

Metanoia Institute Code of Practice for REF2021

Part 1: Introduction

Background

This document sets out the procedures, timetable and governance arrangements overseeing and supporting the Metanoia Institute's preparation for REF2021 submission. This Code ensures that the Metanoia Institute (MI) adopts a fair, transparent and consistently applied process in determining who is an independent researcher and in the selection of outputs for the REF submission. This includes our approach to supporting staff with individual circumstances that may have had impact on their productivity during the REF assessment period. The MI Code of Practice REF2021 will inform all members of staff of the processes to be followed in our preparation for submission to REF2021 and outlines the processes for appeal in relation to this process.

The Metanoia Institute is a small, values-based and highly specialist provider of Higher Education in the fields of Psychotherapy, Counselling and Counselling Psychology. A registered charity, the Metanoia Institute is currently accredited for undergraduate, postgraduate and research degrees by the University of Middlesex, although is in the process of applying for independent Degree Awarding Powers (DAPS). Metanoia Institute is registered with the Office for Students and has made returns to HESA since 2014; a first staff return will be made in September 2020. Whilst Metanoia Institute HE programmes are accredited by Middlesex University, the research undertaken at MI is independent of the University of Middlesex, stemming from the institution's international standing in the field of counselling and psychotherapy.

The Metanoia Institute's mission is to contribute to, and improve, understanding and provision in services for mental health and well-being. With over 250 students currently undertaking doctoral routes at Metanoia Institute, we boast a dedicated research clinic established in 2010 within the Metanoia Institute Counselling and Psychotherapy Service (MCPS). The clinic has direct impact on the delivery and development of mental health services. In 2015, MCPS became a part of the Ealing Talking Therapies Consortium and currently receives grant funding from the London Borough of Ealing. Over one hundred Metanoia Institute students, under supervised training, work within the research clinic every year and offer psychotherapy to between 200-300 clients on an affordable basis.

The Metanoia Institute will continue to build and develop good practice and research capacity through our first REF submission. Alongside developing excellence in learning and teaching in psychotherapy and counselling, the Institute equally values research and knowledge exchange in the field of mental health and wellbeing for impact within the wider community. As a part of the Metanoia Institute ethos, all staff have the opportunity for academic career progression and personal development, regardless of their role or contribution to RKE. A regular series of research seminars and workshops, and the activity of the Research Committee, support this work throughout the year.

The process of REF2021 submission and the publication of the Metanoia Institute Code of Practice will enable the institution to develop research capacity and to build upon the high quality of research outputs and environment work in the field of psychotherapy and counselling.

In addition to the Metanoia Institute staff return to REF 2021, and commensurate with our values of inclusivity, we aim to empower staff who do not meet criteria for submission to self-identify whether research activity has been undertaken. This will be recognised internally by Metanoia Institute, and we will continue to support these staff and influence development in the area of psychotherapy and counselling for future research exercises.

This is the first submission to the REF made by the Metanoia Institute.

Submission to REF2021 is identified as an important part of the Metanoia Institute strategic plan. In determining what is considered a credible submission we aim for all outputs and impact case studies to be a minimum 2*, but will use the procedure identified below to ensure that selection is fair and equitable. Given the nature of the staffing structure at MI, which focusses on high quality training and supervision for undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral psychotherapy and counselling, 100% of Category A eligible staff will be submitted to REF 2021 ($n=6$).

The definition of Category A eligible staff is taken directly from REF 2021, as follows: *Category A eligible staff are those employed by Metanoia Institute who meet the core eligibility criteria below and form the total pool of eligible staff.*

1. Academic Staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 fte or greater on the payroll of Metanoia Institute on the staff census date.
2. Academic staff whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'teaching and research'.
3. Academic staff who have a substantive connection with Metanoia Institute.
4. Academic Staff who are independent researchers (for staff on 'research only' contracts) and not research assistants.

Metanoia Institute will ensure that processes for submission to REF2021 do not discriminate unlawfully against, or otherwise have the effect of harassing or victimising individuals, because of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation or because they are pregnant or have recently given birth. The processes of identification and communication to all staff and the wider MI community will transparently and consistently apply the criteria outlined within this Code of Practice.

Transparency

The processes for identifying eligible staff with significant responsibility for research, definitions of research independence and the selection of research outputs will be approved by the Metanoia Institute Executive Committee and reported to the Board of

Trustees, published internally and communicated within the Institute and the wider Metanoia Institute community, as described in ([see appendix i](#)). The final Code of Practice document will be reviewed via an Equality Impact Assessment ([see appendix ii](#)). The MI REF2021 Code of Practice will be made available in accessible format and published on the institution's website. In addition, the publication will be made available to all doctoral students in order to embed transparency and encourage future early career researchers.

The Code will be circulated to all individual MI staff members. Staff briefings will disseminate the approved document, the requirements for submission, define research independence and the process of selection of outputs for submission. These communications will also be circulated via email to ensure all staff, whether eligible or otherwise, are aware of the processes. The Institute will communicate with any staff on long-term leave via post.

Consistency

Determining research independence, the selection of outputs for submission and development of case studies will be undertaken in accordance with this Code. As a small and specialist institution, all decision-making will take place centrally, confirmed by the Executive Committee and advised by the Research Committee ([see appendices iii and iv](#)). These practices will ensure consistency within the process.

Accountability

Responsibilities are clearly defined in this Code of Practice, and both individuals and bodies that are involved in decision-making and advisory functions are included in [appendix i](#). The Chief Executive Officer, as Chair of the Executive Committee, holds the final decision regarding overall REF2021 strategy, units of assessment, and selection of staff and outputs. This decision will be based on the recommendation of the Research Committee. The REF2021 Working Group is a sub-group of the Research Committee and will report to and advise the Research Committee. All Metanoia Institute staff in decision-making and advisory roles will engage in REF specific equality and diversity training. All data collection for REF2021 purposes will meet GDPR requirements.

Inclusivity

The Metanoia Institute Code of Practice is designed to promote an inclusive environment, commensurate with the values and ethos of the Metanoia Institute, enabling all eligible staff with a significant responsibility for research (Cat A) to be included in the REF2021 submission. The code will promote an inclusive environment by establishing, maintaining and updating an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) at all key stages of the process.

Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

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

N/A

All Category A eligible staff at the Metanoia Institute will be submitted in the Institute's REF2021 return.

Part 3: Determining research independence

Criteria used for determining staff who meet the definition of an independent researcher, including information about how the criteria are being applied.

In order to ensure that Category A 'research' staff meet the criteria for eligibility as independent researchers, the criteria identified in the REF Guidance on Submissions, Panel Criteria and Working Methods will be applied. This defines an independent researcher as an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme. Indicators of independence include but are not limited to;

- Acting as principal investigator or co-investigator on an externally funded research project or equivalent
- Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement
- Leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package
- Having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of research.

A member of staff is not deemed to have undertaken independent research purely on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs, and if being named on research outputs forms part of evidence base for research independence, then their contribution would need to demonstrate significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of research.

Any staff with 'Research Only' employment contracts had the opportunity to be tested for research independence. As per the REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions, in cases where 100% of staff with significant responsibility for research are submitted to the exercise, all staff with 'Teaching and Research' will automatically be understood to hold research independence.

All staff who have been identified as having a significant responsibility in the MI REF 2021 submission are independent researchers. The list of their roles (names excluded) is contained in [appendix vi](#), related directly to employment contracts.

How decisions are being made and communicated to staff, including timescale.

Details of REF2021 will be communicated to all Metanoia staff from December 2019 and will be part of continuing communication and update about the process. Communication will take place via email (due to the working patterns of many staff) as well as through Faculty Meetings, Academic Board and Research Committee Meetings. By regularly updating communications, staff on short-term leave will not be excluded from communications. If any Cat A staff are on sick leave or extended leave, this will be known by the CEO, Deputy CEO and Head of Faculty for Research, so individual arrangements can be made for communication, should this be necessary.

Any staff on 'Research Only' contracts were required to submit an application form to be considered as an independent researcher ([appendix v](#)). This process is complete. The purpose of this exercise was to distinguish between research assistant roles (or similar) and research leadership roles, provided through meeting two or more of the following indicators:

- significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of publications in journals, single or joint authored (where joint authored with statements from co-authors), and / or peer-reviewed books and chapters (single or co-authored)
- leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project
- holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement
- leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package.

The process that was followed is outlined as:

Each application will first be considered in relation to the research activity undertaken during employment at the Metanoia Institute as part of employment duties and responsibilities and any research activity undertaken prior to employment with the Metanoia Institute within the REF 2021 period. The criteria identified in the REF Guidance on Submissions, Panel Criteria and Working Methods will be applied via the Research Committee. The committee will identify how the application meets the criteria (or otherwise) and provide written details with recommendations to the Executive Committee. Recommendations for independent researcher status will be made to the Executive Committee, where decisions are ratified, and reported to the Board of Trustees.

Staff, Committees and Training

The Executive Committee, chaired by the CEO, retains responsibility for the final submission of Metanoia Institute's REF2021. The Executive Committee will be advised by the Research Committee. The membership and terms of reference for these committees are in appendices iii and iv.

All committees are fully supported by a servicing officer and meeting papers and minutes are prepared and kept for all meetings, ultimately reported to the Academic Board and Board of Trustees three times per year.

All senior and permanent staff at MI will receive information and training on the REF2021 process and specifically the Metanoia Institute Code of Practice, relevant legislation,

criteria for individual circumstances and the importance of equality within the REF2021 process.

This training will be delivered alongside other training on diversity and inclusion and will remain available to staff internally via Moodle.

Appeals

The process is complete and there were no appeals. However, the following process was established within the institute:

All applications for independent researcher status will be provided with individual feedback from the Metanoia Institute Director of Research within two weeks of the Research Committee at which a decision was reached.

Whilst we do not anticipate appeals due to the approach proposed in selecting outputs, if a member of staff is unsuccessful in their application, they will be informed of their right to appeal based on:

- The Research Committee decision incorrectly applying REF2021 criteria for determining research independence in the case of their application
- Failure to follow process for identifying researcher independence
- Failure to take account of individual circumstances

Appeals will be submitted in writing to the Chief Executive Officer of the Metanoia Institute (Sheila.Owen-Jones@metanoia.ac.uk) within two weeks of receiving feedback.

All appeals will be heard by an appeals panel convened by the Head of Human Resources. The panel will comprise a member of Metanoia Institute academic staff at Director of Studies level or above, plus two members of the Equality and Diversity Committee. None of the panel members will also be members of the Research Committee or will in any way have been involved in the REF2021 decision-making process. One of the three members shall be appointed as Chair and the Institute's Executive Assistant to the CEO will provide secretariat.

The appellant will be given at least one full week (or 5 working days) notice of the panel. A change of date may be requested, as long as this is within 5 working days of the original date. The appellant may be accompanied by a representative/colleague of their choice, should they wish.

The Chair of the Research Committee (or nominee) will attend the panel to verbally report the reasons for the original decision not to permit independent researcher status.

The panel will establish relevant facts and ensure that processes have been conducted in accordance with the provisions of this Code of Practice, representing fairness, transparency and equity.

The panel will hear the case from the appellant and ask relevant questions.

A private meeting of the panel will then consider the grounds for the appeal and come to a decision to either a) uphold, or b) reject the appeal.

Confirmation of the decision will be provided in writing to both the appellant and the Director of Research within one week (or 5 working days) of the panel hearing. There is no further right to appeal within this process.

The submissions and appeals process will be completed in advance of the submission deadline.

Equality impact assessment

The profile of all Metanoia Institute staff submitting to the REF2021 will be monitored and will be compared to the profile of all staff across the institution. The results of this monitoring exercise will be reported through the following committees throughout the academic year 2020/21:

- Research Committee
- Equality and Diversity Committee
- Joint Student Staff Committee
- Executive Committee

A report will also be made to the Board of Trustees.

The Equality Impact Assessment tool is applied to this document and all relevant documents ([appendix ii](#)).

Part 4: Selection of outputs

Policies and procedures

A consistent approach centrally operated via the Research Committee, reporting to the Executive Committee, will permit fair and transparent selection of outputs.

The committee will consider all outputs held in the Metanoia Institute open research repository as potentially eligible for submission to REF2021. In conducting an EIA of output selection, a range of metrics will be drawn upon, including the use of citation data, bibliometric measures and peer review processes, adhering to principles set out in the Metric Tide report.

Where outputs are co-authored the committee will discuss individual contributions in consultation with individuals involved. If cases should arise where outputs held in the research repository eligible for submission to REF2021 are attributable to a staff member no longer employed by Metanoia Institute, a similar process will take place, but without the individual consultation on outputs, unless the Institute remains in contact with the ex-member of staff and they wish to take part within this process. The outputs published during the contract period of any former staff which recognise the Institute as the author affiliation will follow the procedures identified by Metanoia Institute.

There have been no redundancies at the Metanoia Institute in relation to staff eligible for REF submission and it is not expected that this will be the case during the submission period. In the very unlikely event that this should happen, outputs would be expected to be included within the Institute's REF2021 submission.

Outputs will be ranked using the estimated * rating and self-rated from 4*, 3-4*, 3*, 2-3*, 2* and 1-2*. The outputs will then be selected on the basis of maximising the quality of submission, whilst ensuring all staff identified as having a significant responsibility for research have at least one output submitted.

In cases where the same estimated quality profile would be achieved through the selection of different outputs, then preference will be given to outputs produced by current members of staff, staff with protected characteristics and/or staff with individual circumstances. This will be done in order to support increasing inclusivity.

Individual contribution meetings will be held regularly with those staff identified as having a significant responsibility for research. Meetings will take place with the Director of Research and will both review current outputs and enable individuals to develop a personalised plan and timetable aligned to any individual circumstances. This will include appropriate milestones for achieving future outputs, or involvement in the development of the research environment and impact case studies.

There is no expectation that all staff will contribute equally; it is recognised that the quantity and quality of outputs will vary due to a number of circumstances, not limited to, but including: research career stage, specific personal circumstances and wider role.

In cases where outputs are co-authored with colleagues (as is frequently the case at the Metanoia Institute, reflecting our values and ethos), individual meetings with the Director of Research will include discussion about contribution levels and will take account of the individual's view of what is a fair outcome. The Research Committee will credit outputs to authors, wherever possible through individual staff consultation.

It is not anticipated that any outputs will be submitted as double weighting.

The final decision on the submission of outputs will be made by the Research Committee.

Staff, committees and training

Metanoia Institute embraces research within our specialist area from many different perspectives, with a view to supporting inquiry in a number of different contexts. Our overall intent is to promote research that arises from practice-based settings which address the ethical, philosophical and pragmatic issues derived from such an approach. As such, we aim to ensure that all staff are supported to explore and consider research and inquiry based on their own professional and academic work.

The Metanoia Institute is committed to the provision of staff development by encouraging and supporting staff in obtaining further qualifications, training and experience. Academic staff development is facilitated through annual performance and development reviews. Additionally, the Metanoia Research Academy promotes the research culture and supports individual needs through a regular series of workshops, seminars and events.

All staff at Metanoia Institute undergo induction processes which outline and support the institute's values of equality, diversity and inclusion; a legacy of the humanistic legacy of the founders. See <http://www.metanoia.ac.uk/research/>

Staff circumstances

The Metanoia Institute upholds values of equality, diversity and inclusion and will undertake to implement fair, transparent and confidential procedures to enable staff to disclose relevant individual circumstances that might have impacted on their ability and capacity to

contribute to the MI REF2021 submission. The Metanoia Institute REF2021 Individual Circumstances form ([appendix vii](#)).

Particular regard will be paid to the disclosure of sensitive issues such as ongoing illness or mental health conditions. Staff identified as having a significant responsibility for research and research independence will be asked to complete a form to voluntarily declare any individual circumstances. To enable individuals to disclose circumstances in confidence and avoid any undue pressure regarding disclosure, this process will be managed centrally, through the Head of Human Resources.

Individual staff circumstances may include (but will not be limited to):

- Identifying as an early career researcher
- Maternity, paternity or adoption leave
- Secondments or career breaks outside of the higher education sector, and in which the individual did not undertake academic research.
- Disability
- Ill health or injury
- Mental health conditions
- Childcare or other caring responsibilities
- Gender reassignment.
- Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics.

Given the flexibility in terms of the number of outputs for REF2021 the likely outcome of the disclosure of individual staff circumstances is a reduction in the expectation of the individuals' contribution. The Head of Human Resources will inform the Director of Research that individual circumstances have been disclosed, without revealing personal information, and a decision on the reduced contribution expectation will be reached by the research committee. Where appropriate, additional support will be offered to the staff member.

As a small institution, it is possible (although unlikely) that this policy could disproportionately impact on the Metanoia Institute REF2021 submission if a critical mass of staff identify relevant circumstances. The Director of Research will review the cumulative effect of individual circumstances and consider the REF2021 Guidance on Submissions in consideration of staff circumstances. This could, potentially, lead to a request under the guidance to reduce, without penalty, the total number of outputs required for submission or to remove the minimum of one requirement for an individual.

Equality impact assessment

The Metanoia Institute will conduct a mock REF process during the spring term 2020/21. This will allow a full profile of all staff submitting and the ranking of outputs to be fully assessed through the Equality Impact Assessment tool. By reviewing the REF2021 staff profiles and comparing these to the profiles of all Metanoia Institute staff, any under/overrepresentation will be transparent.

The results of this monitoring exercise will be reported through the following committees:

- Research Committee
- Equality and Diversity Committee
- Joint Student Staff Committee
- Executive Committee

A report will also be made to the Board of Trustees. This will form part of the ongoing work at Metanoia Institute to address issues of disproportionality that we know exist in academic environments and within the field of psychotherapy and counselling.

Part 5: Appendices

[Appendix i: Metanoia Institute REF2021 Responsibility Organogram](#)

[Appendix ii: Equality Impact Assessment](#)

[Appendix iii: Membership and Terms of Reference; Executive Committee](#)

[Appendix iv: Membership and Terms of Reference; Research Committee](#)

[Appendix v: Metanoia Institute Category A staff by job responsibility](#)

[Appendix vi: Application for Independent Researcher](#)

[Appendix vii: Metanoia Institute Individual Circumstances Form](#)