



The University of Exeter's REF2021 Code of Practice

September 2019

Structure of the REF2021 Code of Practice

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

a) Our values and principles

1. Our Code of Practice (CoP) is being developed and implemented in the spirit of our [institutional values](#) of Ambition, Challenge, Collaboration, Community, Impact and Rigour. We will do this by abiding by the following principles:
 - We are committed to research **excellence** and nurturing the **research ambitions** of our staff and students;
 - All staff and students will be treated with **courtesy** and **respect**;
 - We will ensure that the **diversity** of our research **community** and our areas of research are reflected in our preparations and in our submission;
 - We aim to be **inclusive** in our approach to determining eligibility for submission to REF2021;
 - Decision-making processes must be **robust** and **transparent**;
 - All staff will be made aware of where **accountability** for REF2021 lies through the sharing of information about the governance structures for REF2021, and about the roles involved in supporting our preparations;
 - Our research ambitions are collectively articulated and delivered, therefore, our preparations for this assessment exercise must also be **collaborative**;
 - Whilst REF is an assessment exercise, we will remember that REF2021 is also an opportunity to **celebrate** our collective successes and strengths;
 - We **recognise** that our REF2021 submission is the result of contributions from staff across the University of Exeter and our postgraduate research students.
2. In order to demonstrate fairness in the development and implementation of the CoP, the REF2021 guidance highlights the four principles of Transparency, Consistency, Accountability and Inclusivity which the University of Exeter will address as follows:
 - a) **Transparency**: Ensuring that drafts of the CoP and the policies it articulates are shared with all staff for comment and are made accessible within the research intranet. In addition, once finalised, the CoP will be published on the external website. A programme of communication about REF, the Code of Practice and the procedures noted here, is listed below.
 - b) **Consistency**: the approach to identifying “significant responsibility” and “independent researcher” status and establishing allowances for individual circumstances will not vary between UoAs and is governed by the institutional principles listed above. These same principles will shape and govern all policies and procedures for the selection of outputs whilst recognising that, exceptionally, there might be some variance in approach due to discipline-based reasons.
 - c) **Accountability**: a clear governance structure, identifying roles and responsibilities of particular individuals and groups, has been laid out in Appendices 1-2, including their

Terms of Reference. As noted below, all decision makers will undertake specific Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity training.

- d) **Inclusivity:** The Code of Practice aligns with the University of Exeter's strong ethos of Inclusivity (as noted below in relation to institutional policies) and is embodied in the approach laid out in this Code of Practice for determining staff with significant responsibility for research, those who are independent researchers and policies relating to the selection of outputs.

b) Institutional policies and strategies that support Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity

3. The University of Exeter values the diversity of its community because it believes this enriches employment, research, studying and learning experiences. The University is committed to equality of opportunity and aims to provide a safe and inclusive working, learning and social environment that is free from harassment or discrimination. It aims to ensure that staff, students, visitors and all others associated with the University are treated with dignity, respect, and equity, regardless of distinctions, such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (as identified under the Equality Act 2010 as "protected characteristics"). In addition, the University complies with all relevant legislation and aims to promote good practice in all aspects of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within the University.
4. Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) within the University is governed through a mechanism known as dual assurance (for details see Appendix 1 on Governance and the role of dual assurance). Supporting the dual assurance partnership for equality and diversity is the [University Inclusivity Group](#) which is chaired by the College Chief Operating Officer (a member of the Vice Chancellor's Executive Group). The University Council and the Chief College Operations Officer have responsibility for developing policy, monitoring their implementation and reviewing their effectiveness. In line with its Value of '[Community](#)' the University recognises that all its staff, students, visitors and others associated with the University have a responsibility to ensure that their actions comply with both the requirements and the spirit of such policies.
5. The University's Equality Policy is available on the Equality and Diversity webpage: [http://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/humanresources/equalityanddiversityimages/Equality and Diversity Policy March 2018.doc](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/humanresources/equalityanddiversityimages/Equality%20and%20Diversity%20Policy%20March%202018.doc).
6. For further details of the University Inclusivity Group, its broader network and the institutional statement please see the University's Equality & Diversity website at <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/equality/>.
7. Other relevant policies and procedures include:
 - ❖ [Adoption Leave: Guidance](#)
 - ❖ [Bullying and Harassment](#)
 - ❖ [Dignity & Respect](#)
 - ❖ [Equality Analysis Process](#)
 - ❖ [Equality & Diversity Policy statement](#)
 - ❖ [LGBTQ+ Staff and Students](#)
 - ❖ [Parents & Carers](#)
 - ❖ [Maternity Leave: Guidance](#)
 - ❖ [Mediation for Staff](#)
 - ❖ [Parental Leave](#)
 - ❖ [Paternity/Maternity Support Leave](#)
 - ❖ [Reporting Incidents of Discrimination](#)

c) Actions taken since REF2014

8. The University Inclusivity Group has oversight of the institutional actions taken relating to EDI. This includes the creation of an annual Action Plan which is agreed with members of Council. The actions taken since the last Research Excellence Framework include the following:
- ❖ The University requires all staff to take mandatory [EDI training](#) and to undergo refresher training every three years. In addition, an online Inclusivity Toolkit is available to all staff enabling individuals to independently access online guidance and support at any time.
 - ❖ The biennial Employee Engagement Survey (EES) provides staff with the opportunity to reflect and respond on their experience of respectful treatment, including whether they have experienced unfair treatment within the last two years. It has been undertaken in 2016, 2018 and will be next implemented in 2020. The EES had a 73% response rate in November 2018 and action planning on the basis of the survey is focused on in the first half of 2019.
 - ❖ The Provost Commission was established in April 2018. The commission includes academics from all colleges, the professional services directorates, student members and representatives from the Race Equality Group and Speak Out Guardians. The *Exeter Speaks Out* online hub launched in May 2018 as a single point for staff and students to access information, support and advice about harassment, bullying and discrimination. The creation of the commission has led to:
 - The launch of an anonymous reporting tool;
 - Events such as the Exeter Respect Festival (launched in 2018) and a new speaker series to bring national international EDI champions to Exeter;
 - Tools and training such as the Dignity and Respect Quiz as part of student registration, enhanced training on Equality Impact Assessments for professional services;
 - An All-Campus spaces audit conducted to look at spaces on each of Exeter's campuses (Streatham, St Luke's, Penryn and Truro) in terms of design, layout and visual identity; the developed recommendations are currently in discussion;
 - Better data and insights around Diversity which has included updating and expanding an institutional Inclusivity Dashboard to support decision making.
 - ❖ Through the creation of a new Research and Impact Strategy 2020-2025, the University is focusing on the importance of developing an inclusive and diverse research culture, which builds on the work done in the previous strategy (2015-2020).
 - ❖ In the 2019-20 EDI action plan, we have made an institutional commitment to pursuing the Race Equality Charter Mark in addition to our work with Athena SWAN.
 - ❖ To recognize and encourage initiatives to support EDI work, the Professional Services Recognition Awards introduced a new award category for outstanding Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity work in June 2018.
 - ❖ The University of Exeter was one of 21 UK Universities that took part in the Equality Challenge Unit's pilot of the Race Equality Charter Mark (RECM) in 2014, which aimed to improve the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students. The University is making preparations to sign the Race Equality Charter in 2021-22. The University has participated actively in the EHRC commission on racial

harassment on campus and will ensure that any recommendations feed into the action planning for the RECM.

- ❖ We have recently been awarded the Athena Swan Silver Institutional Award in recognition of the steps we are taking to improve career opportunities for women, and for our work towards gender equality. One of the measures of the progress we are making is the gender pay gap as highlighted in our [2018 report](#): the report includes a summary of the actions we are taking to close the gender pay gap between men and women at the University. Since the first year of gender pay gap reporting in 2017, the gender pay gap at the University has reduced from 17.2% to 16.0% (median) and 21.7% to 19.6% (mean). Another measure of our progress is the proportion of Professors who are women: this has increased from 17% in 2012 to 28% today. We are also making progress in other areas: following the introduction of promotion workshops for academic staff and changes to the promotions process, over 100 female academics have been promoted in the academic years 2016/17 and 2017/18; and over 100 female staff at the University have been sponsored on the Leadership Foundation's women-only leadership programme, Aurora, in the last five years.
- ❖ A number of Exeter's disciplines also hold Athena Swan awards (7 discipline-based Silver awards and 1 discipline-based Bronze award) and the University holds an institutional Athena Swan award (held at Bronze level since 2011) which was renewed and uplifted to Silver in 2018. Discipline-based Silver awards are held by: the College of Medicine and Health (since 2014), the College of Life and Environmental Sciences – Cornwall, Geography (since 2016), Mathematics & Computer Sciences (since 2016), Sports and Health Sciences (renewed in 2018), Psychology (since 2015) and Physics and Astronomy. Physics and Astronomy achieved [JUNO Champion](#) status in November 2017 (awarded by the Institute of Physics in recognition of action taken to address gender equality in physics) which they then successfully converted to an Athena SWAN Silver award.
- ❖ The following departments have applications in progress for a Bronze Athena Swan award: History, Classics, Politics and the Business School.
- ❖ As a previous holder of the Department for Work and Pension's (DWP) Two Ticks positive about disabled people scheme, the University migrated across to Level 1 of the DWP's Disability Confident Employer scheme when it was launched at the end of 2016. The University is looking to renew its subscription to Disability Confident in 2019-20.
- ❖ In 2018, the University received its highest ever ranking in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index at 163rd.
- ❖ Since April 2018, we have provided enhanced [parental leave entitlements for staff](#).
- ❖ By December 2017, all six of Exeter's Colleges had established College-level Inclusivity Groups.

d) Consultation and communication of the Code of Practice

9. Two types of activity are described below. Consultation and communication activity including the development of the Code of Practice, and a communication programme regarding the procedures for selection; how to disclose individual circumstances; and how to appeal decisions.

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10. The engagement activities related to the development of the Code of Practice have been institution-wide (through open meetings), at College and discipline-level and with specific groups including the University and College Union (UCU). Through an iterative process, changes have been made to policies and processes as a result of those engagements.

11. **The process of consultation and communication of the Code of Practice in development** is occurring in four phases:

Phase	Consultation	Communication
<p>Phase One: Development of the consultation questions and the preliminary draft of the Code of Practice. December 2018 – February 2019.</p>	<p>With the REF2021 Strategic Advisory Group, The Research and Impact Executive Group (RIEG) and members of the EDI team reviewing the draft and the questions posed.</p>	<p>Cascaded communication to Directors of Research from the discussions at RIEG</p>
<p>Phase two: Open consultation. February 2019 – March 2019</p>	<p>Open consultation to all staff inviting written responses. This will include further discussions with the University Inclusivity Group, individual EDI networks, the University Senate and discussions within disciplines and colleges and UCU.</p>	<p>The consultation was launched by an email from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Impact to all staff and by email to all Associate Deans of Research, inviting written responses.</p>
<p>Phase Three: Analysis of responses and revisions to the Code of Practice. March 2019 and May 2019</p>	<p>The consultation responses were reviewed by a specially constituted task-and-finish group with members of the University Inclusivity Group. Along with the Associate Deans of Research drawn from RIEG, they put forward recommendations for revisions to the Code of Practice drawn from the consultation responses.</p> <p>The responses were discussed and modified with members of UCU.</p> <p>The internal approvals process includes a review of the Code of Practice by the REF Strategic Advisory Group, the Exeter Dual Assurance lead, RIEG and, finally by VCEG (the Vice-Chancellors Executive Group).</p>	<p>The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Impact held three open sessions in the w/c 15th April for all staff to discuss the adopted approaches as a result of the consultation.</p> <p>The Code of Practice as submitted to Research England on 7th June 2019 will be shared with all staff and will be hosted on the research intranet and the external website. It will also be shared with all external advisers.</p>
<p>Phase Four: Further iterations between June 2019 and November 2019</p>	<p>Should Research England require further revisions to the Code of Practice, all staff will be consulted on any substantive amendments required.</p>	<p>All staff will be informed of the nature of any changes made and will be re-issued with the updated Code of Practice.</p>

12. The communication programme for the implementation of the policies includes:

- Digital communications will signpost staff to resources on the University website (behind the single sign-on) which will include web pages, REF resources, brief bite-size videos explaining some of the key policies and processes.
- In addition, there will be regular opportunities for all staff to discuss REF and its associated procedures. This began in April 2019 with engagement activities regarding the Code of Practice. Sessions in late May will cover the agreed policies and practices, and this will be followed by tailored sessions focused on independent researcher eligibility and individual circumstances between June and October 2019. Periodic open meetings until the REF submission in November 2020 have also been planned.

PART 2: SUBMISSION OF CATEGORY A ELIGIBLE STAFF

a) Definition of Category A eligible staff

13. REF2021 guidance notes that, “each HEI participating in REF 2021 **must return all eligible staff with significant responsibility for research**. Such staff will normally be identified by the core eligibility criteria, as set out for ‘Category A eligible staff’”.¹
14. The definition for Category A eligible staff in the REF2021 guidance is: “*academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater*”:
- Who are on the payroll of the submitting institution on the census date;
 - Whose primary employment function is to undertake either ‘**research only**’ or ‘**teaching and research**’;
 - Who have a substantive research connection with the submitting unit (see paragraphs 123 to 127 of the guidance);
 - Staff on ‘research only’ contracts should meet the definition of an independent researcher (paragraphs 128 to 134).²
15. In the context of the University of Exeter, staff whose primary employment function is to undertake “research only” [HESA Code 2] or “teaching and research” [HESA Code 3] – as per the HESA category names for these two types of university contracts - are normally employed on one of two research-related contracts within the University’s academic job families: Research contracts (R) and Education and Research (E&R) contracts respectively.
16. The University of Exeter approach is that all staff with E&R contractual obligations meet the three REF2021 criteria of having significant responsibility for research. The REF2021 criteria³ are:
- a. ‘**Explicit time and resources are made available**’. Indicators of this could include:

¹ §116 https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1092/ref_guidance_on_submissions.pdf

² §117- §144 https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1092/ref_guidance_on_submissions.pdf

³ §141 https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1092/ref_guidance_on_submissions.pdf

- a specific proportion of time allocated for research, as determined in the context of the institution's practices and applied in a consistent way;
 - research allocation in a workload model or equivalent.
- b. **'To engage actively in independent research'**. Indicators of this could include (HEIs are also advised to refer to the indicators of independence, as additional guidance on this aspect):
- eligibility to apply for research funding as the lead or co-applicant;
 - access to research leave or sabbaticals;
 - membership of research centres or institutes within the HEI.
- c. **'And that is an expectation of their job role'**. Indicators of this could include:
- current research responsibilities as indicated in, for example, career pathways or stated objectives;
 - expectations of research by role as indicated in, for example, job descriptions and appraisals.
17. **All staff on E&R contracts of 0.2 FTE or more at the University of Exeter are deemed to be eligible and the intention is that 100% of those members of staff will be returned.** As 100% of staff on "teaching and research" or E&R contracts will be returned, no further selection process for staff on E&R contracts is required.
18. A minimum of one output (and no more than five outputs) will be submitted for each member of staff on an E&R contract. Units of Assessment (UoAs) will return an average of 2.5 outputs per FTE submitted for each UoA.
19. However, in line with REF2021 guidance, members of staff being submitted to REF2021 may be eligible to have the minimum requirement of one output waived due to individual circumstances (e.g. early career status, family leave etc. see Section 4 and Appendix 10 below). **Even if the minimum requirement for one output is waived, those members of staff will still be deemed to have been returned for submission to REF2021 and will count within the FTE reported on the formal census date of 31st July 2020.**
20. The REF2021 guidance notes that the names of Staff members returned and their associated Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data will not be published.
21. Decisions relating to the UoAs to which individual staff members are submitted, and other discipline/UoA-level considerations, are subject to the overarching governance arrangements and structures at the University of Exeter. These are available in Appendix 1 and Appendix 7.
22. **The eligibility of staff on Research-only [HESA Code 2] contracts will be determined by the approach to determine research independence (see Part 3).**
23. The University is committed to providing appropriate support for those on fixed-term or part-time contract in relation to equality and diversity (see Appendix 11).

PART 3: INDEPENDENCE OF RESEARCHERS

1. This section of the Code of Practice relates solely to members of staff on Research-only [HESA Code 2] (R-Only) contracts. As stated in the REF2021 guidance, in order to be a Category A Eligible member of staff, **“Staff on ‘research only’ contracts should meet the definition of an independent researcher (paragraphs 128 to 134).”**⁴

a) Definition of research independence

2. For the purposes of the exercise, the REF2021 guidance defines an independent researcher as: **“an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual’s research programme.”**

The REF2021 guidance also notes that, **“all staff on ‘research only’ contracts who are independent researchers will have significant responsibility for research so should be returned as Category A submitted staff.”**⁵

3. The REF2021 guidance provides the following indicators to assist in determining eligibility as an independent researcher across all four REF Main Panels:
 - Indicator 1: Leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project;
 - Indicator 2: 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 (see also Appendix 9c below);
 - Indicator 3: Leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package.
4. In addition, Main Panels C and D⁶ noted that the following criteria will also apply:
 - Indicator 4: *Being named as a Co-I on an externally funded research grant/award;*
 - Indicator 5: *Having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research.*

The REF2021 guidance notes that “each indicator may not individually demonstrate independence and, where appropriate multiple factors may need to be considered”.

⁴ §117- §144 https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1092/ref_guidance_on_submissions.pdf

⁵ §128-§131 https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1092/ref_guidance_on_submissions.pdf

⁶ The disciplines within Main Panels C & D are: MAIN PANEL C: UoA 13 **Architecture, Built Environment and Planning**; UoA 14 **Geography and Environmental Studies**; UoA 15 **Archaeology**; UoA 16 **Economics and Econometrics**; UoA 17 **Business and Management Studies**; UoA 18 **Law**; UoA 19 **Politics and International Studies**; UoA 20 **Social Work and Social Policy**; UoA 21 **Sociology**; UoA 22 **Anthropology and Development Studies**; UoA 23 **Education**; UoA 24 **Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism**; MAIN PANEL D: UoA 25 **Area Studies**; UoA 26 **Modern Languages and Linguistics**; UoA 27 **English Language and Literature**; UoA 28 **History**; UoA 29 **Classics**; UoA 30 **Philosophy**; UoA 31 **Theology and Religious Studies**; UoA 32 **Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory**; UoA 33 **Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies**; UoA 34 **Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management**.

5. For the avoidance of doubt, the REF2021 guidance notes that: *“Research assistants (sometimes also described as postdoctoral research assistants, research associates or assistant researchers) as defined in paragraph 130, are not eligible to be returned to the REF unless, exceptionally, they meet the definition of an independent researcher (defined in paragraphs 131 to 133) on the census date and satisfy the definition of Category A eligible staff in paragraph 117. They must not be listed as Category A submitted staff purely on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs.”*⁷

b) Relevant Research contract types

6. Members of staff at different career stages might hold a Research-only (R-only) contract which is reported to HESA as HESA Code 2.⁸ At Exeter, this includes the Research job family grades of Grade E, Grade F (equivalent of lecturer grade), Grade G (equivalent of senior lecturer), Grade H (equivalent of Reader or Associated Professor) or the Professorial Grade.
7. All staff on R-only contracts Grade H or Professorial Grade can be assumed to meet the criteria of Independent Researcher. Nevertheless, the test of the criteria above will be applied to them.
8. Staff on R-only contracts at Grade F and Grade G will, in some circumstances, meet the REF2021 definition of Independent Researcher on the basis of the criteria above.
9. R-only contracts at Grade E do not afford the opportunity for wholly self-directed research programmes as defined for REF2021 and, in accordance with the REF2021 guidance (as noted in paragraph 26 above), normally do not satisfy the REF definition of Independent Researcher.
10. **All references to R-only staff below apply solely to staff on R-only contracts at Grade F and above.**

c) REF2021 selection process and application of the guidance

11. As the REF2021 guidance notes, Indicators 1-3 are to be used to determine Research Independence across UoAs in all four Main Panels. They will be the key criteria used to inform decisions about submission and can each be used as a standalone indicator or in conjunction with other indicators.
12. For UoAs in Panel C and Panel D, we will apply the additional indicators as follows:
 - Indicator 4 can be used as a standalone indicator of research independence or in combination with any other indicator;

⁷§129-§130 https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1092/ref_guidance_on_submissions.pdf

⁸ To provide consistency with the terminology used in the REF Guidance, this code of practice uses the term Research-only (R-only) for staff in the University of Exeter Research job family.

- Indicator 5, in isolation, will not normally amount to “independence” as per the REF2021 definition and will, typically, only be considered in conjunction with another indicator.

Procedure for determining an Independent Researcher

13. The REF Eligibility Review Group will play a key role in determining Independent Researcher status and providing consistency of approach particularly. Individuals will be asked to complete a form (see Appendix 9 for the draft form template) and at fixed points in the year the REF Eligibility Review Group will review these forms and take decisions on independent researcher status.
14. This will allow the Eligibility Review Group to take into account data held by the University (e.g. information on research awards or fellowships) as well as additional information provided by the individual. This additional information will be particularly important for those who have recently joined the University or for the type of indicator for which there is no centrally held data, e.g. leading a specialised work package.
15. For simplification, a preliminary stage is proposed using the data held by the University on awards and fellowships, which will be undertaken at UoA level. Figure 1 below offers a visualisation of the process.

Preliminary stage: based on information to-hand:

16. The REF decision-makers within the UoA, typically the Director of Research and Head of Department will review a list of staff on Research-Only (R-only) contracts at Grade F and above. This list will be provided in May.
17. **Indicator 1 (and Indicator 4 for Panels C & D):** The UoA will review the information about Principal Investigator (PI) and Co-Investigator (Co-I) status. The list provided in May 2019 will be pre-populated with information of externally funded research grants. *See Appendix 8 for the template of what will be provided.*
18. All externally funded research grants are considered eligible with the exception of awards that are solely focused on the following:
 - Travel and conferences
 - Consumables

The eligibility of awards relating to studentships, equipment, knowledge exchange or impact-related activities will be considered on a case-by-case basis, with eligibility focused on awards which easily demonstrate that they are in support of that individual's self-directed research programme.

19. **Indicator 2:** Research England have provided a list of [competitive research fellowships](#)⁹ (see Appendix 8c) but have noted that this is not an exhaustive list. Typically, only fellowships listed in the Research England guidance will be considered eligible. However, a case can be made for comparable competitive research fellowships which have not been listed.

⁹ <https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1030/c-users-daislha-desktop-list-of-research-fellowships-updated-22032019.pdf>

20. **Indicator 3 (and Indicator 5 for Panels C and D):** Determining eligibility in relation to Indicator 3 or Indicator 5 will typically require further information. At this preliminary stage, Directors of Research and any others involved in this process (e.g. Heads of Department) will primarily focus on eligibility on the basis of PI (or Co-I) status or competitive research fellowships. Only where eligibility on the basis of Indicator 3 or 5 is indisputable, and when a clear rationale can be provided, will this be identified at this stage.
21. UoAs (typically the Director of Research) will be expected to complete the Preliminary Stage form and return this to the Exeter REF team by **Monday, 24th June 2019**. Associate Deans of Research, or a nominated representative, will review the forms to ensure consistency of practice for UoAs within their College at this initial stage. This will also be reviewed by the Eligibility Review Group for consistency across Colleges (see paragraph 55 below).
22. In the form, the UoA will be able to indicate if the member of staff on an R-only contract:
 - a. **Meets** the REF2021 definition of an Independent Researcher;
 - b. **Does not meet** the REF2021 definition of an Independent Researcher based on the information held by the University;
 - c. **May meet the REF2021 definition but further information is required for confirmation;** this might typically be in relation to Indicators 3 and 5.
23. All those who have been determined to be an Independent Researcher will receive a letter from the University to confirm this status in July/August 2019. All others will be invited to have their eligibility reviewed by the Eligibility Review Group in July 2019 through the open stage listed below.

Open stage

24. The Eligibility Review Group will receive each UoA's Preliminary Stage form and will do a light-touch review to ensure consistency of practice across the different UoAs.
25. As noted in paragraph 46 above, all R-only staff at Grade F or above who have not been identified as meeting the REF2021 definition of Independent Researchers will be invited to complete a form requiring detailed information on eligibility and to submit the form.
26. The responses will be reviewed by the REF Eligibility Review Group. **All R-only staff who meet the REF2021 eligibility criteria in the preliminary phase will be notified in October 2019 and all others following the Eligibility Review Group meetings.**
27. In order to offer a consistent approach to applying the criteria, at each round, the REF Eligibility Review Group will consider these in two meetings: one focused on R-only staff within UoAs in Main Panels A and B and one focused on R-only staff within UoAs in Main Panels C and D. The REF Eligibility Review Group will include

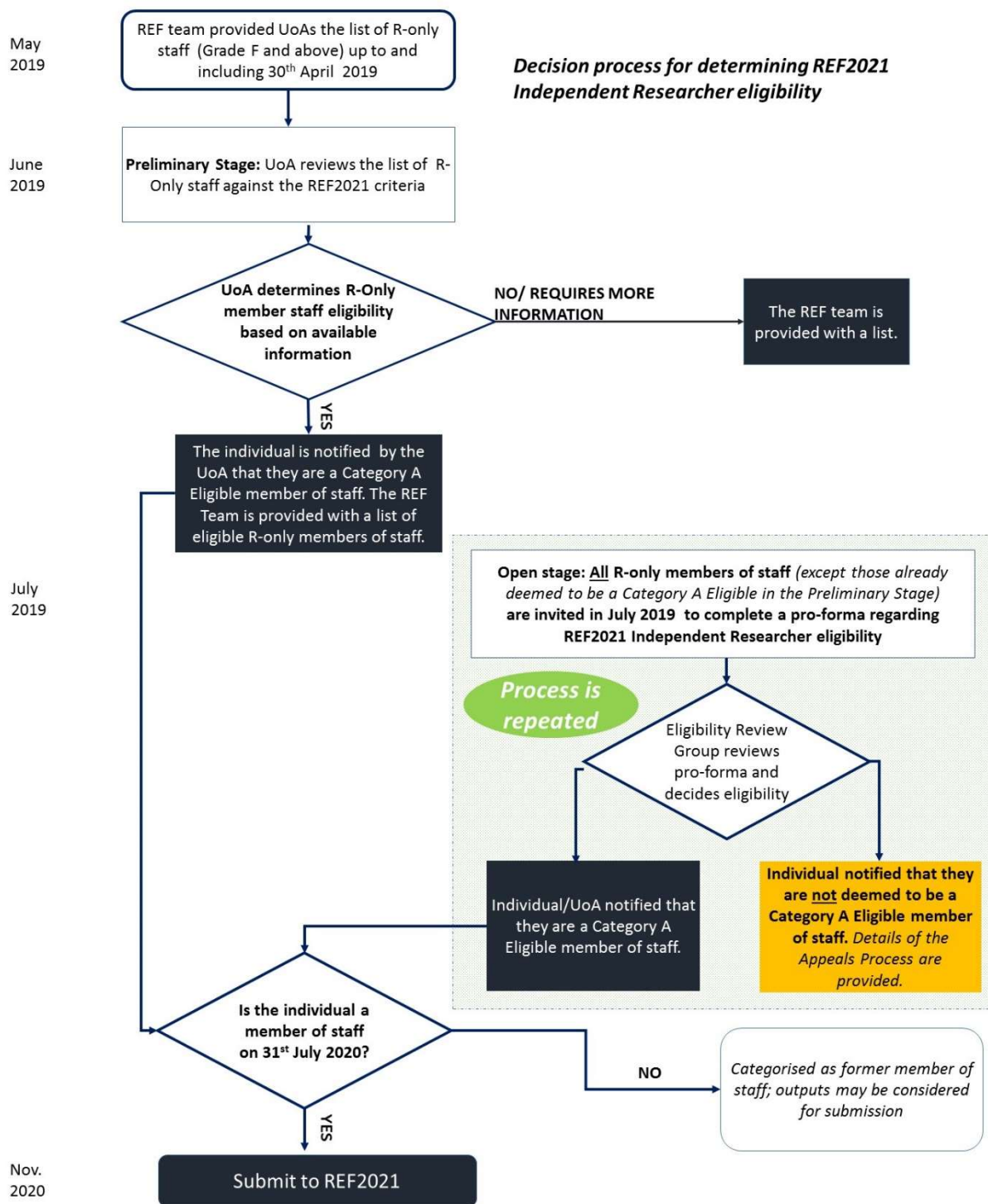
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2-3 members of the academic community who are not involved in other forms of REF decision-making to support this process.

28. The relevant Associate Deans of Research for each College will be invited as observers and will be invited to provide discipline-based context but will not be involved in the decision-making process.
29. The assessment of R-only staff through the Open Stage will be repeated in a further three rounds with the forms available online throughout this REF period.
30. Recognising that researcher status may change, an individual deemed ineligible at an early stage of the process can put themselves forward again, where there is sufficient *new evidence* of researcher independence.
31. The three further rounds will be held as follows:

Deadline for submission	Eligibility Review Group panel meeting	Notification of outcomes	Open to:
Thursday, 16th January 2020	January/ February 2020	February 2020	<i>All R-only staff requiring a decision on Independent Research Status, incl. new members of staff</i>
Monday, 16th March 2020	March/ April 2020	April 2020	<i>As above</i>
Tuesday, 16th June 2020	June/ July 2020	July 2020	<i>Specifically focusing on New members of staff since 1st March 2020</i>
<i>The Group will reconvene in September 2020 should there be any other new members of Research-only (R-only) staff at Exeter on the census date and whose REF2021 eligibility will need to be considered.</i>			

Figure 1. Process for establishing Independent Researcher eligibility



32. However, in line with REF2021 guidance, staff identified as meeting the REF2021 definition of Independent Researcher and who will be submitted to REF2021 may be eligible to have the minimum requirement of one output waived due to individual circumstances (e.g. early career status, family leave etc. - further details are provided in Appendix 10). **Even if the minimum requirement for one output is waived, those eligible members of staff will still be deemed to have been returned for submission to REF2021 and will count within the FTE reported on the formal census date of 31st July 2020.**

d) Governance and decision-making structure

33. Appendices 1 and 2 set out the overarching governance structure for the preparation and submission of REF2021, the roles supporting that preparation and submission, and the responsibilities of those roles.

34. Specifically in relation to establishing independent researcher status in accordance with the REF2021 definition, the key decision makers are:

Preliminary stage:

- ❖ **UoA-level decision makers:** typically, the Director(s) of Research and the Head of Department.
- ❖ **College-level decision makers:** the information is reviewed and approved by the College's Associate Dean for Research, including a review of approach across UoAs within their College for consistency. UoAs which sit across multiple Colleges will need to be approved by the Associate Dean for Research for each College.
- ❖ **Institutional-level decision makers:** Decisions will be shared with the Eligibility Review Group who will also undertake a light-touch review for consistency of approach across all UoAs.

Open stage

- ❖ **Institutional-level decision makers:** The Eligibility Review Group will take all decisions regarding Independent Researcher eligibility. Associate Deans of Research will be invited to attend in an advisory capacity.

e) Training of decision makers

35. As noted above, the University provides mandatory EDI training to all staff (see *Section 1 c*). We are also committed to making additional mandatory and specific EDI training available to all those with decision-making responsibilities by providing face-to-face training.

36. Specific REF-related EDI training covers implicit/unconscious bias training with training to identify risks and to implement bias mitigation strategies. The training will take the form of face-to-face training in July, September and October 2019 with eight half-day sessions offered; all REF decision-makers will be required to attend. The training will be delivered by an external consultant, with the EDI team making face-to-face training available if required in March 2020 and June 2020 to any new REF decision-makers. The addition of an online training course on unconscious bias will also be available from July 2019. This will be available to REF decision-makers unable to attend a face-to-face session and will also be open to other members of staff.

37. In addition to specific EDI training, we will ensure that the REF guidance on selecting independent researchers, the final Code of Practice as submitted in June 2019, and any supplementary guidance/training on independent research status is provided to:

- The Eligibility Review Group;
- All those with decision-making responsibilities for REF2021;
- Members of the appeals panel.

Please see Appendices 1 (Governance structures), 2 (Roles and responsibilities), 3 (Appeals policy and procedures) and 6 (EDI training policy) for further details.

f) Appeals procedures

38. Our overarching appeals policy and procedures can be found in Appendix 3. With regard to determining researcher independence, the following will apply:

- The appeals process will be open after the first set of outcome notifications are made following the Open Stage in October 2019. The Appeals Panel is specifically constituted for REF2021-related decision making.
- From January 2020 until November 2020, the appeals panel will meet monthly, as required.
- The permissible reasons for appeal are set out in Appendix 3.

39. The outcome notifications will provide details of the Appeals policy and procedures.

g) Equality Impact Assessment

40. The process of developing an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will begin with the development of this Code of Practice. The University will undertake a branched cumulative EIA. This will also include overarching data collation and analysis of all current E&R and R-Only staff by protected characteristics and the use of responses to the consultation process for the Code of Practice to identify key issues and challenges.

41. The branched cumulative EIA is being undertaken in six phases from December 2018 till after the REF submission period. The phases include:

<p>PHASE 1 Dec. 2018 – May 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary drafting • Data collection and modelling • Describing and agreeing: scope, processes and stages via the CoP • Pre-Equality Impact Analysis consultation on approach to REF • Equality Analysis Screen Submission • Training Plan and Consultation Plans
<p>PHASE 2 May – October 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of preliminary Full EIA building from REF 2014 EIA setting out the foundation for a cumulative EIA approach that will populate the final REF 21 EIA.

<p>PHASE 3 October 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of EA (1a) on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of outputs; • Determining independent researchers eligibility; • Processes around reviewing individual circumstances for staff. • In parallel, the commencement of relevant EDI training being undertaken for REF decision-makers, any issues or risks identified at the July, September and October sessions will be fed into the reviews of the draft EAs.
<p>PHASE 4 November–December 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 week widespread consultation on EA (1.a) • Completion of EA (1.b): The Process for compiling UoA environment statements) • Final version of EA (1a) Complete and Reference in EA (1b) • EA (1b) out for 4 week focused narrow consultation.
<p>PHASE 5 January – August 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EA (1b) Final version complete • EA (1a) Updated to include any relevant additions • combine EA1a&1b as a EA REF21
<p>PHASE 6 November – March 2021 (TBC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full review of EAs following final submission of University return on 27th November 2020. • Submit EA REF21 • Publish EA REF21 and make available to all staff

42. To support the implementation of the policies in this section we will undertake the following data analyses:

- Of the protected characteristics of all staff on Research-only (R-only) contracts (at Grade F and above) on 30st April 2019 irrespective of whether they meet the REF2021 definition of Independent Researcher;
- the protected characteristics of those who meet the REF2021 definition of Independent Researcher and to compare this with the total population of staff on R-only contracts (at Grade F and above), following the preliminary stage and the first round of the Open Stage described above;
- Where this is statistically feasible, we will provide these analyses of protected characteristics by REF Main Panels and Colleges and, where feasible, at UoA-level.
- The REF Eligibility Review Group and the REF Strategic Advisory Group will review these data analyses to identify any concerns with the findings and process and will make recommendations to the Research and Impact Executive Group (RIEG). The REF Eligibility Review Group will consider this after each key decision making stage.
- This exercise will be repeated in May 2020, with review and recommendations as required, and in December 2020 to support the final equality impact assessment of the submission.

43. The University is committed to providing appropriate support for those on fixed-term or part-time contract in relation to equality and diversity (see Appendix 11).

PART 4: SELECTION OF OUTPUTS

a) Definition of outputs

44. For the purposes of REF2021, “Output” is any item which will be submitted for assessment for REF2021. The types of outputs which are permissible are wide-ranging and not limited to publications. The full list can be found in Annex K of the REF2021 [Guidance on Submissions](#).¹⁰

b) Research Monitoring and its purpose

45. Research Monitoring (RM) at Exeter is an annual exercise which allows disciplines to consider their collective quality profile over the period of a year. An overview of outputs produced within that discipline is part of this exercise. Typically, this has included benchmarking of a selection of outputs by peers within the University of Exeter and/or by those appointed externally. Individuals nominate outputs for consideration which are then normally assessed and for which an indicative score is given to each output using scoring criteria similar to that used in the REF process.¹¹ Such scoring is intended to support REF preparations and an institutional understanding of REF readiness. At the RM meetings, individual indicative output scores are not discussed by the Panel. Scores are only discussed in aggregate in relation to overall department/unit preparedness and the health of the discipline/unit.

c) The approach to outputs selection

The fundamental guiding principle to output selection at Exeter is excellence. This guides the primary selection of outputs whilst considering balance and showcasing diversity across research areas and researchers. As noted above, each UoA submission to REF2021 is a collaborative endeavour. Outputs are selected with a view to being a representative sample of the best work from across the UoA’s members and areas of research focus produced by that UoA between 1st January 2014 and 31st December 2020.

46. The University of Exeter is committed to adopting a responsible metrics approach and has a Responsible Metrics Group chaired by a member of the University’s Research and Impact Executive Group. The University’s processes in preparing its REF submission will be guided by the principles of responsible metrics. In line with the REF2021 Guidance to REF panel members, the assessment and selection of outputs in REF 2021 will not be made solely on the basis of journal impact factors nor the perceived hierarchy of journals. Nor will assessment or selection be made solely on the basis of citation metrics for those UoAs where the REF panels will be provided with citation data.¹²

¹⁰ https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1092/ref_guidance_on_submissions.pdf

¹¹ An 11-point scale is used: U, 1, 2L, 2M, 2H, 3L, 3M, 3H, 4L, 4M and 4H.

¹² §207 Panel Criteria and Working Methods <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/panel-criteria-and-working-methods-201902/> Please see §288-290 on the limited use of citation data and the awareness of panels to the challenges which such data can sometimes pose to diversity of research areas and researchers https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1092/ref_guidance_on_submissions.pdf.

47. Recommendations made on output selection are best supported by insight from within the discipline structure. Within each UoA the Director(s) of Research will take a leadership role in finalising the process for output selection, including the approach to review and moderation with the University policy on selection and review as highlighted below. This will be done in consultation with the Head of Department (or equivalent) and the relevant Associate Dean(s) of Research.
48. All UoAs will abide by the following principles:
- Staff within each UoA will be made aware of the detail of the process (including the membership of the UoA Selection Panel) for their UoA no later than October 2019;
 - If any individual with advisory or decision-making responsibility is conflicted (see Conflict of Interest Policy) they will recuse themselves from that specific recommendation or decision;
 - The UoA will present a set of recommended outputs for submission to the University Research Monitoring Panel in 2019 and, subsequently, an updated set of recommended outputs in 2020.
49. Recommendations and decisions on the overall set of outputs to be submitted for each UoA to the University Research Monitoring Panel will be underpinned by the review and moderation process detailed below. UoAs will also be supported by data analysis relating to quality profiles and balance. The UoA-level decision makers will factor available EDI data and representation across the research areas/research strategy presented in the Environment statement to support recommendations and decisions.

d) Unit of Assessment (UoA) selection processes and governance

Nominations

50. For the annual Research Monitoring exercise, staff nominate outputs via the University's research outputs management system, Symplectic. Since 2018, the Research Monitoring exercise has been particularly focused on outputs which may be submitted to REF2021.
51. Each year, staff are typically given between 3-4 weeks to nominate outputs. They are encouraged to nominate the work which they feel represent the highest quality of their work. Staff have the opportunity to include contextual information about their work. In 2019/2020, as new staff take up their posts, they will be asked to nominate outputs once their eligibility and UoA have been determined.
52. Staff are asked to nominate preferably at least 1 output and no more than 5 outputs. In 2019, staff at the interface of two or more UoAs were given the opportunity to nominate up to 5 outputs for each UoA. In 2020, most decisions regarding an individual's UoA will already have been made but new members of staff whose research sits at the interface of multiple UoAs (or where a final decision is still to be taken) will be given the opportunity to nominate to multiple UoAs.
53. For the 2019 exercise, all staff on E&R contracts were invited to nominate outputs. Using the draft REF Guidance on determining Independent Researcher status,

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Directors of Research were asked to take an inclusive approach and to invite selected staff on R-only contracts who *might* be eligible as an Independent Researcher to nominate outputs.

54. For the 2020 exercise, all staff who will have been identified as Independent Researchers for REF through the process described in Part 3 (and who have not previously nominated outputs through the Research Monitoring exercise), will also be invited to nominate outputs.

Review

55. Each UoA institutes a peer review process. Outputs are reviewed by research leaders with disciplinary and methodological expertise.
56. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the individual, the department/discipline, and the institution, receive feedback on the originality, significance and rigour of the output, and indicative scoring. The reviewer may also consider “fit” within the remit of the UoA and whether the output should be cross-referred or put forward for double-weighting. Indicative grades and comments are provided for each output on an 11-point scale of: U, 1, 2L, 2M, 2H, 3L, 3M, 3L, 4L, 4M and 4H.
57. Outputs which have been reviewed and given indicative grades in previous years are not typically reviewed again. Further review will normally be associated with the moderation process and benchmarking by an independent assessor.

Moderation

58. Each UoA has a moderation process. Although there is some variation of practice, within each UoA staff are made aware of the specific moderation practice to which their outputs are subject. Moderation practices might include a UoA Moderation Panel, external critical friends or the final moderation being undertaken by the Director of Research.
59. Following moderation, a single indicative grade from the 11-point scale is included on Symplectic.

Selection

60. For each UoA, the selection of outputs for REF2021 will be made by a Selection Panel. The Selection Panel will typically include the Director of Research, the Head of Department and others in research leadership roles or with line-management responsibilities. The relevant College Associate Dean for Research may be invited to attend.
61. There are two key moments when output selection will be shaped in 2019 and 2020. In 2019, in line with the process noted above, the Selection Panel (in discussion with the Associate Dean for Research) will review the outputs gathered to date, consider the indicative grades from the 2019 Research Monitoring process and consider the likely pool of outputs to be submitted. They will do this over the course of June and July 2019 in light of available EDI data (primarily gender and career stage) to assess whether the diversity of the research profile is represented. By July 2019, the Panel will be aware of the initial likely number of requests for the

minimum requirement to be waived and may have an initial estimate of the number of people for whom there might be a reduction of the total output pool.

62. This initial phase in 2019 will be revisited in Summer 2020 following the 2020 Research Monitoring process to consider any further works in press or published since the previous exercise and outputs from any newly recruited Category A eligible staff or those newly eligible for REF2021.

63. Each UoA is asked to consider the following questions when recommending the final full set of outputs submission:

- **Does the set of outputs include at least one output per Category A eligible staff returned (with the exception of those whose minimum output requirement has been waived)?**
- **Is this set of outputs reflective of the highest quality outputs produced in this period?**

Whilst bearing in mind the approach to an optimum quality profile, the UoA is also asked to consider the following:

- **Without damaging the quality profile, do the outputs reflect the work of the range of the Category A eligible staff, i.e. in relation to the characteristics of the eligible staff (where known) in the UoA? Are the outputs of one group or other disproportionately represented? If so, are there appropriate ways to rebalance this within the submission?**
- **Without damaging the quality profile, are the outputs representative of the breadth of research areas within the UoA or is one research area or other disproportionately represented? If so, are there appropriate ways to rebalance this within the submission?**

64. In addition to knowing the number of staff who have had the minimum requirement of outputs waived, the UoA will be aware of the total number of reductions which might be requested to the overall output pool as a result of individual circumstances (see section below on reductions relating to individual circumstances). Therefore, the UoA will need to consider the following question as well:

- **Has the cumulative effect of multiple individual circumstances been a constraining factor for output selection? In addition to the reduction to the total output pool for those whose minimum requirement of one output has been waived, should the UoA request further additional reductions to the output pool as a result?** (see section on individual circumstances below).

Communication

65. Each year, after the nominations and review processes are completed for the Research Monitoring exercise, the indicative grades are available to staff on Symplectic.

66. By October 2019, all REF2021 Category A Eligible staff are expected to be aware of the output selection process of that UoA.

67. UoAs are encouraged to have discipline-wide meetings to highlight the key change within REF2021 of delinking the individual from the outputs submitted. They are strongly urged to consider the submission as a collective effort towards putting forward a selection of the highest quality outputs produced.
68. Associate Deans of Research, Heads of Departments and Directors of Research are urged to remind staff who will be submitted that changes to specific output selection may be made up to the point of submission where it is in the interests of optimising the overall quality profile or to improve the representation of the diversity of research and researchers.

Adjudication and ratifying decisions

69. The Associate Dean for Research has an initial adjudicating role when the UoA-level Selection Panel is unable to come to a decision. In instances where the Associate Dean for Research is a member of the Selection Panel due to disciplinary expertise, the initial adjudicating role rests with the Dean/Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the College.
70. Where there is difference of opinion on specific output recommendations amongst decision makers within a UoA or where multiple UoA-level decision makers have a conflict of interest, the issue can be referred to the following for a recommendation or decision:
- First, to the Associate Dean for Research for that College or multiple Associate Deans of Research where a UoA spans multiple College remits;
 - If unresolved, to the Dean/Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the College or Colleges;
 - If still unresolved, to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Impact.¹³
71. Output recommendations will be ratified by the University Research Monitoring panel in 2019 and 2020 (see Appendices 1 and 2 for further details).

e) Selection of outputs of former staff

72. REF2021 guidance permits the submission of outputs of Category A eligible staff who are no longer at the University of Exeter on the staff census date of 31st July 2020. For the removal of doubt, this relates solely to all former staff on E&R contracts and staff on R-only contracts who meet the definition of an independent researcher (see Part 3). Former members of staff whose outputs are returned are not counted within the FTE submitted within a Unit of Assessment.
73. As the REF2021 guidance does not provide a definition of former staff, we are using the following definition for the categories of former staff for our REF2021 preparations:
- Category 1: Staff who have left the employment of the University voluntarily or have transferred to the employment of another organisation under TUPE;
 - Category 2: Staff who are retired;
 - Category 3: Staff who are deceased;

¹³ If there are circumstances that the DVC is conflicted, an appropriate delegate will be appointed.

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- Category 4: Staff who were employed by the University on one or more fixed term contracts and whose employment ended on the expiry and non-renewal of that fixed term contract;
- Category 5: Staff whose employment has ended through a voluntary severance arrangement; Category 6: Staff whose employment with the University ended following the application of the University's Redundancy Procedure.

74. For the purposes of this Code of Practice, and for the avoidance of doubt, this definition of former staff does not include staff who have been dismissed for any other reason. The outputs of staff who have been dismissed for any other reason will not be considered for submission under any circumstances.

75. The University is not required to submit outputs of former members of staff. It will only do so to ensure that the performance of the discipline (including the breadth of strengths) over the period of 2014 to 2020 has been appropriately represented and in order to optimise the performance of that discipline at Exeter. Notwithstanding the intention of REF2021 to delink the individual from each UoA's submission, where possible, the University will be guided by the principle of mutual benefit.

76. For the purposes of the REF2021 Code of Practice, outputs produced at the University of Exeter of a further category of existing staff [Category 7] might also be considered. This will be for staff whose contract has changed from an E&R or R-only contract to a senior administrative contract or an Education and Scholarship contract during the REF period.

77. [Categories 1-4 or 7] Staff who have left voluntarily or have transferred to the employment of another organization under TUPE, retired, are deceased, were on one or more fixed-term contracts, or whose contract type has changed
The outputs of Category A eligible staff who have retired, moved to other organisations, or are deceased produced during the REF period, will be considered available for selection to REF2021. With the exception of former staff who are deceased, where contact details are available, the former member of staff will be informed that their outputs are being considered for submission by the University of Exeter.

78. [Category 5] employment which has ended through a voluntary severance arrangement
For Category A eligible staff who were staff made redundant with a voluntary severance arrangement, outputs might be considered for inclusion but will only be submitted with the permission of the member of staff made redundant with a voluntary severance arrangement.

79. [Category 6] Employment ended following the application of the University's Redundancy Procedure
The University considers that it would not normally be appropriate for the University to choose to return the outputs of Category A eligible staff who have been made compulsorily redundant to a REF2021 submission. However, the University recognises that the author may wish for their output to be considered for the REF2021 submission in the interest of supporting their longer-term career aspirations. If an output has been identified by the UoA or a request is made, the

decision to submit the output will be guided by the principle of mutual benefit to the individual and the institution. If a former member of staff within this category wishes to have an output considered, they will be able to do so through the University REF team and the University REF team and Peoples Services will ensure that no confidential aspects of the redundancy arrangements are disclosed.

80. Co-authored outputs, where the output is already being returned in the name of a current member of staff, are not affected by the approach outlined above.

f) Approach to individual circumstances

81. The national REF2021 policy relating to individual circumstances has been developed in order to ensure parity of treatment and in recognition that there are many reasons why output productivity might vary. Specifically they note that the policy has been developed with the following principles to:

- a. Ensure recognition of the effect circumstances can have upon an individual researcher's productivity.*
- b. Create the right incentives for HEIs to support staff with circumstances (and avoid introducing negative incentives, for example around recruitment).*
- c. Recognise the potential disparity in the available output pool for units in particular contexts, for example where there are high proportions of staff with circumstances, or for very small units.*
- d. Maintain the integrity of the exercise – both in supporting equality and diversity and ensuring the credibility of assessment process.¹⁴*

82. This approach allows a submitting university and UoA to have reductions to the total number of outputs required or to have the requirement of a minimum of one output per member of staff to be waived due to an individual's particular circumstances which may have had an impact on the ability to produce an output during the REF period.

83. The REF2021 guidance highlights **five types** of individual circumstances. The REF2021 guidance distinguishes these five types into two groups: [Group 1] those that do not require judgement and where specific possible reductions of outputs have been suggested within the REF2021 guidance; and, [Group 2] those which require judgement on the nature and complexity of the circumstance.

84. **Group 1: there are four specific types of individual circumstances** which fall into this category and these might impact on the volume of outputs produced across the UoA during the REF period:

- Early Career Status;
- Secondment or career breaks;

¹⁴§156 https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1092/ref_guidance_on_submissions.pdf

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- Family-related leave (this includes statutory maternity, statutory adoption leave, additional paternity or adoption leave of four months or more, or shared parental leave of four months or more);
 - Junior clinical academics (in UoAs 1 – 6).
85. Across these forms of individual circumstances, any member of Category A eligible staff accruing 46 months or more of absence during the REF period is eligible to have the minimum requirement of one output waived.
86. Where the period of absence due to secondment, career break or family-related leave is less than 46 months, the REF2021 guidance offers the flexibility to a UoA to make the case for a reduction to the total pool of outputs submitted by the UoA. Specifically for each type of circumstance, the REF2021 guidance defines the number of outputs that a UoA will be eligible to have reduced for each of the above types of circumstance which is dependent on the amount of time absent.¹⁵
87. Where individuals have had a combination of circumstances of the list above, the reductions may be accumulated up to a maximum reduction of 1.5 outputs per person.
88. In UoAs 1-6, the total number of outputs for the UoA may be reduced by one for each junior clinical academic submitted. These members of staff are defined as clinically qualified academics who are still completing their clinical training in medicine and have not gained a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) or equivalent prior to 31 July 2020.
89. **Group 2:** The fifth type of individual circumstance which requires judgement is in relation to individuals who have experienced, or are experiencing, one or more of the following circumstances:
- 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.¹⁶*
90. For circumstances which require judgement, reductions calculated in relation to either periods of absence or the period of time relating to these circumstances which would be equivalent to absence from undertaking research.¹⁷ Where a member of staff has

¹⁵ Annex L https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1092/ref_guidance_on_submissions.pdf

¹⁶§160 https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1092/ref_guidance_on_submissions.pdf

¹⁷ Universities are advised to use Table L2 in Annex L

https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1092/ref_guidance_on_submissions.pdf

been absent or experienced circumstances requiring judgement equivalent to 46 months or more, the minimum requirement of one output might be waived.

91. Waiving the minimum requirement of one output is permissible for the following:

- Where the individual has been absent from research for an overall period of 46 months or more; for part-time staff this qualifying period is prorated by their FTE;
- Where the individual has experienced circumstances (which require a judgement) for the equivalent of a 46 month absence from research'
- Where the individual has had two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave;
- A combination of circumstances which might have resulted in a similar impact but which would not individually meet the thresholds set.

However, the waiving of the minimum requirement of one output in these circumstances is only permitted if no output has been produced during the REF period.

92. The University of Exeter respects the REF2021 principle that only those individual circumstances made known by the individual concerned and through the processes laid out below, can be taken into consideration. Furthermore, no Category A eligible member of staff should feel compelled to disclose an individual circumstance.

93. **Applying further reductions to the output pool:** where multiple individual circumstances have been submitted for a single UoA, the UoA and the University can make a request for further reductions to the overall output pool. The UoA will be made aware of the total number of outputs it is eligible to have reduced (based on information provided through reporting individual circumstances). The UoA will need to ensure first that there are as many outputs returned as the number of people returned and to consider if the total number of individual circumstances reported have had a cumulative constraining effect on the UoA's ability to produce the required number of outputs.

Procedure for applying individual circumstances

94. All staff on E&R contracts will be issued a pro-forma in late Autumn 2019 and will be asked to complete the form noting:

- ECR status;
- Secondment/career break;
- Family-related leave;
- Other individual circumstances;
- Whether they will wish to make a request to have their minimum requirement of one output waived;
- That no individual circumstances needs be reported at present;

95. All staff on Research-only (R-only) contracts will be issued the pro-forma at the time that their REF2021 Independent Researcher status is confirmed.

96. **These forms will be confidential and will only be viewed by the Eligibility Review Group and its Secretariat.** The handling and storing of this information will be governed by the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and will be retained until the REF2021 audit period has been completed. Universities are currently awaiting details of the audit process from Research England.
97. **The completion of the form is not mandatory for all staff eligible for REF2021. The disclosure of individual circumstances is entirely voluntary.** Only circumstances reported through this process can be taken into consideration for REF2021.
98. Staff are encouraged through the form (see Appendix 10 for the draft version of the form) to use the form to alert Peoples Services/Occupational Health confidentiality to initiate (if required) discussion on the types of support available.
99. The first tranche of forms will be considered in late Autumn 2019 by the Eligibility Review Group.
100. Subsequently the Eligibility Review Group will meet every other month between January 2020 and July 2020 (as required) to consider submissions.
101. Communication of the outcome to the individual will be from the Eligibility Review Group to the individual, with a copy to Peoples Services/Occupational Health if this has been indicated by the individual on the form. Details of the appeals process will be included in the letter.
102. Directors of Research, Heads of Department and College Associate Deans of Research will be notified of the names of members of staff whose minimum requirement of one output has been waived. No further information will be disclosed.
103. Directors of Research, Heads of Department and College Associate Deans of Research will be notified of the total number of reductions of outputs from the overall output pool total that the UoA might request. They will also be provided with the total FTE and head count associated with the possible reduction. No further information will be disclosed.
104. The forms will be available on the staff intranet for staff to return the forms at any time but specific deadlines for individual circumstances to be reported will also be circulated to all staff. All staff will be reminded of the opportunity to report individual circumstance, if required, at regular intervals.
105. Further documentation will need to be completed by the UoA where a reduction of the total number of outputs to be submitted is to be made. The Secretariat to the Eligibility Review Group will assist in composing this request to Research England, and will ensure that sensitive information remains confidential and is not shared with the UoA or similar.
106. When making a request to Research England to have the total output pool reduced due to cumulative individual circumstances, universities will be asked to consider:

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- If they can demonstrate that they do not have the resilience to meet the total number of outputs required for the UoA (i.e. based on the calculation of 2.5 outputs per 1.0 FTE of Category A eligible staff);
- If they can demonstrate that they would be disadvantaged if they did not apply the reductions to which they are eligible.

107. Any reductions to the total number of outputs per UoA and the waiving of the minimum requirement of one output is subject to approval by Research England's REF team.

108. Should Research England reject any requests for reductions or the waiving of the minimum requirement of one output, the submitting institution will be permitted to appeal that decision, if required.

g) Training of decision makers

109. As noted above (Section 3 e), we will make available additional mandatory training on Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) for all decision makers involved in REF2021. This will include specific training regarding unconscious bias, identifying risk and bias mitigation strategies. It will also include an overview on responsible metrics. The training will take the form of face-to-face training in July, September and October 2019 with eight half-day sessions offered; all REF decision-makers will be required to attend. The training will be delivered by an external consultant, with the EDI team making face-to-face training available if required in March 2020 and June 2020 to any new REF decision-makers. Online training course on unconscious bias will also be available to REF decision-makers and also open to other members of staff.

110. In addition to EDI training, we will ensure that the REF guidance on selecting outputs and the final Code of Practice as submitted in June 2019 (and subsequently amended and finalised) is provided to:

- All those with decision-making responsibilities for REF2021;
- Members of the appeals panel;
- Wherever possible, to Internal/external reviewers of outputs.

Please see Appendix 6 for further details.

h) Appeals procedures

111. The University of Exeter's overarching appeals policy and procedures can be found in Appendix 3. For output selection, an appeal is permissible in the following circumstances:

- The failure of the UoA/University to adhere to processes and procedures set out in this Code of Practice;
- Failure to comply with the University's legal responsibilities;
- And, the incorrect interpretation of the REF2021 guidance.

112. Appeals on the grounds of academic judgement or disagreement with a decision (for example, on the assignment of quality profiles of an output or outputs) are not permitted.

113. In relation to the application of individual circumstances where requests have been made to waive the minimum requirement of one output, the appeals process will be open after the first set of outcome notifications are made.

114. The Appeals Panel will be constituted for REF2021-related decision making. From January 2020 until November 2020, the appeals panel will meet monthly, as required.

i) Equality Impact Assessment

115. As noted in Section 3 above, the process of developing an equality impact assessment (EIA) began with the development of this Code of Practice.

116. The branched cumulative EIA is being undertaken in six phases from December 2018 till after the REF submission period. The phases include:

<p>PHASE 1 Dec. 2018 – May 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary drafting • Data collection and modelling • Describing and agreeing: scope, processes and stages via the CoP • Pre-Equality Impact Analysis consultation on approach to REF • Equality Analysis Screen Submission • Training Plan and Consultation Plans
<p>PHASE 2 May – October 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of preliminary Full EIA building from REF 2014 EIA setting out the foundation for a cumulative EIA approach that will populate the final REF 21 EIA.
<p>PHASE 3 October 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of an EA (1a) on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of outputs; • Determining independent researchers eligibility; • Processes around reviewing individual circumstances for staff. • In parallel, the commencement of relevant EDI training being undertaken for REF decision-makers, any issues or risks identified at the July session will be fed into the reviews of the draft EAs.
<p>PHASE 4 November– December 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 week widespread consultation on EA (1.a) • Completion of EA (1.b): The Process for compiling UoA environment statements) • Final version of EA (1a) Complete and Reference in EA (1b) • EA (1b) out for 4 week focused narrow consultation.
<p>PHASE 5 January 2020– August 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EA (1b) Final version complete • EA (1a) Updated to include any relevant additions • combine EA1a&1b as a EA REF21
<p>PHASE 6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full review of EAs following final submission of University return on 27th November 2020.

November – March 2021 (TBC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submit EA REF21• Publish EA REF21 and make available to all staff
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117. To support the implementation of the policies in this section we will undertake the following data analyses:

- A benchmarking data analysis at UoA-level of all outputs in relation to the protected characteristics (where feasible) of the staff to whom that output is attributed.¹⁸ The first full analysis will be undertaken as part of the 2019 Research Monitoring exercise.
- Where the numbers are such that we cannot undertake this analysis at UoA-level, UoAs will be provided with the analysis at institutional or by REF Main Panel for reference.
- The REF Eligibility Review Group and the REF Strategic Advisory Group will review these data analyses to identify any concerns with the findings and process and will make recommendations to the Research and Impact Executive Group (RIEG).

118. This exercise will be repeated in May 2020, with review and recommendations as required. It will be updated in July/August 2020 after the 2020 Research Monitoring meetings and finalised after the completion of the submission period in December 2020 in order to support the final equality impact assessment of the submission.

APPENDICES

1. [Governance structures and membership](#)
2. [Roles and responsibilities for decision-making and key REF2021 recommendations](#)
3. [Appeals policy and process](#)
4. [Conflicts of Interest policy](#)
5. [Confidentiality policy](#)
6. [EDI Training policy and approach](#)
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8. [Selection of Impact Case Studies](#)
9. [Determining Independent Researcher status – reporting template/form](#)
10. [Individual Circumstances disclosure status – form](#)
11. [Supporting research careers](#)

Appendix 1. Governance structures and membership

¹⁸For co-authored outputs, it will only consider the reported characteristics of the attributed author within that UoA and not all authors.

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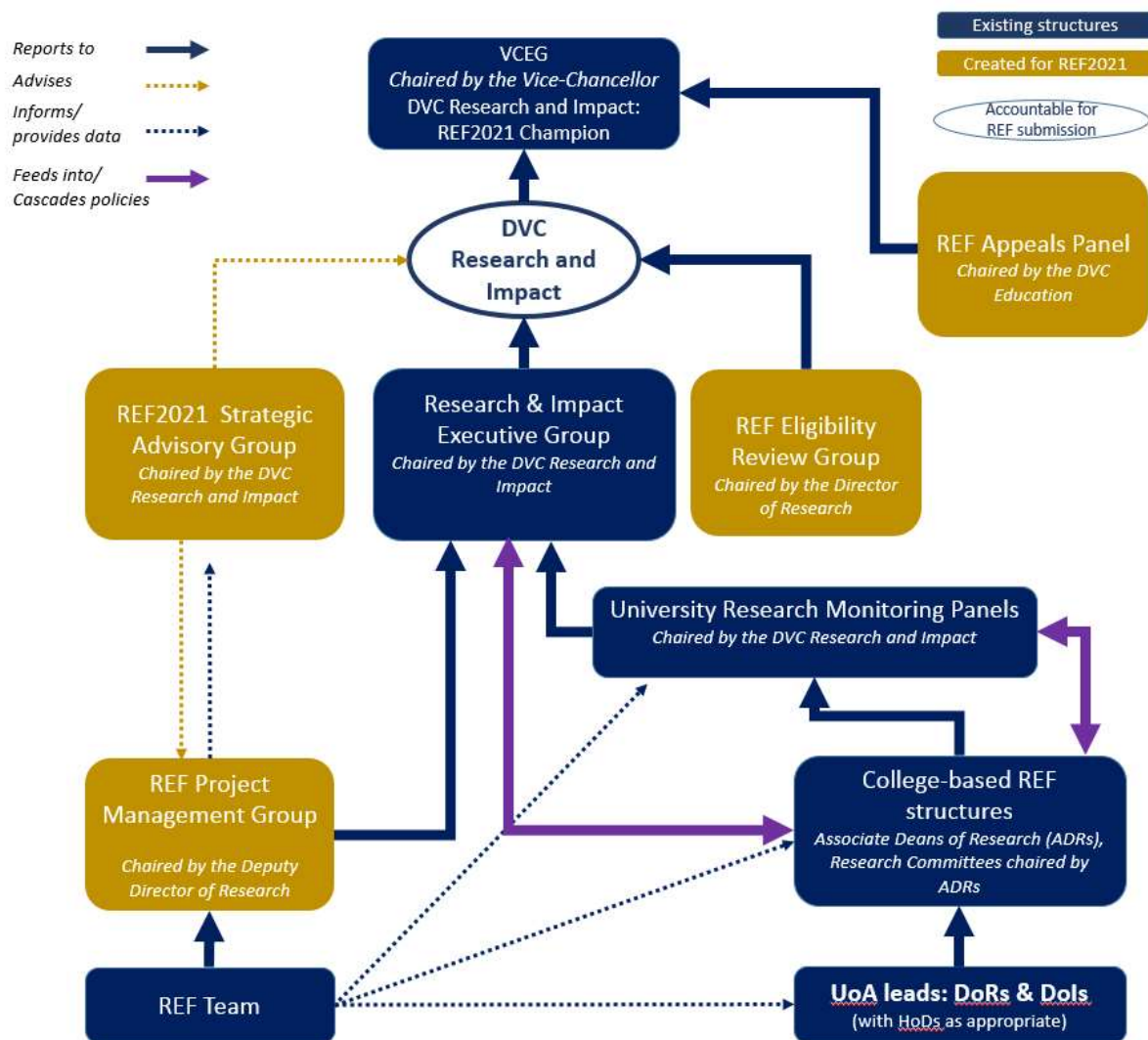


Figure 2 Governance structure for REF2021 delivery and decision making

Vice Chancellor's Executive Group (VCEG)

Purpose

The Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group (VCEG) is the principal management group of the University, supporting and advising the Vice-Chancellor in the performance of his duties as the University's Chief Executive Officer. It is responsible for developing and delivering the strategic plans of the University and for the effective management of the University, including agreeing core University policies. It is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and meets weekly.

VCEG's role in relation to REF

To have strategic oversight of the university's submission to the Research Excellence Framework. The VCEG has final approval of:

- The University's REF strategy
- The University of Exeter REF2021 Code of Practice

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The DVC Research and Impact's role: The DVC Research and Impact (DVC R&I) as the senior member of the university accountable for the development and delivery of Exeter's REF2021 submission is the sponsor for REF2021. The DVC R&I makes the final decision on the University's submission with advice from VCEG.

Undertaking the role:

VCEG will:

- Receive final drafts of all formal consultation responses made to Research England regarding REF2021 for sign-off.
- Sign-off on the University's Code of Practice.
- Receive periodic updates from the DVC R&I on progress. This will include raising awareness of potential risks.
- Take the final decision on the Units of Assessment to be submitted and what, if any, multiple submissions are made to specific Units of Assessment.

Membership of VCEG

- Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive (Chair)
- Provost
- Registrar and Secretary
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Impact)
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (External Engagement)
- Director of People Services
- Director of Campus Infrastructure and Operational Support Services
- Chief Financial Officer
- Director of Communications and Corporate Affairs
- Pro-Vice-Chancellors/Executive Deans of each of the six Colleges
- Chief College Operations Officer

Research and Impact Executive Group (RIEG)

Purpose

The Research and Impact Executive Group (RIEG) supports and advises the DVC R&I on the management and strategic direction of the University in relation to research, impact and innovation. It is chaired by the DVC R&I and meets monthly.

RIEG's role in relation to REF2021

To support the DVC R&I to have operational oversight of the University's submission to REF2021, to shape the development of the University's REF Strategy and oversee its implementation.

The group will:

- Recommend to VCEG the overall REF strategy for the University, including advising which Units of Assessment will be submitted.
- Manage the full cycle process of the institutional return to REF2021 incorporating the annual research monitoring exercise to support these preparations.

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Undertaking the role:

As highlighted in the Group's Terms of References, the group is responsible for ensuring effective performance monitoring and management of research and impact. Specifically:

- To manage the full cycle process of the institutional return to REF 2021 including the annual research monitoring exercise.

In addition to responsibilities within the RIEG Terms of Reference regarding performance and in relation to developing and delivering Exeter's Research and Impact Strategy, members of RIEG will also:

- Provide significant input on all formal consultation responses made to Research England regarding REF2021
- Provide significant input on the University's Code of Practice
- Review the delivery plan for REF2021
- Receive regular updates on the progress of Exeter's preparations in relation to the delivery plan, this includes periodically reviewing potential risks and concerns
- Delegate to Associate Deans of Research/Research and Impact (ADR):
 - Responsibility for the submissions made within their Colleges; where the submission is shared between Colleges this will be a shared responsibility by the relevant ADRs.
 - financial responsibility for College-level REF budget allocations.
 - the cascading of REF policies/strategies (i.e. both communicating and reinforcing) to Directors of Research and Impact.
- To request information that will identify strengths and weaknesses in the REF submission and having identified weaknesses to suggest actions to improve the submission.
- Provide advice and recommendations on the shape of the overall submission and specific UoA submissions as requested by the DVC R&I in order to maximise the final submission from the University.
- Approve the convening of ad-hoc Review Panels (either internal or external) to support the development of specific aspects of the submission.
- To oversee and approve arrangements relating to specific policy issues (e.g. cross-referral, double-weighting etc.).

Membership of RIEG

- Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Impact (Chair)
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Innovation and External Engagement)
- Dean of the Doctoral College
- Associate Deans for Research (or equivalents) of each of the six Colleges
- Director of Research Services
- Director of Innovation, Impact & Business
- Head of Library and Culture Services

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Dual Assurance

Since 2007/08 various areas of the University's business, have been governed through a mechanism known as dual assurance. As its name suggests, this model involves two people. The first of these is a member of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group (VCEG), who takes responsibility for the management and development of policy in a particular area of business. The second member of the dual assurance partnership is an Independent member of Council, knowledgeable in the same area, who provides assurance to Council that this activity is well-managed and that decisions have been reached following due process and appropriate consultation.

Two areas of Dual Assurance apply to the management of REF and to the development and implementation of this Code of Practice:

- Research and Impact
- Equality and Diversity

The VCEG lead for Research and Impact is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor who has overall responsibility for the delivery of REF2021. The Council member and Independent Lead with responsibility for Research and Impact is Professor Sir John O'Reilly.

The VCEG lead for Equality and Diversity is the Chief College Operations Officer who is also a member of the Eligibility Review Group. The Council member and Independent Lead with responsibility for Equality and Diversity is Kiron Farooki.

Further information on dual assurance is available on the University website at www.exeter.ac.uk/about/organisation/dualassurance.

University Research Monitoring Panel

Purpose: The University Research Monitoring (RM) Panel convenes annually to consider a discipline's quality profile and as an opportunity to alert senior administration to specific challenges or opportunities for the discipline. Discussions at RM meetings focus on matters such as resilience, support of the research environment, development and implementation of strategy, an overview of research outputs, an overview of the progress of PGR students, an overview of research income, and, an overview of impact-related activities.

Meetings are organised by UoA or discipline.

University Research Monitoring Panel's role in relation to REF2021: In relation to REF2021, this group is responsible for approving and ratifying decisions relating to each UoA, particularly at the University Research Monitoring Panel meetings in 2020.

Membership of the University Research Monitoring Panel

- The Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Impact (Chair)
- The Dean of the Doctoral College
- The relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellor/Dean of the College or Colleges
- The relevant Associate Dean for Research of the College or Colleges
- The Director of Research Services
- The Director of Innovation, Impact and Business

The following are invited to present to the University Research Monitoring Panel:

- The Director(s) of Research for the disciplines or unit of assessment

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- The Heads of Department for the discipline(s) under consideration
- The Director of Impact for the discipline (s) or unit of assessment

The Secretariat for this panel is provided by the Research and Impact (Policy and Performance) team.

REF2021 Strategic Advisory Group

Purpose

To provide advice to the DVC and the REF Project Management Group on the approach to, and management of, Exeter's RE2021 submission. This group will be constituted to support the preparations for REF2021. It will be chaired by the DVC R&I and will meet termly or quarterly with the possibility of contributions via email in between meetings if required.

The REF2021 Strategic Advisory Group Terms of Reference

- To advise on the management of REF preparation and submission, including the development and implementation of policies, procedures and processes.
- To shape and inform institutional documentation prepared as part of the REF process e.g. the Code of Practice, the institutional environment statement.
- To advise on arrangements relating to specific policy issues. These might include, for example, Exeter's approach to cross-referral, pre-submission reviews, multidisciplinary, double-weighting EDI.
- To request information that will identify strengths and weaknesses in Exeter's overarching REF submission and having identified weaknesses to suggest actions to improve the submission.

REF Strategic Advisory Group Membership

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Impact) Chair, REF Panel member for UoA5 and Interdisciplinary Advisor
- Director of IIB
- Director of Research
- Deputy Director of Research
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (PVC) and Executive Dean, Humanities as a representative of the PVCs
- Professor David Butler (REF 2021 Panel member for UoA 12)
- Professor Jane Elliot (REF2021 Panel member UoA21 and Interdisciplinary Advisor)
- Professor Mark Jackson (REF2021 Main Panel D member and Chair of UoA 28)
- Professor Andy Jones (REF2021 Panel member for UoA 24)
- Professor Debra Myhill (REF2021 Panel member for UoA23)
- Professor Roy Sambles (REF2014 Panel member for UoA 9)

Other former and current REF panel members and other members of the University will be co-opted to be in attendance as required.

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REF2021 Eligibility Review group

Purpose

To support the DVC R&I to oversee the mechanisms for determining eligibility and ensuring adherence to the Code of Practice. This group will be constituted to support the preparations for REF2021. It will be chaired by the University's Director of Research and will have scheduled meetings to review individual circumstances or independent researcher eligibility matters.

The group will:

- Take decisions relating to researcher independence and individual circumstances;
- Provide recommendations to the DVC R&I when the DVC has been asked to mediate and take a decision on issues relating to inclusion and other atypical submission issues relating to individuals being returned to REF2021.

The REF2021 Eligibility Review Group's Terms of Reference

- To oversee the implementation of the policies within the Code of Practice with regard to eligibility and applying policies regarding individual circumstances.
- To oversee the process to review individual circumstances - ensuring strict confidentiality of the materials presented and the communication to the UoA leads of the decisions taken without compromising confidentiality.

Membership of the REF2021 Eligibility Review Group

- (co-Chair) Director of Research Services
- (co-Chair) Chief College Operations Officer/Chair of the University Inclusivity Group
- Dean of the Doctoral College (who has additional responsibility for Early Career Researchers)
- Representation of Peoples Services
- Further representative from the University Inclusivity Group
- 2-3 academic representatives to be co-opted

Secretariat will be provided by the Head of the Research and Impact (Policy and Performance) Team with support from Peoples Services and a member of the Research and Impact (Policy and Performance) Team. The Director of Research Services will normally chair all meetings relating to independent researcher eligibility; the Chief College Operations Officer will normally chair all meetings relating to individual circumstances.

The process for co-opting academic representatives will be as follows:

- Each Pro-Vice-Chancellor/Executive Dean will be invited to nominate a member of the College. This will typically be done with the advice of the College Executive Group (CEG) which includes the Heads of Department and the Director of College Operations. Those nominated cannot be involved in any formal REF decision making processes within the University;
- The University and College Union will be invited to nominate 2 members of the University;
- The list of nominations will be reviewed by the co-Chairs of the Eligibility Review Group and the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor, Research and Impact. They will consider

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representation and put forward the full list with a recommendation of 2-3 members to the University Senate for approval; from that same list they will also put forward a name for membership of the Appeals Panel. *The University of Exeter's Senate is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and it includes the Provost and Deputy Vice Chancellors, Pro Vice-Chancellors/Executive Deans, Associate Deans, Heads of Department and elected members of the academic community. It also includes student representatives.*

The REF2021 Appeals Panel

Purpose

A group constituted to review appeals of certain types of REF2021 decisions (as specified within the Appeals Policy below in Appendix 3).

The REF2021 Appeals Panel Terms of Reference

- To determine the validity of an appeal in relation to the Appeals Policy
- To determine if the decision making process was followed appropriately and the appropriate decision-making body followed the required standards set out in the Code of Practice.
- To take a decision on the appeal, taking into consideration any other relevant factors in relation to the case.
- The quorum of any meeting of the Appeals Panel shall be five members, provided that at all times the Chair or Deputy Chair is present.

Membership of the Appeals Panel

The REF 2021 Appeal Panel will be chaired by Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Education who is not involved in any other REF decision-making processes, except as a member of VCEG. Other members of the group are also not involved in any other REF decision-making structures.

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Education (Chair)
- Director of Peoples Services (Deputy Chair)
- Associate Dean - Education (from a Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences College)
- Associate Dean – Education (from a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics College)
- Another academic representative not previously involved in the decision-making processes

The decision of the 2021 REF Appeal Panel will be final within the procedures of the University and all appeals will be concluded before the REF submission deadline.

The academic representative of the Appeals Panel will be chosen through the process described for selecting academic representatives for the Eligibility Review group.

REF Project Management Group

Purpose

Drawing on representation from across the University to manage and implement the delivery of Exeter's REF2021 submission. The group will include membership from across the Professional Services as necessary, including IIB, RS, Peoples Services, CAMS and Exeter IT.

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The REF Project Management Group's Terms of Reference

- To ensure that progress is made and deadlines are met in accordance with the university strategy and REF timetable;
- To ensure that the REF process at Exeter is managed successfully, identifying roles and responsibilities and coordinating across Colleges and Services;
- To manage and share communications about the policy and operational aspects of the REF;
- To report to RIEG on progress with the REF2021 preparations and to carry out actions as instructed by RIEG;
- To report to the REF Strategic Advisory Group and to carry out actions as advised;
- To ensure that the REF procedures, policies and systems are compatible with Exeter's procedures, policies and systems.

Membership of the REF Project Management Group

- Director of Research Services/Deputy Director of Research, Strategy Policy and Planning (Chair)
- REF Lead: Head of Research and Impact (Planning & Performance)
- REF Co-ordination/Impact Lead: Research and Impact Manager
- Outputs/Reporting Lead: Senior Data Analyst
- REF Environment Lead: Engaged Research Manager
- IIB Business Partners representative
- College Business Partners representative
- People Lead: HR/Peoples Services representative
- EDI Lead: EDI team representative
- Communications Lead: CAMS representative
- Open Access Lead: Library representative
- Systems Lead: Exeter IT representative
- Information Governance/Data Protection lead: Compliance, Governance and Risk representative

REF Team

The REF team within Research Services provides the day-to-day central support to the preparations of Exeter's REF2021 submission, working closely with Colleges, the Associate Deans of Research, the Directors of Research and Impact and with other Professional Services as required. The REF team consists of the Head of Research and Impact (Policy and Performance), the Research and Impact (Policy and Performance) team, the Research Services and Doctoral College Business Partners and the Innovation, Impact and Business College Business Partners.

Appendix 2. Roles and responsibilities for decision-making and key REF2021 recommendations

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Impact)

The DVC (R&I) is the final decision maker for all matters relating to Exeter's REF2021 submission. The DVC (R&I) has the responsibility to ensure that all policies and processes

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have been implemented in a manner which supports a transparent and robust approach. The DVC (R&I) will make all institutional decisions regarding Exeter's REF2021 with the advice of RIEG, e.g. final decisions on the shape of each UoA submission. Specific UoA-based decisions, e.g. output selection, can be escalated to the DVC (R&I) for final decision-making.

University Research Monitoring Panel

All UoA-level REF2021 decisions will be ratified by the University Research Monitoring Panel, specifically the meetings of the University Research Monitoring Panel in June/July 2020. The membership of the University Research Monitoring Panel is listed above.

Pro-Vice-Chancellors/Deans of Colleges

The Pro-Vice-Chancellors or Deans of Colleges are members of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group. The Associate Deans of Research are responsible to the PVC/Dean on a day-to-day basis regarding the preparations within the Colleges. The PVC has executive and financial accountability for the execution of key university strategies relating to Research, Education, Employability and Internationalisation within their College.

Associate Deans of Research/Research and Impact of Colleges

The Associate Deans of Research/Research and Impact (ADRs) are responsible for ensuring that REF policies and processes are effectively implemented within their Colleges and are accountable to RIEG and Deans/PVCs of the College for the readiness of the submissions by the UoAs within their purview. Their other responsibilities include delegated budgets relating to REF preparations. Specific UoA-based decisions e.g. output selection might be escalated to the ADR. The ADR will be expected to have reviewed and approved the recommendations put forward by UoAs regarding the shape of their submissions, e.g. choice of outputs, inclusion of those across UoA boundaries, case studies to be submitted etc.

Heads of Department

Heads of Department (where appropriate, recognising that some UoAs are represented by a single department and some sit across multiple departments) in conjunction with the ADRs are responsible for ensuring there is appropriate resource to support the submission (e.g. having a DoR or DoI, or multiple DoRs or Dols if required for a split site) and with the ADR that appropriate policies are in place for the equitable treatment of staff during the REF process.

UoA Director of Research

The Director of Research is responsible for the preparations and submission of all the research-related components of the UoA's submission. This includes all aspects of the submission with the exception of the impact case studies. This requires working closely with the Head of Department in relation to implementing REF policies and procedures and Exeter's Code of Practice. It also includes agreeing with the ADR and HoD, robust and transparent processes by which individual outputs will be selected (building on processes for review used within the Research Monitoring process) and putting forward recommendations for the shape of that UoA's submission to the RM19 and RM20 processes as the REF submission is finalised.

UoA Director of Impact

The Director of Impact is responsible for the preparations and submission of all the research impact-related components of the UoA's submission. Whilst this role is primarily focused on the development and delivery of impact case studies, it plays a key contribution in supporting

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the impact culture of the UoA and in articulating that culture, and the nature of support available, within the UoA's environment statement.

UoA/College Director of Postgraduate Research

Directors of Postgraduate Research do not have decision-making responsibilities in relation to REF2021 preparation. However, their contributions are vital to the development of the UoA-level environment statement and representing an accurate overview of the support offered to postgraduate research students and the ways in which postgraduate research initiatives and students contribute to other aspects of a vibrant environment, e.g. the use of infrastructure, research income, partnerships and collaborations.

UoA Selection Panel

The responsibility of the UoA Selection Panel will relate to the selection of outputs. The Selection Panel will include the Director of Research. Typically, the Selection Panel will also include the Head of Department and a small group of discipline leads. The full membership of each UoA Selection Panel will be available by the end of October 2019.

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Director of Research

The Director of Research is the Head of Research Services Directorate and is responsible to the DVC (R&I) that the appropriate support is available from the Professional Services in order to: support Exeter's levels of preparedness for REF2021; and, to develop and deliver Exeter's submission to REF2021. The Director of Research owns the following risks identified within the RIEG Risk Register:

- Ensuring confidence in Exeter's management of REF2021 preparations.
- Failure to compile and submit UoE's REF 2021 return in a timely manner or in full due to inadequate management of process.

Director of Innovation, Impact and Business

The Director of Impact, Innovation and Business is the Head of the Innovation, Impact and Business Directorate and is responsible to the DVC (R&I) that the appropriate support is available to UoAs to maximise the potential of Exeter's impact-related submissions to REF2021.

Deputy Director of Research

The Deputy Director of Research is responsible to the DVC (R&I) and the Director of Research for overseeing the development and delivery of Exeter's submissions by overseeing the policies, procedures and infrastructure in place to support the submission. The Deputy Director of Research is responsible for the central REF budget and is responsible for monitoring and mitigating the following risks identified within the RIEG Risk Register:

- Failure to secure a successful outcome in REF2021 – one which maintains or improves Exeter's position relative to previous REF and/or competitor group [Risk owner: DVC (R&I)]
- Ensuring confidence in Exeter's management of REF2021 preparations. [Risk owner: Director of Research]

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- Failure to compile and submit UoE's REF 2021 return in a timely manner or in full due to inadequate management of process. [Risk owner: Director of Research]

Head of Research and Impact (Policy and Performance)

The Head of Research and Impact (Policy and Performance) is responsible for the day-to-day management of Exeter's policies, processes and infrastructure to support the development and delivery of Exeter's submissions and day-to-day oversight of the REF budget.

The Head of Research and Impact (Policy and Performance) is responsible for monitoring and mitigating the following risks:

- Failure to secure a successful outcome in REF2021 – one which maintains or improves Exeter's position relative to the previous REF and/or competitor group [Risk owner: DVC (R&I)]
- Ensuring confidence in Exeter's management of REF2021 preparations. [Risk owner: Director of Research]

Appendix 3. Appeals Policy and Process

Principles

The selective nature of the REF means that outputs from staff may be omitted from the outputs return for tactical reasons rather than because of a negative view of their quality. Non-inclusion within the staff submission pool, or of an individual's outputs component of the REF will not in itself cause any detriment to staff. Similarly, any waiving of the minimum output requirement or consequent reductions in the UoA pool will also not in itself cause any detriment to staff.

What does this policy cover?

This policy covers appeals relating to:

- the determination of independent researcher status;
- the selections of outputs and impact case studies for submission to REF2021;
- Internal decisions relating to the requests for waiving of the minimum requirement for outputs as a result of individual circumstances (including those requiring judgement) which are submitted to REF
- Internal decisions relating to the requests for applying the published tariffs for the reduction of the output pool due to ECR status, family-related leave or secondments/career breaks.

Who can use this policy and when?

Individuals: This policy covers members of staff on E&R and R-only contracts of either permanent or fixed-term basis who wish to appeal decisions based on the areas listed above. The policy applies in respect of a member of staff who has received notification relating to their independent researcher status, the selection of outputs and decisions regarding individual circumstances.

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The member of staff will be notified in writing and be advised of the procedures for appeal, including the time limit for lodging an appeal, to whom an appeal should be addressed and the procedure which will be followed at the appeal panel.

The REF2021 Appeals Panel

As noted above, the REF 2021 Appeal Panel will be chaired by Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Education who is not involved in any other REF decision-making processes, except as a member of VCEG. The Panel membership will be:

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Education (Chair)
- Director of Peoples Services
- Associate Dean - Education (from a Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences College)
- Associate Dean – Education (from a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics College)
- another academic not previously involved in the decision making processes

The REF2021 Appeal Panel will be advised by the Equality and Diversity Team. The decision of the REF2021 Appeal Panel will be final within the procedures of the University and staff will not have recourse to the Grievance Procedure for grievances related to REF2021. All appeals will be concluded before the REF2021 submission deadline.

On what grounds can an appeal be made?

Appeals can be brought forward on the following grounds:

- Failure to follow the policies and/or procedures for determining researcher independence or outputs selection as laid out in the Code of Practice;
- Failure to follow the University's legal obligations;
- And, incorrect assessment of the Research England guidelines in relation to individual circumstances (including those requiring judgement), the removal of the minimum output requirement and any reductions in the UoA's output pool.

The following types of appeal are excluded from the procedure set out in this policy:

- Appeals regarding a disagreement with a decision of the Eligibility Review Group, or similar decision-making body;
- Appeals on the basis of insufficient evidence having been submitted when the request was first put forward;
- A matter which is currently subject to litigation or legal proceedings.
- The matter has previously been through the appeals procedure in line with this policy and has been closed.
- Appeals made by staff with a role determining the shape of a submission to overturn a decision made by the Eligibility Review Group and similar decision making body or role.

The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Appeals Panel using the following email address REF-2021-Appeals@exeter.ac.uk.

The purpose of the Appeal Meeting in these circumstances will be to consider whether the decision taken by the Eligibility Review Group or other decision making body is correct whilst also considering if the appeal is trivial, vexatious or invalid. The substance of the appeal will not be considered any further than is necessary to do this.

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The Appeal Meeting may:

- **Uphold the decision** taken by the Eligibility Review Group or similar decision body, determining also, where relevant, if the appeal is trivial/vexatious/invalid. In this case there shall be no further right of appeal.
- **Determine that further information is required** and invite the member of staff to supply further information and to invite them to appear in person and may be accompanied by a trade union representative or fellow worker.
- **Determine that the decision** taken by the Eligibility Review Group or similar decision body **is not upheld** on the basis of not following the policies and procedures of the Code of Practice, of not fulfilling the University's legal obligations or, in the case of complex circumstances, an incorrect assessment of the Research England guidance. The relevant REF decision-making body will be notified and required to review and reconsider the decision taken.

The individual raising the appeal will be notified within 10 working days of the Appeals Panel. The meeting dates of the Appeals Panel will be made available.

Research England will be launching its Complaints and Whistleblowing procedures in relation to REF2021. The details of this process and guidance on what falls within its remit will be made available by Research England before December 2019. Their process will have an expectation that, where relevant and feasible, an individual will have exhausted the University's own appeals process first.

Appendix 4. Conflicts of Interest Policy

All REF main and sub-panel chairs, members, assessors, observers, secretaries and advisers will observe the arrangements for managing potential conflicts of interest set out at Annex D of the REF2021 Panel Criteria and Working Methods.¹⁹ The University adheres to the same principles of equity, equality and transparency and adopt the same arrangements for recording declarations of interest and avoiding potential conflicts of interest.

Any member of staff – irrespective of role or responsibility in delivering the University of Exeter's REF2021 submission – who is involved in decision-making or assessment must declare their interest to the Head of Research and Impact using the following email address: Exeter-ref-2021@exeter.ac.uk who will maintain a Conflicts of Interest log. This will allow supporting staff to ensure that specific decisions relating to that individual, are not made by the conflicted member of staff. Similarly, where relevant, specific information relating to that individual (e.g. an embargoed output or a confidential impact case study) will not be shared with the conflicted member of staff.

Members of staff will be required to declare a major conflict of interest in relation to:

- any financial or commercial interest conflicts in relation to research or other professional activity
- any minor interest(s) determined by the REF governance structure to be treated as a major interest.

¹⁹ https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1084/ref-2019_2-panel-criteria-and-working-methods.pdf

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Any interest that could lead a reasonable observer to doubt the impartiality of a member of staff with decision-making responsibility (e.g. a familial relationship), that is not a major interest, must be declared by that panel member as a minor interest. Minor interests should be declared on an ad hoc basis to the Head of Research and Impact (Policy and Performance) using the following email address: Exeter-ref-2021@exeter.ac.uk to ensure that the information it captured and acted upon. Declarations of minor interests shall be minuted by the REF Project Management Group.

In addition, the REF team will also proactively issue a request on 1st July 2019, 1st October 2019 and 1st April 2020 to all those with decision making responsibilities to register any major or relevant minor conflicts of interest.

Appendix 5. Confidentiality Policy

All REF panel members, chairs and secretaries are bound by confidentiality requirements, and acceptance of the confidentiality requirements is a condition of their appointment to the role. No information relating to identifiable individuals' circumstances will be published by the funding bodies REF Team. All data collected, stored and processed by the UK funding bodies REF Team will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

All University of Exeter REF Decision makers and those involved in support REF preparations are also bound by the same confidentiality requirements. As noted above in Section 4 and Appendix 1, all information disclosed regarding individual circumstances will be restricted to the Eligibility Review Group and the Secretariat to that group.

The REF2021 process allows for arrangements for sensitive (including commercially sensitive) outputs and impact case studies and those requiring security clearances to be kept confidential. Arrangements will be made to ensure adherence to these requirements within the University of Exeter. Access to such information will be limited to specific members of staff, depending on the level of confidentiality required.

A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is being completed and actions will be put in place to mitigate any risks identified.

Confidential impact case studies for REF2021 and Research Monitoring

This section sets out our policy for the management of confidential impact case studies for Research Monitoring and for the REF submission. This draws on information in the *REF Guidance on Submissions*.²⁰

While all reviewers and Research Monitoring panel members and observers will be asked to respect the confidentiality of all submissions, where case studies deal with matters of national security or contain commercially sensitive or other sensitive information, specific arrangements will be made for storage, review and submission.

Security/government

Government security classification includes the following categories:²¹

Classification	Description
----------------	-------------

²⁰ https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1092/ref_guidance_on_submissions.pdf paragraphs 307-309.

²¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/715778/May-2018_Government-Security-Classifications-2.pdf

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OFFICIAL	<i>'...includes routine business operations and services, some of which could have damaging consequences if lost, stolen or published in the media, but are not subject to a heightened threat profile.'</i> There is no requirement to mark routine OFFICIAL information. OFFICIAL documents may contain sensitive information which will require additional, 'common sense' measures, as deemed appropriate by the organisation. For example, restricted access controls.
SECRET	<i>'Very sensitive information that justifies heightened protective measures to defend against determined and highly capable threat actors. For example, where compromise could seriously damage military capabilities, international relations or the investigation of serious organised crime.'</i>
TOP SECRET	<i>'HMG's most sensitive information requiring the highest levels of protection from the most serious threats. For example, where compromise could cause widespread loss of life or else threaten the security or economic wellbeing of the country or friendly nations.'</i>

Permission to submit

- A case study author or Director of Impact aware of case studies which may include information of national security should alert the Exeter REF team (Exeter-REF-2021@exeter.ac.uk) or their Impact, Innovation and Business (IIB) contact as soon as possible.
- Where the material to be included in a case study can only be made available for assessment to individuals with national security vetting clearance, UoE as the submitting HEI must request advance permission from the REF director to submit such case studies. There will be three staggered deadlines in May 2019, September 2019 and December 2019. The University will submit the request on the case study author's behalf.

Storage and access at Exeter

- Impact case studies classified as OFFICIAL (i.e, the baseline classification for all Government documents) will be stored on the University's Sharepoint site. This site is owned by the Exeter REF team. Access control is in place, and file visibility is restricted to a need to know basis. Impact case study authors and Directors of Impact should alert the Exeter REF team if a case contains sensitive information. Further access control can be arranged as appropriate.
- An impact case study which contains material falling under the SECRET or TOP SECRET classification, and any supporting material, will be stored as hard copies only, in a secure location managed by staff with appropriate security clearance.
- Access to case studies containing SECRET and above material will only be made available to individuals with appropriate national security) vetting clearance, such as Security Clearance (SC) and Developed Vetting (DV).
- All movement of documents containing SECRET and above material will 1) be via hard copies only, and 2) only be handled by staff with relevant national security clearance.

Review

- A case study containing SECRET and above material will be assessed for Research Monitoring by up to two of those named individuals. They will complete the scoring and will provide comments on quality of the case study, and comments on progress without disclosing any sensitive material within the case study.
- Should there be a need for external review, only those with appropriate clearance will be approached.

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- All other case studies will be reviewed within the University of Exeter's Review College, where the confidential handling of material is standard practice. Impact case study authors and Directors of Impact should alert the Exeter REF team if a case contains additional sensitive information, to allow for the appropriate measure to be put in place. For example, restricting user access or providing additional instructions to reviewers.

Assessment

- Special arrangements will be made for the case study author/other named individuals to make the case study with SECRET and above material securely available to named panel members/REF assessors with the appropriate clearance. The REF team will also have checked to ensure that there are no direct conflicts of interest.
- Only outline information about the case study will be available to the panel and no details of the case studies will be published.
- All OFFICIAL case studies will be assessed by REF panelists without special arrangements. However, cases that are OFFICIAL- Sensitive may be identified as requiring additional measures. Authors and Directors of Impacts should contact the Exeter REF team to discuss these measures.
- OFFICIAL-Sensitive cases may be identified as "Not for Publication" or "Redacted" if specific elements should be removed for REF publication. Authors and Directors of Impacts should contact the Exeter REF team to discuss publishing needs.

Commercially sensitive or containing other sensitive information

Apart from national security concerns, there may be cases where information is sensitive for other reasons, for example, due to commercial sensitivities or because the work has been carried out with vulnerable communities

Identifying sensitive case studies

- A case study author or Director of Impact aware of case studies which are commercially sensitive or containing other sensitive information should discuss this with their Impact, Innovation and Business (IIB) Contact or the Exeter REF team as soon as possible.
- Through that process they will need to identify if the case study should be identified as "Not for publication" or "Redacted" where only specific elements are redacted.
- Dols are requested to complete a Unit of Assessment (UoA) overview report as part of the Research Monitoring 2019 (RM19) impact review process, and will be asked to identify case studies which cannot be published by REF or which will need redaction.
- Prior permission from REF is not required but status as "Not for Publication" or "Redacted" will need to be clearly identified when making the REF submission. The case studies will be submitted to REF through the submission portal but, where required, will only be handled or viewed by a restricted group of individuals.

Storage and access at Exeter

- As the REF submission is being prepared, the case studies will be stored in a restricted area on the REF/RM Sharepoint site.
- Access to those case studies and supporting materials will be restricted to a need-to-know only basis (e.g. author(s), the Director of Impact (assuming no conflict of interest) named members of the Exeter REF team and IIB, and specific reviewers).

Review

- The Exeter REF team Impact Lead will discuss with the Director of Impact or the case study author the particular needs of each of these case studies to ensure confidentiality during the review process. This will include not only understanding and identifying

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acceptable reviewers, but also provision of information from the review to the DoI and to the lead reviewer for each UoA, and consideration of how the case might be discussed, if at all, at the Impact Panel meeting.

- For case studies with commercially sensitive information: we will first check existing contractual arrangements or existing non-disclosure agreements (NDA) to ensure if the information can be used within these restricted circumstances and specific individuals involved in reviewing case studies, review panels or Research Monitoring panel may view these documents on a “need-to-know” basis. In most cases, an undertaking that the University as whole is bound by confidentiality is likely to be sufficient.
- Should special permission be required from an organisation or individual, these will be negotiated, agreed and undertaken. For example, where reviewers or Impact or Research Monitoring panel member may be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA). The Exeter REF Impact Lead will also maintain a list of impact case studies where there may be a conflict of interest within the University. Such cases will be identified by the DoI in the UOA overview. Any parties identified as having a conflict of interest will not see the case study or any of the supporting information.
- Where a member of the Impact Review Panel has a conflict of interest, this information will not be shared and conflicted Review Panel members will leave the meeting during any discussion of the case study.
- If permission to share this sensitive information with Review Panel members is withheld by the external organisation or individual, or if any member of the Research Monitoring Panel has a conflict of interest the case study will be restricted to the DoI, specific reviewers and specific members of the REF team. Only outline information will be provided to the Research Monitoring panel which will include scoring from the reviewers, comments on quality of the case study, and any comments on progress which do not disclose any sensitive information and any inappropriate exposure to intellectual property.
- If such a case is to be sent for external review, access for a named person will be managed securely through Sharepoint.

Assessment

- The University is permitted to notify REF of any particular main or sub-panel members who we believe would have a conflict of interest in assessing a case study.
- The Exeter REF Impact Lead will create and maintain a list of such cases as the final cases for submission are decided and as panel members are announced, and will make the appropriate representations when the UoE submission is made.

Publication

- We will need to provide redacted versions suitable for publication by 29 January 2021. Submitted case studies identified as ‘not for publication’ or the elements for ‘redaction’ will be destroyed by the (national) REF team once no longer required for assessment purposes.

Appendix 6. EDI Training policy and approach

The University of Exeter currently provides mandatory [online EDI training](#) to all new staff. A refresher training course is also available after three years of completing the mandatory training and is required to be completed every three years.

Specific training is being commissioned to support REF2021 decision making which will be mandatory for:

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- All groups listed in the governance structure in Appendix 1: VCEG, RIEG, the REF Strategic Advisory Group, the Eligibility Review Group, the Appeals Group and the REF Project Management Team.
- All roles listed as having decision-making responsibilities such as the Directors of Research, the Directors of Impact, the Heads of Department, the Associate Deans of Research and the Deans/Pro-Vice Chancellors.

This approach to REF-focused EDI training has been developed in response to some initial feedback and consultation on the Code of Practice. The focus will be on an approach which will help to identify, challenge and limit bias amongst those engaged in REF decisions and processes, whilst support increased cultural awareness and understanding of diversity.

The training includes specific Unconscious Bias training for decision makers, panels, chairs including the Eligibility Review Group and members of the Appeal Panel (with tools to actively identify and challenge bias). This training is being externally commissioned. The learning is designed to be relevant, engaging and interactive providing case studies, videos clips and group work as part of the training.

Eight face-to-face half-day sessions have been planned to accommodate the availability of REF decision makers and those supporting REF preparations (i.e. the REF team). There will be two sessions in July, with a further three sessions in September and October. The University's EDI team will also offer the opportunity for face-to-face unconscious bias training to new decision makers in March and June 2019.

A short focused training session on unconscious bias will also be offered to members of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group in September 2019.

Online Unconscious Bias training will also be available to REF decision makers and open to any member of staff.

Appendix 7. Policy to determine UoA allocation

The University recognises that there are individuals whose research expertise is at the interface of two or more Units of Assessment (UoA). Moreover, there are some UoAs which do not neatly map onto the University of Exeter's structures and might draw together members of staff within different disciplinary units.

- Any individual member of staff can only be returned to one UoA, irrespective of whether their research might cross multiple disciplines.
- The outputs of that individual will be assessed by the UoA to which they are submitted. However, REF can be alerted that a specific output might need to be cross-referred to a different UoA. *This is a distinct process from tagging an output as being interdisciplinary.*

As an institution we aim to determine an individual's UoA in a three-stage process in our preparations for REF2021 submission:

1) Identifying the relevant additional UoAs

- In **December 2018**, each Unit of Assessment received a list of staff on E&R contract and R-only contracts. *At that time the final guidance on determining eligibility of staff on R-only contracts was still to be issued.* Each UoA was asked

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to reflect on which individuals might be: [a.] returned to multiple UoAs or [b.] which individuals might have research outputs which might benefit from being referred to a different UoA for assessment.

- In **January 2019** each UoA reviewed these lists and the DoRs working with Research Services Business Partners identified those who might be considered for multiple UoAs and those who might cross-refer an output. This was returned to Research Services to collate.
- In **February 2019**, DoRs received a revised list of those currently within their UoA but also a list of those from other UoAs who *might* be suitable for submission within their own UoA or who *might* have outputs for cross-referral. This allowed DoRs to request that through the Research Monitoring process an individual could nominate to multiple UoAs and, therefore, where suitable nominate different outputs for each of those UoAs.
- Where this has been requested, individuals have nominated outputs to multiple UoAs allowing these outputs to be considered within the review processes.

2) Considering fit to UoA remit/strategic placement

- DoRs (irrespective of whether they sit within the same college or not) have been considering the suitability of individuals to UoA remit and have been encouraged to discuss this between themselves and come to an agreement, where appropriate.
- Where the two UoAs are from within a single College, and where the decision is clear, DoRs are asked to ensure that the ADR is aware of the decision taken.
- Where the two UoAs are from within a single College, and if an obvious outcome is not apparent, the DoRs will discuss this with the ADR, allowing the ADR to come to a decision based on fit to the UoA or strategic placement for an optimum quality profile. For the latter, this decision will typically only be taken after the indicative grades following the RM19 process are available, or in 2020 after the indicative grades following the RM20 process are available.
- Where the two UoAs are from different Colleges we propose that, in the first instance these discussions are brought to a meeting of the ADRs (or a representative) Autumn 2019 and in May 2020. We would like to suggest that this meeting will:
 - Approve lists of those who have been considered for alternative UoAs across College boundaries, where an obvious outcome is apparent, e.g. because an individual's outputs fit solely in another UoA.
 - Consider lists where the decision is less apparent. The respective DoRs will be asked to make a recommendation, allowing the ADRs to discuss and approve where feasible. This will require considering the impact on the potential quality profile at this early stage.
- At the meeting in Autumn 2019, the ADRs may wish to:
 - Take a decision;

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- Delay a final decision till the meeting in May 2020;
- At the meeting in 2020, the ADRs would be considering decisions relating to any new members of staff and considering all decisions delayed since 2019.

Appendix 8. Selection of Impact Case Studies

The approach to selecting impact case studies for REF2021 has focused on the following steps:

- Identification of potential case studies and development
- Drafting of case studies
- Review processes
- Selection
- Communication

Identification of potential case studies and development

Within each discipline/Unit of Assessment there is a designated lead for impact activity. In most cases, this is a named Director of Impact and for a small number of Units of Assessment, this role is undertaken by the Director of Research. In relation to REF, working with colleagues in the Innovation, Impact and Business (IIB) Directorate, the Directors of Impact (DoIs) keep abreast of potential impact-related outcomes or activities which may be written up as case studies either for REF2021 or for future REF exercises. Individuals within UoAs with potential impactful research are encouraged to collect and collate evidence of the outcomes and impact of their research. In 2018, a pool of potential cases were identified which could be written up case studies for REF2021 or for future exercises. These were collated into “impact planner” documents with an overview of the likely impact and reviewed (*see details of the review process below*). Based on that 2018 review process, a selection of those impact planners were identified to be written into draft case studies.

Drafting of case studies

Each UoA is preparing draft case studies based on the required number (as guided by the likely FTE) plus *at least* one further draft impact case study to provide additional resilience to the impact preparations. Between November 2018 and January 2019, potential impact case study authors were invited to attend writing workshops and each has a named contact person within IIB to support the development of their impact and draft case study. Case study authors were asked to submit preliminary draft case studies by the end of February to their Directors of Impact and revised draft case studies were submitted at the April 2019 for review by the Impact Review Panel.

Impact Review Panel

Since 2018, we have created a College of Reviewers of impact. In 2018, each impact planner and, in 2019, each draft impact case study will be reviewed by two members of the College of Reviewers. Each UoA has an assigned Lead Reviewer who reads all the case studies for that UoA, the relevant individual reviews and provides an overarching report of the case studies. An Impact Panel Review meeting is convened for each Main Panel. The members of the Impact Review Panel include the Chair of the Panel (who is typically a senior member of the College or who has considerable experience of REF processes), the Director of IIB, the Deputy Director for Research Strategy, Policy and Planning, as well as all the relevant Directors of Impact. ADRs are invited to attend, as are Directors of Research.

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In 2019, following the review process, the Panel will agree an indicative grade and comment on the level of readiness and the feasibility of what might still be required. In 2019, the Review Panel will also comment on whether any further sector-based or discipline-based views might be warranted, potentially provided by individuals external to the university. The panel will also note if a further review of the case study is required.

Should further review be required in 2020, the impact review panel process will be repeated for all UoAs, or selected UoAs, as necessary.

Selection

The UoA will recommend at the 2019 Research Monitoring meeting which selection of draft case studies are likely to be submitted and which might continue to be prepared as back-up/alternative case studies. Final decisions on the selection of case studies will be taken at the 2020 Research Monitoring meeting. These will be based on the following consideration:

- Are the case studies reflective of the strongest case studies representing impactful research in terms of reach and significance, during this period?

Without damaging the quality profile and where there are case studies of similar standing, the UoA might also consider if the case studies broadly reflect the breadth of research or the types of impact within their UoA and make recommendations to the Research Monitoring meeting accordingly.

Communication

The Impact Review Panels provide qualitative feedback and an indicative score using the REF criteria. This provides a score based on the level of readiness at the time of review and the likely score at the point of submission based on the remaining activity or evidence collection which needs to be done. Dols are asked to disseminate the qualitative feedback received from the Impact Review Panel; disclosure of the indicative grades is at the Dols' discretion.

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Appendix 9. Determining Independent Researcher status – reporting template/form

The following are the draft reporting template and the independent researcher form to be completed for the processes outlined in Section 2.

9a. Preliminary stage: reporting template to be completed by UoAs

As noted above, a pre-populated spreadsheet will be provided to UoAs listing all staff on Research-only (R-only) contracts at Grade F and above in May 2019. Other information held on the University's information systems relating to research grants will also be pre-populated. UoAs will be expected to do the following within the form:

- Review the information provided regarding Indicator 1 (Principal Investigator status) and Indicator 4 (Co-Investigator status) and confirm that the types of award listed are eligible, see Section 2 above.
- Where information is readily available within the UoA, to provide information relating to Indicator 2 (Fellowships).
- Where there is indisputable information available within the UoA, to provide information relating to Indicator 3 and 5. NB. As noted in Section 2 of the Code of Practice, in this process, indicator 5 is not accepted as a standalone criterion for determining REF2021 Independent Researcher status.

And then:

- Where an individual has met the REF2021 definition of Independent Researcher on the basis of Indicators 1-4 and Indicator 5 (in conjunction with another indicator), the UoA is asked to mark that individual in the reporting template as having met the REF2021 definition of Independent Researcher.
- Where the UoA does not hold information relating to any of the indicators they are asked to mark that individual in the reporting template as not having met the REF2021 definition. However, that individual will be invited to complete the form through the Open Process where other information not held by the University might demonstrate that eligibility.
- Where the UoA is aware of some information, particularly relating to Indicator 3 and 5 but does not have sufficient information to be certain, they will note that further information is required for a decision to be taken. That information will be invited to complete the form through the open process.

confirm that this form has been reviewed by the College ed Dean of Research or a nominated representative for ncy across UoAs	Y/N	Date:	Reviewed by:
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ed May

Indicators 1 & 4			Indicator 2				Indicator 3 & 5	Stage 1 decisions	
<i>els C &</i>	Eligible as Independent researcher due to PI status (PI or Co-I status for Panel C and D)	On the basis of this indicator, if the member of staff is a PI (PI or Co-I for Panels C and D) but is not deemed to be an independent researcher please explain why (e.g. PI or Co-I for a travel grant only)	Eligible due to competitive fellowships	Competitive fellowship funder	Competitive fellowship type	<i>If "Other" is chosen, please list the name of the fellowship including the funder name and justification</i>	Please provide brief justification as to how the individual meets the requirements of Indicator 3 (or 5 for Panels C and D). NB. For Panels C and D, Indicator 5 cannot be considered as a standalone criterion.	Independent Researcher status (Y/N/F; with F = Further information required for certainty)	Any additional notes (pre-populated from RM19 staff checks where possible).
<i>n</i>	Drop-down: Y/N		Drop-down: Y/N	Drop-down - with option for "Other"	Drop-down - with option for "Other"			Drop-down: Y/N/F	
<i>tion</i>	Drop-down: Y/N		Drop-down: Y/N	Drop-down - with option for "Other"	Drop-down - with option for "Other"			Drop-down: Y/N/F	
<i>e (Co-</i>	Drop-down: Y/N		Drop-down: Y/N	Drop-down - with option for "Other"	Drop-down - with option for "Other"			Drop-down: Y/N/F	
<i>ator)*</i>	Drop-down: Y/N		Drop-down: Y/N	Drop-down - with option for "Other"	Drop-down - with option for "Other"			Drop-down: Y/N/F	
	Drop-down: Y/N		Drop-down: Y/N	Drop-down - with option for "Other"	Drop-down - with option for "Other"			Drop-down: Y/N/F	

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9b. Open stage: Form 1a

This is a draft version of the form which will be made available as an online form



Independent Researcher form

The form is to be completed by staff on Research contracts only. For further information on the REF2021 definition of Independent

Researcher and the criteria for determining Independent Research status please see the [University of Exeter REF2021 Code of Practice](#)

The REF2021 criteria requires an individual meet one or more of the following indicators:

- Indicator 1: Leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project
- Indicator 2: Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement.
- Indicator 3: Leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package.

In addition, for UoAs in Mains Panels C and D the following criteria will also apply:

- Indicator 4: Being named as a Co-I on an externally funded research grant/award
- Indicator 5: Having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research.

If you have previously received confirmation that you meet the REF2021 definition of Independent Researcher, you do not need to complete this form.

A preliminary review of staff on Research contracts was completed by each Unit of Assessment in June/July 2019. This review was completed with information on Indicator 1 and 4 (research awards held at Exeter), Indicator 2 (fellowships) and, where easily accessible, information relating to Indicator 3 and 5. Staff are being asked to complete this form if:

- Additional information is required to decide if you meet the REF2021 definition of Independent Researcher
- You meet the REF2021 definition of Independent Researcher but at the preliminary review stage, the University did not hold relevant information relating to any of the indicators above, e.g. because you have recently received an award for which you are a PI, because you arrived recently but held external research grants as PI (or Co-I for Panels C and D) in another institution
- You meet the REF2021 definition of Independent Researcher but you are a new member of staff who arrived after the preliminary review was completed.

Title	
First Name	
Surname	
Staff ID	

Personal information

Role

Job Title	
College	Choose an item.
Department	Choose an item.
Unit of Assessment (if known)	Choose an item.
Additional Unit of Assessment (if relevant)	Choose an item.

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Indicator 1 and Indicator 4

Are you (or have you been since 1st January 2014) a Principal Investigator on an externally funded research grant? Yes
No

For Panel C and Panel D UoAs only Are you or have you been since 1st January 2014) a Co-Investigator on an externally funded research grant? Yes
No

If your Research contract began at Exeter on or before 30th April 2019, please provide details of any new award(s) or awards held at another HEI prior to arriving at Exeter. Please include the funder's name, the scheme name, the value, duration and start date of the award.

Awards made solely to provide funding for travel, consumables are not eligible. Please see the Code of Practice for further details.

For Panel A and B UoAs – please confirm that you are the Principal Investigator for this award:

Click here to enter text.

For Panel C and D UoAs – please confirm that you are the Principal or Co-Investigator for this award:

Click here to enter text.

If you joined Exeter on or after 1st May 2019, please provide details of award(s) now held at Exeter or awards held at a previous university. Please include the funder's name, the scheme name, the value, duration and start date of the award.

Awards made solely to provide funding for travel, consumables, or for knowledge exchange or impact-related activities are not eligible.

For Panel A and B UoAs – please confirm that you are the Principal Investigator for this award:

Click here to enter text.

For Panel C and D UoAs – please confirm that you are the Principal or Co-Investigator for this award:

Click here to enter text.

Indicator 2

Do you hold (or have you held) one of the following types of competitive Research Fellowships? Choose an item.

The drop-down list has been provided by Research England

Please provide brief details of the competitive Research Fellowship in the box below, i.e. where the award was held (if held at a previous university), the value, duration and start date of the fellowship.

Do you hold (or have you held) a competitive research fellowship of similar standing which is not listed in the drop-down list above? Yes
No

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Name of Funder	Click here to enter text.	Start Date	Click here to enter a date.
Fellowship Scheme	Click here to enter text.	End Date	Click here to enter a date.

Please provide a justification why this funder/fellowship scheme is of a similar standing to those found in the drop-down list above

Click here to enter text.

Indicator 3

Please provide a brief justification as to how you meet (or have met) the requirements of Indicator 3: *Leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package.*

Click here to enter text.

Indicator 5 – for Panels C and D only

Please provide a brief justification as to how you meet (or have met) the requirements of Indicator 5: *Having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research.*

NB. Indicator 5, in isolation, will not normally fulfil the criteria of “Independent Researcher” and will, typically, only be considered in conjunction with another indicator.

Click here to enter text.

9c. REF2021 List of Fellowships

Research England provided a non-exhaustive list of competitive research fellowships where they have confirmed with the funder that research independence is a requirement. Their list which is available [online](#) includes:²²

²² <https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1030/c-users-daislha-desktop-list-of-research-fellowships-updated-22032019.pdf>

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Funder	Fellowship scheme
AHRC	AHRC Leadership Fellowships - Early Career Researchers
AHRC	AHRC Leadership Fellowships
BBSRC	BBSRC David Phillips Fellowships
BBSRC	BBSRC Future Leader Fellowships (from 2018 known as BBSRC Discovery Fellowships)
British Academy	BA/Leverhulme Senior Research Fellowships
British Academy	British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships
British Academy	JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowships
British Academy	Mid-Career Fellowships
British Academy	Newton Advanced Fellowships
British Academy	Newton International Fellowships
British Academy	Wolfson Research Professorships
British Heart Foundation	Career Re-entry Research Fellowships
British Heart Foundation	Clinical Research Leave Fellowships
British Heart Foundation	BHF-Fulbright Commission Scholar Awards
British Heart Foundation	Intermediate Basic Science Research Fellowships
British Heart Foundation	Intermediate Clinical Research Fellowships
British Heart Foundation	Senior Basic Science Research Fellowships
British Heart Foundation	Senior Clinical Research Fellowships
British Heart Foundation	Springboard Award for Biomedical Researchers
British Heart Foundation	Starter Grants for Clinical Lecturers
Cancer Research UK	Advanced Clinician Scientist Fellowship
Cancer Research UK	Career Development Fellowship
Cancer Research UK	Career Establishment Award
Cancer Research UK	Senior Cancer Research Fellowship
EPSRC	EPSRC Early Career Fellowship
EPSRC	EPSRC Established Career Fellowship
EPSRC	EPSRC Postdoctoral Fellowship*1
ESRC	ESRC Future Cities Catapult Fellowship
ESRC	ESRC Future Leaders Grant
ESRC	ESRC/Turing Fellowships
ESRC/URKI	Early Career Researcher Innovation Fellowships
European Research Council	ERC Advanced Grants
European Research Council	ERC Consolidator Grants
European Research Council	ERC Starting Grants
Health Education England	Integrated Clinical Academic Programme Clinical Lectureship*
Health Education England	Integrated Clinical Academic Programme Senior Clinical Lectureship
Leverhulme Trust	Early Career Fellowship
Leverhulme Trust	Research Fellowship
Leverhulme Trust	Emeritus Fellowship
Leverhulme Trust	Major Research Fellowship
Leverhulme Trust	International Academic Fellowship
MRC	MRC Career Development Awards*
MRC	MRC New Investigator Research Grants (Non-clinical)*
MRC	MRC New Investigator Research Grants (Clinical)*
MRC	MRC Clinician Scientist Fellowships*
MRC	Senior Non-Clinical Fellowships
MRC	Senior Clinical Fellowships
NC3R	David Sainsbury Fellowship
NC3R	Training fellowship
NERC	Independent Research Fellowships
NERC/UKRI	Industrial Innovation Fellowships
NERC/UKRI	Industrial Mobility Fellowships
NIHR	Advanced Fellowship*
NIHR	Career Development Fellowship

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NIHR	Clinical Lectureships*
NIHR	Clinician Scientist*
NIHR	Post-Doctoral Fellowship*
NIHR	Research Professorships
NIHR	School for Primary Care Post-Doctoral Fellowships*
NIHR	Senior Research Fellowships
Royal Academy of Engineering	RAEng Engineering for Development Research Fellowship
Royal Academy of Engineering	Industrial Fellowships
Royal Academy of Engineering	RAEng Research Fellowship
Royal Academy of Engineering	RAEng Senior Research Fellowship
Royal Academy of Engineering	UK Intelligence Community (IC) Postdoctoral Research Fellowship
Royal Society	Royal Society Wolfson Fellowship
Royal Society	Dorothy Hodgkin Fellowship*
Royal Society	JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship
Royal Society	Newton Advanced Fellowship
Royal Society	Royal Society/Leverhulme Trust Senior Research Fellowship
Royal Society	University Research Fellowship*
Royal Society and Wellcome Trust	Sir Henry Dale Fellowship*
Royal Society of Edinburgh	RSE Arts & Humanities Awards (for permanent staff)
Royal Society of Edinburgh	RSE Personal Research Fellowship
Royal Society of Edinburgh	RSE Sabbatical Research Grants (for permanent staff)
Sêr Cymru	Research Chairs
Sêr Cymru	Rising Stars
Sêr Cymru	Recapturing Talent*
Sêr Cymru	Research fellowships for 3 -5 year postdocs
STFC	CERN Fellowships
STFC	Ernest Rutherford Fellowship
STFC	ESA Fellowships
STFC	Innovations Partnership Scheme Fellowships
STFC	Returner Fellowships
STFC	RSE/STFC Enterprise Fellowships
STFC	Rutherford International Fellowship Programme
UKRI	UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships
UKRI	UKRI Innovation Fellowships
Wellcome Trust	Intermediate Fellowship in Public Health and Tropical Medicine
Wellcome Trust	Principal Research Fellowships
Wellcome Trust	Research Award for Health Professionals
Wellcome Trust	Research Career Development Fellowship
Wellcome Trust	Research Fellowship in Humanities and Social Science
Wellcome Trust	Senior Research Fellowship

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Appendix 10. Individual Circumstances Disclosure - form

The form below is an adaptation of a template provided by Research England for these purposes.

Individual Circumstances Form: Form 2



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.

Section 1 - Personal information

Title	Choose an item.
First Name	
Surname	
Staff ID	

Section 2 – Role

College	Choose an item.
Department	Choose an item.
Unit of Assessment (if known)	Choose an item.
Additional Unit of Assessment (if relevant)	Choose an item.

Do you have a REF-eligible output published between 1 January 2014 and 31st July 2020? Yes
No

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Section 3 – Circumstances

Applicable circumstances

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

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 following section. Further information can be found paragraph 160 of the [‘Guidance on Submissions’](#) (REF 2019/01).

Please note completion and return of this form is voluntary and individuals 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/Peoples Services 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 university 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/Research England with information 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 contact their HR partner to provide the updated information.

Privacy Notice

At the University of Exeter, all data collected, stored and processed will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). It will be held in a restricted area with controlled access and the Eligibility Review Group Secretariat will destroy the submitted data about individuals’ circumstances when REF have completed the assessment phase and any audit processes by REF have been completed.

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Please complete the section below 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	
Junior clinical academic who has not gained certificate of completion of training by 31 July 2020.	Tick here <input type="checkbox"/>

Early career researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1st August 2016).	Tick here <input type="checkbox"/>
Date you became an early career researcher	Click here to enter a date.

Career break or secondment outside of the HE sector.	Tick here <input type="checkbox"/>
Dates and durations in months	From: Click here to enter a date. To: Click here to enter a date. Duration:

Circumstance	Details
Disability (including chronic conditions) <i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively.</i>	Click here to enter text.
Total duration in months	Click here to enter text.
Mental health condition <i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively.</i>	Click here to enter text.
Total duration in months	Click here to enter text.
Ill health or injury <i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively.</i>	Click here to enter text.
Total duration in months	Click here to enter text.
Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of standard allowance <i>To include: Type of leave taken and brief description of additional constraints, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively.</i>	Click here to enter text.
Total duration in months	Click here to enter text.
Caring responsibilities <i>To include: Nature of responsibility, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively</i>	Click here to enter text.

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Total duration in months	Click here to enter text.

Gender reassignment <i>To include: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively.</i>	Click here to enter text.
Total duration in months	Click here to enter text.
Any other exceptional reasons e.g. bereavement. <i>To include: brief explanation of reason, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively.</i>	Click here to enter text.
Total duration in months	Click here to enter text.

Section 4

Do you feel your circumstances merit the waiving of the minimum requirement of one output?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide further details below

Click here to enter text.

Declaration

Name Print name here

Signed Sign or initial here

Date Insert date here

Please confirm, by ticking the box provided, that:

- The above information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances as of the date below
- I realise that the above information will be used for REF purposes only and will be seen by the REF Eligibility Panel and its Secretariat.
- I realise it may be necessary to share the information with the REF team, the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs.

I agree

I give my permission for an HR/Peoples Services partner to contact me to discuss my circumstances, and my requirements in relation to the contents of this form.

I give my permission for the details of this form to be passed on to the relevant contact within my department/faculty/centre. (Please note, if you do not give permission your department may be unable to adjust expectations and put in place appropriate support for you).

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Preferred method of contact:

Email Insert email address

Phone Insert contact telephone number

For office use only (to be completed by the Eligibility panel)

Please complete where appropriate

- Is the staff member eligible to have the minimum requirement of one output waived?
Yes No More information is required
- Could these circumstances contribute to the UOA's eligibility for a reduction in the total pool of outputs submitted?
Yes No More information is required
- If Yes, what is the maximum number of years/months that might be claimed?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Appendix 11. Supporting research careers

The University is committed to supporting research careers and have a range of resources to help develop skills and provide support structures. The University recognises that it is particularly important to provide such support for Early Career Researchers, those returning to a research career after a break, those on fixed-term contracts and part-time contracts; these are individuals who may be at a stage in their career which is characterised by uncertainties, as well multiple internal and external challenges and stresses.

Researcher development

The University works closely with Vitae and the principles of the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#). The University runs a series of programmes and initiatives that are mapped against the national Researcher Development Framework whose purposes it is to enhance leadership skills and to provide a range of generic skills training. The quality of these programmes have been recognised by the University's retention of

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the [European Commission's HR Excellence in Research Award](#). Through training courses and professional development, specifically focused on early career researchers and postgraduate students, the University helps to facilitate a better understanding of what these researchers need to have to become leaders in their field and to identify and make best use of research-related opportunities. This includes topics such as personal effectiveness, research governance and organisation, and influence and impact. The University runs [ECR Liaison Forums](#) and [Early Career Research Networks](#) to support sharing practice and opportunities for collaboration. The [Researcher-led initiatives](#) award is a fund for early career research staff and postgraduate research students to devise and deliver new professional development activities for their peers.

Research staff receive feedback on their performance and an assessment of their training needs through participation in the Performance and Development (PDR) scheme. The University has an agreed [Code of Good Practice for the Employment of Research Staff](#), which will be reviewed with the anticipated publication of the revised UK Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

In addition, all researchers can look to the dedicated career development framework that is provided through [Exeter Academic](#). This includes the opportunities to be mentored and to explore mentoring to support leadership development. All staff on Education and Research contracts are required to do the [Academic Professional Programme](#) which includes a part-time pathway for researchers on part-time or fixed-term contracts. The Programme was designed with two complementary frameworks in mind and is mapped against them: the [UK Professional Standards Framework \(UKPSF\)](#) and the [Academic Professional \(Level 7\) Apprenticeship Standard](#).

[Supportive policies to support work-life balance and returning to work](#)

The University supports flexible and part-time working. The University has a [flexible working toolkit](#) to allow researchers to consider a range of flexible working arrangements if required. For staff who are part-time, the expectations within the Performance and Development (PDR) scheme are modified following consultation between the new employee and the Dean or Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the College. The University is committed to providing policies and arrangements which promote and support work-life balance for its employees. Colleges and departments are expected to apply fair practices for the allocation of resources (including study leave) and to ensure that those who have had flexible working arrangements or who have had/or not had leave have equal access. The University recognises that some employees may wish to take an extended break from work for personal reasons during the course of their employment. The Career Break Scheme, as set out, provides a facility for staff to request an unpaid extended period away from their work to fulfil these personal obligations and requirements.

The University has processes to ensure a supportive environment for those returning to work after short or long-term absences. This includes a consideration of adjustment to working patterns if required. In addition the University has instituted a [framework for Colleges](#) to support those researchers taking a period of leave for family or caring-related reasons. For example, at a minimum, staff on Education and Research contracts are not expected to resume their teaching responsibilities immediately. As agreed, there will be a period where relieved of teaching duties, the individual will be able to focus on re-establishing research contacts and expertise and a period of time to “regain academic confidence that may have been interrupted by their leave and establish new work-life arrangements”. If there have been significant changes to teaching, administrative roles or research work, it is expected that the work-load model will be suitably adapted to allow preparation time as required.