

Research Excellence Framework 2014

Code of Practice

1 Background

Research at Aston University is a core activity that infuses and informs teaching at all levels from undergraduate through postgraduate to post-experience and is characterised by originality, academic rigour and practical relevance. Aston focuses on translational research that will make a substantial and beneficial difference to individuals, organisations and society in general, in the short, medium and long term.

The University's goal in the REF 2014 is to achieve high quality profiles (combinations of outputs, impact and environment) in each Unit of Assessment submitted such that 75% is evaluated as internationally excellent or world leading, and the remainder internationally recognised. It is the University's intention to submit as many staff as possible to the REF consistent with achieving these quality profiles. Aston will submit as many as possible of its excellent researchers, including those whose volume of research output has been limited for reasons covered by the Individual Staff Circumstances outlined in 4.5. In particular Aston will embrace the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant employment legislation in its selection process. A summary of this legislation can be found in paragraphs 198-201 and table 2 of the Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions at: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02_11/02_11.pdf

This document sets out the internal Code of Practice which will be followed. The Code will be submitted to HEFCE for approval by 31st July 2012 and should be read in conjunction with the **Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions** (REF 03.2011) and **Panel Criteria and Working Methods** (REF 01.2012) issued for each Unit of Assessment. The University will be using the REF module of the PURE Research Information System in order to make its submission to the Research Excellence Framework. All staff who are eligible to be returned (i.e. have a teaching and research contract or a research contract) will be given access to the REF module. This module is available currently in version 4.12 of PURE, with the panel criteria published in January 2012 being built into the 4.13 release available on 1st June 2012. Schools will communicate to staff the timescale for proposing outputs for the REF via the REF module.

The University will also produce an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Mock REF and likewise a further EIA at the final submission stage and the results of these assessments will be published on the staff intranet.

2 Basic Principles

Aston University will undertake its selection of staff for inclusion in the submission to the REF 2014 in accordance with the following principles:

- Transparency (ensuring that this code is made easily accessible to all those staff who may be eligible for submission, including those who are absent from work);
- Consistency (applying the code in accordance with the same principles at each stage of the process across the Institution);
- Accountability (setting out clearly the responsibilities of the senior officers undertaking the selection process and ensuring this is done in line with this Code);
- Inclusivity (ensuring our approach leads to the identification of all eligible staff who have produced excellent research for submission to the REF).

The University will ensure that it both adheres to Equality legislation and follows good practice as identified within the Higher Education sector and particularly by the Equality Challenge Unit.

3 Decision-Making Process

3.1 Selection and Training of Responsible Senior Officers

Decisions about submissions for the REF are crucial to the future of the University and are therefore made at a senior level within the University with guidance from appropriate officers. The Council appointed the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research, on the nomination of the Senate, with a remit for overseeing the research strategy of the University and submission to the REF. The Council also appoints Executive Deans and Associate Deans for Research in each of the Schools of Study. Part of their remit is to oversee all aspects of research activity within their respective Schools. Within Schools of Study Research Group and Centre Leaders are appointed to focus research efforts and themes within the overall research strategy.

Those with lead responsibility for decisions on the REF submissions are:

- Vice Chancellor: Overall responsibility for final decisions relating to Aston's REF submissions;
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research: Lead responsibility for Aston's research strategy and overseeing Aston's REF submissions;
- Executive Deans: Key responsibility for development of REF submissions and selection of staff for inclusion in the REF;
- Associate Deans for Research: Key responsibility for development of REF submissions and selection of staff for inclusion in the REF, as specified by the Executive Dean;
- Other senior academic staff as appointed by Executive Deans: Key responsibility for development of REF submissions and selection of staff for inclusion in the REF, as specified by the Executive Dean.

All senior members of staff involved in the selection of research-active staff for the submission to the REF 2014 will receive briefings on and participate in a workshop on the following issues:

- Equality legislation relevant to the REF

- HEFCE's Equality objectives for the REF 2014 along with their specific requirements for compliance
- Consideration of individual circumstances in decision-making in relation to the REF 2014

3.2 Committees and Decision-making Groups

School Management Teams

School Management Teams, chaired by the School's Executive Dean, have responsibility for the preparation and approval of School REF submissions and for their recommendation to the Research Executive. For items related to REF, School Management Teams report directly to Research Executive.

School-based REF working groups

School-based REF working groups are responsible for the preparation of School submissions, under the direction of the Associate Dean for Research or other nominated subject lead. School-based REF working groups make their recommendations to School Management Teams.

Research Committee

Research Committee chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research acts as an advisory group to the Schools of Study and oversees the development of REF submissions. It monitors progress towards objectives in School research strategies and ensures consistency of approach while taking account of any specific requirements for each unit of assessment. The Research Committee has no decision-making role in relation to the REF.

Research Executive

The Research Executive chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research was established, as a sub-group of the Research Committee, to support Schools, as required, in the co-ordination of REF submissions, and in the provision of information and advice on queries related to the REF. Research Executive will receive recommendations from School Management Teams, and will validate and verify these recommendations before seeking approval from the Vice Chancellor. The Research Executive has no decision-making role in relation to individual inclusion in the REF.

REF Individual Circumstances Panel

Aston's REF Individual Circumstances Panel will consider, in confidence, the individual disclosures of personal circumstances, and make a recommendation about the appropriate number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty. The group will comprise:

- Chair: a PVC or senior academic with a Research Background
- One HR Representative
- The Equality and Diversity Advisor or person with E&D lead within the University
- Head of Research Support Office, offering specialist REF advice on an anonymous basis where required

4 Guidance on Selection and Submission

Aston University recognises and values all contributions to its mission to be a centre of excellence in both teaching and research. To sustain and further develop the academic environment for its staff, the University seeks to optimise the outcome of its REF 2014 submissions by requiring eligible staff to submit outputs as follows:

Staff included in the Business and Management Studies Unit of Assessment (UoA 19):

4 outputs which are all judged as internationally excellent (3*) or world leading (4*) in terms of originality, significance and rigour to give a **minimum** expected total of 12*s.

Staff with individual circumstances as listed in 4.5 may be permitted to submit a reduced number of outputs without penalty. For these staff the quality level required is as follows:

3 outputs which are all judged as internationally excellent (3*) or world leading (4*) to give a **minimum** total of 9*s. or;

2 outputs, which are both judged as internationally excellent (3*) or world leading (4*) to give a **minimum total of 6*s**. or;

1 output, which is judged as internationally excellent (3*) or world leading (4*).

Staff included in all other Units of Assessment to which the University is making a submission:

4 outputs of which at least 3 are judged as internationally excellent (3*) or world leading (4*) in terms of originality, significance and rigour. The 4th output is normally expected to be **at least** internationally recognised (2*) in terms of originality, significance and rigour, to give a **minimum** expected total of 11*s. Exceptionally, staff who achieve a total of 11* through a different profile, contributing more 4* publications, will also be entered.

Staff with individual circumstances as listed in 4.5 may be permitted to submit a reduced number of outputs without penalty. For these staff the quality level required is as follows:

3 outputs of which at least 2 are judged as internationally excellent (3*) or world leading (4*). The 3rd output is normally expected to be **at least** internationally recognised (2*) to give a **minimum** total of 8*s. Exceptionally, staff who achieve a total of 8* through a different profile, contributing more 4* publications, will also be entered. or;

2 outputs, which are both judged as internationally excellent (3*) or world leading (4*) to give a **minimum total of 6*s**. Exceptionally, staff who achieve a total of 6*

through a different profile, eg one output at 4* and one at 2* , will also be entered. or;

1 output, which is judged as internationally excellent (3*) or world leading (4*).

4.1 Appointment of External Advisors or Assessors

External Advisors are appointed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research on the basis of their knowledge and experience of the REF within the relevant academic disciplines. They are appointed after consultation with Executive Deans and Associate Deans for Research within the School. Advisors will be asked to provide comments on the quality of research outputs, research impact and the quality of the research environment, but will not be involved in the selection of staff for inclusion in the REF submission.

4.2 Selecting Staff for Submission

The objective is to submit as many eligible staff as possible, consistent with the University's goal of achieving the quality profile above (Section 1) in each submission. The University recognises and values that there are other ways that staff may be involved in the REF submission, without necessarily being returned as category A staff. This might include for example contribution to impact case studies or contribution to the research environment through the supervision of research students or the winning of external research funding. Further, the University recognises that some staff may have high quality outputs, but that their research may fall beyond the subject coverage of a particular Unit of Assessment, and so cannot be returned for this reason rather than for quality reasons.

Staff who are not returned to the REF 2014 as category A staff can expect their contract to remain unchanged. They will continue to be expected to participate as normal in those areas of academic life commensurate with their appointment. Aston's approach to career development and its promotion criteria for academic staff recognise the value of all areas of academic contribution, including: research and scholarship; learning and teaching; and contributions to the wider mission of the University. Non-submission to the REF 2014 will neither influence submission to future Research Excellence Frameworks or equivalent exercises nor act as a barrier per se to career opportunities for members of academic or research staff.

4.3 Communicating the Process to Staff

This Code of Practice is intended to demonstrate fairness in the selection of staff for inclusion in REF submissions. As part of Aston's commitment to transparency, the Code will be disseminated in the following ways:

- Staff have been given the opportunity to comment on the Code prior to its final adoption via a consultation exercise over the period 28th March 2012 to 21st May 2012.
- All eligible research-active staff will be made aware of the existence of this Code of Practice and the criteria for selection by email or written correspondence from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research.
- Schools will be required to bring this Code to the attention of staff absent from work.

- The Code will also be made available on the University's Intranet and its existence will be publicised via Aston Aspects, the staff newsletter.
- The Code will be made available in hard copy or alternative formats to any member of staff who requests it.
- Staff who are eligible to be returned to the Business and Management Unit of Assessment will be made aware of the update to this Code made in September 2013 via the methods outlined above.

4.4 Offering Feedback

Staff will be informed of the final decision about their selection for submission for the REF 2014 by 16 August 2013. Those staff who require more detailed feedback about decisions will be offered a meeting with the Head of their Research Group, Associate Deans for Research or Executive Dean, as appropriate. In exceptional circumstances, where a decision has been delayed, staff concerned will be informed of the delay, given an expected timescale for the decision to be taken, and informed of their right of appeal.

4.5 Individual staff circumstances

The guidance contained in section 4.5 of this Code of Practice has been taken from the Panel Criteria and Working Methods REF 01/2012 (REF, paras 63-91) and is included here for completeness. The paragraph numbers below, for ease of reference, mirror those in the REF document which can be found at:

http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2012/01_12/

64 Up to four research outputs must be listed against each member of staff included in the submission. A maximum of four outputs per researcher will provide panels with a sufficient selection of research outputs from each submitted unit upon which to base judgements about the quality of that unit's outputs. Consultations on the development of the REF confirmed that this is an appropriate maximum volume of research outputs for the purposes of assessment.

65 As a key measure to support equality and diversity in research careers, in all UOAs individuals may be returned with fewer than four outputs without penalty in the assessment, where their individual circumstances have significantly constrained their ability to produce four outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period. This measure is intended to encourage institutions to submit all their eligible staff who have produced excellent research.

66 HEIs are allowed to list the maximum of four outputs against any researcher, irrespective of their circumstances or the length of time they have had to conduct research. A minimum of one output must be listed against each individual submitted to the REF.

67 In order to provide clarity and consistency on the number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty, there will be a **clearly defined** reduction in outputs for those types of circumstances listed at paragraph 69a. Circumstances that are more **complex** will require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs; these are listed at paragraph 69b. Arrangements have been put in

place for complex circumstances to be considered on a consistent basis, as described at paragraphs 88-91.

68 Where an individual is submitted with fewer than four outputs and they do not satisfy the criteria described at paragraphs 69-91 below, any 'missing' outputs will be graded as 'unclassified'.

69 Category A and C staff may be returned with fewer than four outputs without penalty in the assessment, if one or more of the following circumstances significantly constrained their ability to produce four outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period:

- a. Circumstances with a **clearly defined** reduction in outputs, which are:
 - i. Qualifying as an early career researcher (on the basis set out in paragraph 72 and Table 1 below).
 - ii. Absence from work due to working part-time, secondments or career breaks (on the basis set out in paragraphs 73-74 and Table 2 below).
 - iii. Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave (on the basis set out in paragraphs 75-81).
 - iv. Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6, as defined at paragraph 86.
- b. **Complex circumstances** that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:
 - i. Disability. This is defined in 'guidance on submissions' Part 4, Table 2 under 'Disability'.
 - ii. Ill health or injury.
 - iii. Mental health conditions.
 - iv. 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 made in paragraph 75 below.
 - v. Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member).
 - vi. Gender reassignment.
 - vii. Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed at paragraph 190 of 'guidance of submissions' or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

Clearly defined circumstances

70 Where an individual has one or more circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs, the number of outputs that may be reduced should be determined according to the tables and guidance in paragraphs 72-86 below. All sub-panels will accept a reduction in outputs according to this guidance and will assess the remaining number of submitted outputs without any penalty.

71 In REF1b, submissions must include sufficient details of the individual's circumstances to show that these criteria have been applied correctly. The panel secretariat will examine the information in the first instance and advise the sub-

panels on whether sufficient information has been provided and the guidance applied correctly. The panel secretariat will be trained to provide such advice, on a consistent basis across all UOAs. Where the sub-panel judges that the criteria have not been met, the ‘missing’ output(s) will be recorded as unclassified. (For example, an individual became an early career researcher in January 2011 but only one output is submitted rather than two. In this case the submitted output will be assessed, and the ‘missing’ output recorded as unclassified.)

Early career researchers

72 Early career researchers are defined in paragraphs 85-86 of ‘guidance on submissions’. Table 1 sets out the permitted reduction in outputs without penalty in the assessment for early career researchers who meet this definition.

Table 1 Early career researchers: permitted reduction in outputs

Date at which the individual first met the REF definition of an early career researcher:	Number of outputs may be reduced by up to:
On or before 31 July 2009	0
Between 1 August 2009 and 31 July 2010 inclusive	1
Between 1 August 2010 and 31 July 2011 inclusive	2
On or after 1 August 2011	3

Absence from work due to part-time working, secondments or career breaks

73 Table 2 sets out the permitted reduction in outputs without penalty in the assessment for absence from work due to:

- c. part-time working
- d. secondments or career breaks outside of the higher education sector, and in which the individual did not undertake academic research.

Table 2 Part-time working, secondments or career breaks: permitted reduction in outputs

Total months absent between 1 January 2008 and 31 October 2013 due to working part-time, secondment or career break:	Number of outputs may be reduced by up to:
0-11.99	0
12-27.99	1
28-45.99	2
46 or more	3

74 The allowances in Table 2 are based on the length of the individual’s absence or time away from working in higher education. They are defined in terms of total months absent from work. For part-time working, the equivalent ‘total months absent’ should be calculated by multiplying the number of months worked part-time by the full-time equivalent (FTE) **not** worked during those months. For example, an

individual worked part-time for 30 months at 0.6 FTE. The number of equivalent months absent = $30 \times 0.4 = 12$.

Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave

75 Individuals may reduce the number of outputs by one, for each discrete period of:

- a Statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave taken substantially during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2013, regardless of the length of the leave.
- b Additional paternity or adoption leave¹ lasting for four months or more, taken substantially during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2013.

76 The approach to these circumstances is based on the funding bodies' considered judgement that the impact of such a period of leave and the arrival of a new child into a family is generally sufficiently disruptive of an individual's research work to justify the reduction of an output. This judgement was informed by the consultation on draft panel criteria, in which an overwhelming majority of respondents supported such an approach.

77 The funding bodies' decision not to have a minimum qualifying period for maternity leave was informed by the sector's clear support for this approach in the consultation; recognition of the potential physical implications of pregnancy and childbirth; and the intention to remove any artificial barriers to the inclusion of women in submissions, given that women were significantly less likely to be selected in former RAE exercises.

78 The funding bodies consider it appropriate to make the same provision for those regarded as the 'primary adopter' of a child (that is, a person who takes statutory adoption leave), as the adoption of a child and taking of statutory adoption leave is generally likely to have a comparable impact on a researcher's work to that of taking maternity leave.

79 As regards additional paternity or adoption leave, researchers who take such leave will also have been away from work and acting as the primary carer of a new child within a family. The funding bodies consider that where researchers take such leave over a significant period (four months or more), this is likely to have an impact on their ability to work productively on research that is comparable to the impact on those taking maternity or statutory adoption leave.

80 While the clearly defined reduction of outputs due to additional paternity or adoption leave is subject to a minimum period of four months, shorter periods of such leave can be taken into account as follows:

- a By seeking a reduction in outputs under the provision for complex circumstances, for example where the period of leave had an impact in combination with other factors such as ongoing childcare responsibilities.

¹ 'Additional paternity or adoption leave' refers to leave of up to 26 weeks which is taken to care for a child where the person's spouse, partner or civil partner was entitled to statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave, and has since returned to work. The term 'additional paternity leave' is often used to describe this type of leave although it may be taken by parents of either gender. For the purposes of the REF we refer to this leave as 'additional paternity or adoption leave'.

- b By combining the number of months for shorter periods of such leave in combination with other clearly defined circumstances, according to Table 2.

81 Any period of maternity, adoption or paternity leave that qualifies for the reduction of an output under the provisions in paragraph 75 above may in individual cases be associated with prolonged constraints on work that justify the reduction of more than one output. In such cases, the circumstances should be explained using the arrangements for complex circumstances.

Combining clearly defined circumstances

82 Where individuals have had a combination of circumstances with clearly defined reductions in outputs, these may be accumulated up to a maximum reduction of three outputs. For each circumstance, the relevant reduction should be applied and added together to calculate the total maximum reduction.

83 Where Table 1 is combined with Table 2, the period of time since 1 January 2008 up until the individual met the definition of an early career researcher should be calculated in months, and Table 2 should be applied.

84 When combining circumstances, only one circumstance should be taken into account for any period of time during which they took place simultaneously. (For example, an individual worked part-time throughout the assessment period and first met the definition of an early career researcher on 1 September 2009. In this case the number of months 'absent' due to part-time working should be calculated from 1 September 2009 onwards, and combined with the reduction due to qualifying as an early career researcher, as indicated in paragraph 83 above.)

85 Where an individual has a combination of circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs **and** complex circumstances, the institution should submit these collectively as 'complex' so that a single judgement can be made about the appropriate reduction in outputs, taking into account all the circumstances. Those circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs should be calculated according to the guidance above (paragraphs 72-84).

Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6

86 In UOAs 1-6, the number of outputs may be reduced by up to two, without penalty in the assessment, for the following:

- a Category A staff who are junior clinical academics. These are defined as clinically qualified academics who are still completing their clinical training in medicine or dentistry and have not gained a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) or its equivalent prior to 31 October 2013.
- b Category C staff who are employed primarily as clinical, health or veterinary professionals (for example by the NHS), and whose research is primarily focused in the submitting unit.

87 These allowances are made on the basis that the staff concerned are normally significantly constrained in the time they have available to undertake research during the assessment period. The reduction of two outputs takes account of

significant constraints on research work, and is normally sufficient to also take account of additional circumstances that may have affected the individual's research work. Where the individual meets the criteria at paragraph 86, and has had significant additional circumstances – for any of the reasons at paragraph 69 – the institution may return the circumstances as 'complex' with a reduction of three outputs, and provide a justification for this.

Complex circumstances

88 Where staff have had one or more complex circumstances – including in combination with any circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs – the institution will need to make a judgement on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs submitted, and provide a rationale for this judgement.

89 As far as is practicable, the information in REF1b should provide an estimate – in terms of the equivalent number of months absent from work – of the impact of the complex circumstances on the individual's ability to work productively throughout the assessment period, and state any further constraints on the individual's research work in addition to the equivalent months absent. A reduction should be made according to Table 2 in relation to estimated months absent from work, with further constraints taken into account as appropriate. To aid institutions the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) will publish worked examples of complex circumstances, which will indicate how these calculations can be made and the appropriate reduction in outputs for a range of complex circumstances. These will be available at www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF from February 2012.

90 All submitted complex circumstances will be considered by the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP), on a consistent basis across all UOAs. The membership and terms of reference of the EDAP are available at www.ref.ac.uk under Equality and diversity. The EDAP will make recommendations about the appropriate number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty to the relevant main panel chairs, who will make the decisions. The relevant sub-panels will then be informed of the decisions and will assess the remaining outputs without any penalty.

91 To enable individuals to disclose the information in a confidential manner, information submitted about individuals' complex circumstances will be kept confidential to the REF team, the EDAP and main panel chairs, and will be destroyed on completion of the REF (as described in 'guidance on submissions', paragraphs 98-99).

4.6 Support for staff with Personal and Individual Circumstances at Aston

All eligible staff will have the opportunity to discuss their individual circumstances with the HR Advisor for their school and they may wish to do this before submitting the Individual Circumstances Disclosure form. These forms will be sent to each eligible member of staff for completion. Staff will be asked to return these to HR who alone will view the complete set of responses. The responsible HR Representative will view the routine individual circumstances and agree and verify these (Maternity, ECRs etc). Those applications that involve Complex Circumstances will be put forward to Aston's REF Individual

Circumstances Panel for a decision about the recommended required number of outputs. This decision will be reviewed and ratified by the HEFCE REF EDAP Panel after the University's REF submission has been made.

5 Appeals

Decisions on the inclusion of work and/or individuals on the basis of academic quality or overall contribution will rest with the School responsible for the Unit of Assessment concerned.

Final decisions on the inclusion or not of individual staff in submissions will be made in August 2013. Any appeals or complaints by an individual member of staff in relation to their inclusion or non-inclusion in the REF submission on the grounds of:

- Potential discrimination, or
- A failure to follow the agreed process for the selection of staff as set out in this Code of Practice,

will be considered by both the Dean and the Associate Dean for Research of the School concerned to determine whether the issues can be resolved on an informal basis.

If discussion within the School does not result in a resolution of the matter to the satisfaction of the individual member of staff, it may then be referred by them, in writing, stating the reasons for the appeal, to the Head of the Research Support Office in her capacity as Secretary to the REF Appeals Panel. The latest date by which any written appeals from individual members of staff must be submitted for consideration within the REF is 6 September 2013. An additional date is provided for Business and Management Studies only (see below).

The REF appeals panels will be held no later than 30 September 2013 in order that the outcome can be taken into account in the final REF submission.

Complaints about aspects of the REF other than those which can be dealt with through the appeals process should be addressed through the appropriate grievance procedure. Resolution of such grievances will not affect the selection of staff for the REF.

To ensure independence from the selection process, the Appeal Panel will comprise:

- PVC Research (Chair)
- Chief Operating Officer or HR Director or nominee
- Senior Academic
- Head of Research Support Office (Secretary)

Appellants will have the right to make their appeal in person to the Appeals Panel and may be accompanied by a representative from the University.

The decision of the Panel will be final. There will be no further right of appeal.

6 Timetable

The key external dates and definitions	
Assessment period for publications/outputs in print	1 January 2008 to 31 December 2013
Submission of Code of Practice to HEFCE	By 31 July 2012
Census date	31 October 2013
Submission to HEFCE	30 November 2013
Key internal dates	
Finalisation of Code of Practice	by 15 June 2012
Consultation on Code of Practice	28 March – 21 May 2012
Initial deadline for submission of Individual Circumstances form	11 July 2012*
Initial selection of staff for inclusion	15 April 2013
Final deadline for submission of Individual Circumstances form (for staff starting since July 2012, or for staff whose circumstances have changed since July 2012)	31 October 2013
Final selection of staff for Inclusion	16 August 2013
Deadline for submission of appeals	6 September 2013
Deadline for hearing appeals	30 September 2013
Extended deadline for selection of staff in Business and Management Studies	4 October 2013
Extended deadline for appeals for staff in Business and Management Studies	17 October 2013
Deadline for notifying appellants of appeal outcomes and adjusting Final Selection of staff accordingly (EAS, LHS, LSS)	7 October 2013
Additional deadline for hearing appeals for staff in Business and Management Studies	24 October 2013
Additional deadline for notifying appellants in Business and Management Studies of appeal outcomes and adjusting Final Selection of staff accordingly	25 October 2013
Submission to HEFCE	29 November 2013

* staff whose circumstances may change after 11th July 2012 or staff starting their employment after this date will be able to submit an Individual Circumstances form for consideration at any time up to 31st October 2013, however staff are urged to contact HR at the earliest possible opportunity.

7 Publication and Further Information

This Code of Practice is available on the University's website:

url: <http://www1.aston.ac.uk/staff/rso/research-excellence-framework-ref/>

Further information about the REF is available from HEFCE at:

<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/subs/>