Submission system guidance for the delayed upload of narrative templates

1. To enable the delayed submission of the narrative elements of submission(s), HEIs will be able, by request, to submit impact case study templates, environment templates and the institutional level environment statement at an agreed date up until noon, 14th May 2021.

2. The submission system will require the following change to validation to enable the delayed submission of these documents:

- Submit errors for missing templates and statements will be downgraded to warnings and those HEIs with prior agreement may submit without supplying these documents.

3. Where HEIs have an agreed extension, they will still be able to submit the documents at the submission deadline (31st March 2021). Documents that have been submitted by the submission deadline will not be editable/replaceable even if an extension has been agreed.

4. Following the submission deadline, the submission system will be unavailable for one week while preparations for the assessment phase are undertaken. The system will be available to accept delayed documents from 9th April 2021.

Uploading templates after 31st March 2021

5. From 9th April, HEIs with extensions will be able to upload and save templates and statements where required. In these instances, HEIs will also be able to edit the affected case study statement in REF3 (where applicable), and the COVID-19 annex in REF5a. Upload and data entry will only be available via the user interface and not through the import function. If there are concerns about volumes of delayed submission of case studies, please contact the REF team.

6. Validation of these documents and text fields will be done on 'save'. Should the document or COVID statements exceed page limits or word counts they will not be saved. Saving of the documents and text will occur when they have passed the published validation rules. Saved documents can be replaced up to the extension deadline agreed with the REF team or, if earlier, when all delayed templates are finalised.

7. For any joint submissions with an agreed extension the Lead institution will be responsible for the uploading and saving of the documents.

8. Once the HEI is satisfied they have uploaded all the required documents they should email the REF team informing them that the submissions are finalised. At this point the documents will be locked and no further edits can be made. At this point the HEI's submission is complete.

Further information

9. The submission system will be closed for 2-3 days following the completion of all submissions, and no later than 14th May 2021, to perform a system upgrade. Thereafter, the system will be re-opened for the upload of redacted templates and corroborating evidence, where required, by 1st June, 2021.