, the staff member will not be included in REF 2021.

Equality impact assessment (see paragraphs 59 to 72).

- How an equality impact assessment has been used to inform the identification of staff and make final decisions.

Equality analysis informed the development of this Code of Practice, it was undertaken before the consultation commenced and will be continued on the outcomes of the Ready for REF meetings held for each potential Unit of Assessment during November/December 2018 to inform and better develop the processes.

Equality analysis will be undertaken on the recommendations of the UoA Staff Groups compared to the pool of eligible staff for both establishing those who have significant responsibility for research and research independence. This analysis will be reported to the RSSG alongside the recommendations from the UoA Staff Groups and will inform the decisions of the RSSG.

An equality analysis will also be carried out on the decisions of the RSSG to establish significant responsibility for research and independent researcher status at both UoA and Institutional levels. This analysis will be made available to the Appeals panel for context.

Part 3: Determining research independence.

The majority of Keele staff who are Category A eligible are employed on Teaching and Research contracts of employment. Around 15% of our academic staffing population are employed on Research only contracts and the majority of these roles support another individual's research.

Extract from [Guidance on Submission](#) on 'independent researchers': Staff employed on 'research only' contracts must be independent researchers to meet the definition of Category A eligible. All staff on 'research only' contracts who are independent researchers should be returned as Category A submitted staff. They must not be listed as Category A submitted staff purely on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs. For the purposes of the REF, an

independent researcher is defined as an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme.

Possible indicators of independence are listed below. Institutions should 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, under Guidance)*
- *leading a research group or a substantial work package*

Main panels C and D (i.e social sciences and arts and humanities), additional attributes to indicate research independence:

- *Being named as Co-I on an externally funded research grant/award*
- *Having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research.*

The process to identify if someone on a research only contract is deemed to be research independent, is outlined in section 2. The UoA staff group will consider all 'research only' staff who are grade 7 or above, OR research staff, of any grade, who are principal investigators on a research grant, to be as inclusive as possible.

Policies and procedures (see paragraph 40).

- Criteria used for determining staff who meet the definition of an independent researcher, including information about how the criteria are being applied.
- How decisions are being made and communicated to staff, including timescale.
- Codes of practice should describe stages of approval (diagrams, schematics & timelines might be included as an aid).

Outlined in Part 2, please refer to that section.

Staff, Committees and Training, Appeals

Staff, committees and appeals are the same as those outlined in Part 2, please refer to that section.

Equality impact assessment (see paragraphs 59 to 72).

- How an equality impact assessment has been used to inform the identification of staff and make final decisions.

The process follows that outlined in Part 2, please refer to that section

Part 4: Selection of outputs

Policies and procedures (see paragraph 40).

- Details of procedures that have been developed to ensure the fair and transparent selection of outputs, including the HEI's approach to submitting outputs by former staff, including those made redundant
- Information should be provided about how processes for selecting outputs have been developed and the rationale for adopted methods.
- Codes of practice should describe stages of approval (diagrams, schematics & timelines might be included as an aid).

REF2021 invites a different way of thinking about output selection, and the relationship of outputs to those who are deemed to have a significant responsibility for research. Lord Stern's review proposed the 'decoupling' of outputs from individuals: while full realization of this approach is a direction of travel for future REF exercises, Keele University approaches the present exercise by thinking increasingly about unit-level performance and responsibility; while ensuring that individual circumstances and opportunities are equally supported, provided for and recognised.

Annex B sets out the process for the selection of outputs. All potential REF outputs from current staff and those who have left the University are available in the University's Current Research Information System (CRIS) [Symplectic](#). All potential REF outputs are moved into Units of Assessment (UoA), dependent on their authors' UoA (described in part 2, note that the way we treat outputs for former staff is the same irrespective of their reason for leaving). For each UoA, an outputs list will be produced (in a GoogleSheet/shared platform which is only accessible to UoA leads and relevant professional services staff). This outputs list will be checked by the UoA lead, for (1) output eligibility (i.e. excluding any output types which aren't REF eligible) and (2) where an author has more than 5 outputs, selecting the higher quality outputs for review (in consultation with the author, as necessary). To facilitate identification of higher quality outputs, researchers have the option to provide information on their potential REF outputs (e.g. indicating, in their view, if 1*/2*/3*/4*). The Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research & Enterprise will oversee this initial output checking by UoA leads, and the initial UoA allocation.

The UoA lead will arrange for each output to be reviewed and scored by at least two internal reviewers. Reviewers will be required to use the 12 point scoring system (outlined in Annex C) which enables greater granularity and was approved by the REF Strategy Steering Group following consultation with UoA leads. The UoA lead will review all scores and moderate any discrepancies, entering final output scores onto the GoogleSheet/shared platform. All of the outputs in the UoA will then be ranked/sorted by their score.

To provide assurance about internal output scoring, during 2019 Keele University is undertaking external reviews of approximately one third of REF outputs, and will compare the external score

to the internal score, to assess if they are any areas which are significantly deviating and need recalibration.

Following the ranking process, a UoA Outputs Group consisting of the Faculty Executive Dean (Chair), PVC Research & Enterprise, Faculty Dean for Research and UoA Lead, supported by the Head of Research Quality, will then select the required number of outputs for the UoA, based on those which are highest scoring **and** ensuring a minimum of 1 and maximum of 5 outputs per REF submitted staff. If the UoA Outputs Group members are all the same gender, another UoA lead (of the opposite sex) from the same Faculty will be asked to join the group.

Following the outputs selection process, the selected outputs for each UoA will be presented to RSSG for approval. RSSG will ensure a consistent and transparent process has been followed across the institution, along with ensuring adherence to this Code of Practice. RSSG will review an equality analysis of the output selection process and consider analysis of the distribution of outputs in each UoA (i.e. volume per researcher) to ensure that any unit level circumstances (or exceptionally, the removal of the minimum requirement for one output) have been sufficiently reflected in the output selection.

The required number of outputs is calculated as the Category A staff submitted FTE multiplied by 2.5. However this total number of outputs might be reduced in accordance with any unit level circumstances (or reduction to zero outputs) which are approved by the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel ([EDAP](#)). The UoA outputs group will be informed by the central 'Keele individual circumstances panel' of any reduction to the total number of outputs for that UoA. To preserve confidentiality, they will not be given any details of to whom these apply. This is apart from where circumstances have had an exceptional effect on the ability of an individual staff member to research productively throughout the period, so that have had the required minimum of one output removed. The UoA outputs group won't be given details of circumstances, just informed where zero outputs are required for a researcher.

Staff, committees and training (see paragraphs 44 to 48).

(Where such staff and committees are the same as those outlined in Parts 2 or 3, institutions can cross-refer to that section)

- Procedures for identifying designated staff and committees / panels responsible for selecting outputs (distinguishing between those with advisory and those with decision making roles).
- Information provided should include role descriptions for individuals and terms of reference for committees / panels, modes of operation, and record-keeping procedures, as well as information about where these roles / committees / panels fit into the wider institutional management structure.

Included in Annexes

- Details of training provided to individuals and committees involved in the output selection process, the timescale for delivery, and content (including how it has been tailored to REF).

All members of UoA outputs group will receive specific REF tailored training, as outlined in section 2 above.

Staff circumstances (see paragraphs 49 to 56).

- Procedures for taking into account staff whose circumstances have affected their ability to research productively throughout the period in relation to the unit's total output requirement.
- Procedures for taking into account the effect of circumstances that have had an exceptional effect on the ability of an individual staff member to research productively throughout the period so that they do not have the required minimum of one output.
- For both of the above cases, procedures for :
 - staff to disclose circumstances in a confidential manner.
 - Unit to adjust expectations about staff contribution to the output pool as appropriate

In order to ensure that our submissions are representative of the work of all our staff with significant responsibility for research, the University will consider staff circumstances which have affected an individual's or unit's ability to work productively throughout the assessment period.

To do this, in Autumn 2019 the University will centrally provide a secure and confidential google form (or other similar platform see Annex D), which will be widely disseminated to all staff, asking them to volunteer any circumstances by Friday 29th November 2019 (note that for new staff or circumstances which occur after this date, the google form will remain open for staff to report these). Communications on the process for declaring staff circumstances will highlight that the information will be managed centrally and confidentially and that Keele encourages staff to declare circumstances in line with our commitment to EDI and our People Strategy. This process will be discussed in the Faculty Town Hall meetings to communicate the final Code of Practice.

Completed google forms will be submitted to Human Resources and will be considered by Keele's Individual Circumstances Panel (see details below). The University recognise that staff are best placed themselves to consider if equality related circumstances have affected their productivity over the REF period, and we will not pressure staff to declare their circumstances where they do not wish to do so. The confidential form will be the only mechanism in which staff can declare circumstances; information provided to the University previously or for other purposes will not be used.

The extracts below from the [REF Guidance on Submissions](#) paragraphs 160 to 163 and Annex L detail the applicable circumstances and associated tariffs for which the output pool may be reduced.

(paragraph 160) The funding bodies, advised by EDAP, have identified the following equality-related circumstances that, in isolation or together, may significantly constrain the ability of submitted staff to produce outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period. Details of the permitted reductions are set out in Annex L:

- a. *Qualifying as an ECR (on the basis set out in paragraphs 148 and 149 and Annex L).*
- b. *Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector.*
- c. *Qualifying periods of family-related leave.*
- d. *Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1–6, as defined in paragraphs 161 to 163.*
- e. *Circumstances with an equivalent effect to absence, that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:*
 - i. *Disability: this is defined in the ‘Guidance on codes of practice’, Table 1 under ‘Disability’.*
 - ii. *Ill health, injury, or mental health conditions.*
 - iii. *Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of – or justify the reduction of further outputs in addition to – the allowances set out in Annex L.*
 - iv. *Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member).*
 - v. *Gender reassignment.*
 - vi. *Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed in the ‘Guidance on codes of practice’, Table 1, or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.*

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

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

163. This allowance is made on the basis that the clinical staff concerned are normally significantly constrained in the time they have available to undertake research during the assessment period. Where the individual meets the criteria in paragraph 162, and has had significant additional circumstances – for any of the other reasons in paragraph 160 – the institution can make a case for further reductions as part of the unit reduction request, using

the tariffs set out in Annex L as a guide.

Early Career Researchers (ECRs)

(paragraph 148) ECRs are defined as members of staff who meet the definition of Category A eligible on the census date, and who **started their careers as independent researchers on or after 1 August 2016**. For the purposes of the REF, an individual is deemed to have started their career as an independent researcher from the point at which:

- a. they held a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, which included a primary employment function of undertaking ‘research’ or ‘teaching and research’, with any HEI or other organisation, whether in the UK or overseas, and
- b. they first met the definition of an independent researcher (paragraphs 131 to 133).

149. The following do not meet the definition of an ECR (this list is not exhaustive):

- a. Staff who first acted as an independent researcher while at a previous employer – whether another HEI, business or other organisation in the UK or elsewhere – before 1 August 2016, with a contract of 0.2 FTE or greater.
- b. Staff who first acted as an independent researcher before 1 August 2016 and have since had a career outside of research or an extended break from their research career, before returning to research work. Career breaks outside the HE sector are included in the types of circumstances where requests for output reductions may be made (see paragraph 160).
- c. Research assistants who would not normally meet the definition of an independent researcher, as set out in paragraph 129.

Annex L: Reductions for staff circumstances

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

Table L1: Early career researchers: Permitted reduction in outputs

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

Between 1 August 2017 and 31 July 2018 inclusive	1
On or after 1 August 2018	1.5

Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks

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

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

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

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

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

Qualifying periods of family-related leave

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

- a. Statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave taken substantially during the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020, regardless of the length of the leave.

- b. Additional paternity or adoption leave, or shared parental leave lasting for four months or more, taken substantially during the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020.*

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

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

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

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

Combining circumstances

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

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

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

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

Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1–6

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

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

Circumstances requiring a judgement about reductions

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

Adjusting expectations of an individual’s contribution to the unit’s output pool

Where individuals have declared circumstances (as described above) that, in isolation or together, significantly constrain their ability to produce outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period, the University’s expected contribution from that individual is the minimum one output to the output pool. The University has determined this approach to ensure it is fair, simple and transparent.

This approach recognises that other submitted staff can contribute up to 5 outputs, to enable the average of 2.5 outputs per submitted FTE. Where cumulative staff circumstances within a unit disproportionately affect a unit’s output pool, the University will ask EDAP for a reduction in outputs (process detailed below).

Keele Individual Circumstances Panel

Member	Role descriptor i.e. role within group
PVC Research & Enterprise	Chair, ensuring Code of Practice is applied consistently and fairly. Formally make any requests to EDAP to reduce output pool
Head of Human Resources	Verify information provided in googleforms for accuracy against existing systems e.g. Keele People and assess the

	circumstances potential reduction to the output pool
Head of Research Quality	Assess the circumstances potential reduction to the output pool, and review the cumulative total number of outputs affected. Inform UoA outputs group of any outputs reductions.
Research Operations Officer	Assess the circumstances potential reduction to the output pool

Purpose: The central Keele Individual Circumstances Panel will review all voluntary disclosed circumstances from the confidential [googleform](#). Based on the circumstances detailed in section 4 staff circumstances (above, which is extracted from the [Guidance on Submissions](#)), it will:

- Where appropriate and where the information is available, verify details provided for accuracy against existing systems e.g. Keele People
- Consistently assess the circumstances potential reduction to the output pool in line with REF guidelines

The REF guidance on submissions makes it clear that Institutions will not routinely need to request reductions to number of outputs to take account of circumstances, given the reduced output requirement from 4 per person to 2.5 per FTE. Requests to EDAP for reductions in outputs are only for: 1) Unit level reductions and 2) Removing the requirement for a minimum of one output (in exceptional circumstances).

By December 2019, Keele’s Individual Circumstances Panel will have collated all the reported circumstances for a unit, and verified and assessed them. Keele’s Individual Circumstances Panel will write to all staff who declare circumstances to confirm the University’s expected contribution from that individual based on the information provided.

The panel will then review the cumulative effect of individual circumstances and if they have disproportionately affected the unit’s potential output pool, a request for a reduction in the total number of outputs will be made to EDAP. For these purposes the panel will consider 10% or more of a unit’s total outputs, affected by individual circumstances, as indicating a significant effect on the potential outputs pool. In addition, if on reviewing the collective circumstances of a unit, the Keele Individual Circumstances Panel feel the unit has been significantly affected (e.g. a high proportion of early career researchers), it will put together a case to EDAP for a reduction in outputs, detailing the cumulative effect on the unit.

Where individual circumstances have had an exceptional effect on the ability of an individual staff member to research productively throughout the period so that they do not have the required minimum of one output (*further details in [Guidance on Submissions](#) paragraphs 178-183*) once the information has been verified (to ensure it will withstand audit), the University will make a request to EDAP to remove the minimum requirement of one output for that individual. If successful this will need to be reported to the UoA outputs group, but details of the circumstance will not be disclosed.

Once the outcome from EDAP is received (before the submission date), Keele's Individual Circumstances Panel will advise the relevant UoA outputs group on the total reduction in number of outputs for their Unit of Assessment, without disclosing any details of the individual circumstances (to ensure confidentiality). Where there is approval to remove the minimum of one output requirement, the UoA lead will be instructed that the total outputs required by the unit will be reduced by one and that the member of staff is not required to contribute an output.

The UoA outputs group will be informed by the central Keele Individual Circumstances Panel of the total reduction in number of outputs for that UoA, they will not be given any details of whom these apply to, apart from where circumstances have had an exceptional effect on the ability of an individual staff member to research productively throughout the period so that they do not have the required minimum of one output. The UoA outputs group will not be given details of the circumstance, just an instruction to reduce the total output pool by one output.

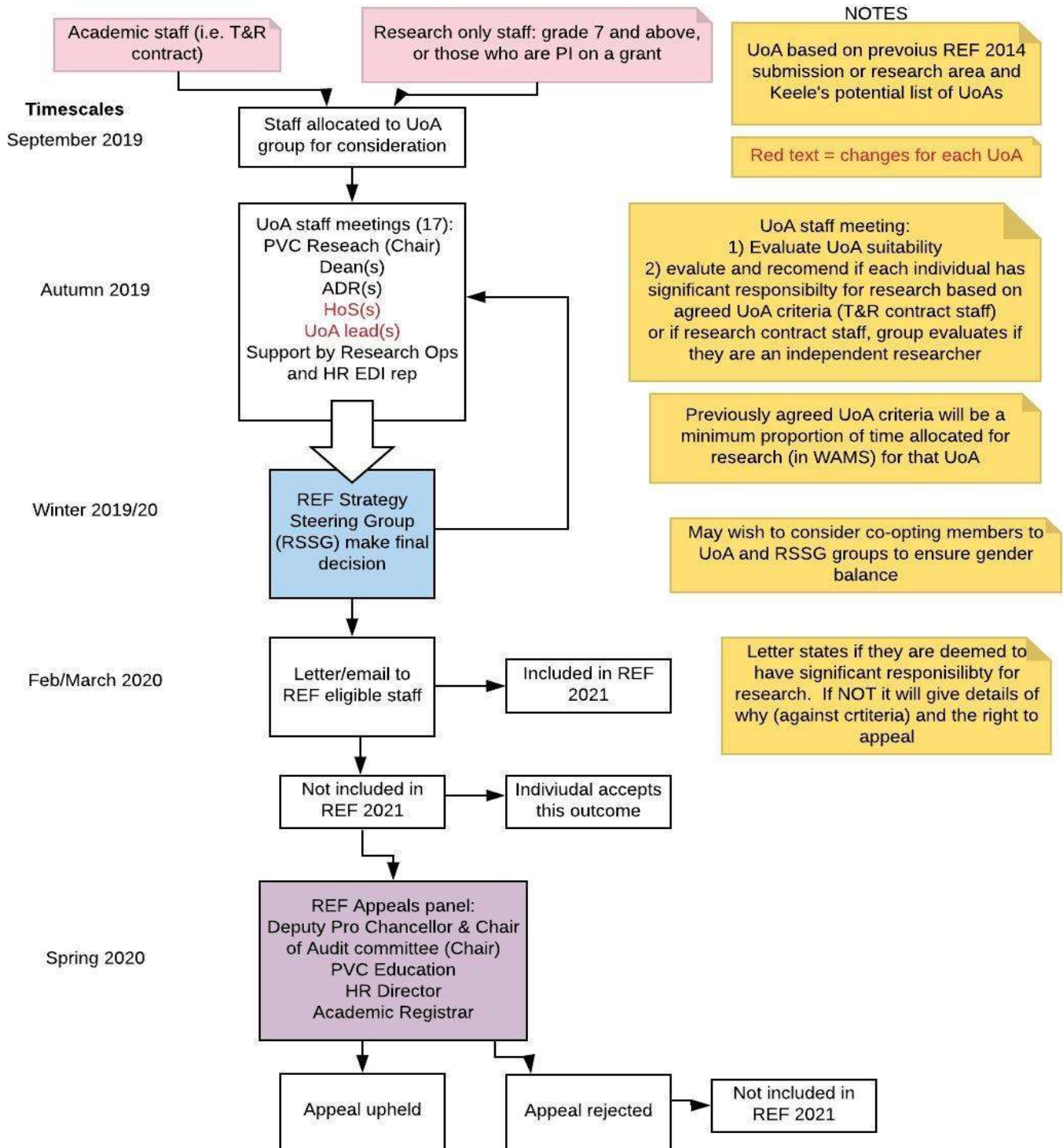
Equality impact assessment (see paragraphs 59 to 72).

- How an equality impact assessment on the spread of outputs across staff (in relation to their protected characteristics) has been used to inform the final selection of outputs to be submitted.

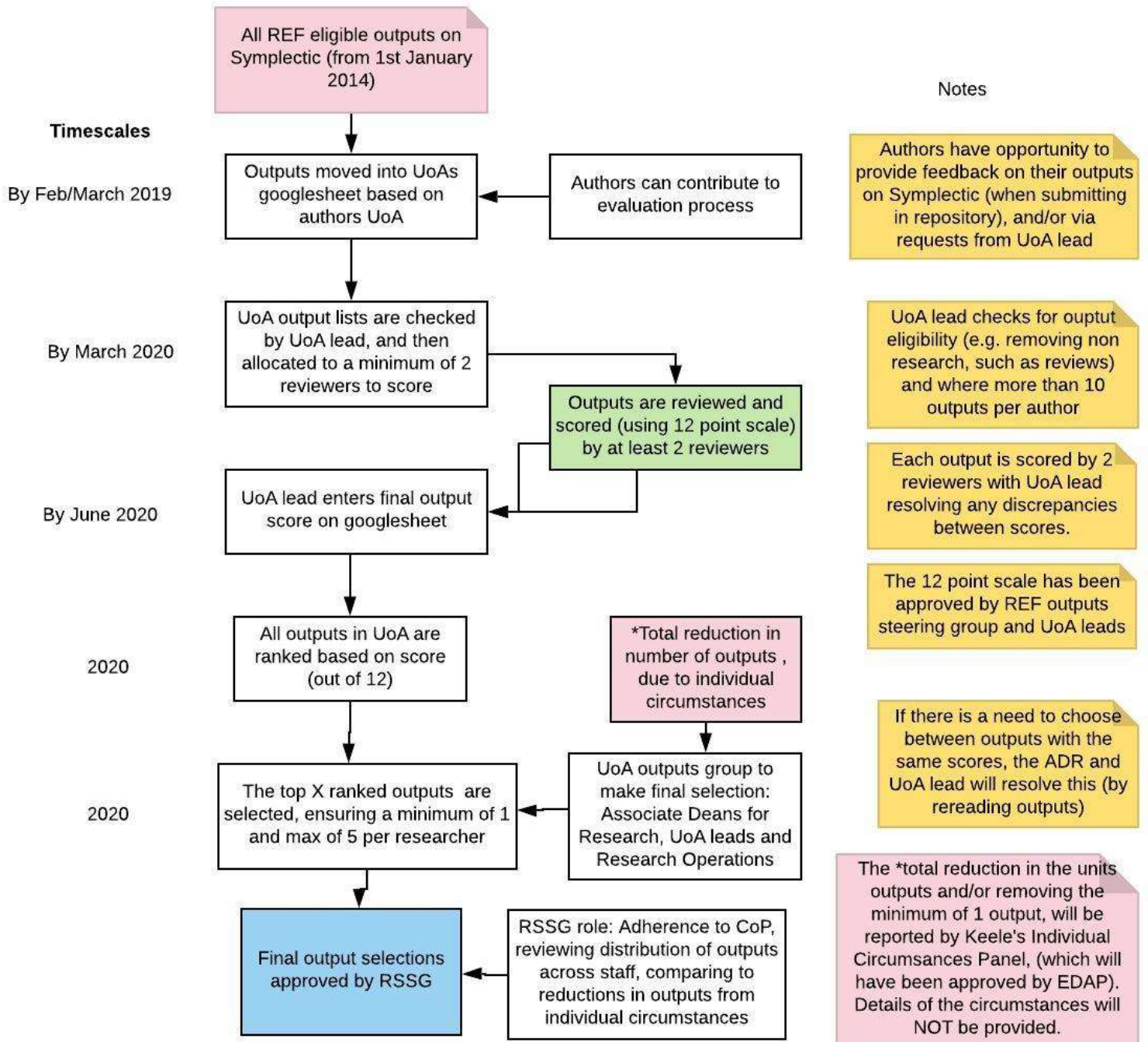
An analysis will be undertaken on the distribution of outputs across the staff in the UoA by protected characteristic. This analysis will be sent alongside the recommendations from the UoA Output Group to the RSSG. The RSSG will consider the outcomes of the analysis before the final selection of outputs are made.

Part 5: Annexes

Annex A
Process for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research or research independence



Annex B: Process for the selection of outputs



Annex C: 12 point outputs scoring system

	score/12	REF score	GPA equivalent
high	12	4*	4.00
medium	11		3.67
low	10		3.33
high	9	3*	3.00
medium	8		2.67
low	7		2.33
high	6	2*	2.00
medium	5		1.67
low	4		1.33
high	3	1*	1.00
medium	2		0.67
low	1		0.33
	u/c	u/c	-

GPA= Grade Point Average

Annex D Individual Circumstances reporting form

(Based on the funding bodies template)

Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances form

This document is being sent to all Category A staff whose outputs are eligible for submission to REF2021 (see [‘Guidance on submissions’](#), paragraphs 117-122). As part of the university’s commitment to supporting equality and diversity in REF, we have put in place safe and supportive structures for staff to declare information about any equality-related circumstances that may have affected their ability to research productively during the assessment period (1 January 2014 – 31 July 2020), and particularly their ability to produce research outputs at the same rate as staff not affected by circumstances. The purpose of collecting this information is threefold:

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

Applicable circumstances

- Qualifying as an ECR (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016)
- Absence from work due to secondment 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

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

Ensuring Confidentiality

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

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

Changes in circumstances

The university recognises that staff circumstances may change between completion of the declaration form and the census date (31 July 2020). If this is the case, then staff should complete another google form.

Name: Click here to insert text.

School: Click here to insert text.

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

Yes

No

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

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

<p><i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	
<p>Mental health condition</p> <p><i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Ill health or injury</p> <p><i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of standard allowance</p> <p><i>To include: Type of leave taken and brief description of additional constraints, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Caring responsibilities</p> <p><i>To include: Nature of responsibility, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Gender reassignment</p> <p><i>To include: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Any other exceptional reasons e.g. bereavement.</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>

To include: brief explanation of reason, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.

Please confirm, by ticking the box provided, that:

- The above information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances as of the date below
- I understand that the above information will be used for REF purposes only and will be seen by the Keele Individual Circumstances Panel
- I understand it may be necessary to share the information with the REF team, the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs.
- The Keele Individual Circumstances Panel may contact me for further clarification

I agree

Name: Print name here

Date: Insert date here

The information you have provided in this form is exclusively for the REF 2021 exercise and the information remains confidential to Keele Individual Circumstances Panel. If in your view the circumstances you have outlined will have a wider impact on your working life going forward, you are encouraged to contact your HR advisor for advice and support.

Annex E Terms of Reference for UoA staff group and UoA outputs group

1. UoA Staff Group

Member	Role descriptor i.e. role within group. All decision makers unless otherwise stated
PVC Research	To Chair the meeting and to ensure the Code of Practice is applied consistently and fairly across the institution. To provide appraisal research objectives information for staff without WAMs, such as Faculty Executive Deans and DVC.
Head(s) of School	To provide information from their staff workload allocation models (specifically the % of time for research 2019/20)
UoA lead(s)	To provide information about researcher independence.
Dean(s) for Research	To provide a Faculty overview
Faculty Executive Dean(s)	To ensure consistency across their Faculty and provide appraisal research objective information for exceptional circumstances where WAMs are not available e.g. Heads of Schools, Deans for Research
EDI rep from Human Resources	In an advisory role, to make suggestions to ensure that the Code of Practice is applied fairly, consistently and transparently
Representative from Research Operations (secretary), Directorate of Research, Innovation & Engagement	In an advisory role, to ensure the REF rules (guidance on submissions and panel criteria and working methods) are being adhered to, and to provide secretarial support to the meeting, recording actions and recommendations

The composition of the groups will be reviewed prior to their meeting and consideration will be given to co-opting additional members to provide a better gender balance, if necessary.

The **purpose** of the UoA staff meeting is to:

- 1) Evaluate UoA suitability for each academic member of staff

- 2a) Evaluate and recommend if each academic member of staff has a significant responsibility for research, based on the criteria set out below (for teaching and research staff)

OR

- 2b) Evaluate and recommend if each member of contract research staff has independent

researcher status, based on the criteria set out below

Modes of operation and record keeping procedures

The UoA staff group will operate as a face to face meeting, with all members present. The research operations team will record actions and recommendations.

Where the UoA staff group is assessing a member on the group, that individual will step out of the room for the discussion. If it is the Chair that is being assessed, the Faculty Executive Dean will take temporary Chairship of the meeting. For those exceptional instances where workload allocations are not available (e.g. Faculty Executive Dean, PVC/DVC or Head of School), the criteria will be their job description/appraisal objectives relating to research, which must demonstrate that undertaking their own research (rather than research management) is an expectation of their job role.

2. UoA Outputs Group

Member	Role descriptor i.e. role within group
Faculty Executive Dean(s)	To Chair the meeting, and to ensure the Code of Practice is applied consistently
PVC Research	Represent RSSG, ensure the Code of Practice is applied consistently across the institution
Dean(s) for Research	To provide a Faculty perspective and overview
UoA lead(s)	To provide information about outputs quality and ranking, following the internal/external reviews
Head of Research Quality, Directorate of Research, Innovation & Engagement	In an advisory role, to ensure the REF rules (guidance on submissions and panel criteria and working methods) are being adhered to and to provide secretarial support to the meeting, recording actions and recommendations. They will also communicate any reductions in the output total from the individual circumstances panel (or exceptionally any reduction to zero outputs)

The composition of the groups will be reviewed prior to their meeting and consideration will be given to co-opting additional members to provide a better gender balance, if necessary. If the UoA Outputs Group members are all the same gender, another UoA lead (of the opposite sex) from the same Faculty will be asked to join the group.

The **purpose** of the UoA outputs group is to select the required number of outputs for the UoA, based on those which are highest scoring and ensuring a minimum of 1 and maximum of 5 outputs per REF submitted staff (unless in exceptional circumstances the minimum of 1 has been excluded).

The required number of outputs is calculated as the Category A staff submitted FTE multiplied by 2.5. However this total number of outputs may be reduced in accordance with any unit level circumstances or exceptional circumstances where the minimum requirement of one output is removed, which are approved EDAP. The UoA outputs group will be informed by the central ‘REF individual circumstances panel’ of the total reduction in the number of outputs for that UoA, they will not be given any details to whom these apply (apart from where circumstances have had an exceptional effect on the ability of an individual staff member to research productively throughout the period so that they do not have the required minimum of one output. The UoA outputs group won’t be given details of the circumstance, just to reduce the total output pool by one).

Modes of operation and record keeping procedures

The UoA output group will operate as a face to face meeting, with all members present. The research operations team will record actions and recommendations.

3. REF Strategy Steering Group (RSSG)

Member	Role descriptor i.e. role within group. All are decision makers unless otherwise stated
Vice Chancellor (Chair)	To Chair the meeting and to ensure the Code of Practice is applied consistently and fairly across the institution.
Deputy Vice Chancellor	As a senior academic manager, provide strategic advice and ensure the Code of Practice is applied consistently and fairly across the institution.
PVC Research & Enterprise	To provide feedback on the UoA staff and output meetings and provide assurance that the Code of Practice has been applied consistently and fairly at these meetings
Director of Research, Innovation and Engagement (RIE)	As a senior professional services manager, provide strategic oversight for impact and strategic advice and ensure the Code of Practice is applied consistently and fairly across the institution.
Head of Research Strategy	Provide strategic advice and guidance on impact and expertise

Delivery & Deputy Director of RIE	in REF processes and to ensure that the Code of Practice is applied consistently and fairly across the institution.
REF 2014 panel member	Provide strategic advice and guidance based on expertise in REF processes and to ensure that the Code of Practice is applied consistently and fairly across the institution.
Head of Research Quality, (RIE)	In an advisory role, to ensure the REF rules (guidance on submissions and panel criteria and working methods) are being adhered to and to provide secretarial support to the meeting, recording actions and decisions.
Head of Human Resources	In an advisory role, to present all equality analysis and provide advice on the adoption of the Code of Practice

The **purpose** of the RSSG is to:

1. Consider the recommendations from UoA staff meetings and make decisions on which staff have significant responsibility for research or research independence, whilst ensuring consistency of approach and application of the Code of Practice, across the University.

and

2. Consider the recommendations from UoA Outputs meetings. The selected outputs for each UoA, will be presented to RSSG for approval. RSSG will ensure a consistent and transparent process has been followed across the institution, along with adherence to this Code of Practice.

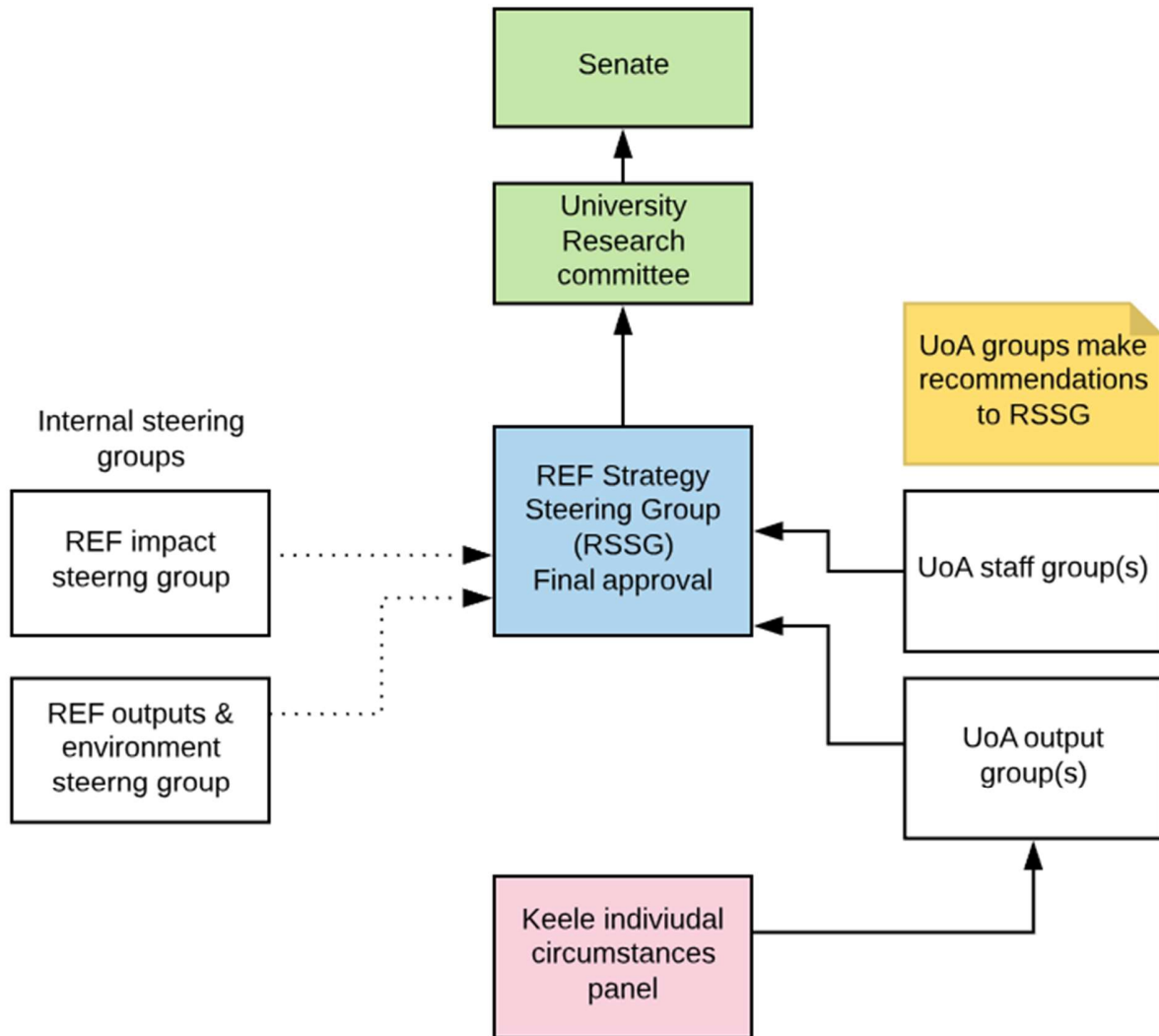
The RSSG has strategic oversight of the University’s REF submission and will resolve any differences of opinion.

The RSSG will receive and consider equality analysis of the outcomes from both the UoA staff and output meetings and will use this to inform their decision making. The RSSG will consider analysis of the distribution of outputs in each UoA (i.e. volume per researcher) to ensure that any unit level circumstances (or exceptionally, the removal of the minimum requirement for one output) to reduce the output pool have been sufficiently reflected in the output selection.

Modes of operation and record keeping procedures

The RSSG will operate as face to face meetings, with all members present. The Head of Research Quality will record actions and decisions.

Annex F - Diagram to show how these groups fit into wider institutional management structure



Note that members of the University Executive Committee and University Research Committee sit on all of the REF groups and panel

Annex G UoA leads remit:

The UoA lead will be responsible for coordinating their UoA submission in REF 2021. This includes oversight of the submission’s collective research outputs, environment statement and impact case studies. This will need to be done in accordance with the University’s REF Code of Practice, which will be drafted following guidance from the REF team at HEFCE, expected in Autumn 2018.

UoA leads will be in regular contact with Head of Research Quality, to whom they will deliver regular updates on activities.

Outputs: Following the important baseline that has been established from the 2016/17 audit of outputs, the University will now move to a continuous mode of assessment. This expectation of continuous mode will be framed by regular points of reporting, to be agreed in due course by the REF Strategy Steering Group. The UoA lead will be responsible for ensuring that all newly published outputs are being assessed/scored and included in a ranked outputs list for each UoA (if they meet open access requirements which will be checked by Research operations). The ranked outputs list will enable modelling of outputs profiles and grade point averages (GPA), the outcomes of which will be continually reported to the REF Strategy Steering Group and Faculties.

Environment: The UoA lead will be responsible for drafting the environment statement for their unit (previously called the REF5), following the format set out in the REF guidance on submissions.

Impact: The UoA lead will have an overview of the impact case studies in their UoA, but will not be responsible for drafting them (this will be led by the case study lead and supported by the University Impact Steering Group)

Support for UoA leads: The PVC R&E will provide leadership and advice to the UoA leads, including cross-University statements around research environment and infrastructure. REF information and data analysis will be supported by Head of Research Quality and the Research Operations team in the Directorate of Research, Innovation and Engagement and their related databases such as Symplectic publications database and the institutional repository.