



University of
East London

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NO

REF2021 Code of Practice

June 2019 - revised September 2019



NO

REF2021 Research
Excellence
Framework

The University of East London REF Code of Practice

This document has been produced in accordance with the requirements set out in the REF2021 *Guidance on submissions* (January 2019) and the *Guidance on codes of practice* (January 2019). It will be submitted to the REF Team by 7th June 2019 and will be examined by the REF's *Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel* (EDAP) and published, with the submissions, at the end of the REF's assessment process in 2021.

A copy of this *Code of Practice*, as submitted to the REF, will be published on the University's public website.

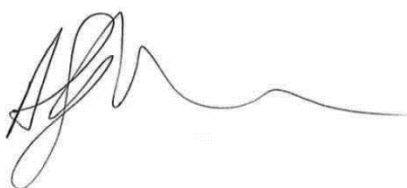
All names and references mentioned in this *Code of Practice* are correct as of June 2019. These, and any other information within this *Code of Practice*, may be updated, as necessary, during the remaining REF period and published accordingly.

This *Code of Practice* has been reviewed and approved by the University's REF Task and Finish Group and the University's Vice Chancellor and President.

The Vice Chancellor and President of the University of East London hereby confirms the University's adherence to this *Code of Practice*:

Signed

Date: 7th June 2012

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Broderick', written in a cursive style.

Professor Amanda J. Broderick

Vice Chancellor and President, University of East London

Revisions have been made to the original version of the University of East London's REF2021 *Code of practice*, submitted in June 2019, in response to Research England's letter of 16th August 2019, regarding confirmation of staff agreement for the definition of 'significant responsibility for research'. The University's response can be seen in Appendix I, signed by the Vice Chancellor and President of the University of East London, with an addition to the main body of the *Code* in section 2.4.3.

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Part 1: Introduction to the University of East London's *Code of Practice*

This is the University of East London's *Code of Practice* for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021. Under REF2021, this *Code of Practice* is mandatory and must be submitted to the REF for approval no later than 7th June 2019. Within the Institution, the *Code of Practice* has received final approval from the Vice Chancellor and President of the University of East London, Professor Amanda J Broderick, following a period of consultation.

It is the responsibility of the University to ensure:

- that all decisions regarding which individuals and research outputs will be submitted to REF2021 adhere to the agreed definitions and criteria set out in this *Code of Practice*;
- that all definitions, communication, guidance and decisions conform to current equality and diversity legislation and to the guidance given in REF2021 documentation;
- that all processes to achieve the above are demonstrably fair, consistent, inclusive and transparent;
- that all data collection processes adhere to the requirements of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation);
- that everyone involved with the University's REF2021 submissions understands the University's criteria and procedures.

1.1 What is the *Code of Practice*?

The *Code of Practice* explains the rules and processes governing decision-making, by the University of East London, for the submission of staff and research outputs to REF2021. It provides guidance to all those being considered for submission and to those involved in any of the processes which contribute to the final decisions as to which people and research outputs are submitted. Underlying the *Code of Practice* is a fundamental commitment to the research careers of staff. The *Code* has been written in conjunction with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team within the University's Human Resources department and in response to consultation with staff.

1.2 What is the purpose of the *Code of Practice*?

The REF asks HEIs to submit the excellent research of all their staff with 'significant responsibility' for research (the definition for which is explained in Part 2 of this document). In order to do this, it is the University's responsibility to establish robust procedures, set out in its *Code of Practice*, so that all those involved with REF2021:

- i. understand and meet their responsibilities to promote equality and diversity in all aspects of the REF submission;
- ii. adopt and put into practice effective processes and criteria designed to demonstrate fairness and meet the core principles of the REF, those of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity;
- iii. help to create an environment where people feel they are respected and valued;
- iv. draw on the talents, skills, experience, networks and different cultural perspectives of the diverse University community;
- v. communicate all relevant information, and the results of any decisions made, within appropriate timescales and in accessible formats;
- vi. contribute to an overall quality profile consistent with our vision of a University of quality and distinction.

For staff who have the potential to be submitted, the *Code of Practice* will explain:

- vii. the procedures that will be used to establish University definitions for 'significant

- responsibility for research' and 'independent researcher', the criteria for which will determine who will be submitted to REF2021;
- viii. the criteria, and their application, for all definitions that affect the submission of staff and research outputs to REF2021;
 - ix. the process and grounds for appeal against decisions on staff submission and output selection;
 - x. how all relevant REF information and decisions will be communicated.

These key themes are expanded upon later in this document.

1.3 Preparation of the *Code of Practice*

This Code of Practice has been compiled using the guidance provided by the REF Team in their REF2021 *Guidance on submissions* (January 2019); *Guidance on codes of practice* (January 2019); *Panel criteria and working methods* (January 2019) and will continue to be reviewed with reference to any other advice and guidance available on the official REF2021 website (<https://www.ref.ac.uk/>).

1.4 Supporting equality, diversity and inclusion

As reflected in UEL's new 10-year strategy, *Vision 2028*, the University is committed to increasing the diversity of the talent pipeline for a rapidly changing world – realising the potential of all its students, graduates and staff. The University is proud of the progress already made, but recognises the continuing challenges and is steadfast in its commitment to an inclusive environment.

1.4.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and actions

The aim of UEL's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) action plan is to translate our EDI policy, as well as the EDI values embedded within *Vision 2028*, into practice. Development of the University's EDI action plan has been underpinned by an evidence-based approach through data collection and consultation. Alongside understanding the broader strategic context at UEL, analysis of the current picture has enabled the Institution to begin to establish a more detailed baseline in relation to equality and diversity at UEL, as well as to understand current good practice and where development is needed. This evidence base has included extensive consultation particularly in relation to UEL's Athena SWAN and Race Equality Charter work. As a result, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion key strategic aims have been developed as a framework for more specific EDI objectives. The University's annual EDI reports provide a snapshot analysis of the student and staff demographic and of specific processes such as staff recruitment.

Equality and diversity data, and further consultation, will continue to be integral to EDI planning at UEL, for example through staff networks (Women's, BAME, LGBTQ+ and Disability). Additionally, UEL is working on developing EDI dashboards for both student and staff data to enable monitoring of progress and identification of future actions.

1.4.2 Equality, diversity and inclusion governance

EDI reporting and governance is led by the institutional Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee, chaired by the Vice Chancellor and President of the University. Each of the University's three Colleges has an EDI committee, which reports to the College Senior Management Teams (SMTs) and through which to:

- facilitate implementation of UEL's equality, diversity and inclusion objectives at local College or service level in order to promote equality;
- monitor relevant College/service level data in relation to EDI and develop appropriate SMART objectives to address issues at School or service level (ie. through a local action plan);

- progress the local EDI action plan, refreshing the aims and actions of the plan as appropriate and devising metrics to evaluate progress;
- provide a staff and student forum in which the development and implementation of the local EDI action plan can be explored and evaluated.

UEL's equality accreditation work is managed via our Athena SWAN steering group and Race Equality Charter implementation group, both of which include College representation and report to the institutional EDI Committee.

1.4.3 Other UEL policies and guidance supporting equality, diversity and inclusion

The University has a number of policies, guidance and support documentation that reflect the institutional approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and are relevant to the development and implementation of the processes and guidance contained within this *Code of Practice*.

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (2017) - currently being updated;
- Equality and Diversity Annual Reports - available on the University intranet;
- Equality Analysis: A guide for all staff and managers;
- Disability Employment Policy;

Part of the Flexible Working suite of policies:

- Maternity, Spouse or Partner and Adoption Leave Policy;
- Shared Parental Leave and Pay Policy;
- Flexible Employment Policy - overarching policy, part of the Employee Handbook;
- Maternity Leave Planning Checklist and Guidance for Line Managers - re-induction programme and mentor/coach offered, risk assessment, flexible working, etc.;

Flexible working resources:

- Flexible Mobile Employees: flexible working covering a range of options;
- Flexible Teams at UEL: a presentation on Flexible Working;
- The Flex-fit Toolkit: job analysis toolkit for identifying potential for flexibility in any role.

There are a number of additional guidance documents covering a wide range of very specific topics relating to understanding and accommodating specific situations for staff in the workplace, from breastfeeding mothers to gender reassignment to unconscious bias and more.

1.4.4 Equality, diversity and inclusion monitoring

UEL has an equality analysis process and guide to help review activities, processes or new policies through the lens of the Equality Duty and to identify where actions can be taken to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. It is anticipated that by actively considering equality issues from the outset through equality analysis this will create smarter practices and services that anticipate different needs and support an inclusive learning and working environment (expanded further in 1.4, below).

1.4.5 Equality, diversity and inclusion - legislative guidance for REF2021

The processes and guidance detailed in this *Code of Practice* fall under the overarching legislation of the Equality Act (2010). This legislation:

- i. relates to the actions taken by the University in response to identified issues arising from UEL's REF2014 submission - details are shown in 1.4, below;
- ii. gives guidance to those who have responsibility for implementing the processes explained in this *Code of Practice*, particularly in relation to 'protected characteristics', listed below and explained in detail in Appendix B of this document, where unconscious bias may be a factor;

- iii. underpins the Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) run on the data generated by the processes and procedures used to identify the people and outputs who will be submitted to REF2021, in relation to some of the 'protected characteristics' - the use of EIAs is described in 2.8;
- iv. is used in the staff circumstances process to identify, provide support for and, optionally, to enable a reduction in the number of outputs required for submission for those people who, during the REF2021 period, have been unable to produce an expected volume of outputs - this is explained in 4.5.

Protected characteristics

Within the *Equality Act (2010)*, the following are known as 'protected characteristics' and are, therefore, protected from unlawful discrimination:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Sex;
- Pregnancy/Maternity;
- Marriage/Civil Partnership;
- Race (including nationality, national or ethnic origin, and colour);
- Sexual Orientation;
- Gender Reassignment;
- Religion/belief (or lack of).

Purpose of the Equality Act (2010)

The Equality Act imposes a general duty on HEIs to:

- i. eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
- ii. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share that characteristic;
- iii. foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share that characteristic.

1.5 Update on actions relating to equality, diversity and inclusion since REF2014

Over the past few years the University has made progress in a number of areas which will also support improving equity in relation to the research environment and research outputs, including achieving the institutional Athena SWAN Bronze Award in October 2017 and the institutional Race Equality Charter award in May 2019. In addition, there have been changes in practice relating to 'protected characteristics', particularly relating, but not limited, to gender (including the representation of women in science, engineering and technology), BME and disability. The University has introduced a new *Equality and Diversity Strategy* following extensive consultation to ensure that we more fully meet the requirements of the *Equality Act 2010*. One of its specific objectives is to increase the representation at senior management and academic level of women and black and minority ethnic groups, and of younger staff.

1.5.1 Athena SWAN

The University is working on a programme of School Athena SWAN submissions - our School of Psychology was the first to achieve a bronze award in July 2018. It is expected that all the Schools will have submitted by April 2020. Through these processes, the University has identified specific developmental needs, for example, in relation to addressing gender imbalances within the quality and quantity of research outputs.

1.5.2 Changes in practice

Recruitment

UEL's recruitment process was reviewed in 2015 and changes implemented during the 2016 - 2017 academic year. Changes include the introduction of anonymous shortlisting (initially for professional and support staff (PSS) and then all posts), requirements for at least one BME panel member (alongside previous gender representation requirements) and compulsory unconscious bias training for all recruitment panel members. An Equality and Diversity statement is in all job adverts and Equality and Diversity requirements are included within all person specifications. Through the University's Athena SWAN and Race Equality self-assessment processes, further improvements have been identified aimed at:

- attracting more diverse talent pools for women at senior grades and, in terms of ethnicity, at all academic grades;
- ensuring more meaningful representation of BME staff in recruitment panels;
- identifying recruitment strategies which recognise the different profiles and issues in different academic disciplines.

The University has recently recruited a Resourcing Manager who will have a key role in developing and implementing recruitment strategies in collaboration with the Executive Deans of the Colleges.

Career development framework

The proposed introduction of a new academic talent management framework, currently undergoing consultation, will allow a more systematic alignment with institutional goals through a focussed learning and development portfolio addressing expected skills and behaviours.

Mentoring and leadership programmes

The EDI team has run an externally accredited mentoring programme linked to Athena SWAN since 2015-16. In developing this programme, consideration was given to all protected characteristics from the outset. While initially focusing on female academics, in 2017-18 the programme was expanded to cover PSS and BME academics. Since 2016-17, there have been funded Advance HE Aurora and Diversifying Leadership (DL) programmes running alongside the University's mentoring programme. Going forward, UEL will ensure that mentoring and leadership align to the University's internal talent management strategies.

1.6 Principles of transparency, consistency, accountability, inclusivity and fairness

REF2021 builds on the strengthening of equality and diversity seen in REF2014 and continues to emphasise the principles of transparency, consistency, accountability, inclusivity and fairness in underpinning all decisions and practices for submissions to REF2021.

Changes in the process of identifying which staff should be submitted to REF2021 require greater consultation with staff than previous exercises. This is particularly true for institutions who are not submitting 100% of their staff and are, therefore, required to identify all staff who have 'significant responsibility for research', the definition for which is agreed by individual institutions following a period of representative consultation. These changes have been made in recognition that "previous assessment exercises had potentially deleterious effects on individuals, their career choices, progression and morale." (*Guidance on submissions*, January 2019).

The University of East London will apply these principles to all aspects of the development and implementation of the definitions, guidance and processes within this *Code of Practice*.

1.7 Communication of the *Code of Practice* to staff

All consultation processes and final delivery of the REF2021 *Code of Practice* will be conducted through a combination of the following, as appropriate:

- staff email;
- post, where other forms of contact are not available;
- use of the UEL intranet pages;
- through meetings and other forms of verbal communication, conveyed via the network of unit of assessment teams and directors of research throughout the University (School/College Research Committee meetings; School/College meetings);
- REF newsletters;
- Microsoft Teams sites within the University's intranet.

Responsibility for these forms of communication will lie with the Research Excellence Team and the HR department, with oversight from the PVC Impact and Innovation. Communication will continue after the *Code of Practice* has been submitted and feedback from staff will continue to inform necessary changes to the *Code of Practice*. The same processes will apply to other aspects of the REF2021 submission processes, including the staff circumstances process described in 4.5.

Communication processes for consultation are explained in more detail later in 2.4 of this document.

1.8 Confidentiality and data protection

During the course of compiling submissions to REF2021, a large amount of data will be collected on staff and research assessment, as well more general information for impact case studies and on the research environment. Some of these data will be submitted to the REF - see 1.8.2 for details of the REF Team's commitment to safe and confidential use and storage of data. The University has already put in place procedures regarding the confidentiality and safe storage of data, but will continue to keep these under review.

1.8.1 The University's Responsibilities

The University will adhere to all legislation referring to data confidentiality and the handling of data, specifically the *General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679* and the *Data Protection Act (2018)*. The University REF Task and Finish Group will continue to take advice on data protection from the University's Data Protection Officer, who has also been consulted for this *Code of Practice*. All personal information will be treated with sensitivity and in confidence, with restricted access, as detailed in 4.5.3. The University has also adopted the REF's *Privacy Notice for users of REF Submission and Assessment Systems* - see Appendix D.

1.8.2 How confidentiality will be observed

All staff involved in the handling and storage of confidential information must abide by the University's *Data Protection Policy (2018)*, *Information Security Strategy (2016)* and *Records Management Policy (2018)*, copies of which are available on the UEL staff and student intranet. All confidential data will be kept in protected areas on the University's computer systems, with password protection of key files, ie. those holding staff information that is not already in the public domain. All staff who have responsibility for generating or handling these data will have signed a confidentiality statement. For the staff circumstances process, where information of a particularly confidential nature may be collected, access will be restricted to the members of the University's Review Panel of Staff Circumstances, only (see 1.8.3, below). All confidential information generated by the staff circumstances process will be retained until the final results of REF2021 have been published (likely to be the beginning of 2022). Any other data that falls under the GDPR will be

retained as agreed with the University's Data Protection Officer.

1.8.3 The REF Team's Responsibilities

The REF's policy on confidentiality and protection of data is set out in paragraphs 98 to 100 in the REF2021 *Guidance on submissions* document. Of particular importance in this statement is how the REF Team will use the information collected from HEIs. As with the University, the REF Team will restrict access to information supplied on staff circumstances, details of which are shown in *Guidance on submissions* (January 2019), paragraphs 151 to 197. Other data will be treated, as follows:

“We will collect, store and process all information submitted by HEIs to the REF in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Information will be processed for the purposes of conducting and evaluating the REF. Information may be shared with other organisations to facilitate this, and will be shared with panel chairs, members, assessors, secretaries and observers, who are all bound by confidentiality arrangements. As stated in paragraph 43, we will extract and pass some information to HESA to enable data verification. We will also publish parts of submissions on the internet (as described in paragraph 36). We will use information from HEIs to monitor the diversity of staff selected for the REF. **HEIs should ensure that individuals whose work is included in their submissions are aware of these uses, including the publication of submissions.**” (January 2019)

Part 2: Identifying staff with ‘significant responsibility for research’

2.1 Context

The University of East London is a teaching-focussed institution, with research undertaken across all areas of academic activity. When the University was first granted its university status, the majority of staff were given teaching and research contracts. Despite staff contracts stipulating a requirement to do research, there has been no consistent expectation to do research nor has there been, necessarily, protected research time, although workload allocation models that include research are used in some areas of the Institution. As a result, the University has a substantial number of staff on teaching and research contracts, even though there is no institutional expectation to engage in research. For this reason, the University has chosen not to submit 100% of staff who have ‘teaching and research’ contracts to REF2021, but instead to identify staff, through a set of criteria and indicators, as having ‘significant responsibility for research’. These staff will submit outputs to REF2021.

Decision on identifying staff for submission to REF2021

The Institution recognised that the lack of a clearly understood, fairly and transparently applied and accountable workload allocation model was affecting the quality of its research, teaching and scholarship. The University’s senior management took the decision, in 2016, to begin work on a more flexible framework which would ‘reward excellence in both teaching and research’ (Bird, 2017, from a report submitted to the University’s Vice Chancellor’s Group).

At the time of submission of this REF2021 *Code of Practice*, an extended ‘academic framework’, incorporating career pathways, performance management and a workload allocation model, designed to give fair and accountable recognition for all types of academic activity, is in its consultation phase. It comprises a set of career pathways through which all staff are recognised and rewarded for their contribution to academic life. If the new ‘academic framework’ is in place before submission to REF2021 in November 2020, **all staff on the research-related pathways of the ‘academic framework’ will be deemed to have ‘significant responsibility for research’ and they will be submitted to REF2021.** It is to be noted, however, that the pathways will be not be determined by the volume or perceived quality of current or past activity for any individual. Rather, institutional priorities, which will differ from area to area, and by individual job-roles in some cases, will confirm that research is not an expectation of the role. Where research is an expectation, a developmental pathway will provide support for staff who are currently not producing research at the volume or quality expected.

Therefore, pending the implementation of this ‘academic framework’, in consultation with staff, we have developed a set of criteria and indicators to identify staff who currently have ‘significant responsibility for research’, which do not have regard for any perceived quality indicators. These will be applied to all academic staff currently outside the ‘academic framework’ or, in the event that the ‘academic framework’ is not implemented, the criteria and indicators will be applied to all staff on teaching and research contracts at the University.

2.2 Principles applied to defining ‘significant responsibility for research’

The University has sought a definition of ‘significant responsibility for research’ that is sustainable in terms of finance, time and resources, in the context of a teaching-focussed institution that wishes to maintain a high quality, industry-applied and socially relevant research base. It is important that this definition can be applied fairly, consistently and transparently across the Institution. It must also be accountable and give staff the flexibility to adjust their career priorities according to their needs and

the requirements of the Institution. This means that staff who had not been expected to research, previously, are being given the opportunity to develop their research to meet the eligibility criteria by the REF2021 date of submission (November 2020).

2.3 Definition of 'significant responsibility for research'

A set of criteria and indicators will be used by this Institution to identify all staff to whom it has given 'significant responsibility' for doing research and thereby confirming they can be submitted to REF2021. The criteria apply to full-time and part-time staff, whether on permanent or fixed term contracts. In broad terms, having 'significant responsibility for research' means, for those staff with teaching and research contracts, that they are independent researchers (see Part 3 for the criteria and indicators for independent researcher) who explicitly have time allocated for research and are expected to undertake research as part of their job role. Annual performance and development reviews examine evidence of that research activity in the context of work-load planning. The University acknowledges the REF's mandate that any definition used to determine who is submitted to REF2021 **cannot** use the quality of outputs as a criterion, in an attempt to limit the number of people submitted by using a highly selective and subjective measure of qualification.

2.3.1 Standard REF2021 requirements for submission

To be eligible for submission to REF2021, all staff must meet all the requirements shown in i), ii) and iii), as follows:

- i. have a **teaching and research or research only contract** on the census date, 31st July 2020, as defined by HESA (see exceptions in the definition of 'independent researcher', in Part 3);
- ii. have a **minimum 0.2FTE contract**, regardless of whether permanent or temporary;
- iii. **independent researcher** - all staff submitted to REF2021 must meet the definition of 'independent researcher' shown in Section 3 of this *Code of Practice*. Staff to whom the research-related pathway within the 'academic framework' applies will be assumed to meet the definition of 'independent researcher'. This definition will also be applied to:
 - staff who do research, but fall outside the College/School structure of the University;
 - staff on research only contracts (see 2.3.2);
 - early career researchers (see 2.3.2);

2.3.2 Staff who fall within the scope for submission to REF2021

University of East London staff must also fall into one or more of the following categories to be considered for submission to REF2021. They must meet the appropriate criteria specified for that category. Look at Table 1 to see if you are within scope.

- i. **New 'academic framework' (workload allocation model)** - staff on one of the designated research-related pathways within the University's new workload allocation model will be submitted to REF2021 - these pathways do not apply to:
 - staff who do research, but fall outside the College/School 'academic framework' structure of the University (see 2.3.2, iii);
 - staff on research only contracts (see 2.3.2, iv).

The new 'academic framework' may be in place before the University makes its submission to REF2021. If this is the case, staff who are within the scope of the 'academic framework' and are on a research-related pathway, will be regarded as having been given 'significant responsibility for research' by the University;

- ii. **All staff on teaching and research contracts, if the new 'academic framework' is not implemented**, must meet the criteria and indicators for 'significant responsibility for research', shown in Table 2, below, to be submitted to REF2021;

- iii. **Research-active staff outside the College/School structure** must be independent researchers (see Part 3), meet the REF eligibility criteria, meet the criteria for 'significant responsibility for research' if not on a research only contract and/or have research explicitly designated within their contract and/or job description with specified time for research;
- iv. **Staff on research only contracts** are, by definition, employed to do research. However, in order to be eligible for submission to REF2021, they must also satisfy the University's definition of 'independent researcher' (see Part 3);
- v. **Early career researchers (ECRs)** will be eligible for submission to REF2021 if they are either:
 - on the new 'academic framework' developmental pathway for early career researchers
 - OR**
 - have been assessed as an early career researcher using the REF2021 criteria and satisfy the criteria for 'significant responsibility for research'.

2.3.3 Identification of staff

The following table shows the options for staff and how the definitions for both ‘significant responsibility for research’ and ‘independent researcher’ will be applied. This table was used as part of the consultation process. The developmental pathway, many aspects of which are available across the University, was thought to be an appropriate way of recognising staff who are doing research, but who are not research independent, thus they cannot be submitted to the REF at this time.

TABLE 1 Identifying staff pathways - the following information should be used in combination with the criteria/indicators for ‘Significant Responsibility for Research’ and ‘Independent Researcher’ in Tables 2 and 5.

STAFF OUTCOMES	STAFF PATHWAYS/OTHER	DEFINITIONS and EVIDENCE	CRITERIA/INDICATORS	CONTRACT TYPE
REF2021 SUBMISSION	<p>‘Academic framework’ (workload allocation model)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching and Research pathway <p>OTHER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outside ‘academic framework’, eg. research institutes, academic management, DoRs, etc. ‘Academic framework’ not implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant Responsibility for Research (UEL definition) - see Table 2 Independent Researcher (UEL definition) - see Table 5 <p>May include ECRs</p>	<p>See criteria/indicator tables for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‘Significant responsibility for research’ Independent researcher Employed by UEL on census date of 31st July 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching and Research contract Research Only contract 0.2 FTE minimum Permanent or temporary
<p>DEVELOPMENTAL (may or may not be submitted to REF2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time to develop for REF2021 Develop towards next REF 	<p>DEVELOPMENTAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECR (‘academic framework’ and REF) PhD (‘academic framework’) Mentored Research Fellowship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Career Researcher (REF2021 and UEL definitions) Mentorship programme Doing PhD Does not have ‘significant responsibility for research’ Not an independent researcher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In UEL ECR list, but doesn’t meet indicators required for independent researcher and/or ‘significant responsibility for research’ Meets REF definition of ECR, but doesn’t meet indicators required for independent researcher or ‘significant responsibility for research’ Self-declares as requiring mentoring and therefore does not have ‘significant responsibility for research’ Doing staff PhD Does not meet independent researcher definition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching and Research contract Research Only contract 0.2 FTE minimum Permanent or temporary
NOT BEING SUBMITTED TO REF2021	<p>‘Academic framework’ (workload allocation model)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching and Scholarship pathway Teaching and Knowledge Exchange pathway <p>OTHER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‘Academic framework’ not applicable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-declared non-researcher Other ‘academic framework’ Pathway (Teaching and Scholarship or Teaching and Knowledge Exchange) Not an independent researcher No evidence of research activity and has not been given ‘significant responsibility for research’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On Teaching Only contract - not eligible for REF2021 No research outputs 2014-2020 Produces outputs as the result of scholarship, but which do not meet the REF2021 definition of research No other signs of research activity Self-declared non-researcher No expectation of research activity or any form of accountability to do so Supervised research as evidenced by research activity Job role/description specifying supervised, rather than independent, research, eg. research assistants, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching and Research contract Research Only contract Teaching Only contract Full-time, part-time, permanent or temporary

2.3.4 Criteria for 'significant responsibility for research'

The following table was used as part of the consultation process to identify criteria and indicators that would be used to identify which staff within the University have been given 'significant responsibility for research'. The criteria and indicators shown in this table are those that were deemed appropriate, fair, inclusive and workable; they are a result of changes made during the course of the consultation process.

TABLE 2 - Meeting the UEL definition for 'significant responsibility for research'

If the 'academic framework' is introduced to UEL before submission to REF2021 in November 2020, this is likely to be the determinant for the submission of the majority of staff to REF2021. For staff outside the 'academic framework', or if the 'academic framework' is not in place before submission to REF2021, the criteria and indicators shown in this table will be used to determine which staff are submitted. To meet the criteria for 'significant responsibility for research', a staff member must meet the requirements of Categories 1 and 2 and one of the indicators in either Category 3 or Category 4. The criteria and indicators for Early Career Researchers are shown separately within the table.

Applies to	Category	Requirement	Criteria/indicators	Evidence
Teaching and Research and Research Only contracts	Category 1	Mandatory - required for submission to REF2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent researcher (see requirements) 	As shown in Table 5
Teaching and Research and Research Only contracts	Category 2	Mandatory - required for submission to REF2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has taken part in at least one Annual Research Review (ARR), ie. outputs have been reviewed internally and/or externally - exceptions for new staff (outputs will be reviewed outside the normal ARR schedule) Staff member must be producing outputs that meet the REF2021 definition of research, as shown in <i>Guidance on submissions</i> (January 2019), Annex C - the ARR will provide evidence 	UOAC/UOA REF team/Research Excellence Team
Teaching and Research (T&R) staff	Category 3	Evidence for one of these two indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of explicit allocation of time by College/School/Department/Institute to do research, at a minimum of 0.2FTE, and consideration of research activity in the annual performance review 	HoS/Department Head/Programme Leader/Academic
Teaching and Research (T&R) staff			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job description and/or contract formally specifying time for research, at a minimum of 0.2FTE, where research activity is a job requirement 	Academic/HR
OR				
Teaching and Research (T&R) staff	Category 4	Evidence for one of these two indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of recent research activity, from 2017 to 2020, supported by the university, unless there have been verifiable circumstances that have prevented the level of research activity normally expected as a condition of employment, as explained in <i>Guidance on submissions</i> (January 2019), paragraphs 178 - 183'. This will be covered in the staff circumstances process in Part 4 of the <i>Code of Practice</i>. 	ARR/Repository/UOACs/staff circumstances process/HoS/ Department Head/Programme Leader/Academic/HR
Teaching and Research (T&R) staff			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Won external income for research activity with an expectation of outputs and impact as outcomes, irrespective of the volume or quality of outputs produced. 	ReDS/Repository/Vertigo Ventures/ Academic/ARR
Teaching and Research and Research Only contracts	REF Early Career Researcher		Meets REF2021 definition of ECR and independent researcher criteria (Category 1) and Category 2 criteria and has sufficient research outputs to meet the requirements of their REF ECR status - see <i>Guidance on submissions</i> (January 2019), 146-149.	Staff circumstances process; as listed in Table 5 for 'independent researcher'; as shown for Category 2, above

2.4 Consultation on definitions

Proposed definitions and criteria for ‘significant responsibility for research’ and ‘research independence’ (see Part 3) were developed and groups of staff were identified who needed to be included in any consultation.

- Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators (UOACs) - academics responsible for co-ordinating a specific unit of assessment submission at UEL;
- College Directors of Research (DoRs) and research leads in UEL’s research Institutes;
- Unit of Assessment Impact Champions;
- Readers and Professors;
- Representatives of a staff Unions;
- University REF Task and Finish Group;
- University Impact and Innovation Committee members;
- College Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee members;
- College PGR committees;
- Any members of unit of assessment reading panels who do not fall into one of the groups, above;
- All academic staff who have an interest in research and in REF2021;
- Professional Services Support staff who have an involvement in the REF submission process, eg. from HR, the Graduate School, Finance, IT, the Library.

2.4.1 How consultation groups were identified

The consultation groups used were identified as either being representative of research staff across the institution, representing staff who would be most affected by the definitions or have a role in the guidance or implementation of this *Code of Practice*. All academic and professional support services staff within UEL have been given an opportunity to comment on the key definitions and the *Code of Practice* in its entirety.

TABLE 3 - Identifying consultation groups

	Identified Group	Why Chosen
1	College Directors of Research (DoRs)/Institute Research Leaders; Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators (UOACs); unit of assessment Impact Champions	This group is responsible for the day to day operation and oversight of identifying staff and outputs for submission to REF2021, in particular, carrying out the Annual Research Reviews of outputs (ARR) and ensuring that REF submission elements are in place for their unit(s) of assessment.
2	Readers and Professors	At the time this <i>Code of Practice</i> was written, Readers and Professors were, by definition, identified not just as researchers, but also as research leaders.
3	Members of University, College and School research-related committees	Members of these committees have an interest in research and have responsibility for the conduct and reporting of research practices within the University.
4	All staff on Research Only contracts	There are very few staff at UEL on Research Only contracts, but they are directly affected by the definition of independent researcher, as the only determinant available to them to decide whether or not they can be submitted to REF2021.
5	Identified leads for specialist groups such as Early Career Researchers (ECRs), members of research centres and research groups	By definition, these groups are research-related and may be affected by the definition of ‘research independence’ adopted.

	Identified Group	Why Chosen
6	All staff who have taken part in an Annual Research Review	The Annual Research Review (ARR) process is used to identify the breadth and quality of research undertaken by staff across the University, regardless of whether those members of staff have been given 'significant responsibility' to do research. Participation in the ARR process, and its outcomes, will be one of the determining factors for allocating staff to a 'academic framework' career pathway (see 4.2.1 and Appendix E), therefore these staff members have a vested interest in the definition of 'research independence'.
7	Deans of College and Heads of School who do not fall into any of the above groups	These people will have responsibility for ensuring that all processes affected by agreed definitions are implemented fairly, transparently and consistently across the Colleges/ Schools and need to understand what is being proposed.
8	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, HR and GDPR specialists at UEL	Professional Services staff who are directly involved in the REF submission processes and have contributed information and guidance to the <i>Code of Practice</i> .
9	Other Professional Support Services staff (PSS)	Many PSS staff assist in the preparation and support of the REF submissions and can give an interesting perspective on the definitions and processes being developed.

2.4.2 The method of consultation

Staff had been given the opportunity to attend events in 2017 explaining the changes to REF2021, particularly how staff would be submitted, as part of the consultation process on the REF's draft documentation. All staff were given a copy of the draft documents and the University's own summary of the proposed changes, to allow a general understanding amongst academic staff regarding the requirements of the *Code of Practice*. The key messages regarding how staff would be submitted continued to be reported to committees, task and finish groups, School and College meetings and at research events, throughout 2017 and 2018.

Consultation process

Given the time constraints of a multi-media consultation on the definitions, it was decided that face-to-face consultation would be the most effective way of eliciting meaningful reaction, feedback and constructive suggestions for change to the proposals. The consultation process was, as follows:

- i. all staff were notified of the consultation through a series of emails, with relevant consultation documents attached and invited to open meetings;
- ii. separate briefings on the definitions of 'significant responsibility for research' and 'research independence', along with the procedure for the selection of outputs, were sent to the UOACs and College Directors of Research to test the consultation process and to get initial feedback;
- iii. seven open meetings were held across the three main University campuses for all consultation groups, in May 2019, to explain the requirements of the *Code of Practice* and the relationship that it has with the ongoing work on the new 'academic framework' within the University - over 120 academic and professional support services staff attended; in addition there were several one-to-one discussions with staff;
- iv. the definitions have also been discussed at various University committees and task and finish groups and at meetings/events at College and School level, eg. University REF Task and Finish Group, University EDI Committee, etc. and with specific individuals such as the University's EDI Manager, the University's Data Protection Officer, the Vice Chancellor and President, the Director of HR and more;

- v. feedback was requested through a series of questions within the documents sent to staff, as well as asked at the consultation events and at relevant University and College/School meetings. Staff were asked to model the criteria on themselves and colleagues to test whether the outcome was what they expected and to suggest changes to the criteria/indicators that would ameliorate any perceived disadvantage or shortcoming.

The consultation documents included an introduction to REF2021 and to the *Code of Practice* consultation process and how to respond, including an explanation of why the *Code of Practice* is necessary. Other aspects of the *Code of Practice* not included in the briefings, such as the appeals process, equality and diversity and staff involved in the REF process within the University, were made available through access to the draft *Code of Practice* and the general consultation on the document itself.

Feedback was sent, either verbally or in writing, to the PVC Impact and Innovation and/or the Research Excellence Manager.

2.4.3 Feedback and assessment of consultation responses

There were recognised challenges in getting agreement on this *Code of Practice* without having the 'academic framework' in place, with its content, procedures and implementation still under discussion and consultation. It was decided that it was necessary to consult on a robust set of criteria and indicators for the definition of 'significant responsibility for research' that would stand in their own right, regardless of whether the 'academic framework' was implemented. The open meetings, 2.4.1, iii, above, were instrumental in explaining the issues and constraints in attempting to reach agreement on, and approval for, the *Code of Practice*.

Responsibility

Many changes were made to the criteria and definitions as a result of feedback and reaction at the consultation responses and revised documents were tested at subsequent events. Consultation responses have been collated and assessed by a group comprising the PVC Impact and Innovation, the Director of Research and Enterprise, the Research Excellence Manager, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager and the College Directors of Research and Institute Research Leads.

Criteria for assessing feedback

All feedback has been assessed and tested against the following criteria:

- do suggested amendments adhere to the guidance set out in the REF2021 *Guidance on submissions* (January 2019) and *Guidance on codes of practice* (January 2019)?
- do any suggested changes refer to the workings of the 'academic framework', which is an institutional structure and, therefore, cannot form part of the consultation on the *Code of Practice*?
- can suggested revisions be applied consistently and fairly across the University or is there a case for exceptions within some disciplines/units of assessment?
- do suggested changes conform to the REF principles of transparency, consistency, accountability, inclusivity and fairness?
- would suggested changes damage the University's reputation or disadvantage any individuals or groups of staff?
- has any feedback identified specific groups of staff and/or disciplines that might be disadvantaged by one or more of the criteria and/or indicators set out for 'significant responsibility for research' and/or 'research independence'?
- is the feedback constructive and feasible, enabling a workable solution or compromise?

Response to feedback

The University has undertaken to do the following in response to any feedback received:

- i. all written feedback will be acknowledged;
- ii. ideas for change, or areas of concern, may be discussed further with the ‘responders’;
- iii. changes will be made to the documentation where such changes are feasible and fair;
- iv. those listed in 2.4.3 ‘Responsibility’ will check for any unintended consequences that may result in making a change to any criteria or indicators;
- v. the changed parts of the *Code of Practice* will be sent to all consultation groups for final review.

All staff will receive a copy of the approved and agreed *Code of Practice*.

Note: Due to the uncertainty of whether the proposed ‘academic framework’ will be implemented during the REF period, consultation will continue in tandem with the work on the ‘academic framework’ in order to ensure equity between the definitions and criteria stated within the *Code of Practice* and the ‘academic framework’. **The University has received agreement from representative staff groups for the definition of ‘significant responsibility for research’, as detailed in the University’s response, shown in Appendix I, to the letter from Research England, dated 16th August 2019, which sought clarification on this point.**

2.5 Policies, processes and procedures for making decisions

This section applies to the data required for determining ‘significant responsibility for research’ and ‘research independence’ (Parts 2 and 3 of this document, respectively) and that derived from the identification of Early Career Researchers (explained in 4.5).

2.5.1 Collection of data on which criteria are based

The Research Excellence Team, within the centrally-based Research and Enterprise department, provides the day-to-day operational resource, collection and guidance for the University’s REF2021 submissions. The Team is responsible for ensuring that accurate information is available so that the criteria used to identify staff for submission are applied correctly. All data are collected and stored by the Research Excellence Team in compliance with confidentiality and GDPR rules (see 1.8).

It is important to note that identification of, and decisions on, which staff will be submitted to REF2021 are separate from decisions regarding which outputs will be selected for submission. A person’s ‘eligibility’ for submission, as set out in this *Code of Practice*, is not dependent on the quality and quantity of research outputs that they have generated during the REF2021 period.

The following table shows the types and provenance of data which will be used to help identify which staff will be submitted to REF2021 and on what basis. Not all of the information types will be necessary for each staff category being considered, eg. proof of research independence will not be required for those covered by the ‘academic framework’.

TABLE 4 - Data supplied for identification of staff for submission to REF2021

Staff Information	Data Details	Obtained From
Staff on the ‘academic framework’		
‘Academic framework’ research-related pathway	List of staff allocated to each career pathway, including research-related ones	In HR supplied spreadsheet
Staff outside the ‘academic framework’ or if the ‘academic framework’ is not implemented		

Research-active staff outside the College/School structure or outside the workload allocation model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of staff with roles outside the Colleges and Schools and outside the workload allocation model Evidence of requirement to do research shown in either an employment contract or job description 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR system, in supplied spreadsheets Discussion with individual members of staff/line managers regarding job description and/or employment contract
Additional/Supporting Information (mainly applies to staff outside the workload allocation model)		
Eligible contract type	Staff list showing HESA contract types, ie. research only, teaching and research (final check on census date)	Part of the annual HESA return by HR department, supplied in HR spreadsheet
Employment hours	Staff list showing FTE and contracted hours, to identify fractional staff and overall FTE	In HR supplied spreadsheet
Independent researcher	<p>The evidence for 'independent researcher' (Part 3) is supplied as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff on research-related career pathway List of staff with a research only contract Returned to HESA as an Early Career Researcher meeting REF2021 definition and/or on developmental Early Career Researcher pathway Terms and Conditions for research fellowships Evidence of PI/Co PI/CI status (external funding) Proof of PI equivalency for unfunded research List of eligible T and R staff not in College/School structure and/or outside the workload allocation model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spreadsheet from HR system Spreadsheet from HR system From staff circumstances process and/or HR supplied spreadsheet - Research Excellence Team and HR Fellowship scheme website (REF2021 supplied) ReDS team in Research and Enterprise Supplied by researcher - description of research projects and output lists From HR system, supplied in spreadsheet
Early career researchers	HESA returned information derived from REF2021 staff circumstances process	Staff circumstances conducted by Research Excellence Team and HR and verified by <i>Review Panel of Staff Circumstances</i>

2.5.2 Processes for creating REF2021 staff submission lists

- Data shown in Table 4, above, will be given to the Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators and the College/School Directors of Research and Institute research leads, as appropriate, and in accordance with any GDPR or other confidentiality requirement, in order to compile lists of people, by unit of assessment, who meet the criteria for submission to REF2021;
- No other data, other than that shown in Table 4, above, will be used to make the recommendations on staff for submission;
- The Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators and the College/School Directors of Research and Institute research leads will follow 'significant responsibility for research' and 'research independence' flowcharts that will be supplied to them later in 2019, to determine how to apply the criteria, and to whom, and thus create a list of staff who should be submitted to REF2021, for their unit of assessment;

- By definition, all staff on research-related pathways in the workload model will be independent researchers and have been given a 'significant responsibility' to do research by the University;
- The process of compiling the lists will be overseen by the Research Excellence Manager and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager to ensure that the criteria are applied in a consistent, fair and transparent way and that every member of staff has been accounted for;
- The lists of names will be subject to EIAs to either confirm that no identifiable ('protected characteristics') group of staff has been disadvantaged or, where this has occurred, put in place a set of actions to address the issues revealed (see 2.8);
- The HR supplied names will be compared to the lists of staff already held by Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators as part of the annual research review process (4.2), which determines the quality and quantity of research outputs within specific units of assessment, to ensure that no staff have been unaccounted for;
- There are a number of staff at UEL who can be submitted to more than one unit of assessment (UOA) - where this is the case, the process described in 'Determining unit of assessment', below, will be followed by the relevant Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators;
- The staff names of those who meet the submission criteria will be put forward to the *REF Oversight Group*, along with all supporting evidence;
- The *REF Oversight Group*, chaired by the PVC Impact and Innovation (see Appendix A for membership and remit information), must:
 - a. check that the criteria have been followed accurately and therefore the correct names appear on each UOA list;
 - b. review and test any strategic decisions regarding which UOA a person (and their outputs) is allocated to and ensure that these decisions have been made in a fair and consistent manner, in accordance with the guidance and criteria in 'Determining unit of assessment', below;
 - c. send the recommended lists of staff to the *University REF2021 Decision Panel*, with or without amendments.
- Any changes made by the REF Oversight Group to the staff lists must be supported by verifiable evidence and included in the information passed to the *University REF2021 Decision Panel*.

It is expected that subsequent recruitment, and departure, of staff and changes in staff who meet the submission criteria will require a repeat of this process at several points leading up to REF submission.

2.5.3 Determining unit of assessment

A number of staff at UEL have research that crosses the disciplinary boundaries defined by the REF2021 units of assessment. Where this occurs, staff members' research outputs will have been reviewed in all appropriate units of assessment, as part of UEL's Annual Research Review process (see 4.2). The outcomes of the Annual Research Reviews will be used to assist in decisions on:

- i. which outputs will be submitted to REF2021 (see 4.2);
- ii. which unit of assessment a staff member's outputs will be submitted to.

Criteria for decisions

Decisions on which units of assessment are most appropriate will use one or more of the following criteria:

- fit with the overall body of work being submitted in that UOA;

- evidence of a relationship between the staff member and the unit of assessment, eg. through a research centre or group, collaborative research/co-authorship, teaching, etc.;
- strategic requirements, eg. strengthening and/or maximising the potential of the submission (quality of outputs, numbers being submitted), alignment with impact and/or the research environment.

The overarching determinant as to which unit of assessment a member of staff will be submitted is deciding where the staff member's outputs would have the maximum benefit to the unit of assessment and to the staff member.

Process for making recommendations and decisions

- For each case, the relevant Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators and Director(s) of Research will meet with the Research Excellence Manager to discuss the options and look at the available evidence, taking the staff member's views into account;
- If a consensus is reached, this will be conveyed to the REF Oversight Group, with an accompanying explanation of the recommendation, for a final review and test;
- If no recommendation can be agreed, the evidence and arguments will be submitted to the REF Oversight Group to make the decision - the REF Oversight Group will forward their recommendation to the University REF2021 Decision Panel, whose decision will be final;
- It is not necessary to wait for a decision as to which UOA a person should be submitted to for the University REF2021 Decision Panel to notify a member of staff whether or not they will be submitted to REF2021;
- The staff member will be notified about the decision as explained in 2.5.6 'Notification to staff' - this may or may not be at the same time as the notification they receive that they will be submitted to REF2021;
- All relevant Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators, Directors of Research and the Research Excellence Manager will be notified of the decision.

2.5.4 Final decisions on staff to be submitted

Responsibility for making decisions on who is submitted to REF2021 lies solely with the University REF2021 Decision Panel, except in the case of an appeal (2.7). The Panel will have full access to all the data that were used to make the recommendations on who meets the definitions of 'significant responsibility for research' and 'independent researcher'. Having reviewed the data, the University REF2021 Decision Panel will ratify, or make changes to, the list of those to be submitted, or not submitted, to REF2021. It is unlikely that all necessary decisions will be made on one single occasion; however, all decisions will be made using the same process, as explained in this section of the *Code of Practice*.

2.5.5 Timescale for decisions

There are two different groups of staff under consideration:

- i. staff included in the 'academic framework, if it is implemented;
- ii. staff outside the 'academic framework' or all staff if the 'academic framework' is not implemented.

Staff in the new 'academic framework' (if implemented)

The process for deciding who meets the definition of 'significant responsibility for research' cannot be started unless, and until, the 'academic framework' has been implemented, the date for which has not be finally agreed.

Shortly after the workload model has been implemented, lists of staff on each pathway will be given to Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators, as explained in 'Application of criteria', above, along with other information, so that they can begin compiling submission staff lists which will be passed to the *REF Oversight Group*, as explained, above.

It is expected that most academic staff at the University will be notified about submission or non-submission to REF2021 during Autumn 2019. However, there may be staff who join the University at a later date, or staff who subsequently meet the research pathway criteria. They will be considered for submission to REF2021, using the same process as all other staff, at any time up to the REF2021 census date of 31st July 2020 for new staff or the REF2021 submission date, 27th November 2020, for existing staff who later meet the submission criteria.

Staff outside the workload model

Work on determining 'research independence' and 'significant responsibility for research' for those employed at the University, but outside the 'academic framework', will begin in September 2019 and be completed during Autumn 2019. The process will be repeated for staff who join the University at a later date or for those whose circumstances change at some point leading up to submission in November 2020.

2.5.6 Notification to staff

Once the names of staff members who meet the 'significant responsibility for research' and/or 'independent researcher' definitions have been agreed by the University REF2021 Decision Panel, staff members will be informed as to whether or not they will be submitted to REF2021. The letter will also include the name of the unit of assessment to which the staff member will be submitted, where that has been determined (see 2.5.3, above). Notification will use one or more of the following methods of delivery:

- **Individual staff email** from the PVC Impact and Innovation, with the Research Excellence Team, appropriate unit of assessment co-ordinator (UOAC) and College Director of Research/research lead (DoR) copied in - this notification will be included in an attachment to the email;
- **Letter**, through a UK postal service, from the PVC Impact and Innovation, sent by the HR department - this will only occur where there has been an express wish by the staff member or the staff member is absent from the University - the Research Excellence Team will be notified of all letters sent to staff and make UOACs and DoRs aware;
- **Face to face meeting** - the UOACs will be advised to have individual meetings with all staff identified for submission, to ensure that they have received either an email or a letter confirming their submission to REF2021 and to explain the selection of outputs process (see Part 4).

Directors of Research and Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators will have the lists of those being submitted confirmed to them by the Research Excellence Manager on behalf of the University REF2021 Decision Panel.

The letters to staff will make it clear where it is still to be determined to which unit of assessment a staff member will be submitted (see 2.5.3, above). Any member of staff may appeal the decision set out in their letter of notification. Please follow the procedure in 2.7 Appeals.

2.6 Staff, committees and training

Committees and other bodies

The University has a number of central and local bodies that have advisory, oversight and decision-making responsibilities. The membership and remit of these bodies are shown in Appendix A of this *Code of Practice*, along with an explanation of how the membership was appointed.

The University has decided that the overall responsibility for making decisions regarding which individuals and which outputs should be submitted to REF2021 should be taken centrally rather than at local level, although the University REF Appeals Panels may comprise academic staff from the Colleges. All other bodies will offer advice, make recommendations and contribute evidence to support the decisions, as specified within this *Code of Practice*. Decisions can only be made within the framework laid down in this *Code of Practice*.

Training

Mandatory training in REF-related equality and diversity issues will be provided for all staff involved in any of the processes that establish the:

- Eligibility of staff for submission to REF2021 (using definitions specified in Parts 2 and 3 of this *Code of Practice*);
- Selection of which outputs to submit to REF2021 (see 4.2 'Selection of outputs');
- Identification and writing of impact case studies and the content of the unit of assessment and institutional environment statements.

At the time of the original submission of this *Code of Practice*, the training was still in development. Once complete, it will be added as an Appendix to this *Code of Practice*. The training is being developed collaboratively by the Research and Enterprise department and the Human Resources department, to be carried out between June 2019 and September 2019, although provision has been made to train any new members of the identified groups, committees and roles, as necessary. It is mandatory for all staff to undergo the University's unconscious bias training in order to be eligible for any of the roles, groups or committees mentioned within this *Code of Practice*.

2.7 Appeals

This section explains the grounds on which a member of staff may make an appeal against the University's decision not to submit them to REF2021, how to make an appeal and the subsequent process and the composition and remit of the panel which will consider an appeal. The process for making an appeal is shown in the flowchart in 2.7.2, as are the grounds for appeal.

2.7.1 Notifications to staff regarding submission to REF2021

In the run up to REF2021 submission in November 2020, staff will receive an official notification from the University as to whether or not they will be submitted (see 2.5.6). Staff are entitled to appeal this decision. Decisions on who is eligible for submission to REF2021 are governed by the definitions to determine:

- 'Research independence' **AND/OR**
- Being given 'significant responsibility for research' by the University.

These definitions have been agreed following consultation with staff (see 2.4 and 3.2).

2.7.2 Grounds for appeal

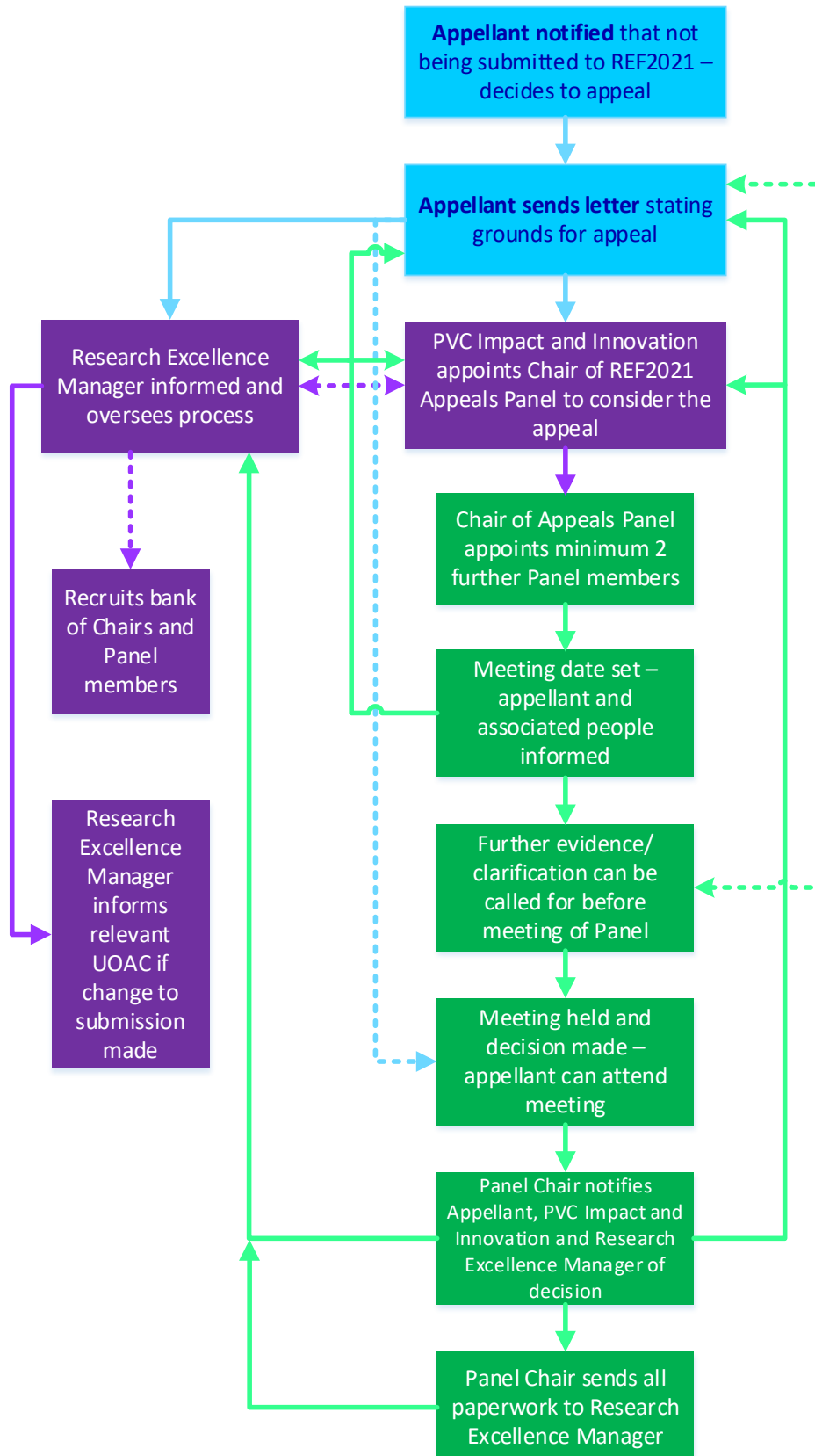
You may appeal against the decision not to submit you to REF2021 if you believe:

- i. that you meet the criteria listed in 2.5 for '**significant responsibility for research**', where this was the reason given for not being submitted, and can provide the evidence to support your claim;

- ii. that you comply with the definition shown in 3.3 for an **independent researcher**, where this was the reason given for not being submitted, and can provide evidence to support your claim;
- iii. that, having been notified that you will be submitted to REF2021, an appeal against submission is necessary on the grounds that submission may damage your academic reputation.

REF2021 Appeals Process for ‘Significant Responsibility for Research’ and ‘Determining Research Independence’ Decisions

NOTES



Only on grounds stated in Code of Practice. Must be within 10 working days of notification of submission decision.

Chair must be from different College or part of the University from the appellant.

Other members of the Panel must also be independent and not involved in any other REF2021 decision making processes.

Meeting must be within 10 working days of receipt of appeal. Appellant must be informed if time limit likely to be exceeded.

Appellant may attend meeting (with a representative, if desired) to answer questions. The appellant should leave for the decision process, as requested by Chair.

Appellant informed by letter/ email, as requested. The decision is final. A further appeal can be made ONLY if the appellant's circumstances have significantly changed.

2.7.3 Prohibited grounds for appeal

- i. The Appeals process cannot consider any appeal against decisions made regarding the new 'academic framework' if implemented and the pathway to which a member of staff has been assigned. The 'academic framework' is a University process, not one required by REF2021 - it has its own appeals process in place;
- ii. To be submitted to REF2021, Early Career Researchers (ECRs) must meet the REF2021 ECR criteria (see 4.5) and the definition of 'research independence' or, if eligible for the 'academic framework', they must be on one of the research-related pathways (eg. the ECR pathway). However, there can be no appeal based on the 'academic framework', for the same reason as (i), above. The REF2021 Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) makes decisions on requests for approval of ECR status from institutions; these decisions can be appealed. Any such appeal will be made under the guidance of the University's 'Review Panel of Staff Circumstances' (see 4.5.6).

2.7.4 Submitting an appeal

An appeal against a decision to not submit a member of staff to REF2021 should be made by letter (this can be sent via email), within 10 working days of the receipt of the notification of submission decision, and sent to the PVC Impact and Innovation, who will then appoint a senior researcher to convene and Chair a *University REF Appeals Panel* to consider the appeal (see 2.7.5).

The appellant's letter should state clearly the grounds for the appeal, which may fall within one or both of the following categories:

- i. **'significant responsibility for research'** - the letter should provide evidence to demonstrate that the appellant complies with the required criteria, as applicable:
 - **'academic framework' research pathway** - state the change in circumstance(s) since the submission decision was made that now proves compliance, including the date this occurred;
 - **outside the 'academic framework'** - state any new information or evidence, that may not have been previously taken into account, to show that the criteria are now met **OR** show that an error occurred in the original assessment of the evidence;

The above grounds for appeal apply to all staff on teaching and research contracts, including those designated as Early Career Researchers.

- ii. **research independence** - the letter should provide evidence to demonstrate that the appellant meets the definition for independent researcher as set out in this *Code of Practice* (Part 3). All staff submitted to REF2021 must comply with the definition.
 - **staff not within the workload allocation model** must state any new information or evidence that may not have been taken into account previously to show that the criteria are now met **OR** present evidence to show that an error occurred in the original assessment of the evidence - this applies to staff on Teaching and Research or Research Only contracts;

Grounds for appeal do not apply to:

- Any member of **staff on one of the 'academic framework' research pathways**, including Early Career Researchers - independent researcher status is a requirement of the research-related pathways in the 'academic framework';
- Anyone to whom the 'academic framework' applies who is **not on a research pathway** has, therefore, not been given 'significant responsibility for research' by the University so is not eligible for submission to REF2021.

2.7.5 The University's REF Appeals Panel

The *REF Appeals Panel* is independent of the University's REF decision-making body, the *University REF Decision Panel*. **There will be no overlap in membership of these two bodies.** There should also be no overlap between members of the *REF Appeals Panel* and any panel, body or committee that is required to make recommendations on submission which involve the unit of assessment to which the appellant could, potentially, be submitted. See *Appendix A* for the membership and remit of the *REF Appeals Panel*.

- The PVC Impact and Innovation will nominate a Chair for a *University REF Appeals Panel*, which will consider the appeal. The Chair will be a senior research academic from a College different to that of the appellant.
- There will be at least two other members of the *REF Appeals Panel*, usually a Director of Research, from a College different to that of the appellant, and an HR representative.
- The Research Excellence Manager will notify the Chair of the other members of the *REF Appeals Panel*.
- All members of the *REF Appeals Panel* will have received equality and diversity and unconscious bias training relevant to the REF selection process.

Considering the appeal

- i. The Chair and *REF Appeals Panel* members will set a date for the *REF Appeals Panel* to meet to consider the appeal and notify the appellant, the PVC Impact and Innovation and the Research Excellence Manager - the *Panel* must sit within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal notification letter from the appellant.
- ii. The Chair may request further information from the appellant and/or a person or department that can provide information relevant to the appeal. The appellant is entitled to know all the information that is being considered as part of the appeal.
- iii. Before the appeal meeting, the Chair may informally discuss the appeal with the appellant (it is recommended that at least one other member of the *REF Appeals Panel* be present; the appellant may have a representative present, also) and, with the full agreement of the *REF Appeals Panel* and the appellant, decide, at this stage, to uphold the appeal or accept a withdrawal of the appeal by the appellant rather than proceed to a full *REF Appeals Panel* meeting.
- iv. If an agreement is reached, as stated in iii, above, a letter should be sent to the appellant immediately, by the Chair, stating the outcome, with copies sent to the PVC Impact and Innovation and the Research Excellence Manager. The appellant must reply stating that they agree with the outcome.

REF Appeals Panel meeting

- v. If no agreement is reached before the formal appeal meeting, the appellant will be invited to attend the official meeting of the *REF Appeals Panel* and they may be asked questions by the *Panel*. The appellant is not required to attend.
- vi. The *REF Appeals Panel* will give due consideration to the appellant's case and any evidence derived from other sources. Notes of the meeting and process will be kept. The actual decision will not be made with the appellant present.
- vii. The decision of the *REF Appeals Panel* is final.

Communicating the *REF Appeals Panel* decision

Once a decision on the appeal has been reached:

- viii. the *REF Appeals Panel* will send a letter to the appellant stating the reasons for their decision in either supporting or rejecting the appeal;

- ix. copies of the letter will be sent to the PVC Impact and Innovation and the Research Excellence Manager;
- x. if the appeal is upheld, the relevant Unit of Assessment Co-ordinator (UOAC) will be notified, so that any decisions required regarding selection of outputs for submission can be made (see 4.2);
- xi. all records, notes, etc. from the appeals process will be sent to the Research Excellence Manager, in compliance with GDPR, until after the REF2021 audit processes are complete.

No further appeal can be made, unless there is a pertinent and significant change to the appellant's circumstances.

2.7.6 EIA for appeals process

In the event of any appeals, an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be conducted at appropriate points leading up to submission in November 2021, using the same process as outlined in 2.8, below. Any areas of concern will be reported to the REF Task and Finish Group, the University REF2021 Decision Panel and the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. It is expected that these bodies will consult and make recommendations to address the circumstances that led to the occurrence of any discrimination or disadvantage, to one or more members of staff, relating to any protected characteristic (1.4.5), as a result of any institutional, group or individual behaviour or practice during the course of the REF2021 period.

2.8 Equality Impact Assessments

The UK higher education funding bodies require all those who submit to REF2021 to conduct Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) on all processes that affect the submission of University staff and their outputs:

- identifying staff with 'significant responsibility for research';
- determining research independence;
- selecting outputs for submission to REF2021;
- staff who have submitted appeals against submission decisions (see 2.7, above).

The University will also continue to monitor the composition of all research-related committees, working groups and other bodies involved in the University's REF submissions.

2.8.1 What is an Equality Impact Assessment?

The aim of an EIA is to identify any impact on (bias, discrimination or disadvantage) specific groups of staff, identified by one or more protected characteristics (see 1.4.5), as a result of institutional, group or individual behaviour or practice, particularly relating to the policies and procedures developed by the University for the submission of staff and research outputs to REF2021. The University has an *Equality Analysis* guide (currently being updated) which will be used by the EDI Manager to conduct the EIAs for REF2021.

2.8.2 How is an Equality Impact Assessment used?

The data reflecting which staff will be submitted, and which research outputs have been selected for submission, is analysed against the protected characteristics, by unit of assessment and the Institution as a whole. In addition, further analysis will compare the University's submission profile against national averages in the HE sector for protected characteristics.

Any discrimination, bias or disadvantage shown in the analysis will be used to review and/or change policy, practice and behaviour, as appropriate, in relation to REF2021 and will be reflected in the *Code of Practice*.

2.8.3 When will the Equality Impact Assessments happen?

An EIA has already been conducted on data from the Annual Research Review process (ARR) explained in Part 4 of this *Code of Practice*, but the data used are reflective of the inclusive nature of the ARR process which looks at the outputs of all research and scholarly activity and, whilst giving an indication of issues, may reveal different outcomes to an EIA performed on the REF submission data. The outcomes of the first EIA are explained in Appendix C. Further EIAs will be conducted throughout the period running up to submission in November 2020. The final pre-submission EIA results will be added to the *Code of Practice*.

In addition, although not part of the REF submission process, EIAs will be conducted on the data from the 'academic framework', if the implementation goes ahead, and monitored closely to see if the implementation has any significant effect on those who will be submitted to REF2021.

2.8.4 Responding to Equality Impact Assessment outcomes

The outcomes and recommendations for action will be/have been presented to the University's *Equality and Diversity Committee*, the *College Equality and Diversity Committees* and the *REF Task and Finish Group*. The consequent action plans of the Equality and Diversity committees will inform the REF submission and those of the University's Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter action plans and submissions, which in turn will inform the REF submission.

Part 3: Determining research independence

3.1 Why define ‘research independence’?

The University is required to define what it is to be an independent researcher in order to contribute towards identifying which staff can be submitted to REF2021. All staff employed by the University who are submitted to REF2021 are known as Category A staff. They must satisfy the ‘research independence’ definition shown in 3.3, below.

In order to define and determine the ‘research independence’ of its staff, the University went through a period of consultation, as explained, below.

3.2 Consultation process

An initial definition of ‘research independence’ was created by the Research Excellence Team, the PVC Impact and Innovation and the Director of Research and Enterprise, using the direction provided in the REF2021 *Guidance on submissions* (January 2019). The process for consultation on the definition, and how it would be applied, is the same as that explained in 2.4, above.

The criteria and indicators that formed part of the consultation process and which have been revised as a result of the consultation are shown in Table 5, below.

3.3 Definition of ‘independent researcher’

The REF *Guidance on submissions* (January 2019) defines an independent researcher as ‘an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual’s research programme’, (January 2019). In practice, to be an independent researcher, an individual must have led, or acted as principal investigator or equivalent, or be regarded as capable of doing so, on an externally funded research project OR have independently conducted their own research, whether funded or not.

3.3.1 Criteria and indicators for ‘research independence’

To meet the definition of ‘independent researcher’, a member of staff must be eligible to apply for research funding as the lead or co-applicant or the equivalent. The University will use the indicators shown in Table 5, below, to clarify the definition.

3.3.2 Indicators of not being an ‘independent researcher’

- Being named on a research output is not an indicator of research independence;
- Staff categorised as Research Assistants, or the equivalent, are not considered to be doing independent research;
- Anyone who is always supervised in the conduct of research is not independent.

3.4 Applying the definition of ‘research independence’

The process is the same as that for ‘significant responsibility for research’, in Part 2 of this *Code of Practice*. Please refer to 2.3.1 to 2.3.3 (including Table 2), 2.4. and 2.5. Additional information is explained below.

3.4.1 Applying the process to staff

All staff will have the opportunity to review the evidence used to determine whether or not they conform to the definition of ‘research independence’ (see Table 5, below). This will be done as explained in 2.5.2, above.

Staff on research only contracts

There are relatively few people at the University on Research Only contracts, but to be eligible for submission to REF2021 they must satisfy the definition of research independence.

- **Research Assistants**, or the equivalent, are not regarded as independent researchers and are, therefore, not eligible for submission to REF2021;
- **Research Fellows** will be regarded as independent researchers if their competitively won fellowship includes a requirement of research independence. Other Research Fellows must be able to satisfy at least one of the indicators shown in Table 5, below, to be eligible for submission to REF2021;
- **Other academic staff** on a Research Only contract must satisfy one of the indicators shown in Table 5, below.

3.4.2 Evidence used for 'research independence'

One or more of the following pieces of evidence will be required to prove research independence:

- A job description and/or contract stipulating a requirement to do independent research, verified by the HR department;
- Evidence of leading a research project as principal investigator, or leading a work package, on an externally awarded grant, verified by the ReDS Team in Research and Enterprise;
- Evidence for a supported application for funding as the research lead for either an entire project or a substantial work package within a project, verified by the ReDS Team in Research and Enterprise;
- Evidence of conducting their own, unfunded research, without supervision, as verified by College Directors of Research;
- Evidence of 'significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation' of a research project, as verified by the principal investigator or within a published output from the research.

Allocation to one of the research-related workload allocation model pathways will be deemed sufficient evidence of research independence.

3.4.3 Decisions on research independence

Final decisions on who meets the definition of research independence will be made by the University REF2021 Decision Panel - the process is explained in 2.5.4, above. Notifications to staff regarding who will be submitted to REF2021 are explained in 2.5.6, above.

3.5 Staff, committees and training

The process is explained in 2.6, above.

3.6 Appeals

The process is explained in 2.7, above.

3.7 Equality impact assessment

The process is explained in 2.8, above.

TABLE 5 - Meeting the UEL Definition for 'Independent Researcher'

To qualify as an independent researcher staff must comply with both Category 1 and Category 2. Category 2 requires compliance with one of the indicators shown.

Applies to	Category	Requirement	Indicators for Research Independence	Evidence
Teaching and Research and Research Only contracts	Category 1	Mandatory	Eligible to apply for external research funding (as approved by UEL)	Contract/Appraisal expectation (HR)/ReDS
Teaching and Research and Research Only contracts	Category 2	Mandatory	Conducting own research without supervision (whether funded or unfunded) - see indicators below	Academics/DoRs/ReDS/Directors of Research Institutes

Indicators for Category 2 - only one required

Teaching and Research and Research Only contracts	Cat 2 - Indicator 1		Leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project or equivalent for an unfunded project	ReDS/Academics
Teaching and Research and Research Only contracts	Cat 2 - Indicator 2		Acting as CI (or equivalent) on a substantial work package in an externally funded research project	ReDS/Academics
Academics on any contract in REF Main Panels C and D Units of Assessment	Cat 2 - Indicator 3		'Having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research' (<i>Panel criteria and working methods</i> , January 2019) on a funded or unfunded research project	Academics/ReDS/output(s)/DoRs
Research Fellows on Research Only contracts	Cat 2 - Indicator 4	Mandatory for Research Fellows	Competitively won research fellowship specifying research independence	HR/Academics/School/Institute

Part 4: Selection of outputs

Introduction

REF2021 requires that each institution explain clearly to its staff, within this *Code of Practice*, the criteria and processes that it is using to select outputs for submission in November 2021.

Output selection does not define who will be submitted to REF2021. Staff submitted to REF2021 must meet the definitions, shown in Parts 2 and 3 of this *Code of practice*, for 'significant responsibility for research' and 'research independence', respectively. The outputs for submission will be chosen from those produced by staff members who meet the submission criteria for REF2021. The data used to decide which outputs will be selected will come from the University's Annual Research Review (ARR) process, which is explained in Appendix E.

4.1 REF2021 rules for output selection and submission

4.1.1 The number of outputs required

The changes in output selection and submission criteria for REF2021, from those of REF2014, demonstrate a more inclusive process for submission, where an individual is no longer disadvantaged or excluded from the REF because they have insufficient outputs, despite meeting other submission criteria.

- REF2021 allows the submission of a maximum of five outputs and a minimum of one output per person;
- There is a required volume of outputs based on an average number of outputs per FTE (2.5) for each unit of assessment submitted, eg. if a unit of assessment is submitting 10 FTE, then they will need 25 outputs for submission - failure to supply the correct number of outputs will result in an unclassified score for each output missing;
- The FTE to determine the number of outputs required for submission is based on Category A staff only (those meeting the criteria in Parts 2 and 3 of this *Code of practice*);
- If required, the staff circumstances process can be used to reduce the number of outputs required for submission, without any prejudice to the outcome of the submission (see 4.5) or to the individual to whom the reduction is attached;
- In addition, the University can submit the outputs of its former staff.

4.1.2 Output rules for submission

REF2021 has specific rules that govern which outputs can and cannot be submitted, but the overarching rule is that they must meet the REF2021 definition of research (see Annex C in *Guidance on submissions*, January 2019 <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/guidance-on-submissions-201901/>). A wide range of output types is expected by the REF, both text and non-text, ranging from journal articles and books to artefacts, performances and databases. For a list of the output categories and types that the REF encompasses, see Annex K in *Guidance on submissions* (January 2019) <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/guidance-on-submissions-201901/>.

Outputs submitted to REF2021 must meet the following criteria:

- Have appeared in the public domain for the first time within the REF2021 period (1st January 2014 to 31st December 2020)¹;

¹ The exception is journal articles published 'online first' in 2013, with an actual publication date within the REF2021 period, as long as they were not submitted to REF2014.

- All journal articles and conference proceedings must meet the REF2021 Open Access criteria (see the REF2021 OA policy - <https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/open-access/ref-2021-open-access-policy/>) - from 1st April 2016 onwards, all journal articles and conference proceedings are eligible for submission to REF2021 ONLY if a version has been deposited in an open access repository or in some other way made 'discoverable', downloadable and searchable, for free and to anyone through an internet connection within three months of 'acceptance';
- ALL outputs for submission must be represented in the University's research output repository, regardless of the open access requirements.

4.1.3 Staff rules for output submission

Outputs will be submitted from two categories of people, as follows:

Category A staff - the FTE dictates the number of outputs to be submitted

- Only outputs of eligible staff can be submitted (see Parts 2 and 3 of this *Code of practice* regarding staff eligibility);
- Staff members must be employed by the University on the census date 31st July 2020;
- Staff members may have been part of a staff circumstances request for the reduction in the number of outputs that they need to submit, which will reduce the overall number of outputs required by their unit of assessment;

Former members of staff - their outputs do not contribute to the number of outputs required

- Only outputs that were produced by former members of staff whilst employed at the University of East London can be submitted;
- Not all former members of staff have to be submitted - selection can be based on the quality of outputs alone;
- Outputs of staff who were made redundant will not be submitted unless their redundancy was voluntary, or they have given their permission to the University, in writing, for their outputs to be submitted.

4.2 University of East London selection process for outputs (policies and procedures)

4.2.1 How outputs for submission will be determined

The University has developed a process of annual review to determine the quality of the research outputs of its current and former staff, which has been in place since 2016 (see Appendix E). The outcomes of these reviews will be used to make recommendations regarding which outputs should be submitted to REF2021, following appropriate discussion between the authors of the outputs and the REF teams supporting each unit of assessment. Having established which staff will be submitted to REF2021, the following key considerations will be used to make recommendations and decisions on which of their outputs will be selected for submission:

- selection of the highest quality outputs available, as established by the Annual Research Review (ARR) process (see Appendix E);
- output selection regarding quality should be based on verifiable evidence from the ARR process - no other information should be taken into account that may be regarded as subjective, biased or in any way prejudicial to either an individual member of staff or to the unit of assessment itself;
- the appropriateness/fit of the output for the unit of assessment - the views of external assessors and the unit of assessment descriptors shown in the REF's *Panel criteria and*

working methods (January 2019) (see <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/panel-criteria-and-working-methods-201902/>) should be taken into account;

- selection of the correct number of outputs for the FTE being submitted;
- the University will not discriminate between whether or not an output is the product of funded or unfunded research and will base decisions on submission on the quality of the research;
- adherence to the REF-defined rules for output submission (as explained in 4.1, above).

Selection principles

All review and selection of outputs processes must meet the tests of openness and transparency, fairness, accountability and consistency. The University's Annual Research Review (ARR) process was created around these principles, as explained in Appendix E. The staff circumstances process may have a direct effect on the output pool available and selection. Where this is the case, decisions will be monitored to ensure that no conscious or unconscious bias, or any other form of discrimination or unfair practice, informs the decisions taken. For this reason, supporting evidence for recommendations/decisions and the presence of impartial observers will be required.

4.2.2 Making output recommendations

This process may change if the expected REF module, being developed as part of a new research output and data repository system, is in place in time for this selection process. This *Code of Practice* will be updated accordingly and consultation will take place if the procedures change fundamentally.

- Recommendations for which outputs will be submitted will be made by each Unit of Assessment Co-ordinator, in conjunction with the appropriate Director of Research, in a format supplied by the Research Excellence Manager, using the ARR data;
- Other considerations regarding outputs, concerning staff circumstances, explained in 4.5.2, and those listed, below, should be discussed by the UOAC and the Research Excellence Manager, before any recommendations are forwarded to the *REF Oversight Group* - the *Review Panel of Staff Circumstances* will make decisions on whether or not a reduction in outputs can be/should be applied for, based on the information collected in the staff circumstances process;
- The recommendations will be separated into lists of outputs for Category A staff (staff employed by the University) and those for former staff and be accompanied by relevant evidence to support selection;
- All output selections will be passed to the *REF Oversight Group* for review;
- The *REF Oversight Group* will challenge recommendations if insufficient evidence has been provided, through discussion with the relevant UOAC and Director of Research;
- Once the *REF Oversight Group* is satisfied with their review, they will pass the recommendations to the *University REF2021 Decision Panel* for final approval;
- All staff who are being submitted to REF2021 will be notified about which of their outputs have been chosen for submission.

The outputs selected will be under constant review up to the date of submission, as changes in staff and outputs can occur.

Other considerations for the selection of outputs for submission

In order for certain outputs to be considered for submission, extra information must be provided by the UOACs and their teams to both the *REF Oversight Group* and the *University REF2021 Decision Panel*, to give an indication of the profile of the outputs being selected for each unit of assessment and any element of risk in the recommendations made:

- **co-authored outputs** - where there are outputs co-authored by staff in the same submission, such that there are insufficient outputs of a desired quality to meet the volume required, recommendations for lesser quality outputs will be required - the UOAC will submit a rationale for each selection and ensure that any recommendations are made based on verifiable ARR evidence;
- the number of co-authors;
- **staff circumstances** - where this process has been used to reduce the number of outputs required for a unit of assessment, details should be provided, without contravening confidentiality, with an explanation of how this affected the outputs selected (confirmation of the reduction must have been received from the REF Team - see the staff circumstances process in 4.5, below);
- **double-weighted outputs** - evidence from the ARR process should be used to support the recommendation for outputs to be submitted as 'double-weighted' (one output counting as two) - the evidence should be submitted with the recommendations, along with details of reserve outputs;
- **outputs for cross-referral** - UOACs should discuss this with the Research Excellence Manager before any such recommendation;
- **interdisciplinary outputs** should be identified;
- **unpublished outputs** must be highlighted and an explanation of risk surrounding the publication of the output should be supplied;
- **confidential outputs** - evidence that permission has been given to submit an item that is regarded as confidential must be provided by the author to the UOAC and submitted to the *REF Oversight Group* and the *University REF2021 Decision Panel*.

4.2.3 Final decisions on output selection

- The *REF Oversight Group* will contain a representative of HR, usually the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager, to ensure that the principles and rules of selection have been followed;
- Output recommendations will only be passed to the *University REF2021 Decision Panel* with the agreement of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager;
- The *University REF2021 Decision Panel* will make the final decisions on selection of outputs;
- There may be adjustments required in the final weeks before submission in November 2020 to take into account changes in output availability and staff definitions regarding research (see Parts 2 and 3).

4.3 Confidentiality

The University's confidentiality procedures are explained in 1.8, above.

4.4 Staff, committees and training

See Part 2.

4.5 Staff circumstances

In the previous REF, staff had to be submitted with a mandatory, fixed number of outputs (four), which had the effect of excluding many excellent researchers unless they could prove, through the staff circumstances process, that there were particular circumstances that had affected their ability to produce sufficient outputs. Where this was the case they could apply for a reduction in the number of outputs required.

In REF2021, however, a more inclusive approach has been adopted so that staff can be submitted with a minimum of one output and a maximum of five outputs per person, with a required total volume of outputs for each unit of assessment (UOA) based on 2.5 outputs for each 1.0 FTE submitted. The removal of the fixed number of outputs allows staff, whose particular circumstances have affected their productivity, to be submitted without having to request a specific reduction in the outputs they have to contribute, although there are situations where this might be necessary, as explained, below. It also removes the necessity for part-time staff, who are likely to produce fewer outputs, to go through the staff circumstances process.

4.5.1 Purpose of the staff circumstances procedure in REF2021

The staff circumstances process in REF2021 has a number of purposes:

- i. to allow institutions, and units of assessment within institutions, to recognise that there are circumstances which affect the productivity of staff (as listed in 4.5.5, below) and to ensure that, through 'supporting and promoting equality and diversity' (*Guidance on submissions*, January 2019), those members of staff are not discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way;
- ii. to assess the 'cumulative effect' (*Guidance on submissions*, January 2019) that a number of instances of staff circumstances may have on a UOA's 'potential output pool' (January 2019);
- iii. to identify those who meet the REF2021 definition of Early Career Researcher (ECR) - it is a requirement of the REF that institutions report their ECRs in the HESA staff return for 2019-2020; institutions may also apply for a reduction in the number of outputs required based on ECR status.

4.5.2 In what circumstances will the University use the staff circumstances procedure?

The University of East London is submitting staff to REF2021 based on its definition of 'significant responsibility for research', recognising that only a proportion of its staff have been allocated time to do research, are classified as 'independent researchers' and undertake research that meets the REF definition. This will have an impact on how the University implements and uses the staff circumstances process.

- i. There will be a number of units of assessment that submit relatively low numbers of staff, so any staff who have been unable to produce the average number of outputs required because of identified circumstances, could have a disproportionate effect on the UOA's ability to achieve the volume of outputs required.
- ii. It is the University's intention to submit the highest quality set of outputs possible for each unit of assessment, that faithfully reflects the UOA's research profile and that of its staff. However, there will be some units of assessment where the pool of outputs to select from is small due to the instances of staff whose productivity has been adversely affected during the REF2021 period and, in order to achieve the number of outputs required for submission, outputs that would not normally be considered for submission would have to be submitted.
- iii. There may be some UOAs that have a high number of ECRs who may not have had the time, experience or support to be as productive as some of their more senior colleagues.

Where any of these situations occur, the University will assess the effect on the submission and consider whether there is a strong case for requesting a reduction in the outputs required for the UOA, using the tariffs set out in Annex L of *Guidance on submissions* (January 2019).

4.5.3 Confidentiality and staff circumstances

The staff circumstances process is handled centrally by the *Review Panel of Staff Circumstances*, with two of its members responsible for the day-to-day operational aspects of the process, as explained

in 4.5.6, below. This is to ensure confidentiality and consistency in the implementation of the process.

Any information gathered through the staff circumstances process will only be used for REF2021 purposes as set out within this *Code of Practice* and the REF2021 *Guidance on submissions* (January 2019), only. The information will not be used by the University for any other purpose and, within the University, the data gathered (related to individual members of staff) will only be seen by members of the *Review Panel of Staff Circumstances*. The exception to this will be the identification of Early Career Researchers, as this information is required for the 2019-2020 HESA staff return. The University will use summary data from the staff circumstances process to inform actions relating to equality, diversity and inclusion, but the *Review Panel of Staff Circumstances* will only make this information available where it is confident that no individual member of staff can be identified.

Where a request for a reduction in outputs is made, the University will be required to pass on information about individual staff members so that EDAP (the REF's Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel) can make an assessment of the request. Information about confidentiality regarding the REF and staff circumstances requests is available in 1.8.3, above and in *Guidance on submissions* (January 2019), paragraphs 195 - 197.

4.5.4 Implementing the REF guidance on staff circumstances

The University will follow all the guidance set out in the 'Staff circumstances' section of the *Guidance on submissions* (January 2019), paragraphs 151 - 201 and Annex L. It is not the University's intention to reproduce the REF's guidance within this document; the *Code of Practice* will explain how it will implement the guidance for its staff and ensure that the processes it uses are fair, consistent and follow the rules of confidentiality that are set out in 1.8 of this document.

4.5.5 What are staff circumstances?

Within REF2021, the following circumstances have been identified as potentially having an effect on a person's ability to 'produce outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period' (*Guidance on submissions*, January 2019):

- i. qualifying as an ECR (on the basis set out in paragraphs 148 and 149 and Annex L of *Guidance on submissions*);
- ii. absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector;
- iii. qualifying periods of family-related leave;
- iv. other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1–6, as defined in paragraphs 161 to 163 of *Guidance on submissions* (January 2019);
- v. circumstances with an equivalent effect to absence, that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:
 - disability: this is defined in the *Guidance on codes of practice* (January 2019), Table 1 under 'Disability';
 - ill health, injury, or mental health conditions;
 - constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of – or justify the reduction of further outputs in addition to – the allowances set out in Annex L;
 - other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member);
 - gender reassignment;
 - other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed in the *Guidance on codes of practice* (January 2019), Table 1, or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

Through the process explained in 4.5.6, below, staff will be invited to declare any circumstances that they believe have affected them during the REF period. This is a confidential and voluntary process and no pressure will be placed on staff to make a declaration.

Exceptional staff circumstances

There may be exceptional circumstances that mean a member of staff has been unable to produce any eligible research outputs in the REF period, 1st January 2014 to 31st December 2020. Such an occurrence should be identified through the application of the University's definitions of 'independent researcher' and 'significant responsibility for research'. The *Review Panel of Staff Circumstances* will follow the process set out in *Guidance on submissions* (January 2019), paragraphs 178 - 183, to request a removal of the minimum requirement of one output.

How staff with particular circumstances are supported

The University has several policies and guidance notes explaining the provisions put into place to support staff who have been affected by periods of absence, or whilst at work, through ill health, maternity/paternity/ adoption leave, disability, etc., both whilst absent and on their return to work, as listed in 1.4.3, above. In addition, there will be support available specifically for research-active staff at School/College level, eg. supervision/mentoring schemes.

4.5.6 Gathering information on staff circumstances

If it is considered necessary to request a reduction of outputs, staff in the UoA will be invited to declare whether they have a circumstance, as listed in 4.5.3, above, that they would like the University to be made aware of. This is a voluntary process and no pressure will be exerted on staff to make a declaration nor will any local or institutional knowledge be used in place of a declaration by a member of staff. This is a completely confidential process, the details of which are as follows:

- i. a letter and declaration form (as shown in Appendix F) will be sent to all staff in the UoA, by email and, where a member of staff is absent from the University, by post;
- ii. staff will be encouraged to talk to either the Research Excellence Manager or the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager, if they are unsure about making a declaration or any other aspect of the staff circumstances process;
- iii. staff will return completed forms either via email or by post - whichever is their preference. A record of receipt will be kept by the *Review Panel of Staff Circumstances* on a password protected spreadsheet;
- iv. forms will be reviewed, in the first instance, by the Research Excellence Manager and/or the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager, who may seek clarification from the staff member - contact will only be made if the staff member has given their permission on the declaration form;
- v. the Research Excellence Manager and/or the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager will use the tariff tables set out in Annex L of *Guidance on submissions* (January 2019) to make recommendations on a potential reduction in the number of outputs for the member of staff;
- vi. the *Review Panel of Staff Circumstances* will meet regularly during the second half of 2019 and early 2020 to approve or reject the recommendations or request further information;
- vii. based on the list of staff who have been identified for submission for each UOA, assessments will be made at UOA level regarding whether or not the output pool is sufficient to meet the requirements for submission, as set out in 4.2.2 and 4.5.2, above;
- viii. the *Review Panel of Staff Circumstances* will determine whether a reduction in outputs is required (based on the evidence supplied) and make the necessary request to the REF Team;

- ix. once a decision has been returned by the REF Team, the UOAC for the affected UOA will be notified of the reduction(s) - staff will not be identified unless they are ECRs or unless they have declared that they are willing to be identified with staff circumstances - in this event, no details of their circumstance will be passed on, just their name and the reduction awarded;
- x. staff will be informed of the outcomes of their declaration, in particular whether they will contribute to a reduction in the number of outputs required for their UOA, by email or letter, depending on their preference.

The Letter and Declaration of Staff Circumstances form

The letter and form are shown in Appendix F. Changes may be considered before use.

Appeals against reduction request decisions made by EDAP

The REF Team will be publishing an appeals process regarding decisions made by EDAP. The *Review Panel of Staff Circumstances* will decide whether or not an appeal should be made against a rejected request.

Audit of staff circumstances information relating to a request for a reduction in outputs

Information supplied may be subject to audit in 2021, as part of the normal REF audit process

4.6 Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

We have already conducted EIAs on the Annual Research Review data. The Annual Research Reviews cover all staff, not just those who have 'significant responsibility for research' and are independent. All outputs, including both REF-defined research and other scholarly or creative outputs, are reviewed in this process. The Annual Research Review process pre-dates the development of the new 'academic framework'.

The University's procedure for EIAs is explained in 2.8 of this *Code of Practice*.

Part 5: Appendices

Appendix A - Decision Making and Advisory Groups

Conflicts of interest for any members of the REF-related bodies, below, which make recommendations or decisions must be declared and documented.

REF Task and Finish Group

Reports to: Impact and Innovation Committee

Sub-committees: Code of Practice Working Group

Membership

Chair: Pro-Vice Chancellor, Impact and Innovation

Ex-officio members: Director of Research and Enterprise

Directors of Research for Colleges

Research Excellence Manager

HR Director

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager

Nominated members: Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators

Others may be invited to support and contribute to specific items on the agenda throughout the year.

Secretary: The REF and Research Impact Officer

Remit

The UEL REF Task and Finish Group acts as an umbrella panel to help steer and shape the University's REF submission. The group has the following terms of reference:

- a. Advise the PVC Impact and Innovation on any emerging implications of REF proposals, criteria and submission guidelines.
- b. Ensure that effective and appropriate institutional action is undertaken to support research productivity, grant capture and research student progression in line with REF proposals.
- c. Assist in peer review and assessment of external assessors' reports and advise on final selection of UOAs and 'submittable' staff, outputs and relevant evidence of impact for submission to REF.
- d. Advise on and evaluate impact statements and case studies.
- e. To communicate research and activities through a tool kit, websites and other appropriate means.
- f. Advise and provide input about the strength/health of UEL's research environment and culture, including oversight of institutional and UOAs' environment statements.
- g. Advise the PVC Impact and Innovation on activity elsewhere in the sector in preparation for REF.
- h. Advise the PVC Impact and Innovation on equal opportunity issues in respect to institutional preparations for REF.
- i. Ensure EDI is embedded throughout preparations for REF through equality impact assessments and consideration of how Colleges are progressing EDI within the research environment, including specifically Athena SWAN and Race Equality Charters and HR excellence in Research.
- j. Deputies are permitted to attend in the absence of their principals. On occasion the REF Task and Finish Group will also include members drawn from Strategic Planning and Financial Services, where and if necessary.
- k. The REF Task and Finish Group operates in practice as a working group of the Impact and Innovation Committee and reports on its activities are a standing item for the Impact and Innovation Committee's agenda.

University REF2021 Decision Panel

Membership

- Vice Chancellor and President of the University of East London
- Pro Vice Chancellor, Impact and Innovation

The members of this Panel were selected because they have the ultimate authority within the University on matters of research and are, therefore, in the best position to make the final decisions on who should be submitted to the REF. They are also outside the academic, College structure of the University, but are active researchers. The composition of this Panel may change - all staff will be notified if this happens.

Remit

- To make decisions on the final list of staff for submission to REF2021, by unit of assessment, based on recommendations from the unit of assessment teams and Directors of Research, as set out in Part 2 of the University's *REF2021 Code of Practice*.
- To use the data collected by the Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators (UOACs) and the Research Excellence Manager, to verify the names recommended for submission.
- To make decisions on staff for submission in compliance with the University's *REF2021 Code of Practice*.
- To notify Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators (UOACs) of decisions made for their unit of assessment.
- To oversee the notification to staff on their submission status for REF2021.
- To supply information, if requested, to the *REF Appeals Panel*, as set out in the Appeals Process section of the University's *REF2021 Code of Practice*.
- Panel members must undertake equality and diversity training and any other training specified within the *REF2021 Code of Practice*.

Review Panel of Staff Circumstances

Membership

- Pro Vice Chancellor, Impact and Innovation (Chair)
- Senior research academic who does not already hold a REF-related role within UEL
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager
- Research Excellence Manager

The Research Excellence Manager is responsible for the papers for the Panel.

The members of this panel were chosen for the following reasons:

- The Pro Vice Chancellor, Impact and Innovation is leading the REF within the University and chairs the University REF Task and Finish Group.
- The senior academic does not take part in any advisory, operational or decision making body within the University for its REF submissions where prior knowledge could affect decisions.
- The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager has played a significant part in writing the *Code of Practice* and in offering support and advice on equality and diversity issues; they are also responsible for the REF-specific equality and diversity training and the production of the Equality Impact Analyses (EIAs).
- The Research Excellence Manager, who has an overview of all things REF within the University, is responsible for managing all of the University's REF data, ensuring compliance with the *Code*

of Practice as far as this data is concerned and is a member of the *University REF Task and Finish Group*.

Remit

- a. To review all returned *Declaration of Staff Circumstances* forms.
- b. To treat all data received with sensitivity and ensure confidentiality.
- c. To request additional information or clarification from the staff concerned, if required.
- d. To use the information and guidance set out in the REF documents *Guidance on submissions* (January 2019), *Guidance on codes of practice* (January 2019) and any other guidance that is supplied by the REF Team, EDAP or the Equality Challenge Unit, to make decisions on:
 - i. whether there is a case for a reduction in outputs;
 - ii. the number of reductions required for staff who meet the reduction criteria, using the tables and worked examples in the REF2021 documentation.
- e. To adhere to the University's REF2021 *Code of Practice*.
- f. To notify all members of staff who submitted a *Declaration of Staff Circumstances* form of the *Panel's* decision relating to their request.
- g. To notify the appropriate Unit of Assessment Co-ordinator (UOAC) of the *Panel's* decisions, simply stating the reduction in the number of outputs required, without revealing any confidential information or as requested by each member of staff concerned.
- h. To prepare statements for unit reduction requests and requests to remove the minimum of one requirement (REF6a/b), as set out in *Guidance on submissions* paragraphs 192 to 197, for submission to EDAP between Autumn 2019 and March 2020.
- i. To make available to EDAP any further information required as part of the decision making process or as part of a REF2021 audit.
- j. To consider, and make, appeals against decisions taken by EDAP on reduction requests, as required, to the REF Team.
- k. To monitor any changes in a unit of assessment's composition that may necessitate a change in the request for a reduction in outputs and adjust accordingly.
- l. To supply information, if requested, to the *University REF Appeals Panel*, as set out in the *Appeals process* section (2.7) of the University's *Code of Practice*.
- m. All *Panel* members to have undertaken the University's REF-specific equality and diversity training and unconscious bias training.
- n. To store securely all information related to the staff circumstances process until such a time as it is no longer required for any official REF audit or University REF processes.

University REF2021 Appeals Panel

Membership

The *REF2021 Appeals Panel* will comprise:

- A senior researcher, who will chair the Panel
- A Director of Research from a College different to that of the appellant
- An HR representative

The members of this *Panel* will be appointed as and when a *Panel* is required, although staff in HR and the Directors of Research within the Colleges will be notified that they may be asked to fulfil this role. The membership has been designed to be fair and impartial, therefore the composition will vary according to which College the appellant belongs. The Research Excellence Manager will

hold a 'bank' of names of staff members willing to form an *Appeals Panel* at short notice.

Remit

- a. Consider appeals from members of staff against decisions, made by the University, on their submission to REF2021 on the basis of 'research independence' and/or 'significant responsibility for research', as detailed in the University's *REF2021 Code of Practice*.
- b. Consider appeals in a fair, impartial and consistent manner, following the procedures laid down in Part 2 of the University's *REF2021 Code of Practice* and adhering to the principles set out in the *Code of Practice*.
- c. Consider the evidence supplied by the appellant in support of their appeal.
- d. Follow the procedure set out in 2.7.5 of this *Code of Practice*.
- e. Report decisions to the appellant and the *University REF Decision Panel* and the UOA Co-ordinator, where appropriate, in writing.
- f. Ensure confidentiality and treat all information with sensitivity.
- g. Ensure that the composition of the *University REF2021 Appeals Panel* is completely independent of any REF selection or decision-making panel.
- h. All *Panel* members to have undertaken the University's REF-specific equality and diversity training and unconscious bias training.

REF Oversight Group

Membership

The *REF Oversight Group* will comprise:

- The Vice Chancellor and President of the University of East London (Chair)
- The Pro Vice Chancellor Impact and Innovation
- College Directors of Research and Institute Research Leads
- Research Excellence Manager (in an advisory capacity)

The members were chosen for their knowledge of the REF, its implementation within the University, their grasp of current issues and challenges across the University or within specific units of assessment and their ability/authority to react to problems quickly.

Remit

- a. To ensure adherence to the University's REF timetable.
- b. To find solutions regarding major issues that are hindering progress in the University's REF submissions.
- c. To adhere to the guidance set out in the University's *Code of Practice*.
- d. To provide information to, and advise, the *University REF2021 Decision Panel*, the University Impact and Innovation Committee and the University Executive Board regarding progress on REF submissions and any issues that have arisen.

Other REF-related advisory roles

In addition to these committees, panels and task and finish groups, each unit of assessment is looked after, at local level, by one or more Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators (UOAC), with an Impact Champion and a REF reading panel, supported by the appropriate College Director of Research or Institute Research Lead. The Research Excellence Team, comprising the Research Excellence Manager and the REF and Research Impact Officer, is based centrally and has day-to-day operational responsibility for the processes and data collection necessary for a REF submission, communicating with everyone with a REF-related responsibility, including Professional Support Services departments.

Appendix B - Summary of Equality Legislation

This is taken from the REF2021 *Guidance on codes of practice* (January 2019)

This summary explains which ‘protected characteristics’ are covered by the equality legislation.

Age	<p>All employees within the HE sector are protected from unlawful age discrimination, harassment and victimisation in employment under the Equality Act 2010 and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or if they are associated with a person of a particular age group.</p> <p>Age discrimination can occur when people of a particular age group are treated less favourably than people in other age groups. An age group could be, for example, people of the same age, the under 30s or people aged 45-50. A person can belong to a number of different age groups.</p> <p>Age discrimination will not be unlawful if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. However, in the context of the REF, the view of the funding bodies is that if a researcher produces excellent research an HEI will not be able to justify not selecting their outputs because of their age group.</p> <p>It is important to note that early career researchers (ECRs) are likely to come from a range of age groups. The definition of ECR used in the REF (see ‘Guidance on submissions’, paragraphs 148 to 149) is not limited to young people.</p> <p>HEIs should also note that, given developments in equalities law in the UK and Europe, the default retirement age has been abolished from 1 October 2011 in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.</p>
Disability	<p>The Equality Act 2010, the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) (Northern Ireland only) and the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 prevent unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment relating to disability.</p> <p>Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to have a disability or if they are associated with a person who has a disability (for example, if they are responsible for caring for a family member with a disability).</p> <p>A person is considered to have a disability if they have or have had a physical and/or mental impairment which has 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. Long-term impairments include those that last or are likely to last for at least 12 months.</p> <p>Cancer, HIV, multiple sclerosis and progressive/degenerative conditions are disabilities too, even if they do not currently have an adverse effect on the carrying out of day-to-day activities. An impairment which is managed by medication or medical treatment, but which would have had a substantial and long-term adverse effect if not so managed, is also a disability.</p> <p>The definition of disability is different in Northern Ireland in that a list of day-to-day activities is referred to.</p> <p>There is no list of day-to-day activities for England, Scotland and Wales but day-to-day activities are taken to mean activities that people generally, not a specific individual, carry out on a daily or frequent basis.</p> <p>While there is no definitive list of what is considered a disability, it covers a wide range of impairments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sensory impairments • impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as rheumatoid arthritis, depression and epilepsy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • progressive impairments, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, HIV and cancer • organ specific impairments, including respiratory conditions and cardiovascular diseases • developmental impairments, such as autistic spectrum disorders and dyslexia • mental health conditions such as depression and eating disorders • impairments caused by injury to the body or brain. <p>It is important for HEIs to note that people who have had a past disability are also protected from discrimination, victimisation and harassment because of disability. Equality law requires HEIs to anticipate the needs of people with disabilities and make reasonable adjustments for them. Failure to make a reasonable adjustment constitutes discrimination. If a researcher's impairment has affected the quantity of their research outputs, the submitting unit may return a reduced number of outputs (see 'Guidance on submissions', Part 3, Section 1, 'Staff circumstances').</p>
<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 protect from discrimination, harassment and victimisation of trans people who have proposed, started or completed a process to change their sex. Staff in HE do not have to be under medical supervision to be afforded protection because they are trans and staff are protected if they are perceived to be undergoing or have undergone related procedures. They are also protected if they are associated with someone who has proposed, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment.</p> <p>Trans people who undergo gender reassignment will need to take time off for appointments and, in some cases, for medical assistance. The transition process is lengthy, often taking several years, and it is likely to be a difficult period for the trans person as they seek recognition of their new gender from their family, friends, employer and society as a whole.</p> <p>The Gender Recognition Act 2004 gave enhanced privacy rights to trans people who undergo gender reassignment. A person acting in an official capacity who acquires information about a person's status as a transsexual may commit a criminal offence if they pass the information to a third party without consent.</p> <p>Consequently, staff within HEIs with responsibility for REF submissions must ensure that the information they receive about gender reassignment is treated with particular care.</p> <p>If a staff member's ability to work productively throughout the REF assessment period has been constrained due to gender reassignment, the unit may return a reduced number of research outputs (see 'Guidance on submissions', Part 3, Section 1, 'Staff circumstances'). Information about the member of staff will be kept confidential as described in 'Guidance on submissions', paragraph 195.</p> <p>HEIs should note that the Scottish government recently consulted on, and the UK government is currently consulting on, reform of the Gender Recognition Act 2004, which may include streamlining the procedure to legally change gender.</p>
<p>Marriage and civil partnership</p>	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 as amended, individuals are protected from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of marriage and civil partnership status. The protection from discrimination is to ensure that people who are married or in a civil partnership receive the same benefits and treatment in employment. The protection from discrimination does not apply to single people.</p>

	<p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not inadvertently discriminate against staff who are married or in civil partnerships.</p>
Political opinion	<p>The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 protects staff from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of political opinion.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not inadvertently discriminate against staff based on their political opinion.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 women are protected from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p>Consequently, where researchers have taken time out of work, or their ability to work productively throughout the assessment period has been affected, because of pregnancy and/or maternity, the submitting unit may return a reduced number of research outputs, as set out in 'Guidance on submissions', paragraphs 169 to 172.</p> <p>In addition, HEIs should ensure that female researchers who are pregnant or on maternity leave are kept informed about and included in their submissions process.</p> <p>For the purposes of this summary it is important to note that primary adopters have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave.</p>
Race	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation connected to race. The definition of race includes colour, ethnic or national origins or nationality. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular race.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not discriminate against staff based on their race or assumed race (for example, based on their name).</p>
Religion and belief including non-belief	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to religion or belief. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular religion or belief.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not discriminate against staff based on their actual or perceived religion or belief, including non-belief. 'Belief' includes any structured philosophical belief with clear values that has an effect on how its adherents conduct their lives.</p>
Sex (including breastfeeding and additional paternity and adoption leave)	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to sex. Employees are also protected because of their perceived sex or because of their association with someone of a particular sex.</p> <p>The sex discrimination provisions of the Equality Act explicitly protect women from less favourable treatment because they are breastfeeding. Consequently, the impact of breastfeeding on a woman's ability to work productively will be taken into account, as set out in 'Guidance on submissions', Part 3, Section 1, 'Staff circumstances'.</p> <p>If a mother who meets the continuity of employment test wishes to return to work early or shorten her maternity leave/pay, she will be entitled to shared parental leave with the father or her partner within the first year of the baby's birth. Partners may also be eligible for shared parental leave or pay. Fathers/partners who take additional paternity or adoption leave will have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave and barriers that exist to taking the leave, or as a result of having</p>

	<p>taken it, could constitute unlawful sex discrimination. Consequently, where researchers have taken additional paternity and adoption leave, the submitting unit may return a reduced number of outputs, as set out in 'Guidance on submissions', Annex L.</p> <p>HEIs need to be wary of implementing procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 that would be easier for men to comply with than women, or vice versa. There are many cases where a requirement to work full-time (or less favourable treatment of people working part-time or flexibly) has been held to discriminate unlawfully against women.</p> <p>HEIs should note that there are now requirements under UK and Scottish legislation for public authorities (including HEIs) to report information on the percentage difference amongst employees between men and women's average hourly pay (excluding overtime).</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to sexual orientation. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person who is of a particular sexual orientation.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not discriminate against staff based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation.</p>
Welsh language	<p>The Welsh Language Act 1993 places a duty on public bodies in Wales to treat Welsh and English on an equal basis. This is reinforced by the provisions of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards (No 6) Regulations 2017.</p> <p>The arrangements for the assessment of outputs in the medium of Welsh by the REF panels are set out in 'Guidance on submissions', paragraphs 284 and 285.</p>

Appendix C - Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

The University has conducted a number of Annual Research Reviews (ARRs). Following the first review, which was based on an internal review of outputs, an EIA was conducted and a combined EIA for the following two ARR, which also included external review, is in the process of being completed. The ARR EIAs are not identical to those that will be conducted for REF2021, but the areas that it highlights are expected to be broadly similar, so the findings, shown below, are an early indicator of issues and challenges. All those involved in the REF and ARR processes, including relevant committees have been given this information.

The findings of the first EIA were, as follows:

- There were questions in relation to representation of academic staff with 3*+ outputs in comparison to the academic demographic as a whole. For example, analysis of 3*+ output ratings by gender shows that the proportion of female academics decreases and does not reflect the overall population from those with 1 x 3+*rating and further to 2 x 3+* rating. For all Schools combined, this drops from 51% to 47% to 43%. This drop is seen in particular within five of the seven Schools.
- This may be accounted for in part by the higher proportion of female part-time academics (64% of part time academics are female) and a perhaps to be expected lower number of outputs from those who work part-time. However, analysis of 3+* output ratings by gender (full time only), still shows a drop from 47% to 43% to 40%, with a similar picture in each School.
- Analysis by ethnicity highlights different issues to those for gender. The data show that overall, across all Schools, the proportion of BME staff who have at least 1 x 3+*rating or at least 2 x 3+* ratings increases from 24% (population) to 29% to 30%. However, this is not consistent and drops quite significantly for three of the Schools. BME staff are underrepresented as a whole and especially in specific schools, when considered in the context of the UEL demographic and location.
- There are a number of caveats to bear in mind, including that the analysis was based on the internal review and will need to be compared to the externally assessed outputs. Additionally, the numbers of outputs reviewed were small and this affects the categories of output rating used in the analysis, eg. the number of staff who have at least 2 x 3+* rated outputs.
- The analysis did highlight potential issues including unconscious bias in the assessment of outputs, workload allocation and balance between teaching and research as well as a reflection of the overall demographic of each School, in some cases.

The *EDI Annual Report* for 2017-18 contains information from the first ARR EIA and is available on the HR pages of the staff intranet.

Appendix D - Privacy Notice for users of REF Submission and Assessment Systems

Summary from the REF2021 website (<https://www.ref.ac.uk/submission-system/privacy-notice/>)

“The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requires that clear and transparent information is provided to individuals about the use(s) that will be made of their personal information:

“The principle of transparency requires that any information and communication relating to the processing of those personal data be easily accessible and easy to understand, and that clear and plain language be used.” (GDPR Recital 39)

To fulfil this obligation, we are employing a layered approach to privacy notices where a short form overview is provided, with a full detailed privacy notice.

Summary privacy notice

Here is a short summary of how the personal information you submit will be held and used:

- Research England (RE) is a part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and delivers UKRI’s England only functions, investing on behalf of the public to promote excellence and innovation in research and knowledge exchange. We also undertake projects on behalf of other funding bodies which will affect the UK as a whole and the Research Excellence Framework (REF) assessment is an example of this. You can find more information about RE and the work that we do on our website: <https://re.ukri.org/>.
- Research England (RE) operates the Research Excellence Framework (REF) on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies. The four UK funding bodies are: RE, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), and the Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland (DfE). The REF is the UK’s system for assessing the excellence of research in higher education institutions (HEIs).
- The REF is a process of expert review, carried out by expert panels for each of the 34 subject-based units of assessment (UOAs), under the guidance of four main panels. Expert panels are made up of senior academics, international members, and research users. The panel recruitment process was managed by the REF team, based at RE. The panel members were appointed by the chief executives (or equivalent) of the four UK funding bodies, after taking advice from the panel chairs. To help administer the work of the panels, we have developed submissions, assessment and administration systems; you will need to register to use one or more of these systems. This requires you to provide some personal information including: your name, job title, contact details and employing organisation. Depending on your reason for using the system(s), we may also require you to declare any conflicts of interest. Other personal information we may collect are set out in the full privacy policy.
- The Data Controller of the personal information you submit is UKRI. Research England, who are part of UKRI, will undertake the REF.
- The legal basis for processing your personal information is that it is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest, and/or for the performance of a contract. The legal basis for processing sensitive or special category data is explicit consent.
- It will be stored on secure servers within the UK and/or the EU.
- It will be retained for six months after the end of the project then securely disposed of.
- You have certain rights in relation to your personal information, including the right to request a copy of information we hold about you.

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You may contact our Data Protection Officer dataprotection@ukri.org with any queries or concerns you have about the use of your personal information.”

A full version of the privacy notice can be seen here: <https://www.ukri.org/privacy-notice>.

Appendix E - Annual Research Review Process

What is an annual research review?

Since 2016, the University has conducted a series of Annual Research Reviews (ARRs) aimed at identifying and assessing the depth, breadth and quality of research across all represented disciplines, irrespective of the contract type and position of the individual, as typified by research outputs. The ARR process has been designed to be both inclusive and supportive of staff and their research, whilst also informing the REF2021 output selection process.

As this process pre-dates the 'academic framework', the ARR has included all staff who have outputs that meet the REF definition of research (see Annex C, *Guidance on submissions*, January 2019), regardless of any implied, or not implied, responsibility for research. The ARR process:

- is voluntary;
- is inclusive;
- involves internal and external assessment of research outputs using REF2014/REF2021 criteria;
- has attempted to be open and transparent, fair, inclusive and institutionally consistent.

Communicating the process

A number of documents explaining the ARR process have been made available to all staff who have the potential to take part in the process, to those people conducting the ARR at local level and to any external assessors being used, explaining:

- the ARR process itself;
- collection and analysis processes for the research output review data;
- how data are kept confidential (collection, analysis, reporting, storage);
- reporting and feedback processes (to staff and senior management, centrally and locally);
- who has responsibility, at central and local level, for implementing the ARR and for the collection, analysis and reporting of the data.

The dates for the annual research reviews are shown in the timetable in Appendix G of this document.

The Annual Research Review procedure

- i. Each year, Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators (UOACs) collect all outputs that have yet to be part of the review process and ensure their suitability for review, in conjunction with the author(s);
- ii. Outputs are reviewed by an internal unit of assessment panel and an appointed external assessor, using REF guidelines for assessment (significance, rigour, originality) and the REF rating system;
- iii. Internal and external ratings are confidential to the internal unit of assessment panels, who reconcile any differences between the internal and external ratings, overseen by an independent Chair, keeping records of all decisions made;
- iv. All ratings, internal, external and reconciled, are sent to the Research Excellence Manager, who oversees the ARR process, to ensure that the principles of openness, transparency, fairness, inclusiveness and consistency have been adhered to and to keep an overall record of all ARR²;

² The REF module, being developed in conjunction with the University's new research output and data repository, will be used to record the outcomes of the Annual Research Reviews, once it is available, later in 2019.

- v. The UOAC ensures that all staff are informed, individually and confidentially, of their output ratings, including feedback, where relevant, from the external assessor and/or the internal panel;
- vi. The Research Excellence Manager, the College Directors of Research and the UOACs will report, at various times, on summary data from the ARR to senior management, research committees and any other relevant bodies, as required;
- vii. Where there are doubts about ratings assigned to outputs, eg. unclear differentiation between quality levels, lack of expertise in the subject area, etc., there will be an opportunity for a further review in a subsequent ARR to ensure fair and comprehensive assessment.

All aspects relating to the sensitive data from the ARRs are subject to the confidentiality commitments and processes explained in this *Code of Practice* - see 1.8, above.

The following table explains the roles and responsibilities of staff in the annual research review process.

TABLE 6 - Staff involved in Annual Research Reviews

People	Role	Responsibility
Research Excellence Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of guidance and staff lists to UOACs • Instigation and monitoring of ARR process across UEL • Collation and analysis of outcomes data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure fairness, transparency, consistency, accountability in all aspects of the ARR • Assist UOACs, DoRs and REF Teams to conduct successful ARRs • Report summaries of outcomes, by UOAs, to committees/groups, as required
Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators (UOACs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify staff and outputs for each ARR • Organise review of outputs, internally and externally • Feedback outcomes to staff reviewed 	Ensure effective and timely <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notification of process to staff • requests for outputs for review • provision of outputs to internal reading panels and external assessors • review and reconciliation of output ratings, with independent oversight • individual and collective feedback to staff, ensuring appropriate confidentiality
Directors of Research/Institute Research Leads (DoRs)	Oversee the conduct and outcomes of ARR process within their College/Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure appropriate support and co-operation given to UOACs in conduct of ARR • Report to College/Institute management committee on outcomes of ARR • In conjunction with UOACs, make recommendations to PVC Impact and Innovation regarding any issues from ARR
Unit of assessment REF Teams/reading panels	Review research outputs using REF criteria and provide appropriate feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair and objective review of colleagues' outputs • Assist UOACs in conduct of ARR process, including feedback to colleagues • Adherence to rules of confidentiality
All academic staff	Provide research outputs for review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to requests for outputs in timely fashion • Ensure outputs are in UEL output repository and meet REF2021 OA requirements, as appropriate • Respond to feedback from review

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People	Role	Responsibility
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager (HR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out EIA on ARR data • Make recommendations regarding outcomes to appropriate UEL committees and groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report outcomes and recommendations to Impact and Innovation Committee, Equality and Diversity Committee and REF Task and Finish Group and UOA teams • Update Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter action plans/processes/applications, as appropriate
Research Output Repository Team (UEL Library)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist academic staff in accurate deposit of outputs • Monitor OA compliance of outputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alert academics and Research Excellence Team of OA compliance issues • Provide regular reports on depositing and OA

Appendix F - Staff Circumstances

Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances Letter

To: All members of staff potentially eligible for return in REF2021

From: Professor Verity Brown, PVC Impact and Innovation

Subject: REF2021 - Declaration of individual staff circumstances affecting the number of research outputs required

The University of East London is committed to ensuring that decisions about how staff and their research outputs are submitted to the forthcoming Research Excellence Framework (REF2021) are made in a fair, transparent and consistent manner. Information about all the processes involved in the University's REF2021 submission can be found in UEL's REF2021 *Code of Practice*, which is available on the University's intranet, where there will also be a FAQ page relating to staff circumstances.

This letter and accompanying declaration form are being sent to all Category A staff whose outputs are eligible for submission to REF2021 (see '[Guidance on submissions](#)', paragraphs 117-122). As part of the University's commitment to supporting equality and diversity in REF, we have put in place safe and supportive structures for staff to declare information about any equality-related circumstances that may have affected their ability to research productively during the assessment period (1 January 2014 – 31 December 2020), and particularly their ability to produce research outputs at the same rate as staff not affected by circumstances.

The purpose of collecting this information is, as follows:

- to enable staff who have not been able to produce a REF-eligible output during the assessment period to be entered into REF where they have:
 - circumstances that have resulted in an overall period of 46 months or more absence from research during the assessment period, due to equality-related circumstances (see below)
 - circumstances *equivalent* to 46 months or more absence from research due to equality-related circumstances
 - two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave;
- to recognise the effect that equality-related circumstances can have on an individual's ability to research productively, and to adjust expectations in terms of expected workload/production of research outputs;
- to establish whether there are any Units of Assessment (UOA) where the proportion of declared circumstances is sufficiently high, or the UOA is small enough to be disadvantaged by a low number of staff with declared circumstances, to warrant a request to the higher education funding bodies for a reduced required number of outputs to be submitted;
- to collect information on early career researchers within the University, as required for submission in the HESA 2019-2020 staff return.

Applicable circumstances

- Qualifying as an ECR (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016)
- Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector
- Qualifying periods of family-related leave, eg. maternity, paternity, adoption, etc.

- Junior clinical academics who have not gained a Certificate of Completion of training by 31 July 2020
- Disability (including chronic conditions)
- Ill health, injury or mental health conditions
- Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of the standard allowances
- Caring responsibilities
- Gender reassignment

If your ability to research productively during the assessment period has been constrained due to one or more of the above circumstances, you are requested to complete the attached form. Further information can be found in paragraph 160 of the *Guidance on submissions* (January 2019), available on the REF2021 website <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/>.

Completion and return of the form is voluntary and individuals who do not choose to return it will not be put under any pressure to declare information if they do not wish to do so. This form is the only means by which the University will be gathering this information; we will not be consulting HR records, contract start dates, etc. as a substitute for completion of this form. You should therefore complete and return the form if any of the above circumstances apply and you are willing to provide the associated information.

Ensuring confidentiality

The University has put in place various processes to ensure the confidentiality of any information that you provide. The only people who will have access to this information are the members of the University's *Review Panel of Staff Circumstances*. For full details of how your information will be protected, please see 4.5.3 of the University's REF2021 *Code of Practice*.

If the institution decides to apply to the REF2021 Equality and Diversity Panel (EDAP) for a reduction of outputs, we will need to provide them with data that you have disclosed about your individual circumstances, to show that the criteria have been met for reducing the number of outputs. Please see *Guidance on submissions* (January 2019), paragraphs 151-201 for more detail about reductions in outputs and what information needs to be submitted.

Submitted data will be kept confidential to the REF Team, EDAP and Main Panel chairs. All these bodies are subject to confidentiality arrangements. The REF Team will destroy the submitted data about individuals' circumstances on completion of the assessment phase.

Changes in circumstances

The University recognises that staff circumstances may change between completion of the declaration form and the census date (31 July 2020). If this is the case, then staff should contact the Research Excellence Manager or the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager.

Declarations of staff circumstances should be returned to the Research Excellence Manager by [insert date], either by email or through the post.

If you have any concerns or questions about the process or the nature of the circumstance that you wish to declare, please contact [insert name], Research Excellence Manager or [insert name], the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager.

Best wishes,

Verity

PVC Impact and Innovation, Chair of the University's *Review Panel of Staff Circumstances*

Declaration of Staff Circumstances Form

Name: Click here to insert text.

College, School, Institute, Department: Click here to insert text.

Do you have a REF-eligible output published between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2020?

Yes

No

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). <i>Date you became an early career researcher.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You are not an Early Career Researcher if you held a research-related post in the public or private sector, in the UK or overseas, at any time before 1st August 2016, where you were expected to do your own research, without supervision. ▪ If you're not sure, please explain the research-based roles that you have had before 1st August 2016. If you can find the contracts of employment or job descriptions for these roles, please show them to the Research Excellence Manager. 	Click here to enter a date.
<p>Junior clinical academic who has not gained Certificate of completion of Training by 31 July 2020.</p>	Tick here <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Career break or secondment outside of the HE sector. <i>Dates and durations in months.</i> Please indicate the evidence to support this.</p>	Click here to enter dates and durations.
<p>Family-related leave:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • statutory maternity leave • statutory adoption leave • additional paternity or adoption leave or shared parental leave lasting for four months or more <p><i>For each period of leave, state the nature of the leave taken and the dates and durations in months.</i></p>	Click here to enter dates and durations.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When you returned to work, were any changes made to your working practice/hours that have affected your research career? ▪ If ‘yes’, please explain and quantify the nature of the changes, their duration and estimate the effect in terms of days/weeks, etc. on your ability to undertake research. 	
<p>Disability (including chronic conditions)</p> <p><i>To include: Nature/name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Mental health condition</p> <p><i>To include: Nature/name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p> <p>Does the HR department, or your School, have a record of the details listed above?</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Ill health or injury</p> <p><i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p> <p>Does the HR department, or your School, have a record of the details listed above?</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of standard allowance</p> <p><i>To include: Type of leave taken and brief description of additional constraints, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p> <p>Does the HR department, or your School, have a record of the details listed above?</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Caring responsibilities</p> <p><i>To include: Nature of responsibility, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p> <p>Does the HR department, or your School, have a record of the details listed above?</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>

<p>Gender reassignment</p> <p><i>To include: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p> <p>Does the HR department, or your School, have a record of the details listed above?</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Any other exceptional reasons e.g. bereavement.</p> <p><i>To include: brief explanation of reason, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p> <p>Does the HR department, or your School, have a record of the details listed above?</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>

Please confirm, by ticking the box provided, that:

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

I agree

Name: Print name here

Signed: Sign or initial here

Date: Insert date here

- I give my permission for the Research Excellence Manager or Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager to contact me to discuss my circumstances, and my requirements in relation to these.
- I give my permission for the details of this form to be passed on to the relevant contact within my College/School/Department/Institute in order to receive, or adjust, appropriate support.
- I give my permission for my Unit of Assessment Co-ordinator to be informed that my circumstances have resulted in a reduction in the number of outputs required by the UOA (no details of your circumstances will be passed on) - this does not apply to those who are Early Career Researchers.

I would like to be contacted by:

Email Insert email address

Phone Insert contact telephone number

Appendix G - University of East London REF2021 Timetable

Date	Event/Action
Pre 2017	
1 st January 2000	Start date for impact underpinning research period
1 st August 2013	Start date for income
1 st August 2013	Start date for doctoral completions
1 st August 2013	Start date for outputs
1 st January 2014	Start date for research impact
2017	
May to November 2017	Preparatory Research Review period
1 st September 2017	Results of REF2021 consultation (HEFCE)
21 st November 2017	Extended REF2021 consultation outcomes
Dec 2017 to Sept 2018	1 st Annual Research Review period (extended)
Winter 2017	Open Access policy survey report (HEFCE, RCUK, Jisc, Wellcome) - some results reported in the extended REF2021 consultation outcomes
2018	
July 2018	Draft REF2021 guidance and panel criteria published
15 th October 2018	Deadline for response to consultation draft REF2021 documents
Nov 2018 to March 2019	2 nd Annual Research Review period (ARR2)
2019	
January 2019 + early 2019	Final REF2021 guidance and panel criteria published; submission exceptions requests
Spring/Summer 2019	Beginning of submission: Codes of Practice (7.6.19); case studies requiring security clearance. Test versions of submission system available
Autumn 2019	Intention to submit to REF2021 period begins; pilot of REF submission system; proposed date for opening staff circumstances submissions
December 2019	End of survey of intention to submit period. Deadline for case studies requiring security clearance. Publication of approved CoPs
Nov 2019 to Feb 2020	3 rd Annual Research Review period (ARR3)
2020 (submission year)	
January 2020	Submission system and technical guidance launched
March 2020	Deadline for staff circumstances. Invitation to HEIs to make submissions.
May - June 2020	Mock REF (confirming selection of outputs and ICS + environment statements)
31 st July 2020	End of assessment period for research impact and the research environment, including research income and doctoral completions
31 st July 2020	Census date for staff eligibility for submission to REF2021
27 th November 2020	Closing date for submissions to REF2021
31 st December 2020	End of research outputs publication period
31 st December 2020	End of period for impact underpinning research (outputs)
2021 Onwards (post-submission)	
29 th January 2021	Impact case study corroborating evidence to be submitted
Throughout 2021	Panels assess submissions
December 2021	Publication of outcomes of REF2021
Spring 2022	Publication of submissions, panel overview reports and sub-profiles; QR funding allocations; Codes of Practice published

Appendix H - REF2021 Glossary

Quotes are from REF2021's *Guidance on submissions* (January 2019) which explains many of the terms shown below in greater detail - a link to the document is on the University's REF2021 intranet page or can be accessed directly from the REF2021 website <https://www.ref.ac.uk/>.

Category A staff	A member of staff with an academic contract where one of the primary functions is research (ie. a research only or teaching and research contract), minimum 0.2 FTE, regardless of whether full-time, part-time, fixed term contract, permanent, hourly, daily, weekly or monthly paid.
Category C staff	Individuals not employed by the submitting institution, but whose research is firmly embedded within the research structures, eg. research centres or groups, etc., of the submitting institution. These individuals can be included in the appropriate unit of assessment environment statement.
Census date	The date on which all staff who are being considered for entry to the REF must be employed by the submitting HEI, the date being 31 st July 2020.
Code of Practice	Mandatory document that each HEI submitting to the REF must create and implement, for the promotion of equality and diversity in their submission to REF2021 - the final document must be sent to the REF Team by 7 th June 2019.
DoR	Director of Research for a College or School
ECR	Early Career Researcher - a member of staff who was given, for the first time, either in the UK or abroad, a research or research and teaching academic contract, working as an independent researcher, on or after 1 st August 2016 and working at least 0.2FTE. An ECR is entitled to a reduction in the number of outputs required for a submission, based on a rising scale.
ECU	Equality Challenge Unit - the HE/FE body supporting staff and students on equality and diversity issues - is advising the REF on these issues and has helped develop the framework around the <i>Code of Practice</i> .
EDAG	The REF's Equalities and Diversity Advisory Group that created the guidance for the development of <i>Codes of Practice</i>
EDAP	The REF's Equalities and Diversity Advisory Panel which will review each HEI's <i>Code of Practice</i> and the claims for reductions in the number of outputs submitted by an individual.
EIA	Equality impact assessment - conducted to evaluate the efficacy of the definitions explained in the University's REF2021 <i>Code of Practice</i> .
FTE	Full-time equivalent, where full-time staff contracts are expressed as 1.0FTE and part-time staff are shown as a proportion, eg. 0.2 FTE.
Outputs	The product of research (meeting the REF definition of research), available in the public domain, where possible, most often in printed form, but also including items such as patents, devices, images, artefacts, performances, exhibitions, etc.. The publication deadline and deadline for verifiable appearance in the public domain, is 31 st December 2020.
Protected characteristics	Under the Equality Act (2010), there are nine protected characteristics and it is unlawful to discriminate against them. See 1.4.5 in this <i>Code of Practice</i> .
REF2021	Research Excellence Framework 2021, the successor to the REF2014
REF-able	Describes an academic member of staff who satisfies the University and REF submission criteria or someone who is expected to do so by the relevant dates.

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REF Panels	The UOAs are divided into four Main Panels, A-D, the criteria for which were published in January 2019 in <i>Panel criteria and working methods</i> .
The REF Team	Those who manage the REF on behalf of the UK HE funding bodies and have oversight of the whole process.
Research	The basic REF definition of research is “a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared”. Annex C of the REF2021 <i>Guidance on submissions</i> (January 2019) document expands on this.
Staff circumstances	The process that recognises a set of circumstances that has limited a member of staff’s ability to work productively during the REF period. This may, for example, involve maternity/paternity leave, ill health, caring responsibilities, and so on. The REF also allows these circumstances to be taken into account when calculating the number of outputs that a unit of assessment is required to submit.
Submission	The complete set of outputs and staff details, impact case studies and environment statement for a specific UOA from an HEI. In addition, there is an institutional environment template.
UOA	Unit of Assessment - submissions are made to one of 34 UOAs, which reflect research subject areas - see the REF intranet portal page for a list: https://www.ref.ac.uk/panels/units-of-assessment/ .
UOAC	Unit of Assessment Co-ordinator - within the University, a senior academic who co-ordinates and oversees the REF submission for a particular subject/discipline (UOA).

Appendix I – Letter to Research England: Response to *Code of Practice* Outcomes

Office of the Vice-Chancellor & President



19th September 2019

Dr Steven Hill
Director of Research, Research England

(Sent via email)

Dear Dr Hill,

Re: REF2021 Codes of Practice Assessment Outcome – University of East London

Thank you for your letter of 16th August 2019, informing us of the outcome of our submission of the University's REF2021 *Code of practice*. In your letter, you asked the University to confirm that we had received explicit agreement from staff for the definition of 'significant responsibility for research' included in our *Code of practice*. I can confirm that, in addition to the many consultation events, and other activities, carried out by the University, regarding the definition, agreement has been sought and given from the following University boards and committees:

- The University Executive Board, of which I am Chair;
- The University Management Board;
- Academic Board;
- The University's Impact and Innovation Committee (responsible for research-related business);
- The University's REF2021 'Task and Finish' Group;

The composition of these committees includes College Directors of Research and Research Institute research leads, unit of assessment co-ordinators, and their teams, for all our identified UOAs, College Deans and Heads of School, academic staff and student representatives.

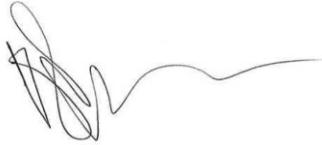
The UEL branch of the University and College Union (UCU) has confirmed agreement by email, following member consultation.

A number of the groups, above, also include professional support staff who have a key role to play in preparing our REF2021 submission.

This letter has been added as an Appendix to our *Code of practice* and a reference has been made to it in section 2.4.3, copies of which accompany this letter.

We, therefore, confirm that we sought and received agreement to the University's definition of 'significant responsibility for research' and ask that you will now accept our *Code of practice*, in full.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Amanda J. Broderick BA (Hons) PhD DipM
DipMRS PGCTL FRSA MBGS FCIM FHEA

Vice-Chancellor & President

cc. Professor Verity Brown, PVC Impact and Innovation Institutional
contacts: Martin Longstaff, Melanie Bullock