

Part 1: Introduction

Purpose and Context

The purpose of this Code of Practice ('the Code') is to set out how the University of Leicester ('the University') will apply principles of fairness in its approach to its REF 2021 submission.

All academic staff on Teaching and Research (T&R) contracts have significant responsibility for research and it is our intention that all such staff will be submitted to REF 2021, provided that they are employed by the University on a contract of 0.2FTE or greater on 31 July 2020. As a result, this Code does not include processes for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research.

The Code sets out how we will determine which staff on research only (R-only) contracts meet the definition of independent researcher. Where independence has been demonstrated, these individuals will be included in the submission.

The Code also sets out how outputs will be selected, including our approach to supporting staff with the disclosure of individual circumstances, as well as the process for taking reductions into account within units of assessment.

The Code is based upon the principles of **transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity**. Furthermore, it embraces and takes full account of all relevant equalities legislation and aligned duties, in particular, the 2010 Equality Act. The Code should be read in conjunction with the Research England Guidance on Submissions and the Panel Criteria and Working Methods (Panel Criteria).

All personal data collected by the University for the purposes of REF 2021 are handled strictly in accordance with current data protection legislation.

How the Code relates to broader institutional policies/strategies that promote and support Equality and Diversity

As a University, we have a strong and well-established commitment to ensuring that principles and practices of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are at the heart of all that we do. One of our strategic aims is to recognise and value diversity, ensure equality of opportunity, and enable all staff and students to flourish in an inclusive and respectful working and learning environment. To support this commitment, we have a comprehensive EDI policy and procedure infrastructure, along with an EDI governance structure that enables active commitment and advances inclusivity across all areas of the University. In addition, we encourage all members of staff to live our VITAL values (Valuing People, Innovators, Together, Accountable, Leaders) in every aspect of University practice and work.

The key relevant University policy is the *Dignity at Work Code of Practice*. This will be replaced during 2019 by two new policies: *Dignity and Respect at Leicester Policy* and *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy*. Together, they will detail the University's expectations of all members of our community in ensuring that the University is a safe, inclusive and productive environment.

Beyond these policies, core principles of EDI and respect can be found in many of our policies and procedures, for example, in our family-friendly and parental leave policies. Our approach to building organisational capability in EDI is to embed these principles throughout the management and delivery of our core activity. This approach is fully outlined in the University's 2017-2021 EDI Strategy, [A Culture of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(Appendix 1\)](#). The Strategy details our commitment to embed an

organisation-wide culture of inclusion that incorporates all aspects of activity and business. Our goals for enhancing EDI are to:

1. Embed EDI into all aspects of University life;
2. Use robust, reliable equalities data to monitor our activities;
3. Attract, retain, develop and support an excellent diverse staff and student population;
4. Provide evidence of progress and clear measurable action in equality charters.

The University engages with sector and other relevant national equality charters to benchmark our EDI activity and to demonstrate evidence of progress and clear, measurable action in advancing equality:

- We hold a Silver Institutional Athena SWAN Award and 13 departmental awards (six silver, seven bronze) with more departments currently working towards silver and bronze awards;
- We are members of the Race Equality Charter and will be making a submission for an Institutional Bronze Award in February 2020;
- We have been a Stonewall Top 100 Employer since 2018;
- We are at Level 1 of the Disability Confident Scheme and are applying for Level 2 during 2019;
- We are the only UK university and one of just ten worldwide university partners in the United Nations HeForShe global solidarity movement for gender equality.

We have a strong governance structure for EDI that comprises four Equality Action Groups (disability, gender, LGBT+ and race) whose remit is to develop and progress actions and initiatives to advance equality. Our EDI Committee is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, who, along with the HR Director, has University leadership responsibility for EDI. Each department has a Diversity Champion whose role is to promote awareness of EDI issues and to enhance and embed equality, diversity and inclusion within their department. In addition, there is an EDI portfolio holder in each College who sits on the relevant college leadership team while the portfolio holder in Professional Services is on the equivalent leadership team.

One of the key ways in which we promote a culture of inclusivity and respect, and ensure that all staff are equipped to contribute to this, is through our comprehensive suite of development and leadership programmes, which have equality and unconscious bias awareness embedded throughout. In addition, all staff are required to complete online Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Challenging Unconscious Bias modules upon joining the University and every three years thereafter. Compliance is monitored through annual Performance Development Discussions.

An update on any relevant actions taken since REF 2014, with reference to the 2014 Equality Impact Assessment, where appropriate.

Since REF 2014, we have introduced significant changes to our EDI and wider HR policy, procedure and practice framework with a view to maximising inclusion and fairness for all staff in everyday working practice. These changes align with a number of actions that were identified in the University's REF 2014 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)(Appendix 2) and can be grouped as follows:

- a. Provide appropriate ongoing support and flexibility for managing changing staff circumstances in a transparent and fair way, including through the use of flexible working arrangements (see Appendix 2, Actions 1 & 2);
- b. Ensure up to date and accurate staff data and contract records (see Appendix 2, Actions 6 & 7).

a. *Appropriate ongoing support and flexibility for managing changing staff circumstances in a transparent and fair way, including through the use of flexible working arrangements*

We value all our staff and are committed to ensuring that our policies, procedures and practices support the achievement of a good balance between work and other commitments and interests, in line with the action identified in our REF 2014 EIA.

Staff are encouraged to request flexible working if they wish to vary their working arrangements. In 2017, new guidance was launched on *Flexible Working for Staff in Grade 6 and above* which provides guidance to staff and managers on the agreement and operation of flexible working arrangements. Between March 2015 and March 2019, 243 flexible working requests were received, 215 of which were approved.

Also in 2017, we launched our *Special Leave Policy* recognising that many members of staff combine their working lives with the responsibilities of raising a family, caring for dependent relatives and other domestic commitments. The Policy provides a framework for staff to request special leave for a range of circumstances, including unplanned, domestic, personal and family reasons, where Heads of Departments can exercise discretion to grant leave. The University also launched an *Annual Leave Purchase Scheme Policy* in 2017, enabling staff to purchase additional leave through salary sacrifice. Between February 2017 and March 2019, 613 requests were received.

In relation to maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental leave, we have enhanced our provision and support for staff. With the introduction of Shared Parental Leave, we offer enhanced pay to eligible staff for the first continuous period of shared parental leave. Key relevant policies and procedures, including *Maternity Leave, Adoption Leave, Paternity Leave, Shared Parental Leave and Parental Leave* have all been updated in line with legislative changes and enhanced good practice since 2014. Key updates include extending parental leave entitlement to 18 weeks per child for parents of children under 18 and enhanced pay provision for Adoption Leave. An online Maternity Leave and Shared Parental Leave course for staff was launched in 2019, along with a guide to keeping in touch days.

b. *Ensure that staff data and contract records are up to date and correct.*

Key academic employment data for all staff are periodically reviewed by HR as part of internal data integrity checks. Any changes are subject to central scrutiny, to ensure they comply with statutory guidance.

Since the last REF exercise, our data capturing and reporting systems have been streamlined to support more advanced monitoring and analysis of staff equality data. From 2018, in addition to disability, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation, we have extended staff equality monitoring to include gender identity. Equalities data are captured during recruitment and staff are encouraged to amend their own records using the University's Employee Self-Service Portal.

As part of the REF 2021 exercise, all REF-eligible staff will be asked to review and, if appropriate, update their equalities data. We will specifically ask staff to review and complete the 'ethnicity' field, as this was identified in the REF 2014 EIA as having a high number of 'unknown ethnicity' responses (122 out of 838). During 2019/20, our EDI Team will be running an EDI data awareness initiative explaining why improving data is important and how equalities data are used.

How the institution is addressing the principles of Transparency, Consistency, Accountability and Inclusivity in demonstrating fairness

We are committed to ensuring that **transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity** inform all of our processes and procedures for REF 2021. Decisions about our submission strategy are being taken centrally through our REF management structure, balancing various factors to achieve the best outcome for the University as a whole. This approach informs all of our decision-making and we expect everyone involved in REF preparations to act in line with the University's best interests and with due regard for equality, diversity and inclusion.

Principles

We ensure **transparency** by:

- Ensuring that this Code is available to all staff, including those absent from the University, through a variety of means, and ensuring it is publicised widely across the University including on the intranet and external website;
- Presenting all documents in formats that render them as accessible as possible, taking into account areas such as font type and size and layout;
- Providing opportunities for all staff to comment on drafts of this Code and the processes it outlines through a consultation process;
- Ensuring that eligible staff have access to information on the scores and comments on their outputs given by output reviewers that are being used to inform REF decisions;
- Setting out clear processes for determining research independence;
- Creating a supportive environment which ensures staff feel enabled to disclose individual circumstances.

We ensure **consistency** by:

- Applying this Code uniformly across all areas of the University and to all stages of REF processes;
- Using cross-college panels rather than individuals to make decisions, for example on research independence or potential reductions aligned with individual circumstances, to eliminate bias and promote consistency of approach;
- Recommending that internal output review panels reflect the make-up of the Unit of Assessment, including both male and female members and individuals at different career stages wherever possible;
- Requiring every individual who is making REF-related decisions to undertake EDI training, including REF-specific provision (see below);
- Ensuring that decisions are based on evidence and draw on all available data and suitable analyses;
- Benchmarking internal review of all aspects of our submissions against external data from reviewers with appropriate experience.

We ensure **accountability** by:

- Having a robust management structure which clearly sets out responsibility for REF preparations and decisions;
- Ensuring that the Terms of Reference and Membership for all groups in our REF management structure (Appendix 3) are available to all staff on the intranet, along with a diagram (Appendix 4) which sets out key decision-making points and information flows;

- Making publicly available the role descriptions and identity of key role holders, such as UoA lead (Appendix 5);
- Ensuring overall membership of the REF management groups represents relevant stakeholders, thus allowing a wide range of voices and opinions to be heard;
- Providing regular and frequent opportunities for those not directly involved in REF management to ask questions and obtain information, such as via REF Newsletters, departmental workshops, presentations to University-wide fora or Early Career Researcher and Research Staff Career Enhancement Group;
- Ensuring a regular flow of information between the different REF management groups, as well as other institutional committees, to ensure that decisions taken by the REF management groups and the University leadership's Executive Board draw on the best available data.

We ensure **inclusivity** by:

- Identifying all academic staff on T&R contracts with an FTE of 0.2 or greater employed on the staff census date as eligible for REF 2021;
- Providing a clear process for determining research independence that is applied equally to all staff on R-only contracts and includes an appeals process;
- Encouraging all staff with individual circumstances to feel empowered to disclose these, in a supportive and confidential environment.

Communication of the Code of Practice to all staff

We have shared our draft Code of Practice with all staff across the University and have held an open consultation process. The Code has been amended to reflect the feedback received. We have also engaged the relevant Trade Unions in discussion about the Code, inviting them to be members of the Code of Practice Working Group which developed the Code, as well as explicitly including them as key stakeholders in the consultation process.

Once the final Code of Practice has been approved internally and by Research England, we will publicise the Code widely across the University, and to all staff, through a variety of means which include:

- Emailing the Code with supporting information to all staff on T&R and R-only contracts;
- Posting copies to all staff who are away from the University through maternity leave, sickness and study leave, or any other prolonged period of absence;
- Placing the Code on the intranet;
- Preparing a news item, directing staff to the relevant intranet link;
- Releasing a special edition of the internal REF newsletter;
- Providing a briefing note for all staff, circulated to departments and schools as well as to Professional Services colleagues;
- Emailing Heads of College, Deans of Research, Heads of Department, UoA leads and deputies, advising them of the Code and its contents, asking them to bring the Code to the attention of staff;
- Presenting the key points to the University's leadership groups and also at UoA Leads meetings;
- Providing dedicated sessions for groups such as early career researchers.

In addition, we will circulate specific communications on the process for determining independence to all staff holding R-only contracts (see Part 3).

Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

We aim to return all staff who meet the definition of Category A in our REF 2021 submission. The REF Guidance on Submissions (paragraph 117) defines Category A staff as:

academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, on the payroll of the submitting institution on the census date, whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'teaching and research'. Staff should have a substantive research connection with the submitting unit. Staff on 'research only' contracts should meet the definition of an independent researcher (paragraphs 128 to 134).

Academic staff on T&R contracts with an FTE of 0.2 or greater on the staff census date meet this definition. We will also return all R-only staff who additionally meet the criteria for research independence, as set out in Part 3.

Part 3: Determining research independence

Approach to determining research independence

We will submit all staff on R-only contracts who meet the definition of an independent researcher on the census date. The process for determining independence is set out below and has been agreed by our REF Steering Group. The process will be applied consistently across all Units of Assessment.

Our criteria for determining independence are drawn from the indicators stated in paragraphs 131–134 of the Guidance on Submissions. These indicators will be used to help us to determine whether an individual is independent:

- holding an independently won, competitively awarded externally-funded fellowship. An illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of independent fellowships supplied by Research England can be found at www.ref.ac.uk;
- leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent or co-investigator on an externally funded research project;
- leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package on an externally funded project.

A member of staff on an R-only contract is not deemed to have undertaken independent research purely on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs. R-only staff funded from research grants are normally ineligible for submission.

R-only staff who hold internally-awarded fellowships or grants do not necessarily meet the above criteria and their eligibility will be assessed on an individual basis using the procedure below.

Leicester procedure for determining independence

HR and the Research and Enterprise Division (RED) will provide regular updates to Heads of Department and UoA Leads with a list of all staff on T&R and R-only contracts so that they can verify that the list is complete and reflects the current contract type for each individual.

A number of steps will be taken to determine which R-only staff are independent. These steps comprise:

1. HR and research grant records will be used to identify individuals who hold fellowships which are a match with the list provided by Research England. Individuals who hold one of these fellowships and will be employed by the University on an eligible contract on the census date of 31 July 2020 will normally be considered eligible. The REF Steering Group will ratify the inclusion of these staff, before the individuals and respective UoA leads are informed.
2. Data on R-only staff will be cross-checked with grant data to identify individuals who are research assistants funded on a research grant held by another individual. In line with the REF guidance, these R-only staff will normally be ineligible for submission. UoA leads and Heads of Department will be asked to verify the data and agree the ineligibility of these staff.
3. Where the independence of R-only staff is not clear from the steps outlined above, individuals will be asked to provide additional information to help determine whether or not they meet the criteria for independence on the census date of 31 July 2020. This will be done in a consistent and transparent manner through the use of a standard form (Appendix 6). Forms will be counter-signed by the Head of Department or research group leader and will be submitted to the RED REF Team. Examples of this group include individuals who hold internally-awarded fellowships or grants.
4. Any member of R-only staff may submit a self-initiated case to help determine whether they meet the criteria for independence. Individuals should use the same standard form as for step 3, but should discuss their application with their Head of Department or UoA Lead prior to submission of the form and additional information.
5. All cases will be reviewed by a panel which will include representation from each college, HR and RED and will meet at regular intervals to consider cases in batches. This cross-institutional panel approach ensures that the criteria are applied consistently across the University. The panel will make recommendations about which individuals meet the criteria for independence to the REF Steering Group. Following ratification by the REF Steering Group, individuals, their Heads of Department and UoA Leads will be advised of the outcome. Individuals will have the right of appeal.
6. UoA Leads will be asked to identify any individuals who are not captured in this dataset and the steps outlined above will then be followed for these staff.
7. Data on R-only staff will be reviewed regularly to identify new members of staff joining the University and any changes in status. The above process will be repeated as required.

Details of training provided to individuals and committees involved in identifying staff, the timescale for delivery and content (including how it has been tailored to the REF).

EDI training tailored to the REF 2021 processes and requirements will be mandatory for all individuals serving on committees or groups which support the University's REF submission. The training is designed to ensure that all of our activities and decisions made in relation to the REF are fair and inclusive, addressing sector concerns highlighted by the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) and reflecting the equality impact assessment (EIA) carried out as part of the University's REF 2014 submission.

The University's EDI Team will develop and deliver training to all staff who are members of the following University committees and groups which have a role to play in overseeing or delivering our REF submission, as well as key individuals such as the RED REF team and UoA leads and deputies:

- Executive Board
- Internal members of REF Advisory Group
- REF Steering Group
- UoA Leads Group
- Unit of Assessment leads, deputies and impact coordinators
- Heads of Departments/Schools
- Impact Working Group
- Environment Working Group
- Code of Practice Working Group
- Technical Group
- College REF Working Groups
- RED REF team and College-based REF support staff
- Any individuals involved with REF appeals processes not captured above

EDI training for REF 2021 comprises two distinct elements which are core EDI training and REF-specific EDI training:

(1) Core EDI Training

It is essential that all members of the University's REF committees and other key staff, as captured above, have completed the University's mandatory online EDI training courses (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Challenging Unconscious Bias) **since 1 January 2019**. This provision ensures relevant and up-to-date knowledge and understanding of EDI legislation, core principles and practices. Members of the Groups highlighted have been contacted individually by our EDI team to confirm the requirement to take these courses. The EDI team are monitoring and reporting levels of completion to the REF Steering Group, who will take action where necessary to ensure we achieve 100% compliance. At the date of submission of this Code, 93% of those listed above have already completed both online training courses.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion course focuses on equality legislation and knowledge, the importance of EDI principles, practices and behaviours in HE, how to proactively promote EDI in the workplace and how the University delivers on its public sector duty to advance EDI. The second module, *Challenging Unconscious Bias*, builds upon the awareness and core principles derived from *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion* and explores thinking around what unconscious bias is, the impact it can have on key decision-making and how we can effectively challenge our own biased thinking and decisions.

- (2) From summer 2019, and following completion of the online training modules mentioned above, face to face training will be delivered to members of the Groups listed on "Key Equality Considerations and Practices for REF 2021". This will be a tailored session that draws upon the findings of EDI-related analysis carried out at both national and institutional level in relation to REF 2014 and informed by AdvanceHE EDI for REF workshops which took place in April 2019.

The EDI Team will actively consider whether any further training should be developed and implemented during the process of our REF preparations. Proposals for any further training will be considered in the first instance by the REF Steering Group and will then be rolled out to all relevant members of staff by the EDI team, as required.

Appeals

Individuals will have the right of appeal if they consider that they are independent researchers and have been deemed not to be by the process outlined above. Any individual who wishes to appeal must normally lodge their appeal within 15 working days of notification of their ineligibility. The appeal should include the grounds for appeal with evidence and must be based on the REF criteria for determining independence. Appeals should be sent to REFCircs@leicester.ac.uk.

Appeals will be considered by a Panel which will be chaired by a member of the REF Steering Group who was not involved with earlier decisions about research independence. Other panel members will include a member of both the EDI and RED REF Teams and up to three academic members of staff. The Appeals Panel will normally meet within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal. Appellants will not normally attend the panel meeting.

The decision of the Appeals Panel will be communicated to the appellant within 10 working days of the date of the panel meeting. The decision of the Appeals Panel will be final.

Equality impact assessment - How an EIA has been used to inform the identification of staff and make final decisions

A key requirement of REF 2021 is the completion of equality impact assessments (EIAs) demonstrating how meaningful equality analysis has fed into the approach we have taken and decisions we have made about both the identification of research independent staff and selection of outputs to be submitted. To meet these requirements, we will begin equality analysis using the University's own EIA process once the Code has been submitted to Research England. This analysis will be completed internally and will remain open until our submission is made. This will be led by the Head of EDI but will involve other key members of the University's wider REF team.

These EIAs will draw on relevant data and information, such as the equality and diversity demographic of the staff identified as independent researchers and the spread of selected outputs across this equality and diversity demographic. They will also include key information sets and findings from equality analysis carried out as part of the University's REF 2014 submission. The extensive consultation exercise engaged in by the University has resulted in a number of changes to this Code and to its appendices. This consultation process and its findings, such as the feedback provided by the University's Staff Disability Forum, will be incorporated into the consultation section of the EIAs.

Equality analysis will be carried out on the mock REF exercise being undertaken in summer 2019 and at key points of our staff circumstances disclosure process to analyse the types and range of disclosures being made. Intersectional analysis will be carried out to ensure a comprehensive understanding of impact is reached. Particular attention will be paid here to the intersections of race, gender and age.

Where potential or actual risk of negative impact is identified, then the EIAs will record all actions taken to mitigate and minimise this impact on the protected groups. Similarly, any potential or actual positive impact will be recorded and, where possible, steps taken to extend such positive impact to all groups.

Analysis and findings from this equality analysis will be reported to the University's REF Steering Group and Executive Board and will inform future University actions, commitments and policies.

Part 4: Selection of outputs

Procedures to ensure the fair and transparent selection of outputs, including approach to submitting outputs by former staff

The University is a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and we take our commitment to, and implementation of the principles of the responsible use of metrics seriously. Our Research and Enterprise Committee has recently established a Task and Finish Group to develop policy and guidance around responsible use of metrics in hiring and promotion.

Consistent with DORA principles, we use internal and external peer review as the basis for informing our judgements about the quality of our outputs. We do not use journal rankings or impact factors as a proxy for quality of an individual article. In UoAs where the REF panels will draw on citation data to inform peer-review judgement, we may also utilise similar analyses as one factor to inform our selection of outputs. Any citation data will be provided in a consistent and transparent format by bibliometrics experts from the Library and the RED REF team. The data and analysis will be shared with UoA Leads and will be available to individual authors on request. Our use of research metrics for REF will be guided by the advice from the UK Forum for Responsible Research Metrics.

In 2017, we introduced an Output Quality Review Policy which requires Departments and Schools to report annually on the quality profile of their outputs, based on peer review, and the measures which are in place to provide a supportive environment which fosters the production of high quality outputs. This includes mentoring support, training sessions to share examples of 4* or 3* work and encouraging staff to self-evaluate their outputs before they are submitted for publication. Departmental reports are considered annually by the Research and Enterprise Committee to allow for comparisons and benchmarking across individual departments and disciplines.

In our REF preparations, our internal output review panels assess outputs using the REF criteria of Originality, Significance and Rigour using a 12-point scale. Where there is divergence in the scoring, internal panels will discuss scores to reach an agreed calibrated score. We expect our internal review panels to reflect the constitution of our departments and, wherever possible, they include both male and female members and staff across a range of career stages. The use of panels to calibrate scores given by individuals counters bias and ensures consistency of approach across the University. In addition, we have a panel of experienced external reviewers, who provide a further level of calibration and allow us to counter any over-positive, or negative, marking by internal reviewers. The mock REF exercise that we are undertaking in summer 2019 will provide additional calibration and validation of our scores, processes and strategy.

Where outputs may fit within the remit of more than one of the UoAs to which we might submit, we arrange for internal and external review by multiple UoAs. This allows us to understand clearly our options for placing staff in different UoAs, including how outputs will score in these different cases.

Recommendations on where to submit individual staff or research groups will be made by the REF Steering Group for decision by the Executive Board. Due account will be taken of factors such as suitability and grades of outputs, as well as availability of impact case studies and environment effects. Members of staff will not have the right to appeal Executive Board decisions on UoA placement or selection of outputs.

Once reviews have been completed and scores agreed, internal and external scores and feedback are shared with authors through IRIS (the University's research information management system or CRIS).

Scores and comments made by both internal and external reviewers are visible to authors within the IRIS Assessment Module, although the identity of reviewers is not shown. UoA Leads and deputies, Deans of Research, Heads of Department/School, review panel members and college REF administrators can also see the scores and comments for the UoAs relevant to them. Members of the RED REF Team have access to all the data for management and modelling purposes.

We undertake extensive analysis of our output pool using the scores from both internal and external review, including outputs reviewed across more than one UoA. This analysis shows the number of outputs for each member of staff and the scores to enable us to model the optimum configuration of our submission for outputs. Data are shared with UoA Leads and reported to the REF Steering Group and Executive Board. The data are presented anonymously, listing Colleague A, B, C etc., which counters any unconscious bias and ensures that decisions are taken purely on the basis of the quality of the output pool. The graphs produced model the minimum of one and maximum of five outputs per member of staff, including double-weighting where appropriate, and allow us to model our strongest configuration, taking into account REF requirements.

As part of our modelling and data analysis, we provide UoAs with basic information on the distribution of outputs amongst staff by grade, full- or part-time status and gender, as well as an indication of the proportions allocated to current and former staff. This information helps to give a preliminary indication of any obvious bias in the choice of outputs that would need further investigation and support the process of optimising output configuration for each UoA. For other protected characteristics, such as ethnicity or disability, it is not possible to provide breakdowns at UoA level due to the sensitive nature of the data and the potential to make individual staff identifiable.

Our modelling includes the outputs of former staff which are reviewed in the same way as those for current staff. As with the data for current staff, data are presented anonymously to counter any unconscious bias. Each UoA will form a view on the number/percentage of outputs it will include from former members of staff which is proportionate with the level of staff change in the Unit during the assessment period and the quality of the overall output pool.

We do not intend to use the outputs of former staff who have left the University through compulsory redundancy in our submission. For clarity, this does not include individual staff who were made redundant at the end of a fixed term contract, nor those who left the University through voluntary redundancy.

We use the UoA Leads group as a forum where Leads can share their own ways of working and enable wider take-up of good practice across the University.

All of the above measures help to ensure that selection of outputs is made in a transparent and accountable manner, on a consistent basis across all UoAs with ultimate decisions made by the Executive Board.

Staff, committees and training

Procedures for identifying designated staff and committees/panels responsible for selecting outputs (distinguishing between those with advisory and those decision-making roles).

Specifically in relation to the selection of outputs, we have appointed Leads and Deputies for each UoA. These individuals are responsible for overseeing the internal review of outputs, for identifying items for external review and nominating an appropriate reviewer from the pool. They are also responsible for proposing the outputs which will make up our submission, within the parameters set out in the Guidance on Submissions in relation to the number of outputs per individual and the requirement for

Open Access compliance for relevant outputs. The Leads and Deputies are provided with data and analyses from the RED REF team to support the optimisation of selections. The REF Steering Group receives reports on the broad constitution of each UoA's selection and final decisions are made by the Executive Board.

Our research information system is IRIS and we use this to capture output data for our REF submission. All outputs are entered on IRIS and individual members of staff identify those which could be considered for REF. Internal and external scores and feedback are stored on IRIS. Individuals can see internal and external scores and feedback on their reviewed outputs.

Information provided should include role descriptions for individuals and terms of reference for committees/panels, modes of operations, and record-keeping procedures, as well as information about where these roles/committees/panels fit into the wider institutional management structure

Details of training provided to individuals and committees involved in the output selection process, the timescale for delivery and content (including how it has been tailored).

Please refer to Part 3 where our broad approach to staff selection, committees and training has been set out and details of our management structure are provided.

Disclosure of circumstances. Procedures for taking into account staff whose circumstances have affected their ability to research productively throughout the period in relation to the Unit's total output requirement.

Procedures for taking into account the effect of circumstances that have had an exceptional effect on the ability of an individual staff member to research productively throughout the period so that they do not have the required minimum of one output.

The University recognises that there are a range of different circumstances which may have affected the ability of some staff to conduct research throughout the REF 2021 assessment period. We are fully committed to providing an environment where members of staff can voluntarily disclose such individual circumstances in a supportive and confidential manner. It is our expectation that staff will have at least one output which can be submitted to the REF, unless there are exceptional circumstances which warrant making a case for a reduction to no output. Our career map sets out broad expectations of research performance, including generation of research outputs, for staff at different career stages, and we fully recognise that these may be impacted by disciplinary differences as well as personal circumstances.

We understand the change in approach to staff circumstances from REF 2014 to REF 2021 and are confident that our process recognises these differences, whilst providing the right environment for staff to make disclosures where they wish to do so. We also recognise that there are likely to be differences in approach across disciplines and that some individuals may be entitled to a reduction, but may elect to forego this entitlement. We will respect the decisions of our staff whether or not to make a disclosure of circumstances. We will not apply inappropriate pressure on staff to make disclosures and there will be no detriment for staff whether they choose to disclose circumstances or not.

We intend to take a highly principled approach to staff circumstances, drawing on the Guidance on Submissions requirements and adopting the same measures for all UoAs. The REF Steering Group will receive anonymised data on the possible reductions broken down into broad staff circumstances

categories and by UoA. This Group will review the data and provided that the circumstances are eligible and in line with the Guidance on Submissions, we will prepare and make the case to Research England for a reduction.

Individual circumstances

We will draw on the circumstances detailed in the Guidance on Submissions (paragraphs 160-161) and the defined reductions set out in Appendix L of the Guidance on Submissions (Appendix 7) to identify individual circumstances which have been identified as, in isolation or together, potentially significantly constraining the ability of a member of staff to produce outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period. These circumstances include:

1. Qualifying as an Early Career Researcher (that is, someone who meets the definition of Category A eligible on the census date, and who started their careers as independent researchers on or after 1 August 2016).
2. Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector.
3. Qualifying periods of family-related leave.
4. Other circumstances that apply to UOAs 1–6 only, for example, for clinically qualified academics who have not gained their Certificate of Completion of Training or its equivalent prior to 31 July 2020.
5. Circumstances with an equivalent effect to absence, that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:
 - a. Disability, as defined in Table 1 of the REF Guidance on codes of practice and detailed in Appendix 8;
 - b. Ill health, injury, or mental health conditions;
 - c. 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 Appendix 7;
 - d. Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member);
 - e. Gender reassignment;
 - f. Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics, as detailed in Appendix 8, or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

As part-time working is now taken into account within the calculation for the overall number of outputs required for the unit, reduction requests on the basis of part-time working hours should only be made exceptionally.

Similarly, we will follow the Guidance on Submissions requirements (paragraphs 178-183) for members of staff who have not been able to produce an eligible output, where any of the following circumstances apply within the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020:

- a. An overall period of 46 months or more absence from research during the assessment period, due to one or more of the circumstances set out in the guidance (such as an Early Career Researcher who has only been employed as an eligible staff member for part of the assessment period);
- b. Circumstances equivalent to 46 months or more absence from research, where circumstances set out in Appendix 7 apply (such as mental health issues, caring responsibilities, long-term health conditions); or

- c. Two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave, as defined in Appendix 7.

Full details of all applicable circumstances can be found in Appendix 7 (Reductions for Staff Circumstances).

Declaration of Individual Circumstances

We set out here the basis on which we will handle the cumulative effect of individual circumstances on a submitting Unit, as well as the process for making the case for removing the minimum requirement of one output.

We will use the same communication methods as we set out in Part 1 to make all eligible staff aware of the circumstances which might enable them to request a reduction. These communications will include information on the way in which requests can be submitted and the process which we will follow. In addition, Heads of Department will be asked to provide information about our approach and process at departmental meetings, encouraging eligible staff to make a disclosure and setting out the support available to all staff, whilst ensuring staff are aware that disclosure is voluntary.

We will encourage all staff with individual circumstances to disclose them on a voluntary and strictly confidential basis. This process will be used for both unit circumstances and requests to remove the minimum requirement of one output.

Staff who wish to make a declaration will be asked to complete the Individual Circumstances Form (Appendix 9). Staff will be directed to Appendices 7 and 8 for further guidance. Completed forms should be returned to the dedicated REF Individual Circumstances email address (REFCircs@leicester.ac.uk) which will only be accessible to members of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team. Additional support will be available as required and any individuals wishing to request a confidential meeting with a member of the EDI Team will be able to request this through the email address above.

Existing University HR data will not be used as a source of information on personal circumstances, except non-sensitive information such as ECR status. Sensitive information provided for REF will not be used for any other purpose and will not be added to existing personnel files. If a member of staff wishes to disclose to the University personal circumstances that have not been disclosed previously, on a completely voluntary basis, members of the EDI Team will support staff in making such disclosures.

Submitted information will be considered in an anonymised format by the Staff Circumstances Panel. Membership of the Panel will include members of the EDI and RED REF teams and up to three academic members of staff who have undertaken the REF training and can ensure representation across all colleges. A further member of staff, drawn from the College of Life Sciences, will be included when the particular circumstances of Academic Clinical Lecturers are being considered. The Chair will be an appropriate member of staff who is not involved with any other University REF committee. The indicative recommendations of the Panel will be shared with individual members of staff ahead of being considered and ratified by the REF Steering Group. The decisions made by the REF Steering Group will then be communicated to individual staff.

All individuals will have the right of appeal if they consider that their circumstances have not been fully taken into account and they do not agree with the proposed reduction, if any. Further details of the Appeals process are set out below. If an individual's circumstances change significantly after they have

received notification of the outcome of a request, they should submit a revised form outlining the changes and this will be reconsidered.

All forms will be treated with **full confidentiality**. They will be reviewed by members of the EDI Team, who will ensure compliance with any relevant legislation and advice on the individual's eligibility for reductions using the REF guidance. Non-sensitive data, for example, about ECR status will be shared with designated staff in the RED REF team.

We will encourage staff to disclose circumstances promptly so that full consideration can be given and additional information gathered when required. We will set a final deadline of 15 January 2020 to ensure that requests can be processed and approved in good time to meet the Research England deadline of 31 March 2020 for submission of cases requesting unit and individual reductions. We will still consider circumstances after this date on an exceptional basis, e.g. for new members of staff or where there have been serious or unexpected changes to circumstances.

The REF Steering Group and UoA Leads will receive regular anonymised updates on the number of circumstances disclosed, broken down by broad category (e.g. parental leave or Early Career Researcher) and by UoA. Data will always be anonymised to protect the identity of individuals and to respect confidentiality.

The internal process for deciding whether an individual is entitled to a reduction is distinct from any request to Research England for a Unit-level reduction.

1. Unit reduction request

We will calculate the anonymised cumulative effect of requests relating to an individual Unit according to the Guidance on Submissions. In line with the approach set out above, the EDI and RED REF teams will work with the relevant UoA Lead to draft the supporting statement for submission to Research England. The statement will provide context about the unit and will articulate the impact of the circumstances on the output pool, thereby making the case for the reduction. The RED REF team will ensure that statements and supporting data for each UoA are submitted to Research England no later than 31 March 2020. They will also communicate the outcome of the requests for reductions to the REF Steering Group, UoA Leads and the EDI team as soon as these are received from Research England.

2. Removing the 'minimum of one' requirement

In line with the Guidance on Submissions (paragraphs 178-183), we will provide a means for members of staff to be returned without the required minimum of one output, where their circumstances have had an exceptional effect on their ability to work productively throughout the period, so that the staff member has not been able to produce the required minimum of one output.

The process for submitting circumstances that may lead to the University requesting the removal of the minimum of one output requirement, will be the same as that outlined above for circumstances impacting on the wider unit.

Appeals

Individuals will have the right of appeal if they consider that their circumstances have not been fully or fairly taken into account by the process outlined above. Specifically, staff may appeal if:

- a) Eligibility for a reduction has not been agreed internally, based on the Guidance on Submissions;
- b) A decision that a reduction below the minimum of one is not justified.

No appeals can be made internally against any decisions relating to staff circumstances taken by Research England.

Any individual who wishes to appeal against an internal decision must normally lodge their appeal within 15 working days of notification of reduction decisions. The appeal should include the grounds for the appeal with evidence and must be based on the REF criteria for individual circumstances. Appeals should be sent to the Head of EDI (REFCircs@leicester.ac.uk) and will be managed by the EDI and RED REF teams.

The appeals panel will be convened by the EDI team. The panel will be chaired by the Chair of the Code of Practice Working Group and the members will include a representative each from the EDI and RED REF teams and up to three academic members of staff who have undertaken the REF training and were not members of the original Staff Circumstances Panel. The Appeals Panel will normally meet within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal. Appellants will not normally attend the panel meeting.

The decision of the Appeals Panel will be communicated to the appellant within 10 working days of the date of the panel meeting. The decision of the Appeals Panel will be final.

Equality impact assessment: How an EIA on the spread of outputs across staff has been used to inform the final selection of outputs to be submitted.

As detailed earlier in Part 3, a key requirement of REF 2021 is the completion of equality impact assessments (EIAs) demonstrating how meaningful equality analysis has fed into the approach we have taken and decisions we have made about both the identification of research independent staff and selection of outputs selected to be submitted. To meet these requirements, we will begin equality analysis using the University's own EIA process once the Code has been submitted to Research England. This analysis will be completed internally and will remain open until our REF submission is made. This will be led by the Head of EDI but will involve other key members of the University's wider REF team.

These EIAs will draw on relevant data and information, such as the equality and diversity demographic of the staff identified as independent researchers and the spread of selected outputs across this equality and diversity demographic. They will also include key information sets and findings from equality analysis carried out as part of the University's REF 2014 submission. The extensive consultation exercise engaged in by the University has resulted in a number of changes to this Code and to its appendices. This consultation process and its findings, such as the feedback provided by the University's Staff Disability Forum, will be incorporated into the consultation section of the EIAs.

Equality analysis will be carried out on the mock REF exercise and at key points of our staff circumstances disclosure process to analyse the types and range of disclosures being made.

Intersectional analysis will be carried out to ensure a comprehensive understanding of impact is reached. Particular attention will be paid here to the intersections of race, gender and age.

Where potential or actual risk of negative impact is identified, then the EIAs will record all actions taken to mitigate and minimise this impact on the protected groups. Similarly, any potential or actual positive impact will be recorded and, where possible, steps taken to extend such positive impact to all groups.

Analysis and findings from this equality analysis will be reported to the University's REF Steering Group and Executive Board and will inform future University actions, commitments and policies.

Part 5: Appendices

1. University of Leicester EDI Strategy: A Culture of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
2. University of Leicester REF 2014 Equality Impact Assessment
3. Terms of Reference and Membership of REF Management Groups
4. Diagram of REF decision and management structure
5. Role description and current post holders for UoA lead and deputy
6. Form for determining research independence
7. Reductions for Staff Circumstances
8. REF Summary of Equality Characteristics
9. Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances: Guidance and Form



Appendix 1

University of Leicester



Appendix 2 UoL

REF 2014 Equality Impact



Appendix 3 - ToR

and membership of



Appendix 4

Diagram of Management



Appendix 5 Role

Profile for UoA Lead



Appendix 6

Research Independence



Appendix 7

Reductions for Staff



Appendix 8 REF

Summary of Equality



Appendix 9

Declaration of Staff