

Code of Practice

Selection of staff for REF 2014 submission

1 Introduction

We aspire to be a world-leading university, clearly ranked within the top-10 in the UK and in the top-50 in the world. The contributions made by staff to teaching, leadership, enterprise and administration are vital to our continued success and for research intensive institutions such as ours, the world standing and reputation of the University depend upon the quality and impact of our research. The Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014) will be used to assess the research performance of UK Universities and will be the single most important measure of our success in research.

The University has defined guidelines for the *minimum* performance expected of all research-active staff and for the *minimum* performance expectation for each Unit of Assessment (UoA) (see Appendix A). Whilst the funds available for distribution will not be known until after the results have been published in December 2014, the message from government is clear that only internationally excellent (3*) and world-leading (4*) elements of the quality profile will be funded. It will therefore be important, when determining which staff to return in REF 2014, to account for contributions that will strengthen the 'impact' and 'environment' components of submissions as well as 'outputs'. The University will seek to optimise its overall submission and may adopt different submission approaches across UoAs. Consequently, the achievement of the minimum GPA will not necessarily guarantee an individual's return in REF 2014 and should not be considered a reflection on the quality of their research per se.

The University of Southampton has adopted this Code of Practice for the Research Excellence Framework 2014 to comply with relevant legislation and ensure fair processes for the selection of all staff that are eligible for return and who are conducting excellent research. The Code of Practice is based on the principles of transparency, consistency, inclusivity and accountability. It forms part of the University's key documentation on Equality & Diversity and is available on the University's website at <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/diversity>.

2 Policy Statement

The University has adopted the following equality and diversity statement:

The University of Southampton is committed to creating and sustaining a positive and supportive working environment for our staff, and an excellent teaching and learning experience for our students. We aspire that staff are valued and respected equally, and students are encouraged to thrive academically. As a provider of employment and education, we value the diversity of our staff and students. We are committed to providing a fair, equitable and mutually supportive learning and working environment for our students and staff.

To this end, we acknowledge the following basic rights for all members and prospective members of our community:

- *to be treated with respect and dignity*
- *to be treated fairly with regard to all procedures, assessments and choices*
- *to be encouraged to reach their full potential*

These rights carry responsibilities and we require all members of our community to recognise these rights and act in accordance with them, and to comply with all relevant legislation and good practice. No individual will be discriminated against. This includes, but is not limited to, discrimination because of

age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and parenthood, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

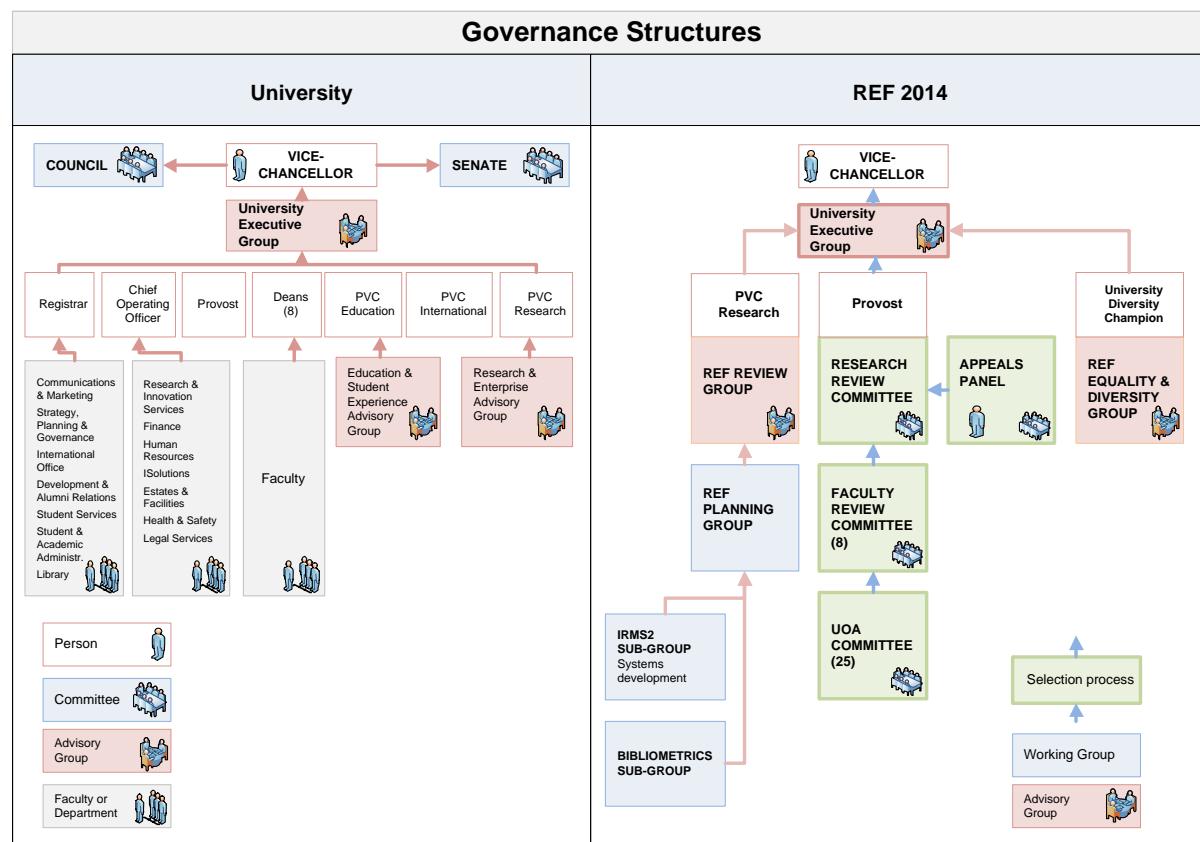
Staff involved in selection decisions for REF 2014 will use their professional judgement and expertise, individually and collectively, to determine the quality of inputs to REF 2014, and where required, will commission external reviews to help calibrate their assessments. They will behave in ways that are consistent with the University's equality and diversity statement and this Code. In so doing, the University will seek to comply with all relevant legislation. All members of staff are able to seek advice on equality legislation in relation to REF 2014 from the Diversity Manager, Human Resources.

All staff involved in selection decisions will receive REF-specific equality and diversity training, comprising briefings on how to adhere to this Code of Practice and all legislation. An outline timetable for the selection of staff is at Appendix B, details of the equality and diversity training at Appendix C, and the communications plan at Appendix D.

3 Staff Selection and Appeals Process

3.1 University and REF 2014 Governance Structures

The relevant components of the University's governance structure are shown below together with the governance arrangements and selection process for REF 2014.



Responsibility for the University's submission to REF 2014 rests with the Vice-Chancellor on the advice of the University Executive Group (UEG). Members of UEG include the Deans of the 8 faculties, the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and the Provost who, together with the 8 Associate Deans Research, play an important role in the REF 2014 selection process. Details of the key groups and individuals involved in the selection process and the University's preparations for REF 2014 are at Appendix E.

3.2 Preparations for Submission

The University has invested in improving the accuracy and completeness of staff records to ensure confidence in the information used in preparing the REF 2014 submission. This has been realised through benchmarking exercises held annually since 2010 which have the following objectives:

- Provide Faculties and the University with an early indication of any issues and reassurance of the University's strengths.
- Support the identification of staff eligible for submission and help identify any anomalies in staff records.
- Provide guidance, advice or support for all individuals who might feel subject to discrimination. (All members of staff are able to seek such advice from the Diversity Manager).
- Obtain an assessment of all research-active staff and a provisional quality profile of outputs for each UoA.
- Identify staff who can make a significant improvement in the quality of their outputs with appropriate support and encouragement.
- Obtain experience of producing impact case studies, impact templates and environment templates.
- Assess the overall process and identify any developments and improvements required.
- Prioritise any systems development necessary to enable the effective collection of information and seamless access to enterprise systems by academic and administrative staff.

Processes have been introduced to improve the accuracy and completeness of staff records and thereby ensure all eligible staff are included in the benchmarking exercises. These include:

- Independent quality assurance of the HESA Staff Return.
- Weekly distribution to faculties of UOA Check Reports.
- Monitoring and intervention by HR Client Partners.
- Periodic monitoring by the central REF 2014 team.
- Feedback from senior faculty staff on individual staff records.
- Full scrutiny (at least annually) by the Research Review Committee of key elements of staff records for all staff on teaching & research or research-only contracts.

Information collected on Individual Staff Circumstances will be used to confirm the accuracy of staff records and where applicable, ensure staff are submitted with an appropriately reduced number of outputs based upon their personal or complex circumstances.

3.3 Staff Selection

A schematic of the staff selection and appeals process is shown below. This reflects the annual benchmarking exercise and review process which includes feedback to staff, where required, on their indicative REF performance through the Dean, Associate Dean Research, Head of Academic Unit or line manager as appropriate. The selection stage will be informed by the UEG policy statement (Appendix A) and the outcome of the 2012 benchmarking exercise. The Research Review Committee will make provisional decisions in December 2012 on the quality profiles required for return in each UOA so that eligible staff have early notice of the standards required for inclusion in the submission. It is recognised that some staff may submit fewer outputs (though of the required quality) by virtue of their personal or complex circumstances. A Statement of Intent (Equality) will be prepared for each UOA for which the University intends to make a submission and made available to all eligible staff who may be returned to that UOA. An example is provided at Appendix F. A draft will be prepared by each UOA Committee for review by the Faculty Review Committee and approval by the Research Review Committee and UEG. The Research Review Committee will make final decisions (subject to leavers, joiners and appeals) on the selection of staff by 5 July 2013 for recommendation to the University Executive Group.

REF 2014 - Staff Selection & Appeals Process

Annual Benchmarking Exercise	Annual Review	Selection Process
<p>Benchmarking exercises have been undertaken in 2010 and 2011 as part of the University's preparations for REF 2014. Further exercises are planned in 2012 and 2013. The exercises support the identification of staff eligible for submission and help surface any anomalies in staff records.</p>	<p>REF REVIEW GROUP </p> <p>Advisory group to PVC Research (Chair) comprising Associate Deans Research (8), Director Human Resources, Associate Director REF Strategy and Head of Research Performance.</p> <p>Meets at least annually to review performance across all UOAs and overall REF strategy, and to ensure consistent implementation of policy across faculties.</p>	<p>UOA COMMITTEE </p> <p>Assesses the quality of outputs selected by staff and prepares the draft Statement of Intent (Equality).</p>
<p>OUTPUT SELECTION </p> <p>Individual staff select their (up to) 4 best outputs.</p>		<p>FACULTY REVIEW COMMITTEE </p> <p>Reviews performance across UOAs in the Faculty and the draft Statement of Intent (Equality) for each UOA.</p>
<p>UOA COMMITTEE </p> <p>Comprises UOA Champion (Chair), Head of Academic Unit and other senior academics for each of 26 UOAs (Units of Assessment).</p> <p>Responsible for assessing outputs and where appropriate, providing feedback to staff on the resulting quality profile.</p>	<p>FACULTY REVIEW COMMITTEE </p> <p>Comprises Dean (Chair), Associate Dean Research, UOA Champions, Heads of Academic Unit and HR Client Partner.</p> <p>Responsible for reviewing performance across UOAs in the Faculty.</p>	<p>RESEARCH REVIEW COMMITTEE </p> <p>Core Team will meet with each Faculty Review Committee in December 2012, to make provisional decisions on the quality profiles required for return in each UOA so that eligible staff have early notice of the standards required for inclusion in the submission. The Committee will make final decisions (subject to leavers, joiners and appeals) on the selection of staff by 5 July 2013 for recommendation to the University Executive Group.</p>
<p>EXTERNAL REVIEW </p> <p>Selected outputs are subjected to independent review by external assessors. Such outputs are selected by UOA Champions in consultation with the Associate Dean Research to validate the internal assessment.</p>	<p>RESEARCH REVIEW COMMITTEE </p> <p>Core Team comprises Provost (Chair), PVC Research, Director Human Resources, Associate Director REF Strategy and Head of Research Performance.</p> <p>Core Team meets with each Faculty Review Committee at least annually to review retention and performance issues from an institutional perspective and to ensure consistency of approach across faculties.</p>	<p>APPEALS PANEL </p> <p>Comprises PVC International or PVC Education (Chair), Director Human Resources, nominated Associate Dean Research and Diversity Manager (as advisor). Responsible for hearing appeals referred by the REF Equality & Diversity Group. Exhausts the informal part of the grievance procedures.</p>
<p>ASSOCIATE DEAN RESEARCH </p> <p>Responsible for ensuring consistency of assessments across the Academic Units and UOAs in their Faculty.</p>		<p>UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE GROUP </p> <p>Takes final decision on submission for recommendation to Vice-Chancellor.</p>
	<p>REF EQUALITY & DIVERSITY GROUP </p> <p>Comprises University Equality & Diversity Champion (Chair), Associate Deans Research (2), Diversity Manager and other senior staff from the academic and administrative communities with equality and diversity responsibilities and interests.</p> <p>Responsible for driving participation in and support for E&D initiatives that lead to a positive impact on the University's submission, managing training, briefings and communication of the Code of Practice and considering appeals against non-selection of staff.</p>	

3.4 Appeals Process

All staff eligible for REF 2014 have the right to appeal against non-selection for the UoA's submission where this is on the grounds of the quality of their research or relates to any protected characteristic defined under the Equality Act 2010.

The University will seek to optimise its submission and may adopt different submission approaches across UoAs. Consequently, the achievement of the minimum GPA for a particular UOA will not necessarily guarantee an individual's return in REF 2014 and should not be considered a reflection on the quality of their research per se. Decisions on who will be included in the final REF 2014 submission will be made by 5 July 2013 (subject to leavers and joiners) and appeals must be made no later than 31 July 2013. Further information and guidance will be available on the REF 2014 SharePoint site.

The appeal mechanism is a letter in the first instance to the Chair of the REF 2014 Equality & Diversity Group. The subsequent steps in the process will depend on the grounds for appeal as described below:

a) Quality of research

Where the reason for the appeal is based solely on non-selection on grounds of the quality of the appellant's research, the letter should set out the case that the quality of research is sufficient to be included in the UoA submission, in particular identifying any new information or evidence that may not have been taken into account during the selection process. The letter will be forwarded to the Chair of the relevant Faculty Review Committee. The Chair, in consultation with members of the committee, will give due consideration to the appellant's case. At the Chair's discretion, this may involve convening a meeting of the committee, a meeting with the appellant (who may bring a supporter if they wish) or both. The decision of the Chair is final and feedback will be provided to the appellant.

b) Relates to a protected characteristic

Where the reason for appeal relates to one or more protected characteristics, these should be clearly identified in the appellant's letter. The Chair of the REF Equality & Diversity Group, in consultation with members of the group, will determine if the appeal against non-selection is based upon a case of discrimination against a relevant protected characteristic. Where the REF E&D Group determines the case clearly does not fit the qualifying criteria, the Chair will inform the individual stating the reasons. If the appeal is valid, it will be considered by the REF Equality & Diversity Group. If the Chair and majority of the Group agree, the appeal can be upheld without a hearing.

In the absence of such agreement, an Appeals Panel will be constituted consisting of the following members:

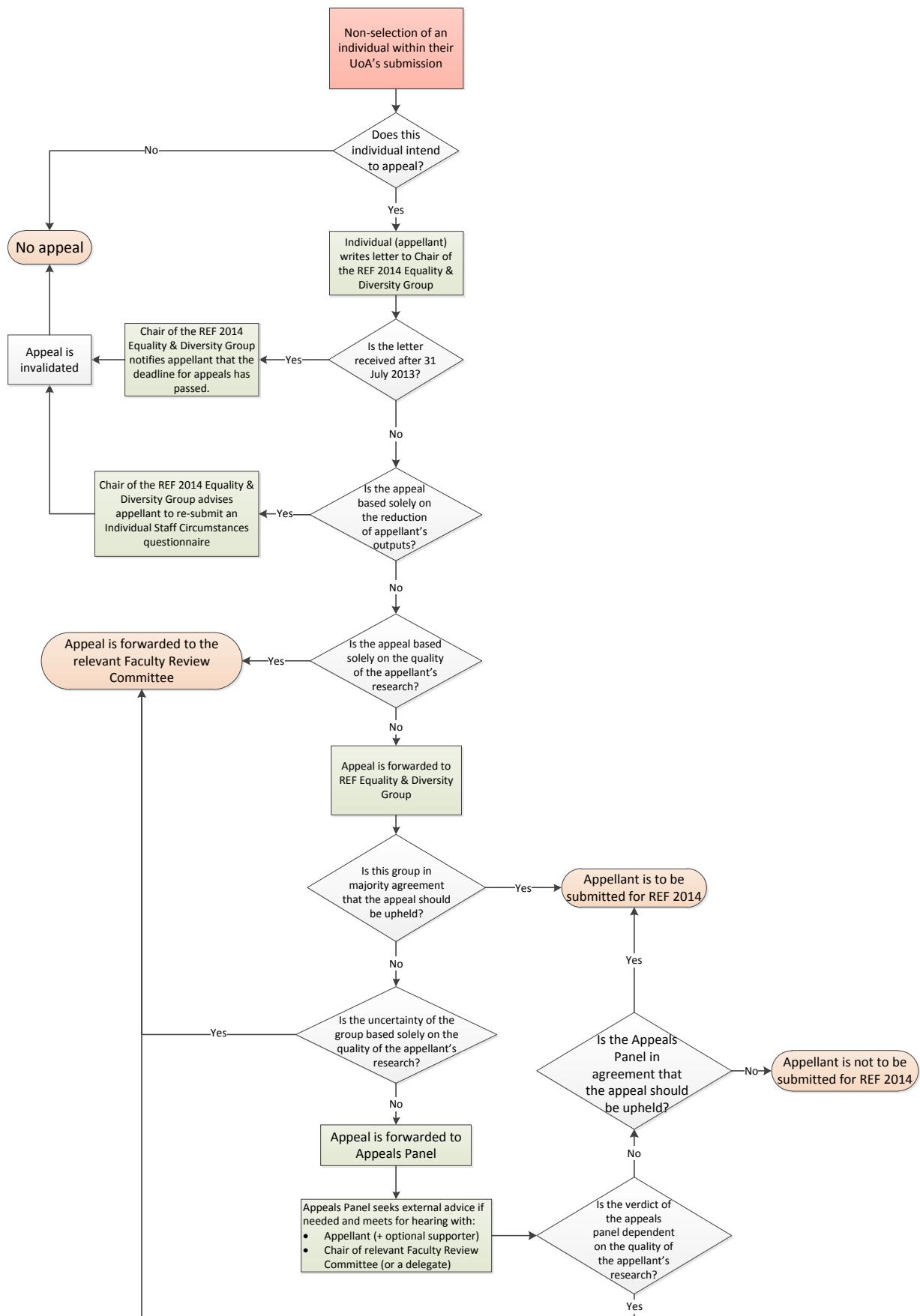
- Pro-Vice Chancellor International or PVC Education as Chair
- Director of Human Resources
- Nominated Associate Dean Research (who is not conflicted)
- University Diversity Manager (as an advisor)

The Appeals Panel will meet with the appellant (who may bring a supporter if they wish) and the Chair of the relevant Faculty Review Committee (or their delegate). The Appeals Panel may also seek external advice where appropriate. After the hearing, the Appeals Panel will determine whether the appellant is to be included in the submission or is unsuccessful in their appeal. The panel's decision is binding and will be notified to the appellant and the Chair of the Faculty Review Committee.

This appeals process is deemed to exhaust the informal part of the grievance procedures.

A schematic of the process is shown below.

Schematic of Appeals Process



4 Individual Staff Circumstances

4.1 Clearly Defined and Complex Circumstances leading to submission of fewer than 4 outputs

For REF 2014, there is a differentiation between staff with *clearly defined circumstances* and staff with *complex circumstances*. The *Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions and Panel Criteria and Working Methods* documentation describe and list the specific circumstances that can be used as evidence for submitting fewer than four outputs for any member of eligible staff where those circumstances significantly constrained a staff member's ability to produce four outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period. An extract of the guidance is provided in Appendix G of this Code. Any member of staff who requires support, guidance or advice in relation to their personal circumstances should contact the University Diversity Manager.

Clearly defined circumstances include:

- Qualifying as an Early Career Researcher.
- Part-time working.
- Maternity, paternity or adoption leave. (Note that maternity leave may involve related constraints on an individual's ability to conduct research in addition to the defined period of maternity leave itself. These cases can be returned as "complex" so that the full range of circumstances can be taken into account in making a judgement about the appropriate number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty).
- Secondments or career breaks outside of the higher education sector, and in which the individual did not undertake academic research.

Complex circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- Disability.
- Ill health or injury.
- Mental health conditions.
- Constraints related to pregnancy or maternity, in addition to a clearly defined period of maternity leave. (These may include but are not limited to: medical issues associated with pregnancy or maternity; health and safety restrictions in laboratory or field work during pregnancy or breastfeeding; constraints on the ability to travel to undertake fieldwork due to pregnancy or breast-feeding).
- Childcare or other caring responsibilities.
- Gender reassignment.
- Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics

There may be other circumstances comparable with the examples given above which REF 2014 Panels and Sub Panels may consider as long as an explanation is provided as to the way in which these are said to have impacted on the individual's ability to produce the expected volume of research outputs. The internal REF 2014 SharePoint site will contain examples of *complex circumstances* and further information and guidance regarding the disclosure and treatment of this information.

For *clearly defined circumstances*, the Panel Criteria statements have provided tariffs (see Appendix G) to determine the number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty in the assessment, depending on the duration of the circumstance (or combination thereof). For more *complex circumstances*, the University will need to make a judgement on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs submitted. The process within the University will be as follows:

All potentially eligible staff who may wish to be considered for submission with a reduced number of outputs will be provided with a pro-forma through which they can disclose any individual staff circumstance. This pro-forma will be available from April 2012 and can be submitted at any point until

28 June 2013. The pro-forma will be accompanied by a covering note explaining the purpose of the exercise and where to find supporting information and guidance.

This information will be held confidentially and presented anonymously to the University Complex Circumstances Assessment Group for review. The group consists of the following members:

- Nominated Associate Dean Research (Chair)
- Senior HR Client Partner (or delegate)
- Head of Research Performance (REF Team)
- Diversity Manager (Advisor)
- Research Performance Analyst (REF Team and Secretary)

The University Complex Circumstances Assessment Group will consider all cases of *complex circumstances* in line with HEFCE guidance and determine the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs to be submitted. External advice will be sought where required. The REF Team will arrange for feedback of decisions to the individuals concerned. Where an individual considers the decision to be incorrect, they should inform the REF Team in writing by 31 July 2013 stating clearly the grounds for requesting a reassessment. The Group will reassess the case in the light of any additional information supplied. If the individual still considers the assessment to be incorrect, the case will be referred to a second Associate Dean Research whose decision will be final. In reaching their decision, they may invite the individual (who may bring a supporter if they wish) to present their case.

4.2 Part-Time and Fixed Term Work

The University's staff policies apply to both full-time and part-time staff except in relation to certain benefits which may apply pro-rata to their hours. Specific policies which facilitate part-time working include flexible working, job sharing, career breaks and voluntary reduced hours. All staff policies conform to equality & diversity legislation and form an integral part of the University's wider equality and diversity agenda.

In respect of fixed-term staff, the University is a signatory to [The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) and is implementing the Concordat's seven key principles through our [Concordat Implementation Plan](#) which includes Principle 6 that "*Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers*".

5 Equality Impact Assessment

In line with HEFCE guidance, the University will conduct equality impact assessments (EIA) on the policy and procedures for selecting staff for REF 2014. The EIAs will help to identify where discrimination may inadvertently occur, differential impact on particular groups, and where a particular policy or practice has a positive impact on the advancement of equality. The EIAs will be informed by thorough and systematic analyses of data on staff who are eligible for selection in respect of all the protected characteristics for which data are available. To achieve this, the University recognises that a full dataset is required and that any missing data will reduce the significance of any subsequent analysis. Individuals will therefore be encouraged to complete the Equal Opportunities details form available from within MyView (the online HR self-service portal) if they have not already done so.

The REF 2014 Equality & Diversity Group is responsible for ensuring the completion of EIAs and making the information available to all groups involved in the selection process.

EIAs are scheduled for completion by 31 January 2013 and by 31 December 2013. The Equality Impact Assessment produced following the REF 2014 submission in November 2013 will be published.

6 Data and Confidentiality

The University seeks at all times to protect data on individuals in relation to REF selection and to ensure confidentiality as far as is appropriate.

Information collected on complex circumstances will be treated as strictly private and confidential and stored securely in password protected files in permissioned folders. Internally, only the University's REF Team will have access to unanonymised data. These data will be destroyed after HEFCE's audit procedures for REF 2014 have been completed.

For each member of staff returned with fewer than four outputs, UoA submissions will include the following information in *REF1b - Individual Staff Circumstances*:

a. **Staff with clearly defined circumstances** (maximum 200 words):

For ECRs, the University must state the date at which the individual became an early career researcher; provide brief details of their research career history, specifically identifying the point at which they became an independent researcher, and the number of outputs returned. For staff with other clearly defined circumstances, the University must provide brief details about the nature of the circumstance(s), their timing and duration, a calculation of the total absence over the period 1 Jan 2008 to 31 Oct 2013, and the number of outputs returned.

b. **Staff with complex circumstances** (maximum 300 words). The University must:

- describe the nature and timing of the circumstances;
- explain the effects on the individual's contracted working hours or ability to fulfil their contracted working hours;
- explain any other effects on the individual's ability to work productively;
- provide a calculation for the reduction in outputs and the number of outputs returned.

The information returned in *REF 1b* for any type of circumstances must be based on verifiable evidence. Information submitted in form *REF 1b* will be kept confidential to the HEFCE REF team and the panel members (for clearly defined circumstances) and the EDAP (Equalities & Diversity Advisory Panel) and main panel chairs (for complex circumstances), who are all subject to confidentiality undertakings in respect of all information contained in submissions. REF sub-panels will know that there are complex circumstances and will receive a decision about the appropriate number of outputs to reduce without penalty, but will not have access to further information about the circumstances.

These arrangements will enable individuals to disclose the information in a confidential manner, and enable consistent treatment of complex circumstances across the exercise. Information submitted in *REF 1b* will be used only for the purposes of assessing the REF submission in which it is contained, will not be published at any time and will be destroyed on completion of the REF.

In completing the *REF 1b* form, the University will be mindful to provide sufficient detail to enable HEFCE Panels and Sub Panels to assess the impact of the circumstances on the person's research capability. However, no precise details will be given on matters such as medical diagnosis or the prognosis of a long term illness. The University will ensure that the information in *REF 1b* is submitted in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and all other legal obligations.

Professor Jeremy Howells
Chair of the REF Equality & Diversity Group

Professor Philip Nelson
Pro Vice-Chancellor Research

Appendix A - Policy Statement from University Executive Group

http://www.soton.ac.uk/ris/news/ref_2014.shtml

REF 2014 AND IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL STAFF

The world standing and reputation of the University depends upon the quality and impact of our research. We aspire to be a world-leading university, clearly ranked within the top-10 in the UK and in the top-50 in the world. The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is now being used to assess the research performance of UK Universities and will be the single most important measure of our success in research. The purpose of this note is to make clear and explicit the way in which individual staffing decisions will be approached in the light of the REF 2014. The principles set out below should be read together with the detailed information provided by the REF Planning Group which can be found on the REF 2014 SharePoint site.

Current context

The University has set a benchmark GPA of 2.50 as a guideline for the *minimum* performance expected of all research-active staff. Similarly, it has defined a *minimum* performance expectation of a GPA of 2.8 for each Unit of Assessment (UoA). The funding intentions stated by HEFCE have evolved over the last year, with only 3* and 4* elements of the quality profile in future attracting funding. It has thus become apparent that achievement by an individual of the minimum GPA will not necessarily guarantee their return in the REF. It is likely that GPAs closer to 3.0 will be required, and it does seem certain that a GPA of 3.0 will be sufficient to ensure return in the REF.

It will also be important, when determining those returned in the REF, to account for contributions that will strengthen 'impact' and 'environment' components of submissions. It is also possible that different UoAs may adopt slightly different submission tactics, although the funding policy being adopted by HEFCE is likely to mean that more emphasis will be given by the University to the 'glory' of achieving a high quality submission, rather than the 'gold' that might be derived from submitting a larger number of staff. It is also clear that the production of work of 4*-quality is at a premium.

Equality and Diversity

Equality and diversity issues include grounds such as part-time status, maternity leave and disability. In its preparations for REF 2014, the University will apply those grounds as stipulated within the HEFCE guidance and will follow the advice and recommendations provided by the University's REF Equality and Diversity Group. Detailed guidance on how, for example, part-time employment or status as an Early Career Researcher impacts upon the outputs required for return to the REF will be provided in a separate note.

HEFCE's Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions ([02.2011, July 2011](#)), makes the following statement as far as equality and diversity matters:

'We are strongly encouraging HEIs to submit the excellent research of all their eligible staff. Individuals whose circumstances have significantly constrained their ability to work productively throughout the assessment period may be returned with fewer outputs, without any penalty in the assessment.'

Performance expectations

Effectiveness in research is of course only one part of overall performance, albeit a very important one for research intensive institutions such as ours. Contributions made by staff to teaching, leadership, enterprise and administration are also vital to our continued success. The REF return represents just one component of our ambition to become a world top-50 University. The increasingly globalised and market-driven system will place even more emphasis on teaching excellence, academic leadership and entrepreneurial skills. These talents are at the heart of our new reward and recognition strategy as we seek to recruit, develop and retain the highest quality academics.

The Academic Reward and Recognition Strategy will be consulted on, refined and implemented over the course of the coming academic year, and this together with the data accumulated from the REF planning process will inform individual career pathways. The principles set out below will be used to guide decision-making:

- 1) Where an individual's GPA meets the minimum performance expected of research-active staff (2.5), but is insufficient for inclusion in the REF, supportive mechanisms will be put in place with the objective of enabling the individual to meet the University's aspirations for producing internationally excellent research.
- 2) Where an individual's GPA consistently falls below the minimum performance expected of research-active staff (2.5), and there are no grounds for special consideration on equality and diversity grounds (see above), then discussions will focus on how that individual's profile enables them to contribute to teaching excellence, academic leadership, entrepreneurship, or to make contributions to the work of a research team.

In both of the above scenarios, there will be an agreed timetable for the achievement of agreed outputs and performance standards as appropriate. These will be commensurate with the individual's academic level. For example, the timetable for professorial staff will be shorter than for those less experienced colleagues. In all cases the performance expectations will take into account the grounds identified as Equality and Diversity considerations. The quality of research contributions will be assessed through peer review, by seeking the opinions of a number of experts in the relevant discipline, with the opinions of experts from outside the University being sought where appropriate.

November 2011

Appendix B - Outline Timetable for Selection of Staff

The timetable below provides details of the key activities related to the selection of staff, the appeals process and equality & diversity training for relevant staff.

Complete by	Activity	Responsibility
30 March 2012	Review ECU worked examples of complex circumstances	Chair REF E&D Group
13 April 2012	Pro-forma for declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances published	REF 2014 Team
16 May 2012	REF 2014 Workshop including E&D training	REF 2014 Team
29 June 2012	Complete initial tranche of E&D training	Chair REF E&D Group
31 July 2012	Submit E&D Code of Practice to HEFCE	Chair REF E&D Group
14 November 2012	REF Review Group discusses progress by UOA	PVC Nelson
31 December 2012	Research Review Committee meetings Review Outputs, Impact & Environment for each UOA and make provisional decisions on standards for submission	Provost
31 January 2013	Equality Impact Assessment	Director HR
29 March 2013	Produce draft Statement of Intent for each UOA	UOA Champions
30 April 2013	Research Review Committee meetings Preview selection of staff, impact and environment documents	Provost
15 May 2013	Approve Statement of Intent for each UOA	UEG
31 May 2013	Provisional selection of staff	UOA Champions
14 June 2013	Inform staff at risk of non-selection	Heads of Academic Units
28 June 2013	Collect/update Individual Staff Circumstances information from academic staff	REF 2014 Team
05 July 2013	Final selection of staff (subject to leavers and joiners)	UEG
15 July 2013	Inform staff of non-selection in writing	Heads of Academic Units
31 July 2013	Final date for appeal against non-selection or to request a reassessment of a reduced number of outputs	Academic Staff
30 August 2013	Complete Individual Staff Circumstances (REF 1b) for staff submitting fewer than 4 outputs	UOA Champions
30 September 2013	Completion of Appeals process	Director HR
29 November 2013	Final date for University's submission	Vice-Chancellor
31 December 2013	Equality Impact Assessment	Director HR

Appendix C - Equality & Diversity Training

REF-specific equality and diversity training will be provided to all members of the committees involved in staff selection for REF 2014. The membership of these committees is outlined in the following table:

Committee Member	Committee				Comments
	UOA	Faculty Review Committee	Research Review Committee	UEG	
Vice-Chancellor				✓	
Provost			✓	✓	
PVC Research			✓	✓	Briefing also received as Sub-panel Chair.
University Diversity Champion		✓	✓	✓	
Deans		✓	✓	✓	4 of 8 Deans have received additional briefings as Sub-panel members.
Associate Deans Research		✓	✓		
Heads of Academic Unit	✓	✓	✓		
UOA Champions	✓	✓			
Senior Academics	✓	✓			
Professional Services staff					Relevant staff will receive a briefing at the REF 2014 workshop.

The training will be delivered by representatives of the University's REF Equality and Diversity Group. In order to ensure the training is focussed on REF-specific issues, the representatives have attended a REF 2014 'Train the trainer' session provided by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU). The content of the training will incorporate material provided by the ECU for this purpose, including case studies exploring implications of personal circumstances in staff selection. Worked examples of complex circumstances provided by the ECU can be found at <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/documents/ref-materials/complex-circumstances-examples>.

Several workshop training sessions will be provided, and one-to-one training and online training modules will be available for staff who cannot attend the workshops. The timetable for the training is as follows:

Date	Details
16 May 2012	REF 2014 Workshop – All relevant committee members invited to attend
June 2012	Training workshops for those unable to attend the main REF 2014 workshop
July 2012	Training provided on a one-to-one basis or online for those unable to attend the workshops
Ongoing	Training provided on a one-to-one basis or online for new committee members

Monitoring will take place to ensure committee members have received or undertaken training.

Appendix D – Communications Plan

The University is committed to ensuring that awareness of the Code of Practice is promoted to all academic staff eligible or potentially eligible for submission to REF 2014, and that the Code is readily available for reference. The timetable below provides details of the pathways through which the Code will be disseminated to staff, including those absent from work.

Complete by	Activity	Responsibility
12 April 2012	Draft Code of Practice published on REF 2014 SharePoint site	REF 2014 Team
13 April 2012	Link to draft Code of Practice included in covering note for staff disclosure form, to be emailed to all academic staff, including those absent from work.	REF 2014 Team
27 April 2012	Code of Practice submitted to HEFCE.	REF 2014 Team
30 April 2012	Code of Practice published on REF 2014 SharePoint site.	REF 2014 Team
30 April 2012	Code of Practice published on University website.	Diversity Manager
11 May 2012	Publication of Code of Practice on University Website announced in email to all academic staff, including those absent from work.	PVC Research
16 May 2012	Code of Practice presented at REF 2014 workshop	REF 2014 Team, Diversity Manager
1 April 2013	Link to Code of Practice included in covering note for staff disclosure form, to be emailed to all academic staff, including those absent from work.	REF 2014 Team

Appendix E - Key Groups and Staff Involved in REF 2014 Preparations

The table below lists the key groups involved in preparations for the University's REF 2014 submission, and where the group is REF specific, how that group has been formed. The criteria that each group applies in carrying out its functions are consistent with the University's values and operating principles and include:

- compliance with relevant legislation
- excellence in research
- fairness, openness, consistency and inclusivity.

Group and Committee members have been selected by virtue of their position, authority and responsibility. In some cases, such as UOA Champions, expertise in a particular discipline and experience of the research assessment exercise are also taken into account. The equality and diversity training undertaken or planned for all members of the groups listed below is detailed in Appendix C.

Group	Terms of Reference, Objectives or Responsibilities	Membership
University Executive Group Existing group providing advice to the Vice-Chancellor.	Advisory Group to Vice-Chancellor comprising the senior executives responsible for all academic and non-academic staff.	Vice-Chancellor (Chair) Pro-Vice Chancellors (3) Deans of Faculty (8) Registrar Chief Operating Officer
REF Equality & Diversity Group Formed in February 2011 to prepare the Code of Practice, ensure it is communicated and implemented effectively, to drive participation in and support for E&D initiatives, and to hear appeals for non-selection. The group is chaired by the University Diversity Champion and includes senior members of staff from the academic and administrative communities with equality and diversity responsibilities and interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepares and implements the University's Code of Practice for the REF 2014 submission. • Considers and evaluates the measurement and inclusion of equality and diversity within REF 2014. • Assesses the benefits and outcomes for the REF 2014 of the University's participation in equality and diversity schemes, initiatives and awards. • Connects with existing equality and diversity networks within the University to help strengthen and accredit existing work. • Drives participation in and support for equality and diversity initiatives that lead to a positive impact on the REF 2014 submission. • Manages training, briefings and communication of the Code. • First stage of appeals for non-selection of eligible staff. 	University Diversity Champion and Dean of Business & Law (Chair) Associate Deans Research (2) Head of Research Performance (or nominee) Diversity Manager Senior Academics with equality and diversity responsibilities and/or interests.
Appeals Panel Will convene as required	Hears appeals for non-selection of eligible staff and exhausts the informal part of the grievance procedures. The date at which appeals can be made is no later than 31 July 2013. The appeal mechanism is a letter in the first instance to the Chair of the REF 2014 Equality & Diversity Group stating the reasons for non-selection. If the appeal is based solely on the quality of the appellant's research it will be forwarded to the relevant Faculty Review Committee. Otherwise, if the appeal is not upheld, the Appeals Panel will be constituted.	PVC International or PVC Education (Chair) Director of Human Resources Nominated Associate Dean Research Diversity Manager (as advisor)

Research Review Committee Formed in November 2010 to review retention and performance issues from an institutional perspective and ensure consistency of approach across faculties. This is the key committee for the selection of staff. The committee is chaired by the Provost who is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Other members of the core team include PVC Research, Director of Human Resources and the Head of Research Performance who is responsible for the design and management of the University's preparations for REF 2014.	The Committee's responsibilities during the preparatory stage are to set performance targets for each UOA, review performance, and agree with Deans any actions required at individual and UOA levels. This has enabled staff and line managers to take appropriate action to improve performance. In December 2012, the Committee will make provisional decisions on the quality profiles required for return in each UOA so that eligible staff have early notice of the standards required for inclusion in the submission. The Committee will make final decisions (subject to leavers, joiners and appeals) on the selection of staff by 5 July 2013 for recommendation to the University Executive Group.	Core team comprising Provost (Chair) PVC Research Director of Human Resources Associate Director REF Strategy Head of Research Performance There are 8 separate meetings of the Research Review Committee composed of the Core team and each Faculty Review Committee. The committee meets at least annually.
Faculty Review Committee Formed in 2010 to oversee REF 2014 preparations in the Faculty. The committee is chaired by the Dean of faculty and comprises other senior members of the Faculty with responsibility for staff management and/or REF 2014.	Reviews preparations for submission for all UOAs within the faculty and takes action on any issues arising from the Research Review Committee .	Dean of Faculty (Chair) Associate Dean Research Heads of Academic Unit UOA Champions HR Client Partner
UoA Committee Formed in 2010 to manage and implement preparations for REF 2014 for a specific discipline. Membership comprises senior academics with expertise in the relevant discipline and experience of the research assessment exercise, and the Head of Academic Unit for the discipline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses the quality of outputs selected by staff and provides feedback. Manages the preparation of Impact Case Studies and the templates for Impact and Environment. Prepares the draft Statement of Intent (Equality). 	UOA Champion (Chair) Heads of Academic Unit Other senior academics as required A UOA Committee exists for each of the 26 sub-panels that the University intends to make a return.
REF Review Group Formed in 2010 to advise the PVC Research on all aspects of the University's preparations for REF 2014. Group comprises the Associate Deans Research from each of the 8 faculties, senior staff from Human Resources, Associate Director REF Strategy and the Head of Research Performance.	Advisory Group to PVC Research on all aspects of the University's preparations for REF 2014.	PVC Research (Chair) Associate Deans Research (8) Director of Human Resources Senior HR Client Partner Head of Research Performance Associate Director REF Strategy

REF Planning Group Formed in 2008 to support PVC research in preparing the University's REF 2014 submission. Group comprises the Associate Deans Research as faculty leaders on research and senior staff from the Professional Services.	Keep abreast of the changes proposed by the funding bodies, assess how these changes will impact on the University, and ensure that the University maintains its premier position in securing government funding for research through a successful outcome for REF 2014. The group has two sub-groups responsible for developing the technical systems required to assemble the University's submission, and to advise on bibliometrics.	PVC Research (Chair) Associate Deans Research (8) Head of Research Performance Associate Director REF Strategy Representatives from Professional Services including Finance, iSolutions (enterprise systems), Human Resources, Library (e-prints), Research & Innovation Services and the Faculty Operating Service.
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The following members of staff have key roles in the staff selection process. As such, they recognise the important role that equality and diversity has in the achievement of the University's strategic plans and are fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to legislation and of living the University's values of inclusiveness and openness.

Provost

As Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Adam Wheeler is responsible for implementing the University strategy and for its academic progress. He has experience of previous research assessment exercises and has held membership of research review panels from time to time. As Chair of the Research Review Committees, the Provost plays a key role in ensuring the consistency and accountability of the staff selection process.

Pro Vice-Chancellor Research

As Pro Vice-Chancellor with the portfolio for research, Professor Philip Nelson has overall responsibility for the University's REF 2014 submission. He has experience of the previous Research Assessment Exercises in 2001 and 2008 as a member of the panel for UoA 30 in the RAE 2001, the sub panel for UoA 28 in the RAE 2008 and as Sub-Panel Chair for UoA 15 in REF 2014. Professor Nelson has undertaken comprehensive Equality & Diversity training in his panel roles and at the University.

University Diversity Champion

The Vice Chancellor has appointed a member of the University Executive Group (UEG), Professor Jeremy Howells, Dean of Business and Law, as the University's Diversity Champion. Professor Howells has responsibility, on behalf of UEG, to take forward the University's equality and diversity agenda. He chairs the REF Equality & Diversity Group.

Deans of Faculty

The Deans of Faculty are responsible for delivering the research, teaching and enterprise activities across their faculty, as well as national and international engagement. They also help lead the strategic development of the University as a whole. Four of the eight Deans of Faculty are serving as REF panel members.

Associate Deans Research

Associate Deans Research for each Faculty, with support from their Heads of Academic Units, are responsible for ensuring that all academic and research staff are made aware of the existence of this Code and for its implementation and adherence in all Faculty and UoA Committees, including highlighting the importance of staff completing the *Individual Staff Circumstances* declaration form. All Associate Deans Research have previous management experience of the research assessment exercise and a number are serving as panel members.

Heads of Academic Unit

The Heads of Academic Units are responsible for ensuring that academic and research staff within their Academic Unit are made aware of the existence of this Code, including highlighting the importance of staff completing the *Individual Staff Circumstances* declaration form. A number of Heads of Academic Units are serving as panel members.

UoA Champions

UoA Champions have been allocated to each Unit of Assessment in which the University is submitting to the REF. Each UoA Champion is responsible for supporting equality and diversity in their Unit of Assessment and evidence of this will be documented in the environment template. The UoA Champion also has responsibilities in output selection, impact case study selection, and preparing the Impact and Environment templates.

Appendix F – UoA Statement of Intent (Equality)

Guidance Notes

- 1. Please complete the UoA number and name in the box below.*
- 2. Provide the names of UoA Committee members in section 2.*
- 3. Enter the target Grade Point Average (GPA) in section 3.*
- 4. Return to the REF team ref2014@soton.ac.uk by 31 March 2013.*

UoA	XX	name
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1. Introduction

This Unit of Assessment Committee endorses the Code of Practice on the selection of staff for the REF 2014 submission and the principle that staff eligible for return are not excluded for reasons related to a protected characteristic such as gender, racial group, disability, religious or sexual orientation or for a non-traditional career pattern resulting for example from a career break, maternity, paternity or adoption leave or by being new to research.

Each member of this Unit of Assessment Committee has received or undertaken equality and diversity training in relation to REF 2014. Any member co-opted to the Unit of Assessment Committee will be briefed on equality and diversity issues in relation to REF 2014 by the Chair of the Unit of Assessment Committee.

This UoA Committee recognises that its role is to recommend to the Faculty Review Committees who should be submitted to the REF 2014 sub-panel for this UoA. The Faculty Review Committee is responsible for taking a holistic view across all UOAs to which it will return staff and to ensure consistency in the interpretation and implementation of HEFCE guidance. The actual selection of staff will be made by the Research Review Committee which will produce a formal record of all meetings where the selection of staff is discussed or decisions are made.

2. Membership of the UoA Committee

The membership of this UoA Committee is:

Role	Name
UoA Champion (Chair)	Please provide names
Relevant Head(s) of Academic Unit for this UoA	
Other members	

3. Outcome from the REF 2014

It is the intention of this UoA Committee to achieve the best possible REF 2014 submission by submitting all REF 2014 eligible researchers whose work contributes to achieving the overall target quality profile for the UoA.

This UoA aspires to achieve an overall target quality profile with a Grade Point Average of X.YZ

The UoA Committee will do this by taking into account research outputs, impact and environment, whilst paying due attention to equality and diversity issues in interpreting submissions.

4. Working Methods

It is recognised that to achieve the intended outcome from REF 2014, that only staff with the relevant research record will be included. This UoA Committee will follow the guidance described in the *Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions* ([REF 02.2011](#)) to determine eligibility for inclusion in REF 2014, together with the guidance set out in the *Panel Criteria and Working Methods* ([REF 01.2012](#)). Members of the committee will use their professional judgement and expertise to achieve the stated outcome and in recommending to the Faculty Review Committee who should be submitted.

The University Complex Circumstances Assessment Group, a sub-group of the REF 2014 Equality & Diversity Group, is responsible for reviewing Individual Staff Circumstances where this involves complex circumstances, and for making a judgement on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs that will be submitted for the individuals concerned.

All staff eligible for REF 2014 have the right to appeal against non-selection for the UoA's submission where this is on the grounds of the quality of their research or relates to any protected characteristic defined under the Equality Act 2010. The appeals process is documented in section 3.4 of the University's [Code of Practice](#) on the Selection of Staff for REF 2014 submission.

5. Confidentiality

Unless permission has been granted in writing (including electronic communication), confidential information regarding an individual's complex circumstances will not be disclosed to this UoA Committee or any other internal committee involved in the selection process.

Appendix G - Individual Staff Circumstances

The information below has been extracted from REF 01.2012: Panel Criteria and Working Methods which is available from HEFCE's REF 2014 [website](#).

As a key measure to support equality and diversity in research careers, in all UOAs, individuals may be returned with fewer than four outputs without penalty in the assessment, where their individual circumstances have significantly constrained their ability to produce four outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period. These circumstances may include one or more of the following:

- a. Circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs, which are:
 - i. Qualifying as an early career researcher
 - ii. Absence from work due to working part-time, secondments or career breaks
 - iii. Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave
 - iv. Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6.
- b. Complex circumstances that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:
 - i. Disability (defined in the [Summary of Equality Legislation](#))
 - ii. Ill health or injury.
 - iii. Mental health conditions.
 - iv. Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of the allowances made in the clearly defined circumstances below.
 - v. Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member).
 - vi. Gender reassignment.
 - vii. Other circumstances relating to activities protected by [employment legislation](#).

Clearly defined circumstances

Where an individual has one or more circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs, the number of outputs that may be reduced should be determined according to the tables and guidance below. All sub-panels will accept a reduction in outputs according to this guidance and will assess the remaining number of submitted outputs without any penalty.

Early Career Researchers

Early career researchers are defined as members of staff who meet the criteria to be selected as Category A or Category C staff on the census date, and who started their careers as independent researchers on or after 1 August 2009. For the purposes of the REF, an individual is deemed to have started their career as an independent researcher from the point at which:

- a. They held a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, which included a primary employment function of undertaking 'research' or 'teaching and research', with any HEI or other organisation, whether in the UK or overseas, and
- b. They undertook independent research, leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on a research grant or significant piece of research work. (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.)

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

- a. Staff who first acted as an independent researcher while at a previous employer – whether another HEI, business or other organisation in the UK or elsewhere – before 1 August 2009, with a contract of 0.2 FTE or greater.
- b. Staff who first acted as an independent researcher before 1 August 2009 and have since had a career outside of research or an extended break from their research career, before returning

to research work. Such staff may reduce the number of outputs submitted according to Table 2 below.

- c. Research assistants who are ineligible to be returned to the REF.

Table 1 sets out the permitted reduction in outputs without penalty in the assessment for early career researchers who meet this definition.

Date when the individual first met the definition of an ECR	Number of outputs may be reduced without penalty by up to:
On or before 31 July 2009	0
Between 1 August 2009 and 31 July 2010	1
Between 1 August 2010 and 31 July 2011	2
On or after 1 August 2011	3

Table 1: Early career researchers: permitted reduction in outputs

Absence from work due to part-time working, secondments or career breaks

Table 2 sets out the permitted reduction in outputs without penalty in the assessment for absence from work due to:

- a. part-time working
- b. secondments or career breaks outside of the higher education sector, and in which the individual did not undertake academic research.

Total absence from contracted work over the period 1 Jan 2008 to 31 Oct 2013 (total months):	For part-time staff this equates to contracted hours for the following average FTE over the period 1 Jan 2008 to 31 Oct 2013	Number of outputs may be reduced without penalty up to:
0-11.99	0.8287 - 1.000	0
12-27.99	0.6001 - 0.8286	1
28-45.99	0.3430 - 0.6000	2
46 or more	0.3429 or less	3

Table 2: Part-time working, secondments or career breaks: permitted reduction in outputs

Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave

Individuals may reduce the number of outputs by one, for each discrete period of:

- a. Statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave taken substantially during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2013, regardless of the length of the leave.
- b. Additional paternity or adoption leave lasting for four months or more, taken substantially during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2013.

The approach to these circumstances is based on the funding bodies' considered judgement that the impact of such a period of leave and the arrival of a new child into a family is generally sufficiently disruptive of an individual's research work to justify the reduction of an output. This judgement was informed by the consultation on draft panel criteria, in which an overwhelming majority of respondents supported such an approach.

The funding bodies' decision not to have a minimum qualifying period for maternity leave was informed by the sector's clear support for this approach in the consultation; recognition of the

potential physical implications of pregnancy and childbirth; and the intention to remove any artificial barriers to the inclusion of women in submissions, given that women were significantly less likely to be selected in former RAE exercises.

The funding bodies consider it appropriate to make the same provision for those regarded as the 'primary adopter' of a child (that is, a person who takes statutory adoption leave) as the adoption of a child and taking of statutory adoption leave is generally likely to have a comparable impact on a researcher's work to that of taking maternity leave.

As regards additional paternity or adoption leave, researchers who take such leave will also have been away from work and acting as the primary carer of a new child within a family. The funding bodies consider that where researchers take such leave over a significant period (four months or more), this is likely to have an impact on their ability to work productively on research that is comparable to the impact on those taking maternity or statutory adoption leave.

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

- a. By seeking a reduction in outputs under the provision for complex circumstances, for example where the period of leave had an impact in combination with other factors such as ongoing childcare responsibilities.
- b. By combining the number of months for shorter periods of such leave in combination with other clearly defined circumstances, according to Table 2.

Any period of maternity, adoption or paternity leave that qualifies for the reduction of an output may in individual cases be associated with prolonged constraints on work that justify the reduction of more than one output. In such cases, the circumstances should be explained using the arrangements for complex circumstances.

Combining clearly defined circumstances

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

Where Table 1 is combined with Table 2, the period of time since 1 January 2008 up until the individual met the definition of an early career researcher should be calculated in months, and Table 2 should be applied.

When combining circumstances, only one circumstance should be taken into account for any period of time during which they took place simultaneously. (For example, an individual worked part-time throughout the assessment period and first met the definition of an early career researcher on 1 September 2009. In this case the number of months 'absent' due to part-time working should be calculated from 1 September 2009 onwards, and combined with the reduction due to qualifying as an early career researcher.)

Where an individual has a combination of circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs and complex circumstances, the institution should submit these collectively as 'complex' so that a single judgement can be made about the appropriate reduction in outputs, taking into account all the circumstances. Those circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs should be calculated according to the guidance above.

Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6

In UOAs 1-6, the number of outputs may be reduced by up to two, without penalty in the assessment, for the following:

- a. Category A staff who are junior clinical academics. These are defined as clinically qualified academics who are still completing their clinical training in medicine or dentistry and have not gained a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) or its equivalent prior to 31 October 2013.
- b. Category C staff who are employed primarily as clinical, health or veterinary professionals (for example by the NHS), and whose research is primarily focused in the submitting unit.

These allowances are made on the basis that the staff concerned are normally significantly constrained in the time they have available to undertake research during the assessment period. The reduction of two outputs takes account of significant constraints on research work, and is normally sufficient to also take account of additional circumstances that may have affected the individual's research work. Where the individual meets the criteria above, and has had significant additional circumstances the institution may return the circumstances as 'complex' with a reduction of three outputs, and provide a justification for this.

Complex circumstances

Where staff have had one or more complex circumstances – including in combination with any circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs – the institution will need to make a judgement on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs submitted, and provide a rationale for this judgement.

As far as is practicable, the information in REF 1b should provide an estimate – in terms of the equivalent number of months absent from work – of the impact of the complex circumstances on the individual's ability to work productively throughout the assessment period, and state any further constraints on the individual's research work in addition to the equivalent months absent. A reduction should be made according to Table 2 in relation to estimated months absent from work, with further constraints taken into account as appropriate. To aid institutions the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) has published worked examples of complex circumstances, which indicate how these calculations can be made and the appropriate reduction in outputs for a range of complex circumstances. These are available on the University SharePoint site.