



REF2021 Research
Excellence
Framework

REF 2021 Code of Practice

on the fair and transparent identification of staff with significant responsibility for research (where an HEI is not submitting 100% of Category A eligible staff); determining who is an independent researcher; and the selection of outputs for submission to REF 2021

Approved by:

Senate on 30th April 2019

University Executive Board on 14th May 2019

Version Control

Version	Date	Summary of Changes	Approval
1	30 th Apr 2019	-	Senate
1	14 th May 2019	-	University Executive Board
1.1	17 th Sept 2019	Appeals: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• inclusion of dates and timings• panel (rather than individual) review	University Executive Board
1.1.1	29 th Oct 2019	'Guarantee' added to appeals	Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research Strategy and Resources
2	21 st September 2020	Dates adjusted to account for revised submission Intranet and web links updated	REF Steering Group

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Institutions making a submission to REF 2021 are required to draw up and implement a code of practice on the fair and transparent identification of staff with significant responsibility for research (where an HEI is not submitting 100% of Category A eligible staff), determining who is an independent researcher and the selection of outputs. Institutions are required to ensure these principles are adopted at each stage when preparing REF submissions.

The University has developed this code of practice in accordance with the guidance on submissions and best practice provided by the REF team at Research England. As recommended in this guidance the University has used the code of practice from REF 2014 as the basis for this version.

The REF 2021 guidance on the code of practice identified the following principles for the development of institutional codes of practice:

- a. **Transparency:** *All processes for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research (where applicable), determining research independence, and selecting outputs for inclusion in REF submissions should be transparent. Codes of practice should be drawn up and made available in an easily accessible format and publicised to all academic staff across the institution, including on the staff intranet, and drawn to the attention of those absent from work. We would expect there to be a programme of communication activity to disseminate the code of practice and explain the processes related to*

- i. *identifying staff with significant responsibility for research (where applicable),*
- ii. *determining research independence and*
- iii. *selecting outputs for submission.*

This programme should be documented in the code. We encourage institutions to publish their codes of practice on their external website. They will be published by the REF team in autumn 2020 and any changes to final codes will be published as part of the submissions in 2022.

- b. **Consistency:** *The principles governing the processes covered by codes of practice should be consistent across the institution. We would expect that the approach to identifying staff with significant responsibility for research (where applicable) would only vary by unit of assessment where employment practices vary at this level, and the difference in practice can be verified. The code of practice should set out the principles to be applied to all aspects/stages of the process at all levels within the institution where decisions will be made.*
- c. **Accountability:** *Responsibilities should be clearly defined, and individuals and bodies that are involved in i). identifying staff with significant responsibility for research, ii). determining research independence and iii). selecting outputs for REF submissions should be identified by role. Codes should also state what training those who are involved in the processes have had. Operating criteria and terms of reference for*

individuals, committees, advisory groups and any other bodies concerned with these processes, should be made readily available to all individuals and groups concerned.

- d. **Inclusivity:** *The processes described in the code should promote an inclusive environment, enabling institutions to identify all staff who have significant responsibility for research, all staff who are independent researchers, and the excellent research produced by staff across all protected groups.*

1.2 Purpose and principles

The purpose of this code of practice is to set out the University's process for determining who is an independent researcher and the selection of outputs.

The University embraces the REF 2021 principles and these have been used, in conjunction with our existing policies and procedures, to define our code of practice.

The University welcomes the shift from selection of individuals and their individual outputs in REF 2014 to an inclusive and collective assessment of research within each unit of assessment (UoA) in REF 2021. The University's approach is one of inclusion and - in order to represent the entirety of research activity within each UoA - we will be submitting contributions from 100% of our Category A eligible staff with significant responsibility for research, as well as contributions from all independent researchers, from staff who have left the University during the census period, and from overseas staff based in our campuses in Malaysia and Singapore (as far as is permitted in accordance with Research England guidance). The University will select outputs that best reflect the excellence of research within the UoA, and will not allow decisions about the inclusion or otherwise of outputs authored by any individual to result in advantage or disadvantage for that individual, including with respect to promotion. The REF is not a 'performance management tool' and will not be used as such.

For the REF 2021, the University undertakes to:

- Submit 100% of our Category A eligible staff with a significant responsibility for research
- Submit all of our independent researchers (see section 3)
- Set out formal, fair, consistent and transparent process for the selection of outputs
- Train those involved in the submission process on issues of equality, diversity and inclusion (see section 1.7)
- Provide guidance and advice on the responsible use of metrics in research assessment

Information held purely for the purposes of REF will be handled and stored in accordance with our data collection and privacy statement (see 5.1 Appendix A: Data collection and privacy statement for REF2021)

1.3 Changes since REF 2014

Embracing the principle of inclusion we now do not need to be 'selective' and so the direct actions relating to this are somewhat superfluous. This aside, the University has actively worked to improve the environment for all staff and offers dedicated programmes and support for: Responsible use of alcohol, Better health at work, Enable (for disabled staff), Active workplace, Mediation service, New staff induction, Parents and Carers, Staff networks, Employee Assistance Programme (24 hour support for staff going through difficult life events), Mental health and Stress.

We have also worked to make our policies clearer (using templates and plain English), more accessible (with a designated intranet space) and more inclusive (by engaging with staff).

1.4 Legislative context

The Equality Act 2010 harmonised and consolidated previous anti-discrimination legislation. Most of the Act, as it relates to public functions and employment, came into force in October 2010. The public sector equality duty of the Act (section 149), which is relevant to HEIs, came into force in April 2011.

In carrying out REF submission processes, the University will give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

In order to show compliance with the requirements of the public sector equality duty, the University will ensure that its REF submission procedures do not discriminate unlawfully against individuals because of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

In addition, there is employment law protecting staff working:

- Part-time, or on a
- Fixed-term contract

In essence, the law protects staff employed in these ways from suffering a detriment compared with staff on full-time or open-ended contracts. The relevant regulations are:

- Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002

The University will ensure that, in line with employment law and Advance HE guidance, its REF submission procedures do not discriminate against individuals because they are on part-time or fixed term contracts.

A summary of the equality legislation and employment law which is relevant to the parameters of the REF is set out in [Appendix B: Summary of Equality Legislation](#).

1.5 Equality, diversity and inclusion

The University is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). We value individual differences and the diversity that this brings. We want to ensure that no one is at a disadvantage because of who they are or how they identify themselves. Our commitment to EDI extends beyond our duties under the Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty. Through dedicated working groups, events and projects we aim to create a positive, supportive culture for everyone to have the opportunity to succeed. EDI is a core value underpinning our strategy and vision.

The University will conduct an equality impact analysis (EIA) of the REF submission at key stages throughout its preparation in order to identify if any equality protected groups could suffer an adverse impact as a result of the REF processes. Details on the EIA can be found in sections 3.4 and 4.3 below.

The EIA will ensure any impact that the REF processes may have on groups and individuals can be considered before the submission decision is taken. The University may replicate these data at UoA level if there is any anecdotal evidence of an imbalance or disparities based on less favourable treatment by reference to a protected characteristic or employment status. Where there is evidence of a prima facie imbalance, the University will review the decisions to ensure they are proportionate, objective, reasonable and justifiable in accordance with the principles of Equality Act 2010.

The EIA will be an ongoing process throughout the REF submission period. The University will publish the latest data and commentary relating to the EIA on the internal REF website (<https://newcastle.sharepoint.com/hub/rsd/ref/>) allowing staff to provide comments and feedback throughout the REF period. The University will also make the results publicly available after the REF submission.

1.6 Governance

Senate has ultimate responsibility for the University's submission to the REF. Operational responsibility is delegated to the University Research Committee (URC) via the University's Executive Board. To effectively manage the REF submission URC has set up a REF Steering Group.

REF Steering Group membership comprises:

- Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research Strategy and Resources
- Faculty Deans of Research and Innovation (including Deputy and Assistant Deans)
- Director of Research Strategy and Development
- Faculty Research Manager for Science, Agriculture and Engineering (SAgE)
- Faculty Research Manager for Medical Sciences (FMS)
- Faculty Research Manager for Humanities and Social Sciences (HaSS)
- Faculty Research and Impact Manager for Science, Agriculture and Engineering (SAgE)
- Faculty Impact Officer for Medical Sciences (FMS) (x 2)
- Faculty Impact Officer for Humanities and Social Sciences (HaSS)

In attendance:

- REF Coordinator

The REF Steering Group coordinates all aspects of the REF submission including:

- advising University Executive Board on strategic issues and direction
- advising UoA coordinators and Academic Units on operational and strategic issues
- proposals concerning the UoAs to which the University might make a submission
- recommendations for the determination of research independence
- co-ordination of the required policies and documentation
- internal assessment of outputs (undertaken with external advice)
- collecting, checking, validating data
- the preparation of the institutional environment statement

At appropriate points throughout the REF process it may be necessary for the post graduate sabbatical officer or senior representatives of some professional services (Newcastle University Information Technology (NUIT), Human Resources (HR) and the Library) to attend meetings of the REF Steering Group.

The REF Steering Group will make recommendations for the submission to University Executive Board and Senate after full discussion with the Faculties. Any decision made at this stage will take into account the principles of the public sector equality duty as referred to in [section 1.4](#) of this code of practice.

The REF Steering Group is advised and supported by the following groups:

- Administrative and Technical Support team, comprising
 - Director of Research Strategy and Development
 - REF Coordinator and members of the Policy and Information Team (PIT)
 - MyImpact developers and technical support (based in NUIT)
 - REF Data Group (including staff from Grants and Contracts, Library, Student Services, Planning and HR)
- Faculty Management Team for each Faculty, comprising
 - Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor
 - Dean of Research and Innovation
 - Director of Faculty Operations or Faculty nominee

It is the responsibility of each Faculty Management Team to work with Academic Units in the respective Faculties on the detail of the following:

- proposals concerning the UoAs to which the University might make a submission
- recommendations for the identification of research independent staff according to the criteria

Faculty Management Teams are advised by the UoA Team which comprises a UoA Coordinator and other selected staff as appropriate to the UoA such as the Head(s) of Academic Unit and Director(s) of Research. A descriptor for the UoA Coordinator role is included in Appendix C: UoA Coordinator Role Descriptor

- Faculty REF Steering Groups provide advice to Faculty Management teams on all REF related matters
- UoA Teams are responsible for:

- determining the research independence of staff
 - Staff details (REF1a)
 - Category B former staff details (REF1b)
 - confirming records which will allow the University and Research England to verify grant income and PGRs
 - Research doctoral degrees awarded (REF4a)
 - Research income (REF4b)
 - Research income in-kind (REF4c)
 - preparing REF documentation
 - Research outputs (REF2)
 - Impact case studies (REF3)
 - Research environment (REF5)
- HR Team and the Dean of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion who advise on EDI matters and associated training.

Each of the groups involved in decision-making will adhere to the code of practice and take into account the public sector equality duty set out at section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Members of each group will receive REF-specific EDI training or briefing as appropriate. Further information on the membership and remit of each committee is provided in Appendix D: Committees.

The structure of REF management is shown in figure 1.

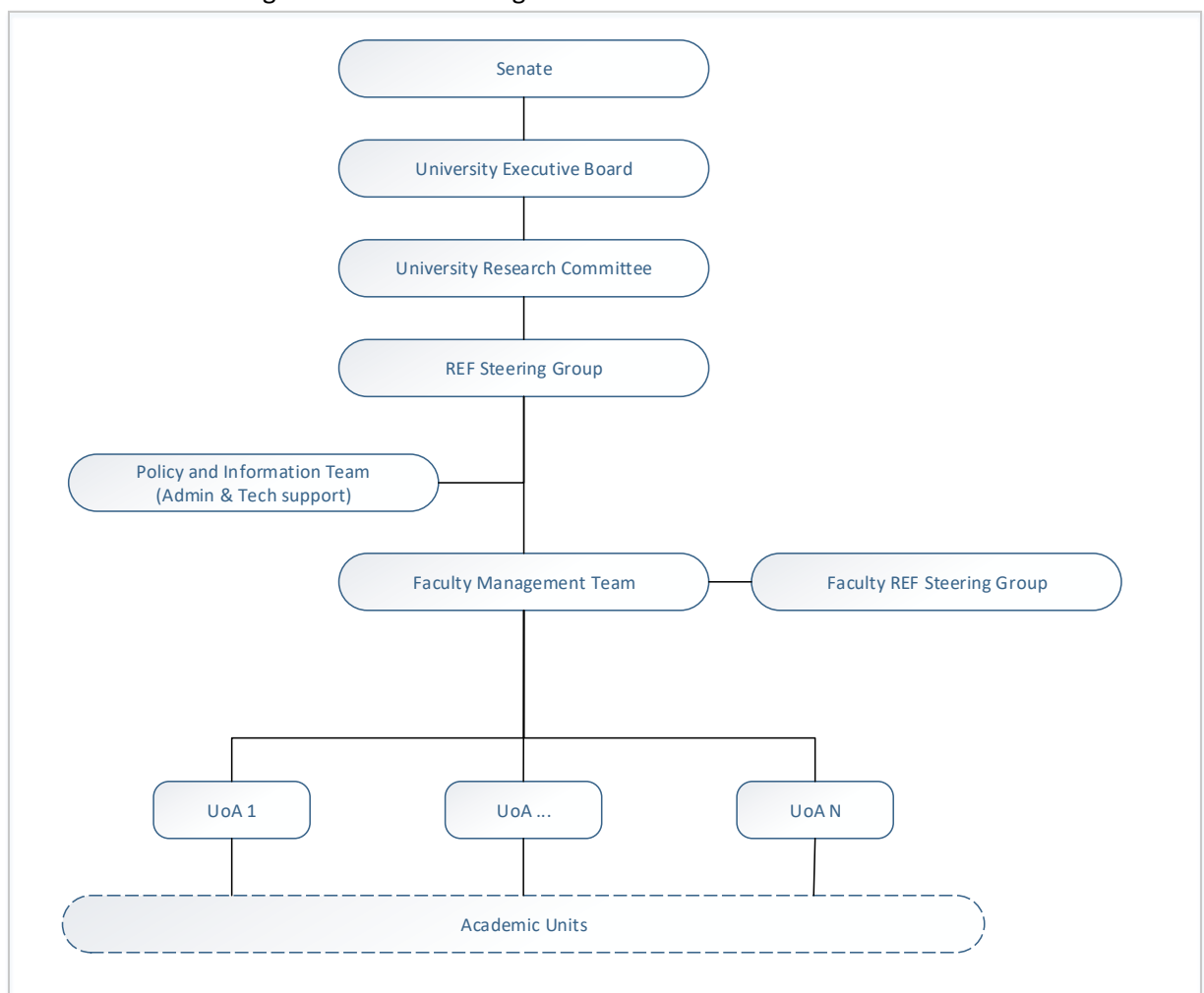


Figure 1: REF management (Note: the dashed box for Academic Unit indicates that a number of UoAs will be composed from staff spanning more than one Academic Unit)

The key decision makers and the methods of appointment are set out in Appendix E: Key decision-makers and methods of appointment.

1.7 Training

Alongside widely publicising this code of practice, the University also undertakes to provide Equality and Diversity briefing sessions and training specifically tailored for the purpose of the REF. The briefing sessions and training will be provided by the University's HR section and will be mandatory for all staff involved in the decision-making process. The materials used will be available as a separate resource via the University's internal REF website:

<https://newcastle.sharepoint.com/hub/rsd/ref/>

In line with the principle of accountability all members of the following groups will participate in EDI briefing sessions or training as appropriate:

- Senate
- Executive Board
- University Research Committee (REF Steering Group)
- Admin and Technical Support teams
- Faculty Management Teams and Faculty Steering groups
- UoA Teams

The Equality and Diversity training will be based upon the Advance HE training materials and case studies. Training will include information about the public sector equality duty set out at section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, and activities to identify clearly defined and complex staff circumstances. Briefing sessions will also be based upon case studies. In addition, EDI issues for the REF will be embedded into REF Roadshows which are available to any member of academic staff.

Additional training will be given to staff who are involved in handling complex staff circumstances. This training may also be useful to all staff involved in the REF so will be offered as optional.

1.8 Communication

Communications will be widespread and varied. Information will be provided via the intranet: <https://newcastle.sharepoint.com/hub/rsd/ref/>, news items and via various forums and meetings. Staff who are absent from the University (e.g. on maternity leave) will receive written notification of the code of practice and can log into the internal information at will.

A team workspace has been defined (using Microsoft Teams) to facilitate communication and collaborative working between all UoAs. The workspace is for all REF matters and provides a channel between REF Steering group members and UoA coordinators. The workspace is administered by the REF coordinator.

2 Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

The University is submitting 100% of our Category A eligible staff with significant responsibility for research.

For the avoidance of doubt, our Category A eligible staff with significant responsibility for research are those staff with a Teaching and Research (T&R) contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, on our payroll on the census date. The University believes staff should be on an appropriate contract for their role.

In line with the principles of transparency and inclusivity staff can, and are at liberty to, check their contract details in the personal information section of the University's bespoke Current Research Information System (CRIS) called MyImpact. Staff who believe their information is incorrect should follow the amendment guidance within MyImpact.

3 Determining research independence

3.1 Overview

In accordance with the Research England Guidance for staff on 'research only' contracts to be eligible for submission to the REF they must be working as an independent researcher. For the purposes of the REF, an independent researcher is defined as an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme.

Research England also provide the following guidance:

- *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.*
- *Research assistants (sometimes also described as research associates or assistant researchers) are defined as academic staff whose primary employment function is 'research only', and they are employed to carry out another individual's research programme rather than as independent researchers in their own right. Therefore Research assistants are not eligible to be returned to the REF unless, exceptionally, they meet the definition of an independent researcher on the census date and satisfy the definition of Category A eligible staff.*

3.2 Criteria

In accordance with the principle of inclusivity the University seeks to include all of our staff on research-only contracts who are independent researchers.

The indicators for research independence specified in the Research England guidance for all main panels are:

- *leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project*
- *holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement. An illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of independent fellowships can be found at www.ref.ac.uk in the Guidance section*
- *significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research.*

And for Main Panels C & D:

- *acting as a co-investigator on an externally funded research project*
- *leading a research group or a substantial work package*

In addition to the above criteria and in accordance with the principle of inclusivity the University will also consider appointment as a primary PhD supervisor to be an indicator of research independence.

The University supports research-only staff through several fellowship programmes, including Newcastle University Academic Track (NUAcT) Fellowships, Newcastle University Research Fellowships (NURF), Faculty Fellowships, and the Research Excellence Academy (REA). Due to the nature (and selection criteria), researchers on the NUAcT and NURF programmes are deemed to be working as independent researchers. Other University-funded fellows will be assessed on the criteria above.

3.3 Process

All staff on research only contracts who are working as an independent researcher will be identified by UoA Teams. These staff (including absent staff members) will be notified by email. It is expected that all of the notifications for current staff will have been sent by 30th September 2019. Staff starting after this date will be notified on appointment. Staff working as independent researchers will be recorded as such on the University's internal systems. Staff members who believe they are independent researchers but have not been notified should follow the appeals procedure.

3.4 Equality, diversity and inclusion

HR will provide an equality profile (see section 1.5) of all staff on Research only contracts as a baseline against which to measure the potential impact of the processes.

At various stages throughout the process HR will provide a profile of those staff on research only contracts who meet the definition of an independent researcher.

Once the final UoA composition has been agreed, HR will conduct an assessment against the baseline in order to identify if any equality protected groups or individuals by reference to protected characteristics (subject to the duties relating to confidentiality of individual cases) could suffer an adverse impact as a result of the processes. The University will publish the results of the EIA on the internal REF website (<https://newcastle.sharepoint.com/hub/rsd/ref>)

3.5 Appeals

Due to the nature of the REF exercise and the specific understanding required, it is more appropriate to follow a dedicated appeal process than the standard academic grievance procedure. Academic staff are not prevented from following the standard grievance route, if they so wish; however only one route or the other can be followed.

The University will guarantee that all appeals will be concluded before the REF submission date. In order to achieve this, the deadline for submitting formal review requests is 31st December 2020.

Informal Discussion:

Any colleague who believes the REF code of practice has not been followed should initially discuss it informally with their UoA coordinator. Where a colleague believes the UoA coordinator is not following the REF code of practice, the person should discuss it informally with their Faculty Dean of Research and Innovation. Where a UoA coordinator feels they cannot resolve the issue, they should consult with their Faculty Dean of Research and Innovation.

Formal Review:

If concerns relating to the determination of research independence cannot be resolved informally by the UoA Coordinator and/or the Faculty Dean of Research and Innovation, a formal review can be requested. A formal review request can be submitted in writing to the Faculty Dean of Research and Innovation, setting out the nature of the issue as relevant to the criteria for research independence. This should include any relevant documentation that the colleague wishes the panel to consider. The Dean of Research and Innovation will refer the matter to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research Strategy and Resources.

The formal review request will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research Strategy and Resources. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research Strategy and Resources will invite the colleague to discuss their concerns with the REF review panel. The REF review panel will consist of:

- Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research Strategy and Resources (Chair)
- a Dean of Research and Innovation from a different faculty to that of the person requesting the review
- another member of the REF steering group

In addition, a HR representative may be present in an advisory capacity. Colleagues will be entitled to be accompanied by a representative or a work colleague if they so choose.

The meeting will take place without unreasonable delay and wherever possible be held within 15 working days of receipt. In the event that one of the parties is unexpectedly unable to attend the meeting at the notified time, the meeting will be postponed and rescheduled to an alternative time. This will normally be within 5 working days after the date initially proposed.

In the meeting the colleague should present their grounds for review in full.

On conclusion of the formal review, the panel will prepare and send an outcome letter, within 10 working days. This will outline:

- the nature of the review
- a summary of the discussions
- the decision and the reasons for the outcome
- the right of appeal

Appeal:

A colleague who wishes to appeal against the decision of the REF review panel can submit an appeal in writing to their Dean of Research and Innovation within 10 working days of the date of the letter confirming the outcome. The letter should set out the particular grounds for the appeal, which are:

- there was failure to follow the procedure which had a material impact on the outcome
- new information has come to light that should be considered and was not available at the time of the meeting
- the action taken was unreasonable or disproportionate to the issue.

The appeal is not to undertake a further review; it will only consider the grounds on which the appeal is based.

The Dean of Research and Innovation will refer the appeal to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor who, with the advice of HR, will convene a REF appeal panel. The REF appeal panel will consist of:

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
- a Dean of the University
- another senior member of staff

All members of the panel will be independent of decisions regarding identifying REF eligible staff and will have the appropriate training.

The REF appeal panel will invite the colleague to discuss their appeal and will notify the colleague in writing. The meeting will take place without unreasonable delay and wherever possible be held within 15 working days of receipt of the appeal. A representative from HR will attend the appeal meeting in an advisory capacity.

The REF appeal panel will ensure that both sides of the case are fully considered.

The decision of the REF appeal panel will be confirmed in writing within 5 working days of the appeal meeting or as soon as reasonably practicable. The appeal outcome letter will state whether the appeal is upheld or rejected and the reasons for the decision. This appeal decision will be final and there is no further right of appeal.

4 Selection of outputs

4.1 Mechanisms and process

The University has a bespoke Current Research Information System (CRIS) called MyImpact. MyImpact is used to store all of the information relating to outputs including scoring information. MyImpact acts as the interface for our custom ePrints repository which stores the author accepted manuscript. As such it is able to show the REF Open Access (OA) status of the output.

As part of the University's ongoing process (and to comply with REF OA) all outputs should be placed in MyImpact within three months of the acceptance date.

MyImpact can be accessed by all staff via the Staff Homepage. Advice and "how to" guides on MyImpact can be found on the University's intranet. Training sessions on the use of MyImpact are run by the Policy and Information Team on a regular basis.

Individual research outputs will be given a star-rating (score) and if appropriate a granular score, through a process of quality review. In the first instance authors will be asked to nominate and score outputs they would propose to be considered for inclusion. Outputs will then be scored using a combination of internal and external review against the published REF criteria. Reviewers (internal and external) will have the appropriate research expertise in the field. All scores and associated notes will be recorded within MyImpact. In line with the principles of consistency and transparency staff can view all notes and scores (with granular scores) relating to their own individual research outputs in MyImpact.

In certain UoAs the sub-panel permits use of citation data to support the expert judgement of research outputs. The University has signed the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and has produced guidelines on the responsible use of metrics for research assessment at Newcastle University, see Appendix F: Guidelines on the responsible use of metrics.

Outputs will be allocated automatically (so as to maximise the overall quality profile within each UoA) by the MyImpact system following the REF guidelines for allocation (i.e. minimum and maximum criteria) and taking into account any staff circumstances (see section 4.4). Outputs from former staff which comply with the REF guidelines will also be considered (see section 4.2 below). Allocation will be done using a combination of the score and granular score. It may be that there are more outputs with the same score and granular score than are required for the UoA, or that the automatic selection of outputs fails to provide a true representation of the environment. In these cases the outputs will be assigned manually by the UoA coordinator(s) bearing in mind the principle of collective excellence.

4.2 Outputs associated with former staff

The University supports the recommendation from Research England that outputs from staff who have left, whether voluntarily or through non-voluntary redundancy, and who fulfil all other criteria are eligible for inclusion in REF 2021. Consistent with section 1.4 and our inclusive ethos, the University would not wish to exclude the contributions of staff on fixed-term contracts or those on open-ended contracts whose funding has discontinued, from REF 2021. Therefore the University will adhere to the REF 2021 guidelines and treat outputs associated with former staff in accordance with section 4.1 above.

4.3 Equality, diversity and inclusion

To ensure the processes for the selection of outputs are being followed the University will conduct an EIA in relation to outputs. This is detailed in section 4.5 d) below.

4.4 Staff Circumstances

Sometimes individual circumstances may have affected an individual's research productivity. To ensure the University can accurately assess the available output pool (and if required offer the necessary support) the University has a process for declaring individual circumstances. This is however completely voluntary and staff are under no obligation to declare their individual circumstances.

In line with Research England's guidance the University recognises the following circumstances:

- a. *Qualifying as an Early Career Researcher (ECR) (on the basis set out in paragraphs 148 and 149 of the submission guidance).*
- b. *Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector.*
- c. *Qualifying periods of family-related leave.*
- d. *Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1–6, as defined in paragraphs 161 to 163 as defined in the submission guidance*
- e. *Circumstances with an equivalent effect to absence, that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:*
 - i. *Disability: this is defined in the 'Guidance on codes of practice', Table 1 under 'Disability'.*
 - ii. *Ill health, injury, or mental health conditions.*
 - iii. *Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of – or justify the reduction of further outputs in addition to – the allowances set out in Annex L of the submission guidance.*
 - iv. *Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member).*
 - v. *Gender reassignment.*
 - vi. *Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed in the 'Guidance on codes of practice', Table 1, or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.*
- f. *As part-time working is taken account of within the calculation for the overall number of outputs required for the unit (which is determined by multiplying the unit's FTE by 2.5) reduction requests on the basis of part-time working hours should only be made exceptionally. For example, where the FTE of a staff member late in the assessment period does not reflect their average FTE over the period as a whole.*

The University encourages staff to declare any of the above circumstances in order that we can accurately assess the effect on the overall output pool. Nevertheless, declaration is completely

voluntary, and staff should not feel pressured in any way to declare circumstances. So that the University can confidently make an assessment on the overall pool before the Research England deadline of March 2020 the last day for submitting individual circumstances internally will be 31st January 2020.

All Category A eligible staff will be invited to complete an individual circumstances form (Appendix G: Staff circumstances form). These open, voluntary invitations will be arranged periodically up until 30th November 2020. Staff who are absent from the University will receive written notification of the code of practice and the invitation to complete an individual circumstances form.

Staff who wish to disclose individual circumstances will be able to do so in confidence via HR who will determine whether circumstances are 'clearly defined' or 'complex' and make an initial assessment of any complex cases in consultation with the Chair of the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Following this initial assessment, and in order to ensure a standard approach across all UoAs, HR will provide the relevant Faculty Dean of Research and Innovation with the information necessary for decision-making:

- A brief description of the nature and timing of the circumstances
- An explanation of any effect on working hours (contracted or otherwise)
- A recommendation regarding the extent to which the circumstances have constrained the individual's ability to produce outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period. Where possible and appropriate, this will include the number of months the circumstance(s) is likely to have prevented the individual from working productively.

For the University to determine if there is a case for a Unit Reduction, Faculty Deans will determine the potential reduction in outputs on the basis of the tables and guidance in Annex L of the submissions guidance for clearly defined circumstances or the information from HR for complex circumstances. Faculty Deans will also determine if the case warrants a reduction in the minimum output of one. This will be done on the basis described in paragraphs 179 and 180 of the submissions guidance.

The University recognises that any individual circumstances can affect a member's ability to contribute to the output pool at the same rate as other staff. Therefore, a unit reduction in outputs for the UoA will be considered when:

- The individual circumstances of staff within the unit amount to a loss of more than 46 months of full time equivalent researcher time to the unit
- AND**
- Where this has a material effect on the available output pool, a criterion which is more likely to apply to smaller UoAs

To ensure individual disclosures are dealt with in a timely manner, individuals who submit a completed form should notify the REF Coordinator who will keep a basic record including:

- Name of the individual making the disclosure
- Date and time the disclosure was submitted to HR
- Date and time a recommendation was passed to the relevant Faculty Dean
- Type (clearly defined or complex)
- Outcome

Members of the REF Steering Group and a senior representative from HR will regularly review decisions about output reductions to ensure all Faculties apply a fair and consistent approach to this decision-making process (including by reference to section 149 of Equality Act 2010).

In order to ensure individual disclosures are dealt with in a confidential manner the only individuals who will be aware of the specific circumstances of an individual disclosure are the Chair of the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and the designated member(s) of HR. The decision of Research and Innovation Deans will be notified to the relevant Head of Academic Unit, UoA Coordinator and members of the REF Steering Group without specification of the reasons for reaching the decision. If the decision is that the minimum output of one is removed the Research and Innovation Deans will also notify the individual concerned.

A report on staff circumstances will be produced in accordance with paragraph 73 of the code of practice guidelines.

4.5 Timeline

Staff will be informed of key stages in REF preparation; these are summarised below. The dedicated University website concerning the REF will include a more detailed copy of the timetable for REF preparation, quick links to relevant Research England documentation and copies of University-generated documentation, including this code of practice. Staff will be consulted at appropriate stages as indicated below.

a) Selection and scoring of outputs (Spring 2018 – Autumn 2020)

The selection and scoring of research outputs proposed by individual members of staff should be undertaken at key points during the process, as directed, in MyImpact to ensure the information held about their research activity is correct.

In relation to the REF, the purpose of selecting and scoring research outputs and of any subsequent quality review is to measure the University's progress towards the REF submission in 2021.

Faculty Management Teams will monitor outputs using MyImpact and where relevant will undertake a review of output selections and scores in order to determine the University's progress towards the 2021 submission. Progress towards previously agreed actions to help complete key outputs for the UoA submission will be discussed formally by the Head of Academic Unit with individual staff as part of this process.

b) Publication of submission guidance and panel criteria by Research England (July 2018 and January/February 2019)

Staff were informed when the draft submission guidance and panel criteria and working methods were published in July 2018. School/Institute Research Committees discussed the criteria in detail, feeding back appropriate comments to the REF Steering Group via Deans of Research and Innovation.

Staff were informed when final guidance and panel criteria and working methods were made available in January 2019. The documentation has been made available on the internal REF website (<https://newcastle.sharepoint.com/hub/rsd/ref>)

c) UoA composition (Winter 2018 – Autumn 2020)

Following each peer and Faculty-level review of output selections and scores, Deans of Research and Innovation will visit Heads of Academic Unit to discuss the results of the review and the UoA composition.

Faculty recommendations on the general UoA composition will be submitted to REF Steering Group and then University Executive Board in summer 2019. Following broad approval of UoA composition by the REF Steering Group, Research and Innovation Deans will refine the composition of each UoA (over the following year) with Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Heads of Academic Unit, Research Directors and UoA Coordinators.

Final recommendations on UoA composition will be submitted to REF Steering Group and then University Executive Board in autumn 2020.

d) EDI (Summer 2019 and Autumn 2020)

HR will initially provide an equality profile of all our eligible staff as a benchmark by which to measure the potential impact of the processes.

On completion of each quality review (section (a) above), HR will provide a profile of the scored outputs against those outputs included for submission. This will inform an analysis of the impact that the processes may have on groups and individuals.

Once the final UoA composition has been agreed, HR will conduct an assessment against the baseline in order to monitor any irregularities in output distribution. If there appears to be any anomalies the appropriate Research Dean will conduct a review of the output scores and output selection.

The University will publish the results of the EIA on the internal REF website.
(<https://newcastle.sharepoint.com/hub/rsd/ref>)

e) Preparation of the final submission (Summer 2020 - early 2021)

Research and Innovation Deans will make a formal presentation of each of the draft UoA submissions to University Executive Board in November and December of 2020.

Research and Innovation Deans and UoA Coordinators will revise the UoA submissions in the light of University Executive Board's decisions concerning the composition of each UoA, and in the light of further developments in submitted outputs since the last quality review process. UoA Coordinators are expected to consult all staff at this stage to ensure that the material is correct.

In early March 2021, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research Strategy and Resources will meet formally with the Research and Innovation Deans and Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellors to agree the final draft submission for each of the UoAs in the respective Faculties.

The final submission for each UoA will be agreed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Strategy and Resources) with the Vice-Chancellor and President immediately prior to the submission deadline (31st March 2021). The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research Strategy and Resources will then instruct the Policy and Information Team to submit formally each of the UoA submissions.

f) Publication of results (April 2022)

Deans of Research and Innovation will visit Academic Units to discuss the results of the REF.

4.6 Appeals

Please refer to section 3.5

5 Appendices

5.1 Appendix A: Data collection and privacy statement for REF2021

Privacy Notice for Submissions for the Research Excellence Framework (REF)

The information we process

For the purposes of participating in the REF, Newcastle University processes information relating to past and present research staff.

1. Current University employees (employed during the REF assessment period) who are considered to be REF-eligible (Category A eligible), this includes individuals with a primary employment function of “Teaching & Research” and “Research only”. It may also include employees who are research active but not currently on an eligible contract.
2. Former University employees (employed during the REF assessment period) who were REF-eligible at the time of ceasing employment and who have research outputs that were generated while they were employed at the University during the REF assessment period
3. Individuals who are not employed by the University but whose contract or job role includes the undertaking of research primarily focused at the University during the REF assessment period.
4. Individuals who are not employed by the University but who have provided testimonials concerning the development of impact case studies in relation to the University’s preparations for the REF 2021 exercise

The legal basis for this processing is legitimate interest. The categories of information we process are:

- HESA staff identifier and staff number
- Name (initials and surname)
- Date of Birth
- Open researcher and contributor ID (ORCID) (where held).
- Job title/position
- Grade
- Contracted hours/FTE.
- Research connection if a person’s FTE is 0.2 to 0.29
- Information about contract type and any secondments/periods of unpaid leave, including dates.
- Whether any personal data should be omitted from the published data for specific reasons, such as commercial sensitivity or security.
- If the person is an Early Career Researcher (ECR) the date of commencement of ECR status and information in relation to this

Special category information

The University will also process Special Category information for which the legal basis will be the substantial public interest; and archive, statistical and research purposes (monitoring equal opportunities). The following information will only be processed if it is voluntarily supplied by you:

- For Junior Clinical academics, information relating to their clinical training progression
- Disability status
- Information about any ill health, injury or mental health conditions.
- Information about any maternity, paternity, adoption/surrogacy, shared parental leave and time off for dependants including dates.
- Information about other caring responsibilities
- Information about protected characteristics including: age, sex/gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, ethnic origin, religion or religious beliefs and sexual orientation.

How we obtain the information

We get information from you, University documents and systems and from third parties including research users.

How long we keep it for

The University will destroy the data about individuals' circumstances within one month of the publication of the REF 2021 results. Within environment statements and case studies we may use names and job titles but no other personal information will be used. The environment statements and case studies will be published as part of the REF submission. All other personal information collected as part of the REF exercise will be retained for a maximum of seven years.

Who we share it with

The purpose of the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF2021) is to assess the quality of UK research and to inform the selective distribution of public funds for research by the four UK higher education funding bodies. The REF is managed by the REF team, based at Research England (RE), on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies. RE is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and under this arrangement UKRI has the role of 'data controller' for personal data submitted by the University to the REF.

If you are a researcher who has been included as part of our submission to the REF 2021, in 2020 and 2021 we will send some of the information we hold about you to UKRI for the purpose of the REF2021. The information will not be in coded form and your name and details such as your date of birth, research groups, and contract dates will be provided along with details of your research. If you are submitted with individual circumstances that allow a reduction in the number of outputs submitted, without penalty, some details of your personal circumstances will be provided.

You can find further information about what data are being collected on the REF website, at www.ref.ac.uk in particular publication 2019/01, 'Guidance on submissions'.

Data about personal circumstances

You may voluntarily disclose personal circumstances to your submitting unit, which could permit the University to submit your information to the REF without the 'minimum of one' requirement (without penalty), or to submit a reduced number of outputs without penalty. If (and only if) we

apply either form of reduction of outputs, we will need to provide UKRI with data that you have disclosed about your individual circumstances, to show that the criteria have been met for reducing the number of outputs. Please see the 'Guidance on submissions' document (paragraphs 151-201) for more detail about reductions in outputs and what information needs to be submitted.

Submitted data will be kept confidential to the REF team, the Equalities and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs. All these bodies are subject to confidentiality arrangements. The University's Code of Practice details how staff circumstances will be handled. The REF team will destroy the submitted data about individuals' circumstances on completion of the assessment phase.

As set out above, unless redacted, the information to be published by UKRI, on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies, will include a single list of all the outputs submitted by the University. The list of outputs will include standard bibliographic data (including the author name) for each output, but will not be listed by author name.

Your rights

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR, you have the right to see and receive a copy of any personal information that the University holds about you, as well as other rights. More information can be found from the University's intranet pages:

<https://newcastle.sharepoint.com/hub/ig/Pages/GDPR.aspx>

or by contacting:

Data Protection Officer: Maureen Wilkinson, Email: rec-man@ncl.ac.uk

The same rights apply to the information the UKRI holds about you. Further information about the Act and GRPR, and guidance on making a subject access request, can be found on the RE web-site at <https://re.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards/foi-data-protection/>

If you have any concerns about your information being used for these purposes, please contact:

Data Protection Officer
UK Research and Innovation
Polaris House
Swindon, SN2 1FL

Email: dataprotection@ukri.org

This privacy notice should be read in conjunction with the University's Data Protection Policy (<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/data.protection/dataprotectionpolicy/>) and staff privacy notice (<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/data.protection/informationforstaff/>)

5.2 Appendix B: Summary of Equality Legislation

<p>Age</p>	<p>All employees within the higher education sector are protected from unlawful age discrimination in employment under the Equality Act 2010 and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or if they are associated with a person of a particular age group.</p> <p>Age discrimination can occur when people of a particular age group are treated less favourably than people in other age groups. An age group could be for example, people of the same age, the under 30s or people aged 45-50. A person can belong to a number of different age groups.</p> <p>Age discrimination will not be unlawful if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. However, in the context of the REF, the view of the funding bodies is that if a researcher produces excellent research an HEI will not be able to justify not submitting them because of the their age group.</p> <p>It is important to note that early career researchers are likely to come from a range of age groups. The definition of early career researcher used in the REF (see paragraph 85 of the submission guidance) is not limited to young people.</p> <p>HEIs should also note that given developments in equalities law in the UK and Europe, the default retirement age will be abolished from 1 October 2011 in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>The Equality Act 2010, the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) (Northern Ireland only) and the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 prevent unlawful discrimination relating to disability. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to have a disability or if they are associated with a person who has a disability (for example, if they are responsible for caring for a disabled family member).</p> <p>A person is considered to have a disability if they have or have had a physical and/or mental impairment which has 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. Long-term impairments include those that last or are likely to last for at least 12 months.</p> <p>Cancer, HIV, multiple sclerosis and progressive/degenerative conditions are disabilities too, even if they do not currently have an adverse effect on the carrying out of day-to-day activities. An impairment which is managed by medication or medical treatment, but which would have had a substantial and long-term adverse effect if not so managed, is also a disability.</p> <p>The definition of disability is different in Northern Ireland in that a list of day-to-day activities is referred to.</p>

	<p>There is no list of day-to-day activities for England, Scotland and Wales but day-to-day activities are taken to mean activities that people generally, not a specific individual, carry out on a daily or frequent basis.</p> <p>While there is no definitive list of what is considered a disability, it covers a wide range of impairments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sensory impairments • impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as rheumatoid arthritis, depression and epilepsy • progressive impairments, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, HIV and cancer • organ specific impairments, including respiratory conditions and cardiovascular diseases • developmental impairments, such as autistic spectrum disorders and dyslexia • mental health conditions such as depression and eating disorders • impairments caused by injury to the body or brain. <p>It is important for HEIs to note that people who have had a past disability are also protected from discrimination, victimisation and harassment because of disability.</p> <p>Equality law requires HEIs to anticipate the needs of people with disabilities and make reasonable adjustments for them. Failure to make a reasonable adjustment constitutes discrimination. If a researcher's impairment has affected the quantity of their research outputs, the submitting unit may return a reduced number of outputs (see 'Guidance on submissions', Part 3, Section 1, 'Staff circumstances').</p>
Gender reassignment	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 protect from discrimination, harassment and victimisation of trans people who have proposed, started or completed a process to change their sex. Staff in HE do not have to be under medical supervision to be afforded protection because they are trans and staff are protected if they are perceived to be undergoing or have undergone related procedures. They are also protected if they are associated with someone who has proposed, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment.</p> <p>Trans people who undergo gender reassignment will need to take time off for appointments and, in some cases, for medical assistance. The transition process is lengthy, often taking several years, and it is likely to be a difficult period for the trans person as they seek recognition of their new gender from their family, friends, employer and society as a whole.</p> <p>The Gender Recognition Act 2004 gave enhanced privacy rights to trans people who undergo gender reassignment. A person acting in an official capacity who acquires information about a person's status as a transsexual may commit a criminal offence if they pass the information to a third party without consent.</p>

	<p>Consequently, staff within HEIs with responsibility for REF submissions must ensure that the information they receive about gender reassignment is treated with particular care.</p> <p>If a staff member's ability to work productively throughout the REF assessment period has been constrained due to gender reassignment, the unit may return a reduced number of research outputs (see 'Guidance on submissions', Part 3, Section 1, 'Staff circumstances'). Information about the member of staff will be kept confidential as described in 'Guidance on submissions', paragraph 195.</p> <p>HEIs should note that the Scottish government recently consulted on, and the UK government is currently consulting on, reform of the Gender Recognition Act 2004, which may include streamlining the procedure to legally change gender.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 as amended, individuals are protected from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of marriage and civil partnership status. The protection from discrimination is to ensure that people who are married or in a civil partnership receive the same benefits and treatment in employment. The protection from discrimination does not apply to single people.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not inadvertently discriminate against staff who are married or in civil partnerships.</p>
Political opinion	<p>The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 protects staff from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of political opinion.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not inadvertently discriminate against staff based on their political opinion.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 women are protected from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p>Consequently, where researchers have taken time out of work, or their ability to work productively throughout the assessment period has been affected, because of pregnancy and/or maternity, the submitting unit may return a reduced number of research outputs, as set out in 'Guidance on submissions', paragraphs 169 to 172.</p> <p>In addition, HEIs should ensure that female researchers who are pregnant or on maternity leave are kept informed about and included in their submissions process.</p> <p>For the purposes of this summary it is important to note that primary adopters have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave.</p>
Race	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation connected to race. The definition of race includes colour, ethnic or national origins or nationality. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular race.</p>

	<p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not discriminate against staff based on their race or assumed race (for example, based on their name).</p>
<p>Religion and belief including non-belief</p>	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to religion or belief. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular religion or belief.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not discriminate against staff based on their actual or perceived religion or belief, including non-belief. 'Belief' includes any structured philosophical belief with clear values that has an effect on how its adherents conduct their lives.</p>
<p>Sex (including breastfeeding and additional paternity and adoption leave)</p>	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to sex. Employees are also protected because of their perceived sex or because of their association with someone of a particular sex.</p> <p>The sex discrimination provisions of the Equality Act explicitly protect women from less favourable treatment because they are breastfeeding. Consequently, the impact of breastfeeding on a woman's ability to work productively will be taken into account, as set out in 'Guidance on submissions', Part 3, Section 1, 'Staff circumstances'.</p> <p>If a mother who meets the continuity of employment test wishes to return to work early or shorten her maternity leave/pay, she will be entitled to shared parental leave with the father or her partner within the first year of the baby's birth. Partners may also be eligible for shared parental leave or pay. Fathers/partners who take additional paternity or adoption leave will have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave and barriers that exist to taking the leave, or as a result of having taken it, could constitute unlawful sex discrimination. Consequently, where researchers have taken additional paternity and adoption leave, the submitting unit may return a reduced number of outputs, as set out in 'Guidance on submissions', Annex L.</p> <p>HEIs need to be wary of implementing procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 that would be easier for men to comply with than women, or vice versa. There are many cases where a requirement to work full-time (or less favourable treatment of people working part-time or flexibly) has been held to discriminate unlawfully against women.</p> <p>HEIs should note that there are now requirements under UK and Scottish legislation for public authorities (including HEIs) to report information on the percentage difference amongst employees between men and women's average hourly pay (excluding overtime).</p>
<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to sexual orientation.</p>

	<p>Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person who is of a particular sexual orientation.</p> <p>HEIs must ensure that their procedures and decision-making processes in relation to REF 2021 do not discriminate against staff based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation.</p>
Welsh language	<p>The Welsh Language Act 1993 places a duty on public bodies in Wales to treat Welsh and English on an equal basis. This is reinforced by the provisions of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards (No 6) Regulations 2017.</p> <p>The arrangements for the assessment of outputs in the medium of Welsh by the REF panels are set out in 'Guidance on submissions', paragraphs 284 and 285.</p>

5.3 Appendix C: UoA Coordinator Role Descriptor

Background

The UoA Coordinator is an academic role which plays a key part in the UoA Team comprising selected members of staff from academic units contributing to the UoA such as the Head(s) of Academic Unit and Director(s) of Research. The UoA Team will work with the Dean of Research and Innovation to propose the composition of the UoA to the University Research Committee (URC, acting as the REF Steering Group). The URC will make final recommendations for the submission by the University.

Workload

UoA Coordinators are expected to be in post from January 2019 until March 2021. Post holders will be expected to commit a proportion of their time each week in order to fulfil the requirements of the role. This commitment will be reflected in workload planning to ensure that all UoA Coordinators have a balanced and reasonable workload. It is anticipated that the role will require an average commitment of one day (or 0.2 FTE) per week, although periods of increased intensity will be necessary as we draw closer to the submission deadline.

Role

- To support preparation of the UoA submission, including its composition, with the Dean of Research and Innovation and the UoA Team.
- To keep up to date with the latest REF developments and specific UoA panel guidance and to communicate strategy, University policy, guidelines and timescales to the UoA Team and individuals being submitted.
- To contribute to and manage the review of outputs (with other internal or external reviewers where appropriate) in order to maximise the validity and robustness of the output quality assessments.
- To work with the PGR Director, Research Directors and Administrative team to ensure all data are recorded accurately on University systems and that the MyImpact database is checked and maintained appropriately.
- To identify and oversee the preparation of impact case studies and to assist with the assessment of their quality.
- To draft the environment narrative to ensure that:
 - The research landscape is presented in the most advantageous manner.
 - There is a coherent expression of a sustainable research strategy for the future, grounded in current research strengths.

5.4 Appendix D: Committees

Senate

Senate is the supreme governing body of the University in all academic matters although many of its responsibilities are delegated to sub-committees including University Research Committee.

Membership of Senate is largely elected and comprises: 8 ex officio members, 4 students, 20 members elected by and from the academic staff of the University, one lay member of Council and up to three co-opted members. Membership is defined by the University Statutes, which also describes the method of appointment.

Ex-officio members are:

- Vice-Chancellor and President
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor
- Pro-Vice-Chancellors

University Executive Board

University Executive Board's remit is to exercise an integrated overview of the University's policies and resources through the implementation of the strategic plan and operating statement, to ensure a prompt and strongly co-ordinated approach to the evaluation of academic and business opportunities, and to appraise and prioritise proposals for major new initiatives. Membership of University Executive Board comprises the senior management team of the University.

- Vice-Chancellor and President
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor
- Pro-Vice-Chancellors
- Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellors
- Registrar
- Executive Director of Finance
- Executive Director of Human Resources
- Executive Director of Corporate Affairs

University Research Committee

The University Research Committee is responsible for all matters pertaining to and impacting on research within the University, including preparation for national research assessment exercises in conjunction with Faculty Research Strategy Groups.

Ex officio members include:

- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Strategy and Resources) (Chair)
- Faculty Deans of Research and Innovation
- Director of Research Strategy and Development
- Head of the Joint Research Office (JRO)
- Dean of Innovation & Business
- Director of Business Development and Enterprise
- Director of Academic Services & University Librarian
- Senate representative

In attendance:

- Faculty Research Manager for Science, Agriculture and Engineering (SAgE)
- Faculty Research Manager for Medical Sciences (FMS)
- Faculty Research Manager for Humanities and Social Sciences (HaSS)

- Research Strategy Manager
- NUIT representative

5.5 Appendix E: Key decision-makers and methods of appointment

Role/Office	Method of Appointment
Vice-Chancellor and President	Governed by University Statute. Committee of Council and Senate makes nominations after external recruitment campaign.
Deputy-Vice-Chancellor	Internal appointment selected from the Pro-Vice-Chancellors by the Vice-Chancellor and reported to Senate and Council.
Pro-Vice-Chancellors	Internal appointments on rotating basis, (or external appointment) made after open advertisement. Selection by Committee of Senate and Council.
Registrar	Substantive appointment made by Council, after external recruitment campaign.
Chair of University Research Committee	Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research Strategy and Resources (see above).
Deans of Research/Innovation	Internal appointments made on rotating basis after open advertisement. Selection by Faculty Appointment Board.
Executive Director of Human Resources	Substantive appointment made by Selection Committee after external recruitment campaign.
Director of Research Strategy and Development	Substantive appointment made by Selection Committee after external recruitment campaign.
Head of Faculty Administration	Substantive appointment made by Selection Committee after external recruitment campaign.
Head of Academic Unit	Internal appointment made on rotating basis after open advertisement. Selection by Faculty Appointment Board
Unit Director of Research	Often also Head of Academic Unit. If not, internal responsibility nominated on rotating basis by Head of Academic Unit.
UoA Co-ordinators	Nominated by Heads of Academic Unit.

5.6 Appendix F: Guidelines on the responsible use of metrics

Guidelines on the responsible use of metrics for research assessment at Newcastle University

Context

The University signed up to the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#) in 2017 and is committed to the principles of the responsible use of metrics as outlined in [The Metric Tide](#) report and the [Leiden Manifesto](#). The use of research metrics falls within the context of the [University Code of Good Practice in Research](#).

This guidance is provided to ensure that research assessment activities are carried out in line with the three principles below.

Metrics should:

Support expert judgement

Research assessment should always be based on expert judgement with metrics used only to support and inform this assessment.

Be fit for purpose

Metrics should only be sought when appropriate, it is important to know what the question is before gathering the required data. Data should only be obtained from reliable and accurate sources and due consideration should be given to ensure data quality. Disciplinary differences should always be accounted for. Metrics should always be used in the correct context and users should be mindful of changes in information that might affect the underlying assessment.

Be transparent

When metrics are used to form an assessment, the data sources and assumptions should be acknowledged.

5.7 Appendix G: Staff circumstances form

Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances form

This document is being sent to all Category A staff whose outputs are eligible for submission to REF2021 (see [‘Guidance on submissions’](#), paragraphs 117-122). As part of the university’s commitment to supporting equality, diversity and inclusion in the REF, we have put in place safe, confidential and supportive structures for staff to declare information about any EDI related circumstances that may have affected their ability to research productively during the assessment period (1 January 2014 – 31 July 2020), and particularly their ability to produce research outputs at the same rate as staff not affected by circumstances. The purpose of collecting this information is threefold:

- To enable staff who have not been able to produce a REF-eligible output during the assessment period to be entered into REF where they have;
 - circumstances that have resulted in an overall period of 46 months or more absence from research during the assessment period, due to equality-related circumstances (see below)
 - circumstances *equivalent* to 46 months or more absence from research due to equality-related circumstances
 - two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave.
- To recognise the effect that EDI related circumstances can have on an individual’s ability to research productively, and to adjust expectations in terms of expected workload / production of research outputs.
- To establish whether there are any Units of Assessment where the proportion of declared circumstances is sufficiently high to warrant a request to the higher education funding bodies for a reduced required number of outputs to be submitted.

Applicable circumstances

- Qualifying as an ECR (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016)
- Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector
- Qualifying periods of family-related leave
- Junior clinical academics who have not gained a Certificate of Completion of training by 31 July 2021
- Disability (including chronic conditions)
- Ill health, injury or mental health conditions
- Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of the standard allowances
- Caring responsibilities
- Gender reassignment

If your ability to research productively during the assessment period has been constrained due to one or more of the following circumstances, you are requested to complete the attached form. Further information can be found paragraph 160 of the Guidance on Submissions (REF 2019/01). Completion and return of the form is voluntary, and individuals who do not choose to return it will not be put under any pressure to declare information if they do not wish to do so. This form is the only means by which the University will be gathering this information; we will not be consulting HR records, contract start dates, etc. You should therefore complete and return the form if any of the above circumstances apply and you are willing to provide the associated information.

Ensuring Confidentiality

The code of practice describes how the information in this form will be used and who will see the information. Staff members should also refer to the REF 2021 privacy statement.

If the institution decides to apply to the funding bodies for either form of reduction of outputs (removal of 'minimum of one' requirement or unit circumstances), we will need to provide UKRI with data that you have disclosed about your individual circumstances, to show that the criteria have been met for reducing the number of outputs. Please see the ['Guidance on submissions'](#) document (paragraphs 151-201) for more detail about reductions in outputs and what information needs to be submitted.

Submitted data will be kept confidential to the REF team, the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs. All these bodies are subject to confidentiality arrangements. The REF team will destroy the submitted data about individuals' circumstances on completion of the assessment phase.

Changes in circumstances

The university recognises that staff circumstances may change between completion of the declaration form and the census date (31 July 2020). If this is the case, then staff should contact their HR partner to provide the updated information.

To submit this form you should email an electronic or scanned version to: <Confidential email address to be set up>

Name: Click here to insert text.

Department: Click here to insert text.

Do you have a REF-eligible output published between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2021?

Yes

No

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

Circumstance	Time period affected
<p>Early Career Researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016).</p> <p><i>Date you became an early career researcher.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter a date.</p>
<p>Junior clinical academic who has not gained Certificate of completion of Training by 31 July 2021.</p>	<p>Tick here <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Career break or secondment outside of the HE sector.</p> <p><i>Dates and durations in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter dates and durations.</p>
<p>Family-related leave;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • statutory maternity leave • statutory adoption leave • Additional paternity or adoption leave or shared parental leave lasting for four months or more. <p><i>For each period of leave, state the nature of the leave taken and the dates and durations in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter dates and durations.</p>
<p>Disability (including chronic conditions)</p> <p><i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Mental health condition</p> <p><i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>

<p>Ill health or injury</p> <p><i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of standard allowance</p> <p><i>To include: Type of leave taken and brief description of additional constraints, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Caring responsibilities</p> <p><i>To include: Nature of responsibility, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Gender reassignment</p> <p><i>To include: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Any other exceptional reasons e.g. bereavement.</p> <p><i>To include: brief explanation of reason, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>

Please confirm, by ticking the box provided, that:

- The above information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances as of the date below
- I realise that the above information will be used for REF purposes only and will be seen by those individuals highlighted in the code of practice
- I realise it may be necessary to share the information with the REF team, the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs.

I agree

Name: Print name here

Signed: Sign or initial here

Date: Insert date here

I give my permission for an HR partner to contact me to discuss my circumstances, and my requirements in relation to these.

I give my permission for the details of this form to be passed on to the relevant contact within my department/faculty/centre. (Please note, if you do not give permission your department may be unable to adjust expectations and put in place appropriate support for you).

If we need to contact you, would you like to be contacted by:

Email Insert email address

Phone Insert contact telephone number