



**Heriot-Watt University**  
**REF2021 Code of Practice**

**September 2019**

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# 1 Part 1: Introduction

## Overview

- 1.1 The Research Excellence Framework 2021, (hereafter referred to as REF2021), is the system for assessing the quality of research in higher education institutions (HEIs) in the UK.
- 1.2 The REF was first carried out in 2014 (REF2014), replacing the previous Research Assessment Exercise. The REF is undertaken by the four UK higher education funding bodies: [Research England](#), the [Scottish Funding Council \(SFC\)](#), the [Higher Education Funding Council for Wales \(HEFCW\)](#), and the [Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland \(DfE\)](#).
- 1.3 The funding bodies' shared policy aim for the assessment is to secure the continuation of a world-class, dynamic and responsive research base across the full academic spectrum within UK higher education. The funding bodies believe that this will be achieved through the threefold purpose of the REF:
- To provide accountability for public investment in research and produce evidence of the benefits of this investment.
  - To provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks, for use within the HE sector and for public information.
  - To inform the selective allocation of funding for research.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.4 For Scottish HEIs the selective allocation of funding is provided by the SFC through the Research Excellence Grant (REG).
- 1.5 This Code of Practice has been developed to support the University's submission to REF2021 by ensuring fairness and transparency in identification of staff with significant responsibility for research; determine who is an independent researcher; and the mechanisms whereby research outputs will be selected and submitted for

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<sup>1</sup> [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk)

evaluation. Eligible employees are referred to as ‘Category A staff’, those who are deemed, by contractual arrangements, to have significant responsibility for research.

**1.6** There have been some significant changes introduced to the mechanisms used to assess research quality since the REF2014. These changes are highlighted in Table 1 below and impact on;

- the identification of staff with significant responsibility for research (part 2 below),
- determining research independence (part 3 below),
- the selection of research outputs for evaluation (part 4 below) and the disclosure of individual circumstances that may have impacted on an individual’s contribution to research.

*Table 1: REF2021 compared to REF2014 with implications for Heriot-Watt*

	REF2021	REF2014	Implications for HWU
<b>Method of Identifying Eligible Staff</b>	HEIs can use <u>contracts or other methods</u> to define significant responsibility for research.	HEIs could use contracts or other methods to identify eligibility	HWU used contract method for REF2014
<b>Selection of Staff</b>	No selection: <u>all eligible staff</u> should be included	HEIs could choose how many eligible staff to select	No selection of staff, only selection of outputs
<b>Total outputs required</b>	<u>2.5 X total FTE</u> per Unit of Assessment	4 outputs from each member of staff included	Fewer outputs required for HWU
<b>Number of outputs per individual</b>	Flexible: At least 1 but no more than 5 at HEIs discretion <u>1 ≤ outputs/individual ≤ 5</u>	Fixed: 4 but reductions allowed for staff circumstances	Greater consideration of inclusion matters at output selection level.
<b>Outputs of Former Staff</b>	Eligible if employed when the output was first made publicly available.	Ineligible	Need to be included in consideration and modelling on output selection

## **Interface with University Contracts and Policies**

**1.7** Our REF2021 preparations are supported by a number of University level functions. These functions cover contracts of employment (the basis of REF2021 eligibility), role descriptors, performance development reviews, promotion procedures, through to personal career development opportunities. Each area is underpinned by policies and procedures which embed equality and diversity as a cornerstone of the University's business. In addition to the University's Equality and Diversity Policy, our commitment to Athena SWAN across all academic areas of the University ensures equality and diversity is fully embedded across the institution.

**1.8** As a University we have made a number of improvements to our support for research excellence during the REF2021 period. These improvements have included:

- regular promotion workshops to assist career development – with particular targeted activity to encourage women to apply for promotion
- specific support to early career researchers
- renewal of HR Excellence in Research accreditation
- progression through Athena SWAN including renewal of the University's bronze status
- greater emphasis on career development in Performance and Development Review

**1.9** This Code of Practice commits the University to a two-part equality and privacy impact assessment: part 1 covering the production of our Code of Practice; part 2 covering our REF2021 submission, including the selection of outputs and the composition of our REF2021 submission both by Unit of Assessment and at a University level as outlined in paragraphs 2.26-2.29.

## **Transparency, Consistency, Accountability and Inclusivity**

**1.10** Our REF2021 Code of Practice is underpinned by 4 key principles:

- (a) Transparency:** All information governing the processes for determining the selection of outputs for inclusion in our REF2021 submission will be available in an easily accessible format and publicised to all academic and other relevant staff across the institution through dedicated intranet space

and regular communication as detailed in the communication section below and Appendix 1.

Our intranet space is accessible for those who are absent from work through the staff portal. To support two-way communication the REF2021 intranet space includes a dedicated email address for all REF related queries: [REF@hw.ac.uk](mailto:REF@hw.ac.uk).

- (b) Consistency:** The University is committed to ensuring that our output selection policy is consistent across the institution and that the Code of Practice is implemented uniformly. The Code therefore sets out the principles that will be applied at all stages of the decision making process. We want to make sure all staff are able to openly engage. Should any staff member be concerned about the consistency, transparency or application of our Code of Practice our two-way communication and appeals mechanisms are accessible throughout the development of our submission, as outlined in Appendix 1.
- (c) Accountability:** Individuals and bodies appointed to make decisions with respect to the selection of outputs in our REF2021 submission will have clearly defined terms of reference and responsibilities as contained in Appendix 2, 3 and 4. We have developed in-house training that will support those in decision-making positions to avoid bias and take into account equality and diversity in preparing a submission. All staff involved in the decision-making process will have been trained in equality and diversity including unconscious bias. Decision-making meetings will follow the REF2021 equality and diversity checklist as contained in Appendix 5. Output selection decisions will be clearly recorded, but will not be published in the interests of confidentiality.
- (d) Inclusivity:** The University is firmly committed to fostering and promoting an inclusive environment and will apply this code across all Units of Assessment (UoAs), enabling the University to identify all outputs that could be considered for inclusion in the submission.
- (e) Application:** An individual's status in relation to our REF2021 submission will not be used in itself as a proxy for level of performance. The processes defined in this Code of Practice and the outcomes of the output selection decisions are **only to be applied in the context of the REF**. The

University stresses that engagement with the REF2021 submission is only one indication of the contribution made by individuals to the University.

**1.11** This Code of Practice has been developed with engagement from across the University community. In particular iterations have been informed by:

- The University Executive
- The Combined Joint Consultative Committee (CJNCC)
- Staff Committee
- University Committee for Research and Innovation
- Contact with Schools via internal management and/or staff meetings
- REF Steering Group
- REF Inclusion Group

## **Communication**

**1.12** Central to supporting the key principles outlined above is communication across the University. We have put in place a processes that enables two-way communication between the REF2021 team and the University community.

**1.13** We communicate via REF2021 intranet space, regular news items and dedicated email contact to for REF specific communication supported by the REF Manager and the Equality and Diversity Partner.

## 2 Part 2: Staff Eligibility

- 2.1 The Guidance on Codes of Practice (REF 2019/03) states that “*Part 2 need only be completed where the institution will not be submitting 100 per cent of Category A eligible staff*”. However, the University feels that there is much relevant information that should form part of our Code of Practice and this fits better in Part 2. Therefore, we have included material in this section despite it not be explicitly required.
- 2.2 The core eligibility criteria of “significant responsibility for research” is set out in the REF2021 Guidance on submissions (REF 2019/01, *Guidance on Submissions*, paragraph 117 on Category A eligible staff). At Heriot-Watt University contracts of employment along with role descriptors (as recorded in the University’s people management system, iHR) detail each employee’s status in relation to responsibility to undertake independent research. The University will therefore use this information to determine staff eligible for submission to REF2021.

### **Staff eligibility and supporting policies and procedures**

- 2.3 All Heriot-Watt Watt employees employed in the UK with contractual obligations to deliver independent research are eligible for submission in REF2021 and will be part of the University’s submission.
- 2.4 As a University with international campuses we also have employees based in Malaysia and Dubai. The law governing employee contracts is different in these countries and up until 2019 identification and recording of staff job function in HESA staff is different. Therefore, staff with contracts through these campuses do not meet the definition of Category A staff.
- 2.5 REF 2021 Guidelines do allow staff based overseas to be returned if the primary focus of their research activity is clearly and directly connected to the submitting unit based in the UK. This may allow some staff based in Dubai and Malaysia to be returned provided we can clearly evidence the direct connection, i.e. CIs on funded research projects that span multiple campuses. The UoA Coordination groups have been asked to identify international staff whose research is “clearly and directly connected to the submitting unit” and present the case for inclusion to the REF2021 steering group who will take a decision on their eligibility or otherwise.



**2.6** Contracts of employment along with level and role descriptors outline the expectation that an employee has significant research responsibility and determines research independence. This is summarised in Table 2 below.

*Table 2: REF eligibility status for academic contracts*

Academic Contract Type	Confers Significant responsibility for Research	REF2021 Status
Teaching and Research	Yes	Eligible
Teaching and Scholarship	No	Not eligible
Research only	Yes	Subject to confirmation of Academic Job Family (through iHR)

**2.7** Units of Assessment will seek to create of a pool of outputs from which to present the highest quality in our REF2021 submission. The outputs submitted will be selected from this using the following criteria:

- i) Compliance with REF requirements (minimum of one and maximum of five allocated to individuals, open access rules, etc.);
- ii) Outputs of the highest quality available (informed by internal and external peer review), as long as criteria (i) is met;
- iii) Outputs representative of the profile and strategy of the Unit of Assessment submission, as long as criteria (i) and (ii) are met;
- iv) Outputs of staff in post are preferred, as long as criteria (i), (ii) and (iii) are met.

**2.8** Point (iv) above means outputs submitted may be attributed to individuals who are no longer employed by the University. Inclusion of such outputs will be based on:

- a) the quality of output (i.e. criteria (i) above),
- b) that the output(s) in question could not be attributed to a co-author employed at the University (i.e. criteria (iv) above), without affecting the quality of the submission and,

- c) there are no other material circumstances that should be considered, i.e. compulsory termination of employment.

- 2.9** Any previous employees whose outputs fit these criteria and are subsequently included in the University's submission will be informed as part of the two-way communication processes outlined in paragraphs 2.21-2.25.
- 2.10** The decision on selection of outputs is made to achieve the highest quality of research. The decision on output selection, therefore rests with the Unit of Assessment Leads and their Teams who have the best understanding of Quality in their disciplines.
- 2.11** The role of the REF Steering Group is to challenge Units of Assessment teams on how these decisions were made (using Annual REF Reviews, Equality Impact Assessments) to ensure transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity in the selections.

### **REF2021 Submission Development**

- 2.12** Selecting outputs for evaluation in the REF2021 exercise will be overseen by the Deputy Principal (Research and Innovation) with support from Heads of School and be based on recommendations from Unit of Assessment Champions. The overriding criteria in the selection of outputs will be to optimise the quality profile obtained from the evaluations of outputs for each UoA.
- 2.13** A number of groups have input to the development of the submission, as outlined in more detail in Appendix 2.

### **Staff committees and training**

- 2.14** To ensure the preparation of the REF2021 submission embeds the key principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity each member of a committee/board/group participating in contributory activities will be required to undertake equality and diversity training. In house materials have been informed by Advance HE guidance and supporting resources.
- 2.15** The training focuses on ensuring decisions are based on the quality of submissions and that individuals or individual circumstances do not feature in decision-making.

Training is supplemented with checklists for Unit of Assessment and University level committees and boards as contained in Appendix 5.

### **REF Inclusion Group**

- 2.16** Alongside the committee/boards/groups overseeing the development of the REF2021 submission a REF Inclusion Group (REFIG), chaired by the Deputy Principal (Staff Development and Engagement) has been constituted to support the REF2021 principles of transparency, consistency, accountability, inclusivity and application.
- 2.17** The REFIG has a particular focus on supporting equality and privacy impact assessment, verification of individual circumstances, and communication across the REF2021 processes, and addressing any individual queries. An extra-ordinary meeting of the REFIG constitutes the formal appeals forum. Full terms of reference for the REFIG are available at Appendix 3.
- 2.18** The REFIG cycle of meetings is set in advance including a standardised agenda and the opportunity for other business as outlined in paragraph 2.19. Membership of the group is drawn from outwith Unit of Assessment or University-wide REF panels and includes trade union representation. All members of the REFIG will have undertaken equality, diversity and inclusion training and will follow the equality and diversity checklist.
- 2.19** A key function of the group is to ensure consistency in approach to the verification of individual circumstances and recommendations linked to output requirements for both units of assessment and the University's overall REF2021 submission. The REFIG provides an internal check and balance to REF2021 processes ensuring inclusivity through supporting equality and privacy impact assessment of the overall REF2021 submission.
- 2.20** REFIG will meet every 3 months from September 2019 throughout the preparation of the REF2021 submission to cover:
- Individual circumstance disclosure
  - Update on output requirements by Unit of Assessment and anticipated University requirements

- Address any individual queries raised
- Update equality and privacy impact assessment
- Review of recent communication with the University community and outline content of any follow-up

**2.21** Supporting openness and transparency minutes and agenda items from the REFIG will be made available. Individuals will not be named in such documentation. The REFIG will also act as the forum to hear any formal appeals.

### **Two-Way Communication**

**2.22** Our process is to be supported by open and regular communication with members of the University community encouraged to engage throughout the process.

**2.23** Our approach to REF2021 is to create an open and inclusive process that allows for two-way communication and feedback supporting active engagement across the academic community (including any individuals no longer employed who may be part of the University submission).

**2.24** Information sharing across the University community is taken forward through E-News items, all staff emails and information housed on dedicated webpages. Line managers play a key role in disseminating information to employees, particularly those currently on leave of absence. Line managers use electronic and written communication along with other mechanisms such as 'keep in touch days' to ensure that employees away from work for an extended period are kept informed of all REF2021 matters. This expectation is included in all communications and the REF Equality and Diversity training.

**2.25** REF2021 Equality and Diversity training is scheduled as outlined in Table 3 below. All staff involved in REF selections, management and coordination at any level will be required to attend one of these sessions. Attendance will be monitored and additional training will be scheduled if required.

*Table 3: REF Equality and Diversity Training Schedule*

Wednesday 25 September 2019	14.00-16.00
Friday 25 October 2019	14.00-16.00
Wednesday 20 November 2019	14.00-16.00

Wednesday 18 December 2019	14.00-16.00
Wednesday 22 January 2019	14.00-16.00
Wednesday 26 February 2020	14.00-16:00

**2.26** The development of dedicated intranet space with regular updates along with individualised communication (when appropriate) will support transparency in the preparation of the submission. Each stage of the process allows for queries where individuals can address issues arising from the information they receive about their REF status or their disclosure of individual circumstances.

**2.27** These communications channels with all staff including those on leave will continue throughout our REF preparations, ensuring all staff have the opportunity to engage.

### **Appeals Process**

**2.28** Our appeals process is designed to minimise formal appeals through swift and open resolution of any issues arising. We recognise that effective communication is key to achieving this and will implement information sharing and communication as outlined above to ensure this is achieved.

**2.29** There were no appeals during the development of the REF2014 submission. We hope that by building on that good practice we will reduce the need for a formal appeals hearing. An appeal regarding the implementation of this Code of Practice is triggered through contacting the Equality and Diversity Partner, setting out the grounds for appeal. The appeal must be evidence-based and refer to this Code of Practice. Complainants can be accompanied by a work colleague

**2.30** An appeal brought under this Code can only be on grounds of equality or failure by the University to follow the processes laid out in this Code. Appeals regarding the quality of an individual's research will be considered under the University's normal Grievance Policy and Procedures.

**2.31** A REF Appeals Panel has been constituted to hear any appeals arising from the Code of Practice. Membership of the Panel has been drawn from outwith any REF2021 committees/boards/groups; i.e. it is independent of those making decisions. Terms of Reference for the Appeals Panel are included in the Appendix 4.

**2.32** A timetable for meetings of the REF2021 Appeals Panel has been set as outlined below:

Appeals Hearing 21 February 2020 (papers deadline 14 February 2020)

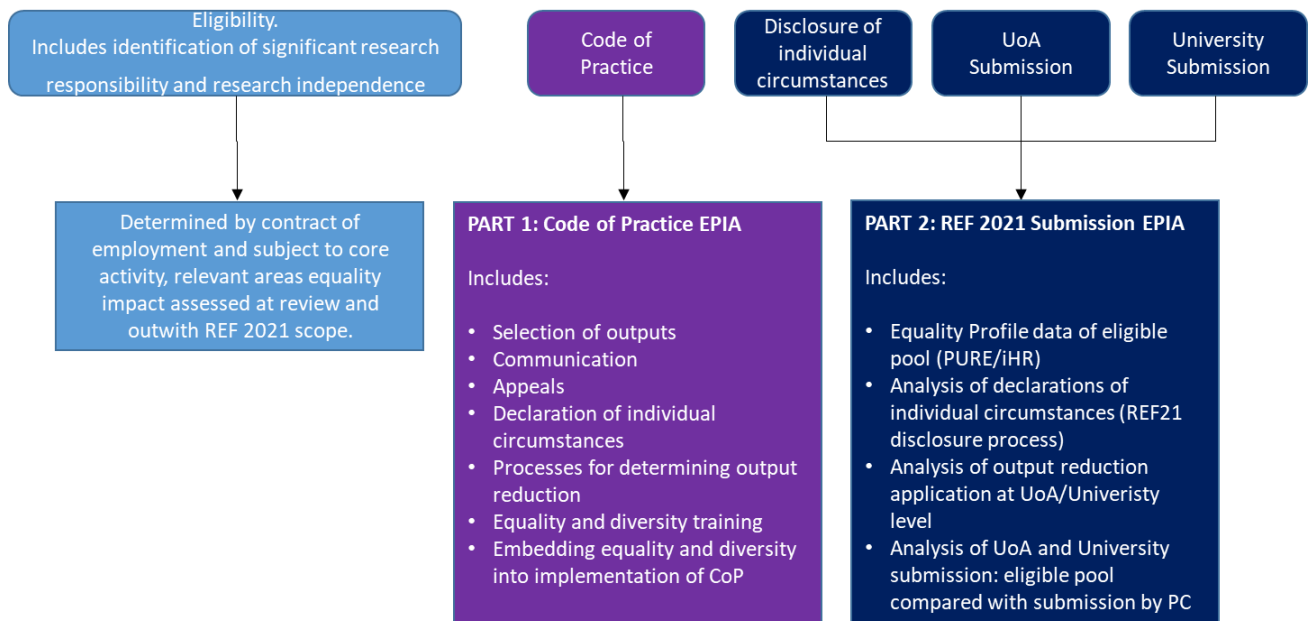
Appeals Hearing 22 May 2020 (papers deadline 15 May 2020)

Appeals Hearing 21 August 2020 (papers deadline 14 August 2020)

**2.33** Additional meetings of the Appeals Panel maybe scheduled as required.

## Equality and Privacy Impact Assessment

**2.34** Our REF2021 preparations are supported by a two-part equality and privacy impact assessment (EPIA). Part 1 covers the production of our Code of Practice and part 2 covers the REF2021 submission, including the selection of outputs and the composition of our REF2021 submission both by Unit of Assessment and the submission in its entirety as well as an analysis of declarations of individual circumstances. As outlined in figure 1.



*Figure 1: REF2021 Equality and privacy impact assessment*

**2.35** The purpose of our equality and privacy impact assessment process is to ensure that our REF2021 processes and procedures are free from negative impact for groups and to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded throughout our decision making.

- 2.36** Equality and privacy impact assessment for this Code of Practice was undertaken alongside development of the Code.
- 2.37** Equality and diversity training for all involved in decision making supports eliminating any negative impact from our process. This is further supported by the use of the equality and diversity checklist for decision making meetings of REF2021 groups.

### 3 Part 3: Determining research independence

- 3.1** Recruitment of staff onto Research and Teaching contracts on UK campuses includes an evaluation of ability to undertake research independently such staff are therefore independent researchers (Category A) and eligible for submission to REF2021.
- 3.2** Recruitment is supported by the underpinning role descriptors for these posts, i.e.; leading projects of significant scale; the authoring of research outputs; disseminating research; and creating economic, societal &/or policy impact. There is also an expectation of peer esteem as evidenced by the securing of external funding for research projects as Principal Investigator or equivalent.
- 3.3** The situation differs for some staff on research only contracts where an assessment of independence requires an evaluation against the posts role descriptors. The University formally records staff in Job Families. These include the following (individuals may not be in both categories):
- Academic and
  - Research
- 3.4** In both cases staff might have an employment function of 'Research Only'. For those with contracts in the Academic Job Family the expectations in relation to research are described above in 3.2.
- 3.5** Those with contracts in the *Research* Job Family includes postgraduate or post-doctoral Research Assistants and Research Associates. These individuals make important contributions in supporting the research activities of staff in the Academic Job Family, and are therefore not generally independent researchers.
- 3.6** However, the University recognises that such posts can be a transitional stage in the career of researchers and exceptionally an individual might achieve independence in such a role prior to being given a contract in the Academic Job Family.
- 3.7** Where such an individual is on a Research Contract and has achieved independent researcher status they would be eligible for inclusion in our REF submission. The



decision on independence for staff in the Research Job Family will be confirmed by the REF Inclusion Group.

### **Process for Confirming Independent Researcher Status**

- 3.8** An employee within the *Research* Job Family can use a form for making a case for independence of research. The form is attached at Appendix 6.
- 3.9** Cases will undergo initial checks by the REF Manager and the Equality and Diversity Partner. This might include confirming details of contracts in the HR records or confirming information held elsewhere (such as in the Schools or Research Engagement).
- 3.10** The REF Manager and the Equality and Diversity Partner will then prepare a recommendation to the REF Inclusion Group based on matching the case to the REF Guidance on research independence. The REF Inclusion Group will confirm the recommendation or ask for further information.
- 3.11** In order for a recommendation of research independence to be made, information on all of the following criteria (referred to in REF Guidance on identifying those who “engage actively in independent research”) must be provided:
- Indicators of independence with evidence (reviewed in conjunction with guidance on Research Independence in the REF Guidance on Submissions and any discipline-specific advice given in the Panel Criteria and Working Methods);
  - How explicit time and resources are made available to engage actively in independent research (for example, an independent researcher would be expected to have at least 20%FTE available for independent research where they are not working on projects for which they are not the PI);
  - That independent research is an expectation of their job role descriptor or recorded in performance development review.
- 3.12** Note REF has confirmed that a member of staff is not deemed to have undertaken independent research purely on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs (REF 2019/01, Guidance on Submissions, paragraph 133 on Independent researchers).

- 3.13** Resources and staff time commitments for research are overseen by Heads of School, advised by Directors of Research. Therefore, cases are required to include statements from one of these individuals to confirm criteria identified above.
- 3.14** Individuals who successfully meet these criteria will be informed within 5 working days of the REF Inclusion Group confirmation.
- 3.15** Unit of Assessment Coordinators and their Teams will be passed the names of the individuals who successfully meet these criteria, to include in their submission planning.
- 3.16** Individuals who do not successfully meet these criteria will be informed within 5 working days of the REF Inclusion Group confirmation (with Heads of School copied). They will be given a short note on how their application did not meet the REF Criteria.
- 3.17** Line managers will be supported to engage with individuals who have not successfully met the criteria outlined above to assist with future career development. This will be facilitated by Heads of School.

## 4 Part 4: Selection of outputs

### Output Reductions Disclosure of individual circumstances

- 4.1 The selection of outputs for inclusion in the REF2021 submission is taken forward as outlined Appendix 1. All eligible staff are to be included in the submission with a minimum of 1 output and a maximum of 5 outputs per individual. The size of the overall submission is based on a requirement of 2.5 outputs per eligible staff member.
- 4.2 There may be instances where declarations of individual circumstances results in an individual requiring 0 outputs. In such circumstances the UoA will be informed of the need to formally reduce the output allocation for the UoA. As outlined below.
- 4.3 The disclosure of individual circumstances allows the University to take into account how circumstances impact on the ability of individuals to undertake research and allocate output reductions on the basis of disclosed circumstances. As per the REF Guidance on codes of practice, disclosure of individual circumstances is voluntary. **Individuals are encouraged to disclose any circumstances that they deem to have been impactful, but this is not mandatory.**
- 4.4 The University is committed to ensuring an inclusive environment for all. As part of that commitment we are taking forward a detailed disclosure process for all those eligible for inclusion in the REF2021 submission.
- 4.5 Forms are available for staff to disclose any individual circumstances that may have had an impact on their ability to undertake research and for any output reduction to be calculated and ratified by the REFIG.
- 4.6 Equality profiling information will support us to ensure that our REF2021 processes are inclusive. We will gather information from our central people management systems which will help monitor the impact on different groups. Circumstances include *inter alia*; absence from work (including ill health, parental and/or caring related leave), working patterns (including part-time working) and early career researcher status.

- 4.7** Following a disclosure of individual circumstances verification of the disclosure is undertaken and individuals are asked to provide supporting documentation if the University does not already hold the information. This may include, for example, a copy of relevant maternity related forms should the disclosure relate to maternity.
- 4.8** In some circumstances there may be a requirement to seek additional supporting information. This would include verification at a previous institution to support (or otherwise) early career researcher status.
- 4.9** Verification of individual circumstances is supported by the University's Equality and Diversity Partner and the REF Manager with support from HR.
- 4.10** While disclosure of individual circumstances is for REF2021 purposes only any individual disclosure can be recorded on central systems on request. Any disclosure can be accompanied by contact with the Equality and Diversity Partner for forward action.
- 4.11** Any specific issues raised through the disclosure processes can be addressed through an individual query which the REF Inclusion Group (REFIG) will consider. An extraordinary meeting of the REFIG can be called should a formal complaint/appeal related to the REF2021 processes be raised.
- 4.12** No individual will suffer detriment resulting from raising an individual query or formal complaint/appeal.
- 4.13** All data gathered will be kept in accordance with the University's data protection policies and procedures as detailed in the fair processing notice.
- 4.14** The disclosure form is included in Appendix 7 and is also available under separate cover.

### **Applying Output Reductions and Selection of Outputs**

- 4.15** Unit of Assessment Coordinators and their Teams will be passed information on the total number of output reductions that should be applied to their Units by the University's REF Manager. No information relating to the detail of disclosures will be shared.

**4.16** Unit of Assessment Coordinators and their Teams will not be passed the names of the individuals associated with the output reduction except in relation to two issues (as in both cases knowledge of this will be required in order to manage their Units of Assessment):

- Early Career Researcher status;
- Removal of requirement to submit at least 1 output.

**4.17** The required number of outputs (2.5 X FTE in the Unit of Assessment less any reductions) will then be selected based on the following ordered criteria:

- i) Compliance with REF requirements (minimum of one and maximum of five allocated to individuals, open access rules, etc.);
- ii) Outputs of the highest quality available (informed by internal and external peer review), as long as criteria (i) is met;
- iii) Outputs representative of the profile and strategy of the Unit of Assessment submission, as long as criteria (i) and (ii) are met;
- iv) Outputs of staff in post are preferred, as long as criteria (i), (ii) and (iii) are met.

**4.18** Output selection will be subject to equality and privacy impact assessment as outlined in paragraphs 2.26-2.29.

*Former Staff (including Staff Made Redundant)*

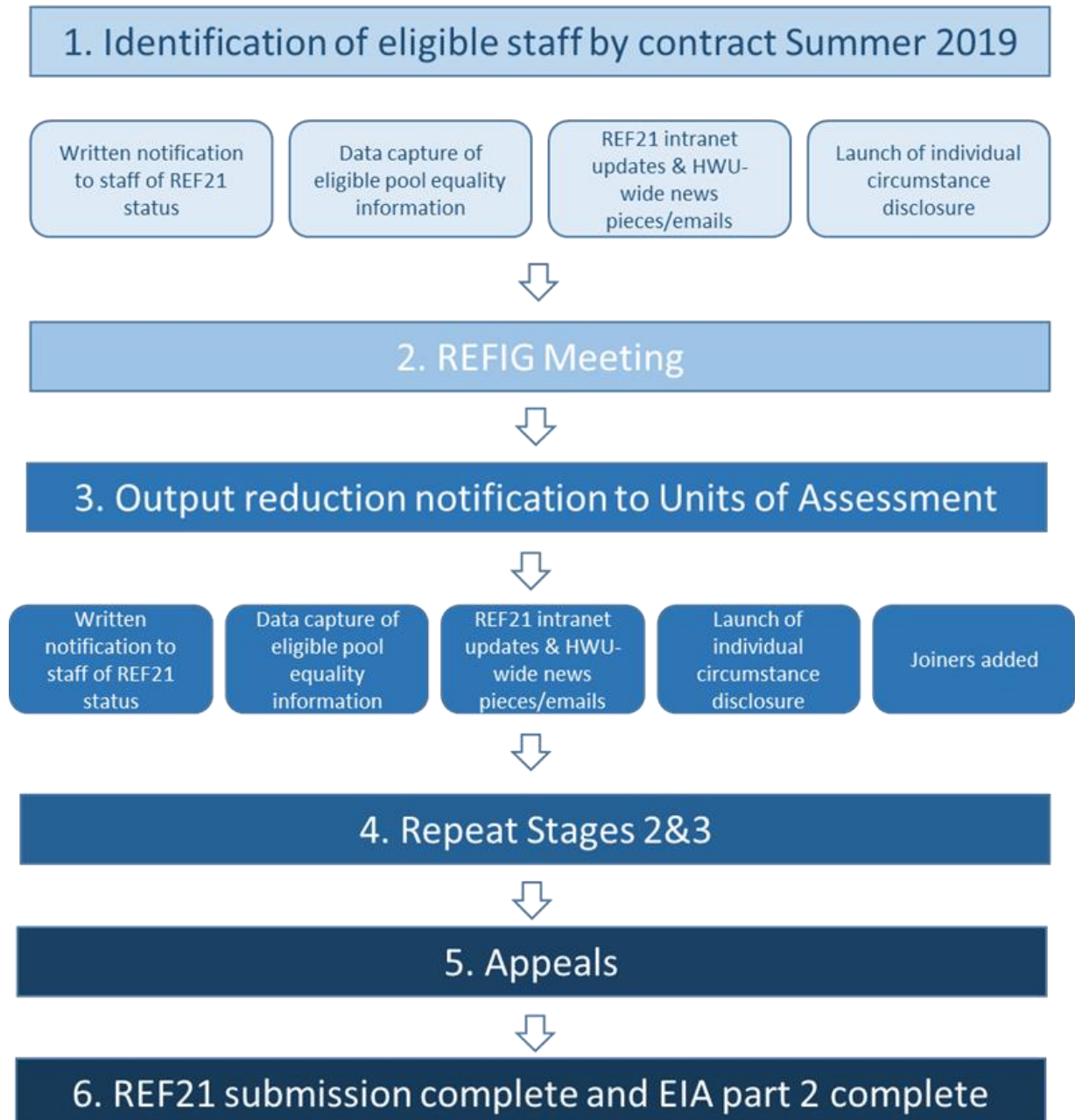
**4.19** The University values the work of its existing and former staff throughout the REF Assessment period. Furthermore, contributions of former staff (including those made redundant) are important to demonstrate accountability and benefits of public investment in research. For these reasons, the University may choose to submit outputs of former staff.

**4.20** Section 2.7 sets out our criteria for selecting outputs that will form our final submission for all UoAs. It should be noted that 2.7 (iv) and 4.17 (iv) make it clear that outputs of staff in post at the census date will be chosen over those of former staff. In addition, Our Data Protection Policy adopts a *data minimisation* approach: collecting, disclosing and retaining the minimum personal data necessary for the purpose, hence our Data Protection Policy requires us not to gather data on why former staff left the university where this is not required (e.g. in REF). Therefore, on

occasions where the outputs of former staff are selected for submission the reasons for these staff leaving the university will be unknown to the selectors.

## 5 Part 5: Appendices

### Appendix 1: REF2021 Process outline



## Appendix 2: University REF Designated Groups and Structure

### University Officers with responsibility for REF

Individual	Position	Role in Relation to REF
Professor Garry Pender	Deputy Principal (Research and Innovation)	Overall lead for REF for the University
Dr Antony Weir	Head of Policy, Strategy & Impact	REF Manager
Prof. Gill Hogg	Deputy Principal (Staff Development and Engagement)	Chair, REFIG and REF Appeals Chair
Dr Paul Thompson	Information and Planning Officer	Coordination of REF data collection & analysis and administrative support
Sharan Virdee	Equality and Diversity Partner	Coordination of equality and diversity issues relating to REF including individual circumstances and equality and privacy impact assessment

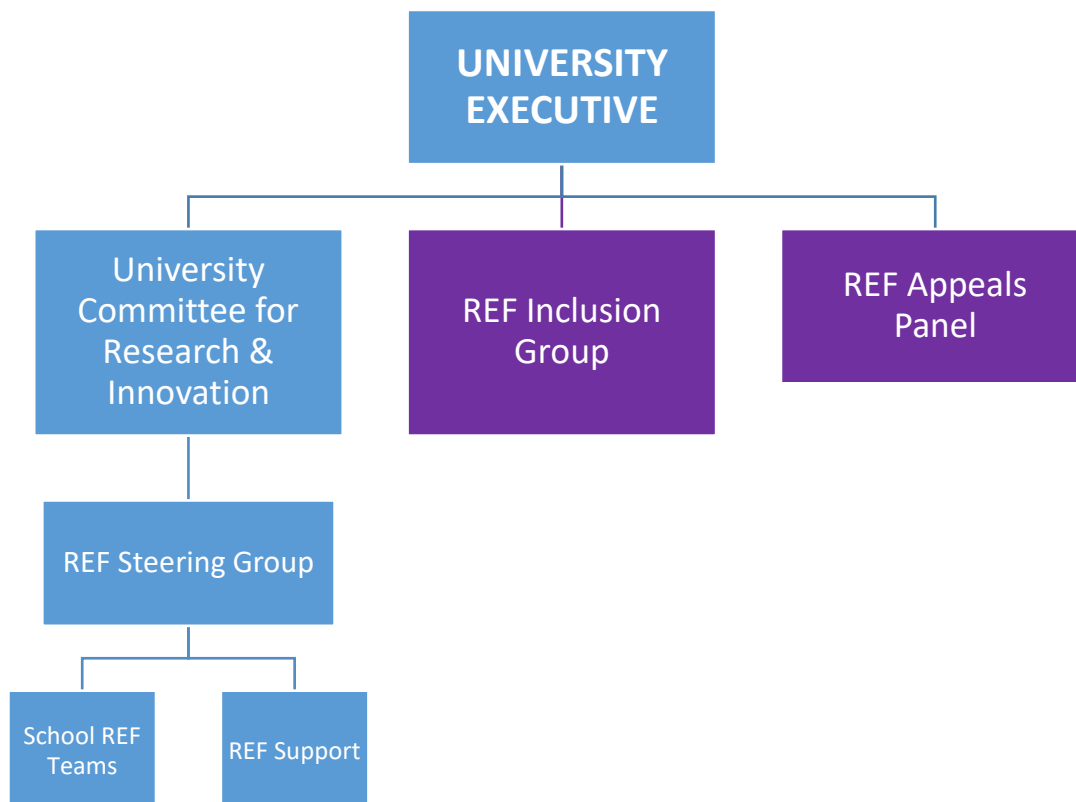


Figure 2: REF Structure

## Appendix 3: Terms of Reference

# REF2021 Inclusion Group (REFIG)

## Terms of Reference

<b>1</b>	<b>Constitution and purpose</b>
1.1	<p>The REF Inclusion Group (REFIG) has been constituted to support the REF2021 principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity with a particular focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• supporting equality and privacy impact assessment</li><li>• verification of individual circumstances</li><li>• communication across the REF2021 processes</li><li>• addressing any individual queries</li></ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Remit</b>
2.1	<p>The REFIG is remitted to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. agree recommended output reductions resulting from declarations of individual circumstances</li><li>ii. verify complex cases as necessary</li><li>iii. oversee formal requests for application of 0 outputs resulting from declarations of individual circumstances</li><li>iv. overseeing communication across the University community</li><li>v. inform Units of Assessment of decisions regarding output reductions linked to individuals</li><li>vi. review equality profiling data linked to the eligible pool, Unit of Assessment and University submission and relating to individual circumstance declarations.</li></ol>
<b>3</b>	<b>Membership</b>
3.1	<p>The REFIG shall include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Deputy Principal Staff Development and Engagement</li><li>• The REF Manager</li><li>• HRD representation</li><li>• Equality and Diversity Partner</li><li>• Trade Union representation</li></ul>



#### **4 Committee Chair**

- 4.1 The Chair of the REFIG shall be the Deputy Principal Staff Development and Engagement

#### **5. Frequency**

- 5.1 The REFIG meetings are set for:
- 3-4.30pm, 7 November 2019  
10-12pm, 19 December 2019  
10-12pm, 23 January 2020
- 5.2 Additional meetings will be as necessary for example to respond to a formal appeal resulting from implementation of the REF2021 Code of Practice

#### **6. Meeting outline**

- 6.1 Each meeting of the REFIG will cover:
- Individual circumstance disclosure
  - Update on output requirements by Unit of Assessment and anticipated University requirements
  - Address any individual queries raised
  - Update equality and privacy impact assessment
  - Review of recent communication with the University community and outline content of any follow-up

#### **7 Reporting procedures**

- 7.1 The REFIG will report to the UE and other relevant Committees and Boards such as UCRI

## Appendix 4: Terms of Reference

# REF2021 Appeals Panel

## Terms of Reference

<b>1</b>	<b>Constitution and purpose</b>
1.1	The REF2021 Appeals Panel (REFAP) has been constituted to support the REF2021 principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity with a particular focus on hearing appeals related to the REF2021 Code of Practice.
<b>2</b>	<b>Remit</b>
2.1	The REFAP is remitted to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Hear appeals raised by eligible staff relating to the REF2021 Code of Practice</li><li>Assess any appeal against the REF2021 Code of Practice</li><li>Determine the outcome of the appeal with direct reference to the REF2021 Code of Practice.</li></ol>
2.2	The decision of the REFAP is final. Should the appellant disagree with the outcome of the REFAP the case appellant would need to take further action under the University's Grievance Procedures.
<b>3</b>	<b>Membership</b>
3.1	The REAP shall include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Vice Principal</li><li>Head of Learning and Teaching</li><li>Head of HR Policy</li><li>Trade Union representation</li><li>Global Director of Research Engagement</li></ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Committee Chair</b>
4.1	The Chair of the REFAP shall be the Vice Principal
<b>5</b>	<b>Frequency</b>

5.1 The REAP shall meet as follows:

10-12pm, 6 February 2020

10-12pm, 25 May 2020

10-12pm, 17 August 2020

5.2 Additional meetings will be as necessary for example to respond to a formal appeal resulting from implementation of the REF2021 Code of Practice.

## **6 Meeting outline**

6.1 Each meeting of the REFAP will cover:

- An outline of the Appeal, including any supporting statements
- A cross-reference with the REF2021 Code of Practice

## **7 Reporting procedures**

7.1 The REFAP will report to the UE and other relevant Committees and Boards such as UCRI

## Appendix 5: REF2021 equality and diversity checklist

### University-Wide Checklist

**1. University REF Steering Group membership takes account of diversity**

Comments

**2. The Chair opens meetings with a reminder of the REF21 E&D principles, highlighting issues relating to unconscious bias**

Comments

**3. All University submission panel members have undertaken REF21 Equality and Diversity Training before final decisions are made around the selection of staff for submission**

Comments

**4. Selection of the pool is based on contract of employment**

Comments

**5. Determination of significant responsibility for research based on contract of employment**

Comments

**6. Submission make-up is monitored linked to equality profile information of eligible pools as the submission develops**

Comments

## Unit of Assessment checklist

### 1. Unit of Assessment Panel membership takes account of diversity

Comments

### 2. All Unit of Assessment Panel members have undertaken REF21 Equality and Diversity Training before final decisions are made around the selection of staff for submission

Comments

### 3. The Chair opens meetings with a reminder of the REF21 E&D principles, highlighting issues relating to unconscious bias

Comments

### 4. Allocation of output reductions across the Unit of Assessment is free from bias. This would include:

- Output selection is based on 3\* threshold for research
- Individuals included in the pool is representative of the eligible population in the UoA
- Submission make-up is monitored linked to equality profile information as the submission develops

Comments

## Appendix 6: REF2021 Case for Independence of Research.

Name:	Contact Details	Staff Number:

Job Title:	Contract / Grade:

School:	Institute / Department:

Evidence of Independent Research		Tick as appropriate
Give details of and of these that are ticked or any other evidence:	I am leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project	
	I hold an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement	
	I am leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package	

Statement from Head of School / Director of Research		Tick as appropriate
	<i>I confirm that the individual above is in a position which includes the following:</i>	
	explicit time and resources are made available to engage actively in independent research	
	independent research is an expectation of their job role	
	Comments and evidence of time, resources and/or expectation:	

I give consent for my HR record to be reviewed to support this case.	Please Tick:

Signatures:	
Applicant:	
Date:	_____
Head of School / Director of Research:	_____
Role:	
Date:	

Applicants are advised to:

- review the generic paragraphs on Research Independence in the REF *Guidance on Submissions* and any discipline-specific advice given in the *Panel Criteria and Working Methods* (both available at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk)).
- consult with their Line Manager, Head of School and/or Director of Research before considering an application.

## Appendix 7: Disclosure of individual circumstances

Heriot-Watt University is currently preparing for our REF21 submission. As part of that process we are encouraging staff to disclose individual circumstances that may have had an impact on an individual's ability to work productively between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2020.

Declaration of individual circumstances is confidential and is not related to the selection or eligibility of staff to be submitted to the REF.

Staff should note that disclosing this information for REF is encouraged, but it is in no way mandatory. Providing this information to assist in our REF submissions is voluntary.

Declaration of individual circumstances does require some verification. As a new member of staff (i.e. joined between the period 01/01/14 to 31/12/2020) it would be helpful if you could provide supporting documentation alongside your declaration of individual circumstances. This information will be treated with the strictest confidence, in line with the fair processing notice.

Queries about the declaration process can be directed to: [equality@hw.ac.uk](mailto:equality@hw.ac.uk)

### Fair processing

Heriot-Watt University is a public authority with a number of legal duties placed upon us to ensure that we eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equal opportunities. To help us meet these duties we are collecting information about our service users to help us plan activity for improving our services. Under the Data Protection Act the information you give us is voluntary and Heriot-Watt University will keep your personal details safe and secure with strict limits on who has access to the information and you may ask us to stop processing this data at any time. By filling in the form and returning it, you are consenting to your data being processed and looked after in this way. If you have any questions or queries about this please contact [equality@hw.ac.uk](mailto:equality@hw.ac.uk).

## SECTION 1

**Please select any of the following that apply:**

- I have no individual circumstances that I wish to be taken into consideration for the purposes of the Research Excellence Framework, REF.
- I have individual circumstances that I wish to make known
- I would like my declaration to be recorded in my HR file\*

\* recording your circumstances may help with future funding, or equality and diversity initiatives that the University is leading such as the EPSRC-funded Inclusion Matters project, or University Innovation Fund (funded by the Scottish Funding Council). All information will be treated with the strictest confidence, in line with the fair processing notice.

## SECTION 2

**Please select as appropriate:**

- I would like to be contacted by the Equality and Diversity Partner to discuss my circumstances and requirements and/or the support provided by Heriot-Watt University.

I do **not** wish to be contacted by the Equality and Diversity Partner

I wish to make the University aware of the following circumstances which have had an impact on my ability to produce four outputs or work productively between 1 January 2014 – 31 December 2020.

### SECTION 3

Details relating to my disclosure are contained in my HR file

**If details are not held centrally please provide information required on relevant circumstance/s and continue onto a separate sheet of paper if necessary.**

<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Information required</b>
Early career researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016)	Date on which you became an early career research
<b>Information</b>	
Maternity leave, statutory adoption leave, or additional paternity leave (taken by partners of new mothers or co-adopters)	For each period of leave state which type of leave was taken and the dates and duration in months
<b>Information</b>	
Career break or secondment outside of the higher education sector	Dates and duration in months
<b>Information</b>	
Disability (including conditions such as cancer and chronic fatigue)	Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months
<b>Information</b>	
Mental health condition	Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months



<b>Information</b>	
Ill health or injury	Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months
<b>Information</b>	
Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding, paternity, adoption or childcare <b>in addition to</b> the period of maternity, adoption or additional paternity leave taken.	Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months
<b>Information</b>	
Other caring responsibilities (including caring for an elderly or disabled relative)	Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months
<b>Information</b>	
Gender reassignment	Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months
<b>Information</b>	
Junior clinical academic staff who have not gained Certificate of Completion of Training by 31 October 2013 <b>[Delete as appropriate: applies to specific units of assessment within Panel A]</b>	Please place a tick in this box if the circumstance applies:
Part time employee	FTE and duration in months

<b>Information</b>	
Other exceptional and relevant reasons, not including teaching or administrative work	Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months
<b>Information</b>	

## SECTION 4

### Signature

Please select as appropriate:

- I confirm that the information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances.
- I recognise that the information provided will be used for REF purposes and may be used to support future funding proposals.
- I realise that it may be necessary to share information with the UK funding bodies' REF team, who may make the information available to REF panel chairs, members and secretaries and/or the REF Inclusion Group.
- I recognise that if a joint submission is made, information may be shared with another institution.

**Where permission is not provided Heriot-Watt University will be limited in the action it can take.**

Signature:

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

(Staff member)

Completed forms should be marked as 'Confidential' and sent in hard copy to Equality and Diversity, room 1.07, Lord Balerno Building, Edinburgh Campus or by email to: [equality@hw.ac.uk](mailto:equality@hw.ac.uk)

### OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Date received	
Verification of circumstances received/Additional Documentation	