



REF 2021 Code of Practice

Part 1: Introduction

This Code of Practice describes the Royal Academy of Music's approach to ensuring equality of opportunity for eligible staff for submission to the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF 2021). All decision-making bodies will adhere to the principles of this Code of Practice, ensuring equality, transparency, consistency and accountability.

As a small specialist institution with a core mission to train undergraduate and postgraduate students for the music professions and industries, the Academy's academic staff profile looks significantly different from the equivalent in large multi-disciplinary institutions. Most academic staff are performers and composers with busy careers outside the Academy and they have part-time teaching-only contracts. A small percentage of academic staff have teaching and research contracts which vary from full-time to 0.2 FTE. The Academy encourages its academic staff on teaching-only contracts to develop their scholarly and professional interests with a view to enabling them to become early-career researchers. Given this context, a key role of the Academy's Code of Practice is to ensure that there is no discrimination in the REF 2021 exercise against those on part-time contracts, fixed-term contracts, or early-career researchers.

Because of the Academy's small size and its monotechnic mission, all REF 2021 processes will be centralised and, as in REF 2007 and REF 2014, it is our intention that our submission will be to one unit of assessment (D 33: Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies). If, however, an eligible member of Category A staff has undertaken research that falls outside the scope of Unit of Assessment 33, then the Academy will review its policy to ensure that it provides equality of opportunity for that member of staff.

1.1 How this Code of Practice has been developed

- 1.1.1 This Code of Practice has been developed within the general framework of REF 2021 published in the *Guidance on Submissions* and the *Guidance on Codes of Practice*. We took as our starting point the approach used in our preparations for REF 2014, taking into account the lessons learned from that exercise and the evolution of institutional policies over past six years, and adapting them to the new requirements of REF 2021. The draft is the result of reiterative processes, with reviews by the Academy's Academic Board, its Equality and Diversity Committee, its Audit Committee and its Research Committee. It has been shared with all academic staff

and we have welcomed feedback from any individual, department or committee. Its text has been agreed with academic staff representatives.

- 1.1.2 The Code of Practice will be submitted for scrutiny to the REF Equality and Diversity Panel (EDAP) by 7 June 2019. EDAP will advise the UK funding bodies on the Code's adherence to the published guidance. As encouraged by the funding bodies, we will use our Code of Practice in an internal mock REF exercise in the autumn term of 2019 to gain experience on the proposed processes. The processes will be reviewed in the light of any feedback we receive. The Code will be used in our REF preparations in 2020 and the Principal will be required to confirm adherence to it when he makes the Academy's submission to REF 2021.

1.2 The Academy's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion

- 1.2.1 The Academy recognises the importance of building an inclusive, diverse and high performing institution because we have nearly 200 years of evidence to show how people from different backgrounds and with different perspectives can work together to enrich a creative environment. Our vision is to make the Academy a place that actively attracts, engages and develops talented individuals from many different backgrounds.
- 1.2.2 In line with the legislative framework as outlined in the Equality Act 2010, and as part of our longstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion, the Academy is dedicated to treating all people with dignity and respect equally, irrespective of their protected characteristics, and to creating an environment that enables people, regardless of their protected characteristics, to reach their potential.
- 1.2.3 We take a holistic approach to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and embed them in our values and our strategic objectives. Our commitment to treating all students, staff and visitors with dignity and respect permeates our employment policies and practices. This is reflected in our Code of Practice. The relevant Academy policies are:

The Equality and Diversity policy and Equality Action Plan

The Equality and Diversity policy is the Academy's commitment to an inclusive learning and working environment, based on the principles of dignity and respect. It recognises the diverse community of students and staff that affords the artistic, educational, social and organisational benefits to the institution. It details the requirement for the advancement of equality and the elimination of inequality and discrimination in respect of the Equality Act 2010 and all protected characteristics. It is accompanied by the Equality Action Plan, which sets out our initiatives for advancing equality and removing barriers to inclusion.

The policy and plan are governed by the Equality and Diversity Committee, chaired by the Deputy Principal and Dean, and to which all matters of equality, diversity and inclusion are referred. Its remit is to ensure our institutional approach to EDI is progressive, transparent, and advances equality between parties who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Equality and Diversity Committee has oversight of Academy Equal Pay Reviews and Gender Pay Gap reporting, identifies institution-wide training in equality, diversity and inclusion across the institution and directs resources towards significant access improvement projects. It receives all student and staff equality monitoring data to inform the Equality Action Plan.

Equal Pay policy

The Equal Pay policy sets out the Academy's commitment to equal pay in relation to the principle of equality and the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 and in-line with the provisions of equal pay legislation.

Recruitment and Selection policy

Defines the requirements for fair, transparent recruitment and selection, and for all staff involved in recruitment and selection to comply with their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to advancing equality with respect to the protected characteristics, with set procedures and appointments assessed on merit against set job criteria, and as a Disability Confident employer.

Anti-harassment policy

The Academy is committed to a respectful environment that encourages positive professional relationships, and that is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and intimidation. The Academy promotes a culture in which harassment and bullying are known to be unacceptable and in which individuals have the confidence to challenge and report it, should it arise, including where protected characteristics and matters of diversity are concerned.

Managing Stress at Work policy

Details the institutional commitment to providing a healthy and safe workplace for all staff, including the steps it takes to minimise stress for staff and support them should it arise, including possible longer-term mental health considerations and the Equality Act 2010.

Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Special Leave policies

Details the rights, arrangements and protections for staff utilising a variety of leave arrangements, which can be covered by the Equality Act 2010 in relation to protected characteristics, health and caring responsibilities.

Flexible Working policy

The Flexible Working policy outlines the institutions commitment to where flexible working arrangements may assist in better attracting, retaining and promoting staff.

Grievance policy and Discipline and Appeal policy

The Grievance policy and the Discipline and Appeal policy further outline the Academy's stance in relation to tackling inequality and the penalties for failing to adhere to legislative requirements and Academy policy in this area. It facilitates the eradication of discriminatory behaviour with clarity for all staff.

Whistleblowing policy

The Whistleblowing policy encourages the prevention of malpractice in the Academy, facilitating the protection of persons raising issues in the public interest in relation to, amongst other things, improper conduct, failure to comply with legal obligations, and institutional discrimination or harassment or the concealment of it. It underpins the Academy's approach to transparency, accountability and fairness.

1.3 The Legislative Context

1.3.1 Throughout all stages of the planning and selection processes of REF 2021 the Academy will meet key legislative requirements. The Equality Act 2010 provides legal protection to nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability

- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion of Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

In each of these areas the Academy has a legal responsibility to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate all forms of unfair discrimination, and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

- 1.3.2 In line with other employment legislation, the Academy will not treat those employed on fixed-term contracts or those working on a part-time basis less favourably than a comparable permanent full-time employee in REF 2021.

1.4 Underlying Principles

In line with REF2021 *Guidance*, this Code of Practice demonstrates our adherence to the principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity as follows:

1.4.1 Transparency

All processes for identifying eligible staff who have significant responsibility for research, determining who are independent researchers, and for selecting research outputs for inclusion in the REF2021 submission are aligned to the *Guidance on Submissions*. Transparency also stems from the consultation between researchers and their line managers in the institutional annual review cycle and in the Academy's preparation for REF 2021.

1.4.2 Consistency

Our selection processes will be undertaken in accordance with our Code of Practice which will be consistent across the institution and implemented uniformly and with due regard to equality and inclusivity.

1.4.3 Accountability

Responsibilities are clearly defined, and individuals and groups involved in the selection of staff and outputs for the REF submissions are identified by name or role.

1.4.4 Inclusivity

The Code of Practice will promote an inclusive environment by establishing, maintaining and updating an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) at all key stages, applying our equality and diversity policies, and by communicating with staff openly and via any media required to assist with individual staff circumstances.

1.5 Decision-making Bodies and Staff Training

- 1.5.1 The staff and decision-making bodies involved in processes covered by this Code of Practice are detailed in parts 2 and 3. The Academy will establish a set of REF-specific committees comprising staff who have appropriate knowledge and experience. These committees will be permitted to exercise their professional judgment in choosing to seek advice from others within and outside the Academy.

- 1.5.2 All staff on REF 2021 decision-making bodies will be required to undertake tailored training on this Code of Practice, the implications of the Equality Act 2010, and on

how to apply equal opportunities legislation to REF 2021. This training will be led by the Director of Human Resources in dedicated workshops in the autumn term of 2019. The need for subsequent training will be assessed on completion of the internal mock exercise and delivered, if necessary, at the start of 2020.

1.6 Programme of Communication

The Academy has put in place a comprehensive communication plan to ensure that all potentially eligible staff are informed of this Code of Practice.

- 1.6.1 In accordance with the principle of transparency, the Research Committee has undertaken a consultation process on a draft of this Code of Practice with all academic staff, including those absent from the Academy, for example on family leave. The draft Code of Practice was emailed to all staff and they were invited to comment on it within 10 working days at a dedicated email address ref@ram.ac.uk. All responses were considered by the authors of the Code and Practice and individual feedback was provided. Where the consultation process resulted in a redrafting of sections of the Code of Practice, all staff were informed of those changes and invited to comment on them. Staff have been asked to use ref@ram.ac.uk for all subsequent REF 2021 related queries.
- 1.6.2 The approved text of this Code of Practice will be published on the Academy web site and staff intranet. Consultation and awareness raising will be undertaken through staff emails and internal meetings, via Academic Board, Equality and Diversity Committee and the Principal's Bulletin. The Human Resources team will ensure accessible information is available to all staff requiring information in an alternative format.
- 1.6.3 The Academy Code of Practice will be published on the REF2021 website in December 2019, along with all other participating higher education institutions. In addition to this, our Code of Practice will be made available on our website and on the Academy Intranet Resource (AIR) with a link to the Code of Practice sent directly to all staff.

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.7.1 An initial equality impact assessment (EIA) of the Academy Code of Practice will inform of any adjustments, omissions or challenges in relation to equality and inclusion.
- 1.7.2 The EIA may be reviewed with regard to protected characteristics when identifying staff with significant responsibility for research and in determining research independence, when selecting outputs for submission, when considering an appeal, when preparing against identification of staff who do not have significant responsibility for research, and when preparing the final submission.
- 1.7.3 We shall afford careful consideration to the impact of the REF selection processes on both the protected characteristics and on fixed-term and part-time staff.

Part 2: Identifying Staff with Significant Responsibility for Research

Principles

- 2.1 The Academy's procedures for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research have been developed by research and Human Resource managers with input from the Research Committee, the Audit Committee, the Equality and Diversity Committee, and Academic Board.
- 2.2 The procedures are designed to be:
 - 2.2.1 Transparent, by scrupulously following the processes and applying the criteria outlined in this Code of Practice;
 - 2.2.2 Consistent, by reiteratively following the same procedures and applying the same criteria in the consideration of each member of academic staff who might be eligible for inclusion in REF;
 - 2.2.3 Accountable, by recording each decision and its rationale;
 - 2.2.4 Inclusive, by giving equal consideration to all members of academic staff, and by giving careful consideration to all staff who have declared special circumstances and/or a protected characteristic.
- 2.3 The Academy's strategy is to include all Category A eligible staff with significant responsibility for research in post on 31 July 2020 in its submission to REF2.
- 2.4 The Academy has established an Eligibility Panel to undertake the work of identifying staff with significant responsibility for research.

Eligibility Criteria

- 2.5 The Eligibility Panel will reach a decision about each member of staff by applying the following criteria:
 - 2.5.1 To be classed as Category A eligible a member of academic staff must meet all three of the following criteria:
 - 2.5.1.1 Have a contract of employment at the Academy of 0.2 FTE or greater, or the equivalent part-time hourly paid;
 - 2.5.1.2 Be on the Academy payroll on the census date of 31 July 2020;
 - 2.5.1.3 Have a primary function of employment at the Academy that is either 'teaching and research' or 'research only'.
 - 2.5.2 Staff who meet all three criteria given in 2.5.1 and whose contract is 0.3 FTE or greater will be deemed to have significant responsibility for research, unless one or more of the conditions outlined in 2.6 pertain to them.
 - 2.5.3 Staff who meet all three criteria in section 2.5.1 and whose contract is between 0.2 and 0.29 FTE will be Category A eligible if they have a substantive research connection with the Academy.
 - 2.5.4 Evidence of a substantive research connection will include:

- 2.5.4.1 Participation in the Academy's research environment, such as research leadership, the supervision of research staff or postgraduate research students, and involvement in research collaboration with other staff or students at the Academy;
- 2.5.4.2 Teaching at the Academy informed by the member of staff's own research;
- 2.5.4.3 Research that has been wholly or in part funded by the Academy;
- 2.5.4.4 Research disseminated with an affiliation to the Academy (for example, using the Academy's logo on recordings);
- 2.5.4.5 Substantive engagement in the Academy's research environment for at least one year before the census date of 31 July 2020 (or for the whole of their employment at the Academy if they were appointed in the year prior to the census date).
- 2.5.5 Staff whose contract is between 0.2 and 0.29 FTE and who meet at least three of the criteria given in 2.5.4 will be automatically deemed to have significant responsibility for research.
- 2.6 Staff who meet the criteria listed in 2.5.1 and 2.5.2 will not be deemed to have significant research responsibility if:
 - 2.6.1 Over 90% of their contractual time has been devoted to teaching during the period 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2020; or
 - 2.6.2 Current expectations (as described in agreed Annual Appraisal Forms) do not include significant research responsibilities.
- 2.7 Where academic staff are on an unpaid leave of absence, or on secondment to an organisation other than a UK HEI on the census date and are contracted to return to normal duties up to two years from the start of their period of absence or secondment, either the seconded staff member or any staff recruited to cover their duties that meet the eligibility criteria listed in 2.5 will be Category A eligible.

Eligibility Procedures

- 2.8 The eligibility of staff will be decided using the following procedures:
 - 2.8.1 In November 2019 the Chair of the Eligibility Panel will write to all academic staff with contracts of between 0.2 and 0.29 FTE and invite them to submit a self-appraisal of their substantive research connection to the Academy by 1 December 2019.
 - 2.8.2 In January 2020 the Eligibility Panel will meet and consider the Category A eligibility of all academic staff on contracts of 0.2 FTE (and the part-time hourly paid equivalent) or greater.
 - 2.8.3 For each member of staff under consideration the Panel will apply the criteria set out in 2.5 to 2.7 above.
 - 2.8.4 Each decision of the Panel, and its rationale, will be recorded by the Clerk of the Panel.

- 2.8.5 Each member of staff under consideration will be informed of the Panel's decision regarding their Category A eligibility, together with the rationale for that decision, in writing with five working days of the Panel's meeting.

Membership of the Eligibility Panel

- 2.9 Membership of the Eligibility Panel will be designed to be inclusive by containing academic staff representatives who are Category A eligible and others who are not eligible.
- 2.9.1 The Chair of the Panel, appointed by the Academy's Principal, will be the Director of Human Resources. The Chair will play a full role in the Panel's decision-making processes.
- 2.9.2 Academic Board will appoint one member of academic staff with Category A eligibility to sit on the Panel. [Decision-making role]
- 2.9.3 The Equality and Diversity Committee will appoint one member of academic staff who does not have significant research responsibilities to sit on the Panel. [Decision-making role]
- 2.9.4 The Research Committee will appoint an academic manager (not the Deputy Principal (Programmes and Research)) to sit on the Panel in an advisory capacity.
- 2.9.5 The Clerk of the Panel will be a senior member of administrative staff appointed by the Deputy Principal (Programmes and Research).
- 2.10 Before the first meeting of the Panel in January 2020, all members of the Panel will be given REF-specific training in the workings of the Panel, this Code of Practice, and the Equality and Diversity Issues that pertain to it. This training will be led by the Director of Human Resources.

Appeals Process

- 2.11 A member of staff may appeal against a decision of the Eligibility Panel in writing within 28 working days of notification of the decision. Appeals should be directed to the Deputy Principal and Dean.
- 2.12 The appeal will be heard by an Appeals Panel chaired by the Deputy Principal and Dean, and consisting of the Academic Registrar and a member of academic staff appointed by Academic Board. The academic staff member must not also be a member of either the Eligibility Panel or the Selection Panel for REF 2021. All members of the Appeals Panel will have decision-making roles.
- 2.13 Appeals may be considered on the following grounds, that:
- 2.13.1 Criteria for selection of Significant Research Responsibility or independent research were not applied in accordance with this Code;
- 2.13.2 There was a material error in the data used by the Working Group in applying the criteria.
- 2.14 Meetings of the Appeals Panel will be held in February 2020 and the outcomes communicated to the relevant staff by writing within three working days of the appeal hearing.

Part 3: Determining Research Independence

Principles

- 3.1 The Academy will deem all academic staff on teaching and research contracts to be independent researchers.

Criteria

- 3.2 Staff on research only contracts will be deemed to be independent researchers if:
- 3.2.1 They are acting as a principal investigator or coinvestigator; or
 - 3.2.2 They have significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research; or
 - 3.2.3 They are expected to seek external funding for their research.
- 3.3 The Academy, in accordance with the REF *Guidance on Submissions* does not recognise research assistants or research associates as independent researchers where the primary employment function is research only and they are employed to carry out another persons' programme of research.

Processes

- 3.4 The Academy is a small specialist institution whose core mission is to teach, and it has a very small number of academic staff on research-only contracts. Because of this small volume, the research independence of eligible staff will also be determined by the Eligibility Panel. The Eligibility Panel will reach its decision by applying the criteria set out in 3.2 to all staff on research only contracts. Each decision, together with its rationale, will be recorded by the Clerk of the Panel.
- 3.5 Decisions made by the Eligibility Panel with regard to research independence may be appealed according to the terms set out in 2.11 to 2.14 above.

Part 4: Selection of outputs

Principles

- 4.1 The Academy's procedures for selecting outputs for inclusion in its REF2 submission have been developed by research and Human Resources managers with input from the Research Committee, the Audit Committee, the Equality and Diversity Committee, and Academic Board.
- 4.2 The procedures are designed to be:
- 4.2.1 Transparent, by scrupulously following the processes and applying the selection criteria outlined in this Code of Practice;
 - 4.2.2 Consistent, by reiteratively following the same procedures in the consideration of each piece of work from the submission pool;
 - 4.2.3 Accountable, by recording each decision and its rationale in the selection process;

- 4.2.4 Inclusive, by giving equal consideration the outputs of all eligible members of staff.
- 4.3 Because the Academy is a specialist institution and all of its Category A staff undertake research in the same broad subject area, it expects to submit only to Unit of Assessment D 33: Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies.
- 4.4 The Academy's strategy regarding section 2 of its REF submission is to maximise its quality by selecting the strongest single output by each Category A member of staff and supplementing them to reach the required total of [2.5 x total FTE of Category A staff] with the strongest outputs from the rest of the submission pool.
- 4.5 The Academy has established a Selection Panel to undertake the work of selecting outputs on behalf of the Research Committee.
- 4.6 In its decision-making processes, the Selection Panel will apply the following criteria to each output from the submission pool:
 - 4.6.1 Is the output eligible for submission by meeting the REF's definition of research and, where relevant, the open-access criteria?
 - 4.6.2 What is the quality of the output in terms of originality, significance and rigour?
 - 4.6.3 In line with the main Panel guidance, is the output eligible for double weighting?

Procedures

- 4.7 The selection of outputs will be made using the following procedures:
 - 4.7.1 After the Eligibility Panel has completed its procedures and any subsequent appeals have been heard and resolved by the Appeals Panel, the Chair of the Eligibility Panel will write to each Category A member of staff and former members of Category A staff who have left the Academy during the assessment period inviting them to attend a training session during March/April 2020 on the eligibility criteria of outputs and the procedures that will be followed by the Selection Panel. Members of staff and former members of Category A staff who have left the Academy during the assessment period who are unable to attend a training session will be offered one-to-one surgery time with a member of the Selection Panel to cover the same ground as the training sessions.
 - 4.7.2 In April 2020 the Chair of the Selection Panel will write to each Category A member of staff (and former members of Category A staff who have left the Academy during the assessment period) inviting them to submit up to five research outputs to the submission pool, together with 300-word contextual statements for each output, by 1 July 2020. The Clerk of the Selection Panel will anonymise each output and identify its author by a numerical marker. This will ensure that all outputs are given fair consideration, regardless of the role of their author within the Academy.
 - 4.7.3 At its first meeting in July 2020 the Selection Panel will receive the following information from the Chair of the Eligibility Panel:
 - 4.7.3.1 The FTE of Category A staff who will be in post on the census date of 31 July 2020.
 - 4.7.3.2 A list of Category A staff who will be in post on 31 July 2020, anonymised but identified by numerical marker.

- 4.7.3.3 A list of Category A staff who left the Academy during the assessment period and who have submitted outputs to the assessment pool, anonymised but identified by numerical marker.
- 4.7.3.4 A list of recommendations about staff, anonymised but identified by numerical marker, whose circumstances may warrant a reduction in outputs (see Section 5 below).
- 4.7.4 On the basis of this information, the Selection Panel will decide whether to apply for a reduction in the number of outputs for any individual member of staff, and how many supplementary outputs will need to be selected from the pool to bring the total to [2.5 x FTE of Category A staff].
- 4.7.5 Selection Round 1: At the start of September 2020 the Selection Panel will meet to select the strongest single output submitted by Category A staff who will be in post on 31 July 2020. It will apply the criteria outlined in 4.6 above to arrive at its academic judgement on each submitted output. Each decision, with a brief rationale, will be recorded by the Clerk of the Panel.
- 4.7.6 Selection Round 2: In mid/late September 2020 the Selection Panel will meet to select the required number of supplementary outputs from the submission pool to reach [2.5 x number of Category A staff]. The submission pool will contain the remaining outputs of Category A staff in post on 31 July 2020 and all submitted outputs of Category A staff who left the Academy during the assessment period.

Selecting Outputs from the Submission Pool

- 4.8 It is the responsibility of the Selection Panel to carry out a rigorous review process to assess the quality of eligible outputs from the submission pool. The Panel will conduct an iterative process, scoring each output with reference to the published criteria in the *Guidance on Submissions*. This will enable the strongest outputs to be fairly identified. Each decision, with a brief rationale, will be recorded by the Clerk of the Panel.

Communicating decisions with eligible staff

- 4.9 On 1 October 2020 the Chair of the Selection Panel will write to all Category A staff, including staff who left the Academy during the assessment period, to inform them which of their submissions have been selected, along with the rationale recorded by the Clerk.
- 4.10 All decisions of the Selection Panel will be reported to the Research Committee at its Autumn Term meeting.
- 4.11 The Panel's decisions will be matters of academic judgement. There will be no appeals process for members of staff who disagree with the Panel's judgement.

Panel membership

- 4.12 Membership of the Selection Panel will be designed to be inclusive by containing representation of a broad range of Category A staff with research expertise in different sub-disciplines, research managers, staff at different stages in their research career, and whose demographics reflect that of the Academy's research staff as a whole.

- 4.12.1 The Chair of the Panel, appointed by the Academy's Principal, will be the Deputy Principal (Programmes and Research) – the senior member of academic staff with responsibility for research. The Chair will play a full role in the Panel's decision-making processes.
- 4.12.2 Two members of Category A staff, at least one with managerial responsibilities for research, appointed by the Academy's Research Committee from among its own members. [Decision-making roles]
- 4.12.3 Two members of Category A staff who are not members of the Academy's Research Committee, appointed by Academic Board from a pool of nominees. [Decision-making roles]
- 4.12.4 The Director of Human Resources will not take part in the Panel's decision-making processes, but will advise the Panel on Equality and Diversity issues.
- 4.12.5 The Clerk of the Panel, who will anonymise the submitted outputs and keep a record of the Panel's decisions, will be the Secretary to the Academy's Governing Body.

Panel training

- 4.13 Before the first meeting of the Selection Panel in July 2020, all decision-making members will be given REF-specific training by the Director of Human Resources. Topics to be covered will include all published Guidance on the selection of outputs for REF2, this Code of Practice and how it sits in relation to the Academy's Equality and Diversity Policies, and how the working methods of the Panel will underpin the core values of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity.

Part 5. Support for staff with equality-related circumstances

The Academy recognises the effect that equality-related circumstances may have on research productivity. In line with the *Guidance on Submissions* paragraphs 179–180 and Annex L, we will enable the 'minimum of one' requirement to be removed where exceptional circumstances have prevented staff from producing an eligible output. The Academy will request a reduction in the total number of outputs required for submission if the cumulative effect of equality-related circumstances has had a disproportionate effect on the available output pool.

- 5.1 Funding bodies have identified the following equality-related circumstances that may, in isolation or together, significantly constrain the ability of eligible staff to produce outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period:
 - Staff who started their research careers as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016.
 - Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector that lasted at least 12 months.
 - Statutory maternity or statutory adoption leave taken between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2020, regardless of the length of the leave. Additional parental or adoption leave lasting four months or more, taken between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2020.
 - Circumstances equivalent to absence, including: disability; illness or injury; constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or child care; other caring responsibilities; gender reassignment; other circumstances relating to the characteristics protected by employment legislation.

- 5.2 All category A submitted staff must be returned with a minimum of one output attributed to them in the submission, including staff with equality-related circumstances. But where an individual's circumstances have had an exceptional effect on their ability to work productively throughout the assessment period so that they have been unable to produce an eligible output a request may be made for the 'minimum of one' requirement to be removed. Applicable circumstances include:
- An overall period of 46 months or more absence from research within the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020 due to one of more of the circumstances set out in 4.11.1.
 - Two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2020.
 - Other circumstances deemed to have had a similar impact.
- 5.3 The Academy believes that individual staff are best placed to consider whether circumstances have affected their research productivity over the assessment period, and that they should not feel under any obligation to declare their circumstances if they do not wish to do so.
- 5.4 The Academy has put in place a supportive process to enable staff to declare voluntarily their equality-related circumstances and to recognise the effect of those circumstances on their ability to contribute to the output pool at the same rate as other staff. The process to disclose circumstances in confidence will be overseen by the Director of Human Resources, ensuring that decisions are consistent and transparent, and that they are undertaken by specifically-trained staff with relevant knowledge of equality legislation.
- 5.5 The procedure will have four stages:
- Communication
 - Self-disclosure
 - Review
 - Outcomes
- 5.6 **Communication**
The Director of Human Resources will write to all potentially eligible staff outlining equality-related circumstances, the process for disclosure, and the timescale, making it clear that staff are not required to provide information about equality-related circumstances if they wish not to do so.
- 5.7 **Self-disclosure**
Staff may voluntarily disclose in confidence any equality-related circumstances that have affected their research productivity during the assessment period. They should write before 31 December 2019 to the Director of Human Resources to disclose which circumstances apply and how they have affected the member of staff's research productivity. The Academy will accept an individual's self-description of their circumstances, though the information provided should be based on verifiable evidence. To ensure that applicable circumstances are addressed equally, only information that has been voluntarily disclosed will be taken into account.
- 5.8 **Review**
The disclosed circumstances will be initially reviewed by the Director of Human Resources. Circumstances that are clearly defined and do not require a judgment will be forwarded directly to the Chair of the Selection Panel. Circumstances which require a judgement shall be considered by the Eligibility Panel, whose decisions in

this respect shall be final. In all cases the appropriate reduction will be determined using the tariffs in Annex L of the *Guidance on Submissions*.

5.9 **Outcomes**

In all cases the Director of Human Resources will inform the Chair of the Selection Panel that a self-disclosure has been made and reviewed, and whether a request to remove the 'minimum of one' requirement has been approved. The Chair of the Selection Panel will work with the individual's line manager to set a realistic expectation of their contribution to the overall output pool. Requests to remove the 'minimum of one' requirement must be submitted to the funding bodies for approval by March 2020. The Chair of the Selection Panel will prepare the request (REF6a) based on the information provided.