

University of Reading
REF 2021 Code of practice

Part 1: Introduction



Development of the Code: The Code has been produced following an extensive consultative process with relevant staff groups across the University, including the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Board (chaired by the Pro- Vice-Chancellor, Academic Planning & Resources), the Staffing Committee and the recognised trade union (UCU). The Code has been discussed and feedback sought from the University Senate and the Board for Research & Innovation. A draft form of the Code has been made available to all academic staff and discussed with Unit of Assessment (UOA) Leads and academic staff through Q&A sessions. All staff were invited to provide comments through a named email address. This approach has provided staff with multiple opportunities for feedback, which informed the different iterations of the document. Approval has been confirmed by the University Executive Board and the Code will be made available to the University Council.

Accessibility: the Code has been written in plain, clear and unambiguous language. Links to relevant University policies are included in the Code for ease of access by staff. Simple process diagrams allow easy visualisation of processes. A summary of timelines for processes and decisions are included in the Code to ensure that colleagues understand what to expect and when. However, if any member of staff is uncertain about any of the procedures documented in the Code, they should contact REF and Research Planning Manager, Wanda Tejada (w.tejada@reading.ac.uk) in the first instance

Communications: to ensure that the Code is effectively publicised, we will make use of the Staff Portal, our All-Staff Briefing communications (through which the University communicates with staff on a regular basis) and individual email communication. We will also make the Code available to all staff through the REF 2021 internal webpages and provide a copy of the Code directly to all REF-eligible staff. We will make provision to send the Code to all eligible staff who are absent from the University for whatever reason and we will ensure that the Code is made available in an appropriate format for staff with special requirements (for example, a disability). To further support communications, we will facilitate discussions at departmental m

(v) proactive use of the Equality Impact Assessments across all UOAs and review of these by the REF Planning Group.

Accountability: to ensure that staff are aware of who is responsible for decisions relating to the determination of staff eligibility and selection of outputs and impact case studies, and that a clear appeals process is established for the research independence element of the submission. An appeals process for decisions on output reductions due to personal circumstances will also be put in place to ensure that decisions on reductions and adjustment of expectations are commensurate with the circumstances declared. The ultimate responsibility for decisions on staff eligibility and selection of outputs and impact case studies will lie with the REF Planning Group; this will be clearly communicated through all of the channels indicated above.

Inclusivity: to ensure that the University is supporting a submission which reflects the excellent research of a broad spectrum of researchers irrespective of their personal characteristics or circumstances. This has been, or will be, achieved through (i) consultation with the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Board, UCU and the Staffing Committee in the development of the Code as indicated above, (ii) REF-specific training regarding the Equality Act 2010, unconscious and implicit bias training and guidance on responsible use of metrics for all staff involved in REF planning, including UOA Leads, Research Deans, Pro-Vice Chancellors Research & Innovation, the Diversity & Inclusion Dean and the Research Publications Advisor, (iii) establishment of an appropriate appeals procedure and (iv) production of interim and final Equality Impact Assessments, followed up by actions to ensure that any bias identified through the analysis is addressed and any good practice is disseminated as appropriate.

Diversity and inclusion play a prominent role in the University, largely supported by the creation of academic leadership roles in Diversity and Inclusion (Deans for Diversity and Inclusion- a 1FTE post currently held as a job share) in 2015, following a recommendation by the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Group. The Deans are responsible for developing and leading strategy on equality, diversity and inclusion, working with teams across the University to implement and evaluate actions and co-ordinate applications for external recognition of our diversity and inclusion work, such as Athena SWAN and the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index. University Executive Board members visibly champion different areas of the diversity agenda, and all academic Schools have Diversity and Inclusion champions, supported by a very active Community of Practice. Staff surveys conducted in 2017 and 2018 indicate that staff believe that the University respects people equally regardless of their disability, race, religion, gender or sexual orientation. We successfully renewed our Athena SWAN Bronze institutional award in 2016, and 6 Schools currently hold an award (Silver or Bronze), with a further 5 Schools working towards achieving one in the next two years. Over the past 3 years the University has climbed 124 places to rank 80th in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index. We also joined the Race Equality Charter as members and have carried out a thorough self-assessment over 2017-18.

- To improve the University's position on the Stonewall Workplace Index, aspiring to be in the top 50 by 2020 (current position is 138, a substantial improvement on our 2016 position of 204).

Progress towards these targets is actively reviewed every year by the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Board, which challenges the Deans on progress and future priorities. Membership of this group comprises chairs of the 4 staff networks (Women@Reading, Cultural Diversity Group, LGBT+ and Ally network and Staff Disability Network) and other staff and student representatives. Action plans and teams (LGBT+, Disability, Race Equality and Athena SWAN) have been formed via consultation with relevant groups of staff. All but one of the STEM Schools hold Athena SWAN awards and most other Schools are in the process of developing applications.

Underpinning many of these actions are institutional policies, including the Equal Opportunities Policy; the Code of Good Practice [Valuing Ourselves and Others]; Harassment and Bullying Policies and Procedures; Trans and Gender Identity: Supporting Information and Procedures for Staff/Students; Family Leave Procedures; and Provision of Gender Neutral Toilets. These are developed through staff network consultation.

The University has substantially revised its procedures for academic staff probation and promotion over the last five years to become more criteria and evidence based, and to ensure that all staff are considered routinely for promotion. Specific procedures for committees to consider the impact of personal circumstances were also established. Additional support for Early Career Researchers has been taken forward through the University's HR Excellence in Research Strategy and Implementation Plan, which puts into practice the principles of the UK Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. This helps to ensure that those with line management responsibilities of researchers understand their responsibilities regarding support of research staff and that research staff are aware of their development and career opportunities, including promotion. This understanding has been greatly aided by the production of comprehensive Principal Investigator and research staff handbooks available to all staff and accessed from the University's website.

The University conducted an Equality Impact Assessment of its 2014 submission, which concluded that the University of Reading's process for the selection of staff to be submitted to REF 2014 had no negative impact for any group of staff on the grounds of equality protected characteristics. Notable findings were as follows:

- At institutional level, there were no significant differences in the percentage of eligible staff submitted with respect to gender, disability, contract hours, contract type, nationality, ethnicity or age relative to the comparator group of category A eligible staff.

- The University's selection rate by gender, in particular, compared very favourably with the sector.
- There was some evidence of underrepresentation of BAME staff and female staff in some science disciplines; this is of ongoing concern, but in line with sector trends

Notwithstanding changes to the process for this REF, the University will draw on lessons learned from its REF 2014 Equality Impact Assessment, and the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel's post-REF 2014 report on equality and diversity to inform its approach to Equality Impact Assessments in REF 2021. Equality Impact Assessments will be conducted at key stages in the University's REF preparations, allowing review of the criteria for significant responsibility for research, for research independence and review and adjustment of the output selection process as appropriate. An Equality Impact Assessment on the final submission will be published on the University website following submission in November 2020. This will include data on the distribution of the selected outputs across staff, by protected characteristic, Equivpqaorssvis will

- Job description identifies independent research as primary activity or workload

drawn from the REF Planning Group and also included an HR Partner to ensure appropriate consideration of current HR policies and procedures. As part of the consultation process, a number of key University Committees were consulted with and representatives from the REF Code of Practice Group have held 3 consultation meetings with representatives from the Reading Branch of the Universities and College Union trade union (with whom the University have a collective consultation agreement). UCU is the recognised representative body for staff who are Grade 6 and above. The REF Code of Practice Group, on behalf of the University, held discussions and provided information to the Chairs of the Staff Forum, which is a separate staff representative group (primarily representing Grade 1-5 staff but which also enables information sharing and communication with staff who are Grade 6 and above who may not be members of UCU). Details of dates and minutes of the consultation meetings with UCU representatives and the Staff Forum were published on the REF webpage² on the Staff Portal and dates of meetings are listed below.

UCU: 22 February, 21 March and 7 May 2019

Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Board: 11 March 2019

consistent with the principles of the Code of Practice, the Research Deans for each of the research themes to provide disciplinary insight, the Dean for Postgraduate Research Studies to provide input on matters relevant to postgraduate research and the environment statement, a Dean for Diversity and Inclusion to ensure that equality and diversity considerations are taken into account in all REF preparations, a member of the Research Intelligence Unit to provide information relating to data on staff and outputs, the REF Planning Manager, who is responsible for the project management of the submission and a Secretary. The REF Planning Group is responsible for all decisions regarding the University's REF submission. The Group meets monthly and reports periodically to the University Executive Board, of which both PVCs R&I are members. Terms of reference for the REF Planning Group are included in **Annex A**.

Unit of Assessment Leads have been appointed for all UOAs where the University intends to make a submission. Appointments were made through an open and transparent process with applicants assessed by an interviewing panel against published criteria based on expertise within the discipline and familiarity with the REF context. Unit of Assessment Leads play an advisory role for all aspects of the submission in their units. A role description for UOA Leads is included in **Annex B**.

UOA Leads are supported by small teams drawing expertise from within the UOA, including Research Division Leaders for the research divisions' part of the UOA, who are responsible for developing research culture in their research divisions. UOA Leads interact with Heads of School, who have overall responsibility for workloads and performance management of staff in the research divisions in their schools.

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sector by the funding bodies, AdvanceHE and other organisations. Training will be delivered according to the following schedule:

- REF Planning Group, UOA Leads, Research Division Leads and Heads of School: July 2019
- Personal Circumstances Group, and Appeals Committee: October 2019

Responsible use of metrics: training has been developed and delivered by the University Research Publications Advisor according to the following schedule:

- REF Planning Group: October 2018 (principles)
- UOA Leads: October 2018 (principles), March 2019 (applying the University statement on responsible metrics to inform output selection)
- Appeals Committee: October 2019 (principles)

Appeals

A standing Appeals Committee has been established for the purpose of hearing any appeals resulting from the process for determining research independence.

Appeal cases will need to be submitted to the secretary of the Appeals Committee within 14 days of receiving formal notification of independence decisions. Appeals can only be made where an individual feels that the process for determining research

working days of the appeal hearing enabling outcomes to be implemented in a timely manner. The Appeal Committee's decision will be final and there will be no further right of appeal.

Equality impact assessment

Equality, diversity and inclusion issues have been considered throughout the development of fair and transparent procedures and processes for progression of research staff towards independent researcher. Role descriptions for grade 6 and 7 and criteria for progression have been reviewed again during 2018-19 academic year to ensure consistency with new promotion and progression processes for other members of staff (including research staff at grade 8 and 9), and to inform our methodology for determining research independence for REF purposes. Our support for research staff, and the impact on progression is also scrutinised through the self-assessment process for institutional and School level Athena SWAN applications providing additional input from research staff across the University. Workshops on research independence and gaining progression from research grade 6 to grade 7 have been held across several Schools, and via the open programme from People Development throughout the REF period.

In order to confirm that our processes and procedures are providing equal opportunity to all and allowing researchers to progress from all backgrounds, we will utilise the following methodology:

Research only Grade 7 staff

For each protected characteristic listed below, we will compare the profile of staff deemed to be independent researchers with all research only staff at this grade.

This will be undertaken at institutional level, and where the numbers are sufficient, at Panel/disciplinary/UOA level to identify any disciplinary concerns.

Where there is over/under representation, we will investigate further to identify the reasons and any issues that need to be explored, and whether these can be addressed in the remainder of the REF period. Whilst mindful of practical significance in any differences, we will also evaluate statistical significance using the most appropriate test from the Fish

anticipate that these will constitute small numbers, and will reflect primarily those that are holding eligible external Fellowships, the receipt of which is beyond our influence.

We will also review the characteristics of staff that have appealed decisions on independence to establish whether there are any patterns that might suggest particular groups have been affected.

Protected characteristics and groupings for analysis

The following outlines the protected characteristics against which we will undertake comparison and the levels of aggregation where data are available. Following review of the data and due regard to declaration rates and data volume, greater levels of granularity may be instructive for some characteristics, or similarly further consideration of intersectionality. We may determine appropriate declaration rate thresholds before undertaking analysis or drawing conclusions.

- Sex (Male/Female)
- Disability (Not known to be disabled/Declared disabled)
- Race: Ethnicity (BAME/White, Asian/Black/Chinese/White/Other), Nationality (British/Non-British)
- Age (under 30/30-39/etc/over 60)

Analysis for other protective characteristics will be subject to sufficient available data and declaration rates.

In light of the fixed term and part-time regulations (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment Regulations 2000 and 2002 respectively), we will also review data for contract mode (FT/PT) and type (fixed term/open).

As context, we will consider the diversity of our academic staff population in comparison with the sector, including comparisons at disciplinary level (e.g. STEM, non-STEM) using HESA/ECU data.

We will reflect on the outcomes of the interim Impact Equality Assessment and make adjustments to REF processes should any issue be identified.

We will reflect on our final Impact Equality Assessment and ensure that conclusions inform future development of institutional policies and processes.

Part 4: Selection of outputs

Policies and procedures

The REF 2014 represented a turning point for the University in its management of research and outputs

The set of eligible outputs in ROSS selected by staff, together with outputs authored by staff who have left the University as selected by the UOA Lead, comprise the pool of eligible outputs for the UOA.

ROSS data and the selection process is undertaken 2-3 times a year. At each iteration of the process, UOA Leads validate the UOA pool for eligibility against the REF definitions and staff members update their selections.

Once the pool of eligible outputs available at each iteration is determined, UOA Leads reflect on the pool and determine whether additional information is required for outputs in the set. This may comprise:

- Additional internal peer review: used where ROSS assessments do not provide sufficient granularity to allow for differentiation. Additional internal peer review is coordinated by the UOA Lead following similar principles to those used for ROSS evaluation. Any changes to ROSS assessment as a result of this additional internal peer review are communicated to authors and the ROSS data is updated.
- External peer review:

This process is undertaken in an iterative manner through the REF Planning period, with 2 to 3 validation and modelling exercises per year.

Scoping & Reflection exercise and mock submission: A scoping and reflection exercise took place between September and December 2018, during which UOA Leads submitted a written report describing the preliminary shape and quality of the portfolio at that time, and identified key issues which needed to be addressed, additional information required, any equality and diversity issues and priorities for the next phase. The scoping and reflection stage also included a meeting with the relevant Research Dean and PVC R&I and feedback to the UOA Lead on both the written report and the meeting.

A full mock submission will be undertaken in 2020, during which UOA Leads will make recommendations on the output pool based on the process described above.

Final selection of outputs for submission: Final decisions on outputs for submission will be made by the REF Planning Group in 2020, based on the information gathered throughout the processes described above. The REF Planning Group will seek to compile a portfolio that reflects the vitality and sustainability of each UOA, the quality of research of the UOA. The process of selection will give due regard to diversity and inclusion considerations. Information on the outputs selected for submission will be

Research Division Leads and the Unit of Assessment Leads within their area/discipline of responsibility.

Research Division Leads have primary responsibility for ROSS. Workshops on ROSS and its use for peer review and preparation for the REF were held in 2017/18 for Research Division Leads, who subsequently ran workshops for staff in their divisions. Training on the responsible use of metrics was provided to UOA Leads in October 2018 and March 2019 (see Part 3 – Staff, committees and training)

UOA Leads were appointed by inviting expressions of interest and a selection interview. Interview panels consisted of at least one PVC R&I, at least one relevant Research Dean, the Dean for Postgraduate Studies and the REF Planning Manager. In September 2018, a REF Planning Day for UOA Leads provided information and training on all aspects of REF, including the use of ROSS to select and model eligible outputs. In practice, UOA Leads work closely with and take advice from Research Division Leads; both roles have an advisory capacity.

After each validation and modelling, the REF Planning Group receive validated data, summary information for each UOA, and data analysis. The REF Planning Group will determine any necessary course of action to ensure that the principles for output selection are adhered to. The REF Planning Group has ultimate responsibility for decision-making.

Staff circumstances

agreed, in recognition of their declared circumstances and their impact on their ability to research productively This may include a decision to remove the minimum requirement of one output. The Chair of the REF Planning Group will also write to all staff who have declared personal circumstances where no adjustments have been agreed, outlining the reasons for why this is the case.

Where individual staff feel that the decisions made through the process described above have not taken their personal circumstances fully into account, in accordance with the REF guidance on submission document, they can submit an appeal. Appeals will be heard by a standing Appeals Committee established for the purpose of hearing any appeals resulting from the processes of determining reductions in outputs due to voluntary declared personal circumstances. The composition of the Committee will be identical to that described in Part 3 and will follow the same procedure and timescales, although the permissible grounds for appeal will differ and as outlined above. Appeal cases will need to be submitted to the University Secretary within 14 days of receiving formal notification of decisions on any agreed adjustments relating to voluntary declared personal circumstances. It should be noted that the appeals process, whilst remaining confidential, will not be able to remain anonymous as the Appeals Committee will require the name of the individual who has declared personal circumstances to be known to the Appeals Committee and for them to also be aware of the personal circumstances outlined on the declaration form and any additional information provided to the PCG by the individual as part of the informal review process outlined above. The decision of the Appeals Committee will be final and there will be no further right of appeal.

Eligible appeals will be heard in late December 2019, August and November 2020, and the Appeals Committee will confirm their decision to Appellants in writing within 10 working days of the appeal hearing enabling outcomes to be implemented

Part 5: Appendices

Annex A: REF Planning Group Terms of Reference and membership

Annex B: UOA Lead role description

Annex C: Diagram of process for determining Research Independence

Annex D: Addendum for interpretation of Research Independence Criteria

REF PLANNING GROUP: GOVERNANCE AND WAYS OF WORKING

Membership

The PVC Research & Innovation, Professor Dominik Zaum [Chair]

The PVC Research & Innovation, Professor Parveen Yaqoob

The Research Deans, Professor Adrian Williams, Dr Phil Newton, Professor Richard

The REF Planning Group will act as the project board for the REF 2021 submission project. The REF Planning Group will have responsibility over all aspects of the submission as follows:

- *Approve plans and processes developed to support the delivery of the University's submission to the REF 2021.*
- *Oversee the implementation of plans and processes, monitoring progress and making decisions on required changes to these plans.*
- *Identify and monitor the project risks and ensure that appropriate action is taken to reduce identified risks.*
- *Make final recommendations to the University Executive Board on:*
 - *the Units of Assessment where the University will make a submission*
 - *the approach to determining staff in scope*
 - *the outputs to be included in the submission*
 - *the impact case studies to be included in the submission*
- *Approve Environment and Impact case study templates to be submitted*
- *Oversee the development of the University's Code of Practice for the REF 2021, ensuring the code is widely disseminated and that it is applied across the University.*
- *Review Equality Impact Assessments against the protected characteristics at appropriate stages of the submission preparations, and determine what action, if any, needs to be taken, should any noticeable imbalances be observed in the output and staff submission profile.*
- *Keep abreast of developments in national REF policy and criteria, and take any necessary action arising from implications of these developments.*
- *Provide regular updates to the wider University on policies, processes and the status of the University's preparations for REF 2021.*

Ways of working

The Group will meet monthly to monitor developments and agree necessary actions. The Group will delegate specific tasks and responsibilities to members as necessary. This might include members of the group taking on specific based on an area of expertise or role.

Role Description

Role Title: Unit of Assessment Lead

Faculty/Department:

Reports to: Head of School/Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

Responsible for: N/A

Purpose

The University needs to appoint a lead academic for each Unit of Assessment (UOA) in the

- To identify staff on Teaching & Research and Research Only contracts who need consideration by the REF Planning Group as to whether they do/do not meet the funding bodies' eligibility criteria for inclusion in the REF.

Outputs:

- To establish the pool of outputs eligible for submission in accordance with definitions and guidance from the Funding Bodies.
- To regularly review the potential quality profile of the pool of outputs and determine the need for further quality assessment of outputs included in this pool.
- To identify potential configurations of outputs to return to the REF in accordance to the Funding Bodies definitions and guidance and the University's Code of Practice for REF 2021.
- To make recommendations on the optimal selection of outputs for inclusion in the submission.
- To ensure all outputs to be included in the submission are available on CentAUR with the necessary data required for each output

Impact

- Working with the Impact Lead and Impact Team, to review and amend the pool of impact case studies considered for submission.
- To ensure that evidence supporting impact case studies is robust, accessible and appropriate for auditing, ensuring it meets all funding bodies' requirements.
- To plan and oversee the development of impact case study templates, ensuring that these are produced in a timely manner and to a high standard.
- To make recommendations on the final selection of impact case studies to be included in the UOA submission.

Environment

- In consultation with others, to develop the content of the UOA specific sections of the Environment template.

General

- To contribute to the University's responses to REF consultations
- To work within the requirements of the overall University submission p12 (r83(s)-2.3 (rT)2u89 b c)-1.6 fun

This role will be undertaken in conjunction with regular academic activities and so overall line-management remains with the Head of School. However, for this particular task, they will be reporting to the PVC (R&I) in his/her role as Chair of the REF Planning Group.

The Unit of Assessment Lead will work with, and be supported by, the PVC Research and Innovation and the Research Dean/s relevant to the Unit of Assessment.

Supervision given

This role does not include staff supervision.

Contact

Academic staff in the areas relevant to the Unit of Assessment

Research Division Leads for Divisions relevant to the Unit of Assessment

Head of Schools for schools relevant to the Unit of Assessment

Impact Leads relevant to the Unit of Assessment

REF & Research Planning Manager

Research Intelligence Unit

Professional Support Services as relevant

Terms and conditions

The role requires a minimum of 0.2 FTE commitment, with potential for significant increase in the year of submission (2020). The role is fixed term from 1 May 2018 to 31 December 2020.

This is a leadership role to be undertaken in conjunction with regular academic activities. A set honorarium is not attached to the role.

This document outlines the duties required of the post as currently envisaged. It is not a comprehensive or exhaustive list and the PVC (R&I) may vary duties from time to time which do not change the general character of the job or the level of responsibility entailed.

Date assessed: December 2017

Person Specification

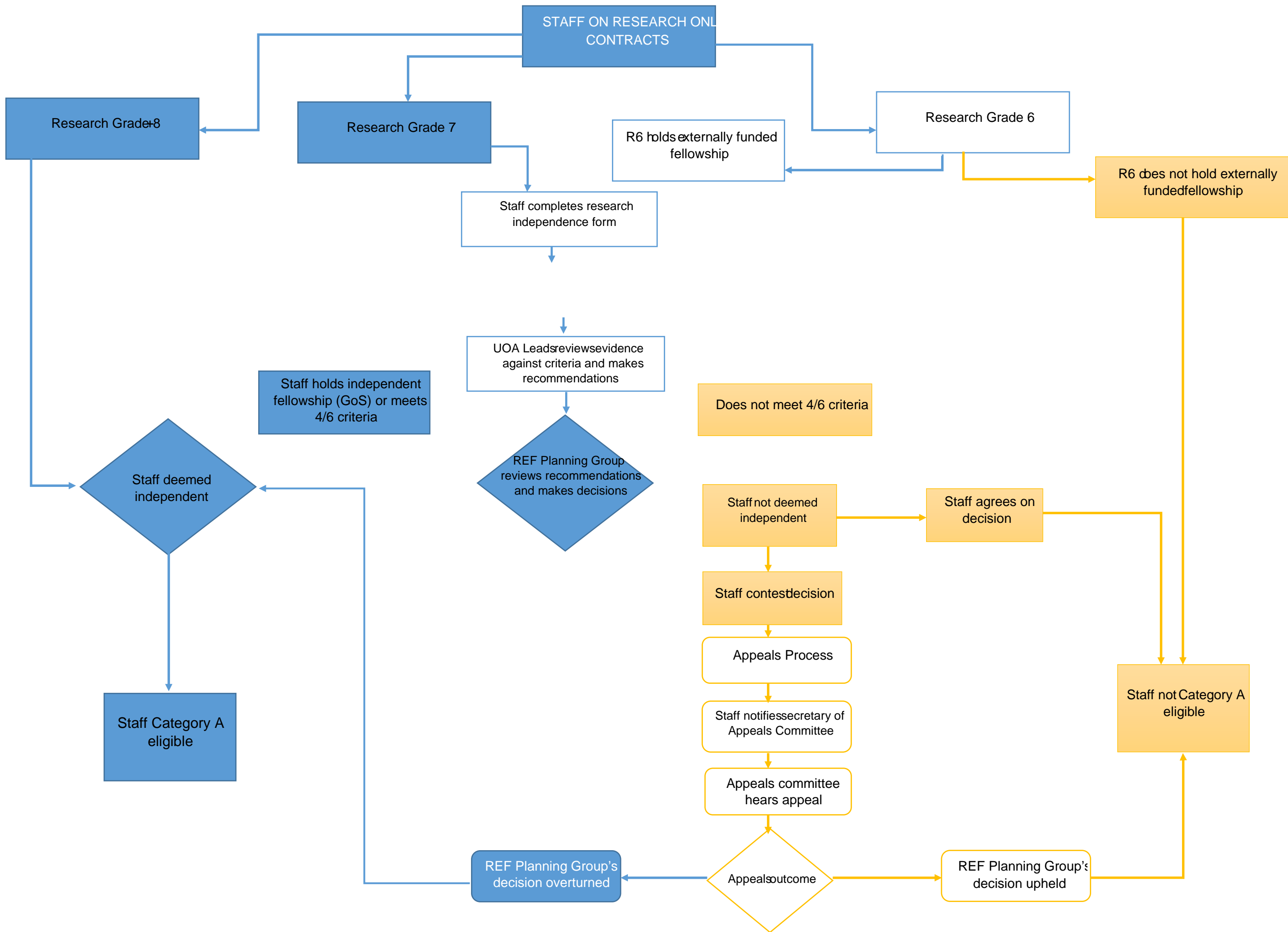
Role Title: Unit of Assessment Lead

Criteria

Essential

Desirable

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding of policies related to Equality & Diversity in research | |
|--|---|--|



University of Reading

REF 2024 Code of Practice: Addendum (January 2020)

Part 3: Determining Research Independence

- 1) The REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions requires that staff returned to the exercise are deemed to be research independent on the census date for staff (31 July 2020). At the University of Reading, in line with our Code of Practice, we are assessing research independent in advance of the census date. Those who are considered to meet the criteria for research independence when assessed will be considered to be independent on the census date, in that they are individuals who undertake directed research.

- 2) The REF Planning Group makes assessments based on the evidence provided by individual staff with regards to their current role.

With regards to the first criterion, the REF Planning Group interprets that a job description identifies independent research as a primary activity when this is explicitly indicated in the job description, or when this is implicit in the responsibilities described in the job description, with these being commensurate to those of an independent researcher.

With regards to the remaining criteria (second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth), the REF Planning Group interpret that these should have been met over the REF period (1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020).

Examples of this interpretation would include (but are not limited to):

- Staff who have led the development of proposals over the REF period but are not currently working on a specific proposal
- Staff who have secured research funding over the REF period but currently do not hold

DETERMINING RESEARCH INDEPENDENCE

you are either:

- Employed by the University on a Research Fellowship
- Employed by the University on a Research Assistantship or an externally funded fellowship

this deadline, please contact REF.admin@reading.ac.uk as soon as possible.

~~Please ensure that you read the guidance carefully before completing the form.~~

This document provides you with information on research independence for REF purposes. It also provides a REF Research Independence form. You are required to complete this form and return it to REF.admin@reading.ac.uk by [DATE]. If you are an independent researcher, you should complete the form rather than carrying out another process.

Guidance

You are receiving this document because the University needs to determine your status in relation to research independence for REF, and therefore your eligibility for inclusion in our REF 2021 submission.

The rules of the REF 2021 specify that all staff who have significant responsibility for research [1]-6.6rmp are eligible for inclusion in the REF 2021 submission. If you are an independent researcher, you should complete the form rather than carrying out another process.

¹ The REF 2021 guidance

proposes a number of indicators that can be used to determine research independence for REF purposes. We have used those indicators to develop the University's criteria for this process.

This document provides you with guidance on the University's process for determining research independence for REF. It also includes a REF Research Independence Form where you can provide information about your current role and responsibilities in relation to the REF independence criteria. This information will be used by the University to determine your REF eligibility. It is essential that you provide accurate information; the national REF Team and REF Panels may request this information through audit queries. The details you provide in this form will be used as supporting evidence when answering audit queries.

It is important to note that the definitions and criteria used in these documents relate purely and exclusively to the REF 2021 and do not relate to any internal evaluations of your performance or status. The information you provide will therefore only be used to determine research independence for REF purposes.

¹ REF 2021 Guidance on submissions, paragraph 131.

independence and eligibility for REF. It cannot be used as evidence in any assessment of performance, for example, cases for promotion.

Process & Criteria

The University has put in place a Code of Practice setting out the principles that guide our REF 2021 submission. The Code sets out the following mechanisms to determine research independence for REF:

If you hold a Research Fellowship included on the List of Independent Research Fellowships² published by the funding bodies, and your fellowship is not asterisked ³ on that list, then you are automatically considered to meet the REF definition of research independence. This list was

relevant sections and return it to REF.admin@reading.ac.uk as soon as possible and no later than [INSERT DEADLINE] .

Step 3: UOA Leads will review each form relevant to the UOA, and make a recommendation to the REF Planning Group on whether individual

REPORTING MANAGER COMMENT

Please comment on the accuracy of the information provided by the researcher. For finance/publication details, please confirm that project codes and publication IDs are correct. For proposals and work in progress, please confirm the nature of these activities and the role of

3.6 Recruit and supervise/co- supervise doctoral students.

RESEARCHER EVIDENCE

Please list the doctoral students you are/have supervised either as main or co-supervisor.

Only include supervision where you are/have been formally named on the University's student record system (RISIS).

REPORTING MANAGER COMMENT

Please comment on the accuracy of the details provided by the researcher and their role as supervisor/co-supervisor.

Section 4: Signatures

RESEARCHER

Researchers: Once signed (electronically) , please send your form to REF.admin@reading.ac.uk no later than [INSERT DEADLINE].

REPORTING MANAGER

Reporting Managers: once you have completed the Reporting Manager sections, please return it to REF.admin@reading.ac.uk no later than [INSERT DEADLINE].

Staff deposit outputs in CentAUR

Staff submit outputs into ROSS for internal peer review

Peer review of ROSS outputs undertaken within Research Divisions

Candidate outputs selected in ROSS amalgamated centrally by UOA to form the pool of eligible outputs for each UOA

UOA Lead undertakes academic validation of eligible pool

UOA Leads and local REF teams conduct additional peer review and/or review of metrics as required & undertake interim modelling

UOA Leads

and provides feedback to UOA Leads

Code of Practice Annex G

The REF Planning Group will receive from the Personal Circumstances Group a number of declarations and aggregated agreed outputs reductions. The Planning Group will use the following criteria in order to determine whether to request reductions from the funding bodies:

- 1) Units where the percentage of Category A staff declarations is higher than the

Unit's total Category A staff declarations. Reductions will be requested on the basis of the large proportion of staff affected by personal circumstances which affects the productivity of the unit through a) impact on a large number of individuals, and b) impact on research time available to other staff in the unit as a consequence of increased workloads in terms of

University of Reading declaration of individual personal circumstances form

This document is being sent to all eligible staff whose outputs are eligible for submission to REF2021 (see [‘Guidance on submissions’](#), paragraphs 117-122).

As part of the University’s commitment to supporting equality and diversity in REF, we have put in place safe and supportive structures for staff to declare information affecting their performance.

- Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of the standard allowances
- Caring responsibilities (e.g. for elderly parents or children who may have a disability where you are the primary carer)
- Gender reassignment
- COVID-19 specific related circumstances, applicable only for cases of removal of the minimum requirement of one output

To submit this form you should email the completed form to the following mailbox: REFcircumstances@reading.ac.uk. You should submit the completed form no later than 30 September 2020

Name: [Click here to insert text.](#)

Department: [Click here to insert text.](#)

Please complete this form if you have one or more applicable equality-related circumstance (see above) which you are willing to declare. Please provide requested information in relevant box(es).

Circumstance	Time period affected
<p>Early Career Researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016) .</p> <p>Details of the date you became an early career researcher, context and justification are needed. Please see Annex 1 which provides details about the information you need to provide in relation to context and justification</p>	<p>Click here to enter a date.</p> <p>Use this box to provide information justifying your ECR status</p>
<p>Career break or secondment outside of the HE sector .</p> <p>Dates and durations in months.</p> <p>Family -related leave ;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Statutory/occupational maternity leave · Statutory/occupational adoption leave · paternity leave lasting for four months or more · shared parental leave lasting for four months or more. 	<p>Click here to enter dates and durations.</p>

For each period of leave, state the nature of the leave taken and the dates and durations in

<p>Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of standard allowance</p> <p>To include: Type of leave taken and brief description of additional constraints, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Caring responsibilities</p> <p>To include: Nature of responsibility, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Gender reassignment</p> <p>To include: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>

I confirm that (you must check one of the two boxes, as relevant to you):

- a) Despite the personal circumstances outlined above, I have been able to publish a REF eligible output during the REF 2021 assessment period (1 January 2014 – 31 July 2020).

OR

- b) Due to the personal circumstances outlined above, I have not been able to publish a REF eligible output during the REF 2021 assessment period (1 January 2014 – 31 July 2020).

Please confirm, by ticking the box provided below, that:

- This information has been declared voluntarily
- The above information provided is a true and

Annex 1: Early Career Researcher definition and guidance

For the purposes of REF 2021, an Early Career Researcher is defined as a member of staff who meet the definition of Category A eligible staff on the census date (31 July 2020), and who started their careers as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016.

Main examples could include the following:

- A member of staff who began their first academic appointment on or after 1 August 2016 in a post for which independent research is a contractual expectation (for example a Teaching and Research lecturer). This could be at another institution or organisation
- A research fellow who first met the definition of an independent researcher after 1 August 2016, for example through being awarded an externally funded fellowship, or the point at which they met the University's criteria. This could be at another institution or organisation, for example a Research Council institute or a company

You would not meet the definition of an Early Career Researcher, if you acted as an independent researcher at another HEI or organisation prior to 1 August 2016.

Please provide the date and brief prior career history. Example text could be:

- "This is the date of my appointment as a probationary lecturer at the University of Reading. Prior to this point, I was completing my PhD at the University of Sussex"
- "This is the date when I was awarded a Leverhulme independent Fellowship. Prior to this date, I was a research assistant at the University of Durham working on Project X"
- "I was appointed as a Probationary Lecturer at the University on 1 August 2018. I first became an independent researcher when I took up a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Max Planck Institute on 1 January 2017. Prior to this appointment, I was completing my PhD at the University of Vienna"
-

Code of Practice Timeline

Date	Communications
July 2019	Submitted Code of Practice communicated
September 2019	Final Code of Practice Communicated Process for determining research independence starts
October 2019	Process for declaration of circumstances starts
November 2019	Decisions on circumstances (PCG) and communication with staff who declared circumstances (PVC R&I)

	Process for determining research independence ^{REF} (round 2) starts
May 2020	Process for declaration of circumstances ^{REF} (round 2) starts
June 2020	Decisions on reductions due to personal circumstances made (CPG)
July 2020	Decisions on Research Independence ^{REF} (round 2) made (REF PG) Staff Census Date
August 2020	Process for declaration of personal circumstances start (round 3) Process for determining research independence ^{REF} (round 3) starts Appeals (research independence and circumstances round 2)
September	Decisions on Research Independence (round 3)
October	Decisions on reductions due to personal circumstances round 3 (PCG) Appeals (research independence round 3)
November 2020	Appeals (personal circumstances round 3)
December 2020	Outputs Census Date
January / February 2021	Decisions on outputs pool made (REF PG)
March 2021	REF submission
Spring 2021	Communication to all staff on submission, including outputs pool submitted Publication of the final EIA