



Code of Practice: Selection of Staff for REF-2014

Birmingham City University

Document Purpose

This document outlines the Code of Practice that will be adopted by Birmingham City University for the selection of staff for submission to REF-2014.

This Code of Practice has been created under the umbrella of the University's Equal Opportunities Policy and, we believe, encompasses fully the definitions, principles and practices outlined in the HEFCE publications REF 02.2011 and REF 01.2012 and the additional guidance provided by the Equality Challenge Unit on Complex Circumstances.

The Code of Practice has been authored by a team including Human Resources, the Equality and Diversity Advisor, the Director of Research, the Pro-Vice Chancellor and senior researchers and managers of research drawn from across the University.

This Code of Practice has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Strategy and Policy Committee and was submitted to HEFCE for review in July 2012. Following the review, the changes required by the ECU have been incorporated into this version of the Code of Practice which has been published on the university's web-site and iCity intranet.

Keith A. Osman
Director of Research
Birmingham City University

Preamble

Birmingham City University is committed to sustaining a research environment which supports excellent research that underpins core institutional priorities linked to learning and teaching, professional practice, knowledge exchange and business engagement. The University recognises and celebrates the diverse nature of the research active population which includes full-time and fractional academic staff, contract research staff and researchers from collaborating organisations. The history and make-up of the University is such that, whilst all academic staff are required to engage in teaching and research or professional practice, it is not our expectation that all staff are research active.

The University recognises and embraces fully the principles of promoting equality and diversity in all of our operations and in selecting staff for REF-2014, as outlined by HEFCE and by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) in HEFCE 2009/34. The University's submission to REF-2014 will be a highly selective and strategic return of our most excellent research from our strongest Units of Assessment (UoAs). This Code of Practice details the responsibilities, operating criteria, processes and decision frameworks that will be used to select staff for submission to REF-2014.

We believe that our Code of Practice enshrines the values and principles of equality and diversity, to ensure that selection for submission of staff to REF-2014 is based solely on the criteria of research excellence aligned to our key priorities and will not unlawfully discriminate against any member of staff on their protected characteristics¹ or any irrelevant personal characteristic. Prior to submission of this Code of Practice to HEFCE the University has undertaken an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and this will be updated as the selection process becomes more refined.

This Code of Practice for REF-2014 will be applicable to all members of University staff involved in the conduct of research or the management of research, including full-time and fractional staff and contract researchers. The Code of Practice will ensure that:

- There is a shared understanding of and commitment to ensuring all eligible research active staff are treated fairly and equitably in accordance with over-arching principle of equality, and
- A consistent process is applied across the University for the selection of research active staff in each Unit of Assessment to which we plan to return in REF-2014, and
- There is transparency of the process for selection, the criteria for selection are clear, appropriate, proportionate, and well communicated to staff, and
- There is a transparency of the confidential process by which staff can identify that they have clearly defined or complex individual circumstances which may justify a reduction in output count and of the mechanism by which any justifiable output count reduction is communicated to Faculties, whilst maintaining confidential the nature of the circumstances and the rationale for the output reduction to respect the privacy of the individual.
- There is a clear explanation of the grounds for appeal and of the mechanisms by which appeals can be made against non-selection for REF-2014.

¹ The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, and sexual orientation

Institutional Equal Opportunities Policy Statement

Birmingham City University has an over-arching policy on equality of opportunity in respect of every aspect of its provision and this policy has provided the framework within which the Code of Practice for REF has been developed. An extract from the University's Equality of Opportunities Policy appears below and a copy of the complete statement is included in this document at Appendix A.

"Birmingham City University promotes equality of opportunity in respect of every aspect of its provision. University policy and practice will seek to provide an environment that is free from discrimination against students, staff, visitors and others. The University will ensure that all students and staff, current or prospective, are treated solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential. The University will seek to prevent any form of unlawful or unfair discrimination, and will be concerned with the prevention of direct and indirect, associative and perceptible discrimination on the grounds of age, sex (gender), disability, race, sexual orientation, transgender status, family circumstances, marital or civil partnership status, religion or belief, citizenship, colour or ethnicity, social and economic status, or other irrelevant personal characteristic.

The University is committed to fairness in its practices and in meeting the needs of our diverse student and staff bodies. Where appropriate and within our means, the University will take positive action to meet these commitments."

Criteria for Selection of Staff for Submission to REF-2014

The University values the contributions made by all staff through their engagement in the delivery of learning and teaching, research, scholarship, professional practice, knowledge-exchange, business engagement, administration and other duties. The University is recognised for employer engagement and support for professional practice and offers a number of academic courses that are practice-based. Such courses require a combination of academic rigour, new knowledge created by research and new “know-how” derived from leading edge practice.

Academic staff teaching on many of our courses are recognised practitioners in their fields, and include fine artists, designers, musicians, healthcare professionals, etc. The University has a diverse research population of part-time staff, contract researchers and visiting teachers who make various contributions to the body of our research through their outputs, their participation in our research community and their contributions to impact via knowledge exchange, professional practice and associated activities.

The University will make a highly selective submission to REF-2014, with the final strategy for submission being developed by the University Research Strategy and Policy Committee (URSPC) and the REF Strategy Group. The contribution to research as measured by REF-2014 metrics will form the primary criterion for internal selection of those who will be included in the submission to REF-2014. In full compliance with the guidance issued by funding councils, the University will employ the following key criteria to inform the decision on eligibility for inclusion of research-active staff in the REF-2014 return:

Category A Staff: Eligible staff will hold a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater and be on the University payroll on 31-Oct-2013 with a primary employment function to undertake either ‘research only’ or ‘teaching and research’. Whilst staff holding an academic post? will satisfy the eligibility requirement, there may be other staff who are research active and have a primary purpose similar to academic staff but have a different job title. It is their primary employment function which will be reviewed to ensure eligibility for REF-2014, irrespective of their current job title. The University will apply the definitions for Category-A staff defined in paragraphs 78-81 of REF 02_11.

Category C Staff: Where it is deemed appropriate, the University may seek to include staff employed by another institution where their research is closely linked to that of the University, such that they meet the requirement for Category-C staff as defined in REF 02_11 paragraphs 82 and 83.

Full account will be taken of clearly defined and complex individual staff circumstances which may have affected the ability of an individual to produce and publish the expected four outputs of appropriate quality between 1-Jan-2008 and 31-Dec-2013.

Outline Strategy for REF-2014 Submission

In RAE-2008 the University made a highly selective submission of 103 headcount / 87 FTE staff (9% of eligible staff) returned to 7 UoAs. It is possible that the submission to REF-2014 may involve an increase in the number of staff submitted and return to more UoAs, where inclusion is justified by the quality of research and other indicators. Alternatively, the University may conclude that an increased focus on the quality of research submitted to REF-2104 may provide a greater strategic gain to the University, with the potential for an equal or reduced size of submission to REF-2104.

The University's research strategy makes it clear that we may also have different expectations of research quality and quantity within different UoAs, reflecting factors such as the maturity of the discipline within the University, our relative position in the marketplace and the strategic importance of certain disciplines to the future strategy of the University. The University may therefore apply different internal quality thresholds to each UoA when considering the potential inclusion of that UoA in totality of the submission but will apply a consistent quality threshold within each UoA when considering inclusion of staff in the possible REF-2014 return of that UoA.

The primary selection criterion for our REF-2014 submission will be the quality of research carried out during the assessment period by our eligible Category-A staff, with quality embracing research outputs (assessed in terms of originality, significance and rigour), impact (significance and reach) and contribution to the research environment

REF-2014 expects that each member of staff will normally be returned with four single-weighted outputs or a combination of double-weighted and single-weighted outputs plus a reserve output. All outputs must have appeared in the public domain between 1-Jan-2008 and 31-Dec-2013. This will be the normal expectation of the University to justify the inclusion of full-time staff member whose ability to produce the required number of outputs has not been constrained during the assessment period by clearly defined or complex individual circumstances.

The University will indicate to HEFCE its submission intentions by December 2012, but the final decision on the optimum University submission strategy will be made by the REF Strategy Group in mid-2013, when full visibility of all research indicators is available.

Consideration of Individual Circumstances

Document REF 02_11 outlines the over-arching principles on how individual circumstances of all types should be handled and further guidance is provided in the Panel Criteria and Working Methods in REF 01_2012 and this has been disseminated across the University. We recognise and celebrate the diverse make-up of our research community and the University's commitment to equality of opportunity. In accordance with this Code of Practice and guidelines from HEFCE and the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), we will treat accordingly staff who discloses the following circumstances, so that they may be considered for inclusion in the REF-2104 submission with a reduced output count and without penalty:

The University will employ the definitions contained in REF 02.2011 and additional guidance provided in REF 01.2012 that relate to clear-defined individual circumstances, including:

- Early Career Researchers (who became independent researchers after 1-Aug-2009)
- Part-time working (where the contact fraction is 0.2 FTE or greater)
- Maternity, paternity or adoption leave
- Secondments or career breaks outside of the higher education sector during which the individual did not undertake academic research.

The University will employ the definitions contained in REF 02.2011 and additional guidance provided in REF 01.2012 and by the Equality Challenge Unit, which refers to complex individual circumstances which embraces:

- Any disability to which the Equality Act 2010 applies,
- Ill health or injury,
- Constraints related to pregnancy or maternity, in addition to a clearly defined period of maternity leave,
- Childcare or other caring responsibilities,
- Gender reassignment

Staff with clearly defined or complex circumstances will be included where their output count, at the University's internal quality threshold for that UoA, meets or exceeds the minimum number of outputs required. Eligible staff entitled to a reduction in output count must still achieve the same quality profile as staff returning four outputs, i.e. there is an output count reduction but not a reduction in required quality. This will ensure that Early-Career Researchers, fractional staff and those with clearly-defined or complex individual circumstances, which justify a reduction in output count, will be returned in UoAs to which we are submitting, where the quality profile of their reduced number of outputs matches that of the staff returning 4 outputs into that UoA.

Early-Career Researchers: The University will seek to identify and include in the REF-2014 return, with an appropriate reduction in output count, early career researchers where their inclusion can be justified by the quality of their research (as defined in paragraphs 85-86 of REF 02_11). The University will seek to apply fully the allowable reduction in output counts for ECRs to ensure that neither they nor the University is disadvantaged by their reduced output count at the required internal UoA quality threshold.

Staff with Clearly Defined Circumstances: The University will seek to identify and include in the REF-2014 return staff whose ability to produce the required number of outputs has been constrained by clearly defined circumstances such as part-time working, but where their inclusion can be justified by the quality of their research (as defined in paragraphs 90-94, REF 02_11). Fractional contracts are commonplace in a number of UoAs to which the University plans to submit, so the allowable reductions in output count based on contracted FTE will be applied fully to fractional staff so they are not disadvantaged by their reduced number of outputs.

Staff with Complex Circumstances: The University will seek to identify and include in the REF-2014 return staff whose ability to produce the required number of outputs has been constrained by complex circumstances (as defined in paragraphs 90-94, REF 02_11). Staff will be invited to disclose information pertaining to their complex circumstances, as defined in paragraph 96 of REF 02_12, through an appropriate confidential process operated by the REF Equality and Diversity Group. REDG will make a judgement on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs submitted, by

applying consistently the guidance developed for Complex Circumstances by the ECU and communicating this to Faculties.

Disclosure Process for Clearly-Defined and Complex Circumstances

The process for assessing Clearly-Defined or Complex Circumstances and for calculating any application reductions in output count will be conducted by the REF Equality and Diversity Group (REDG) chaired by the Deputy Director of Human Resources. The process is as follows:

- i. All eligible staff receive an explanation of the definitions of Clearly Defined and Complex Circumstances and invited to complete a pro-forma if they believe they have circumstances that could qualify them for an output count reduction.
- ii. Staff complete and return all REF Circumstances forms to REDG for review.
- iii. Clearly-Defined Circumstances are normally processed with appropriate triangulation on the Human Resources staff database, to verify contract fractions, start dates, maternity leave and other factors that justify the reduction in output count.
- iv. The review of Complex Circumstances may require further evidence from the member of staff and, in exceptional cases, an individual interview to ensure that the entirety of the case can be considered fairly.
- v. Following the review, REDG will calculate the justified reduction in output count and, in the case of Complex Circumstances, create the rationale which must be entered into form REF1c as part of the return.
- vi. REDG notifies the Faculty where an output count reduction can be applied to a member of eligible staff, to ensure that their potential inclusion in REF-2014 can be assessed accurately in terms of the minimum number of outputs required that meet the internal UoA quality threshold.
- vii. Details of the circumstances and the rationale for output reductions are not disclosed to the Faculty but are maintained confidential within the Human Resources department unless the member of staff requests that this information be released to the Faculty.
- viii. Faculties may already be aware of complex individual circumstances, where these have already been disclosed by the individual and may have led to variations in working practices.

REF SUBMISSION AND DECISION MAKING

It is important to recognise that research undertaken within Faculties is driven primarily by the strategic needs to underpin Faculty-owned learning and teaching programmes and external engagement with new knowledge and know-how generated by research and leading-edge practice. Research conducted by academic staff is one component of the virtuous circle of research, scholarship, professional practice and external engagement underpinning and nurturing the quality and relevance of our core business.

Decisions regarding support for research and decisions around return of subject and associated eligible staff to REF-2014 are separate from decisions about the conduct of research addressing institutional priorities and will by definition employ very different criteria, because the end purpose is different. The University recognises that research of internationally-recognised quality (2*) may not of itself be appropriate for return to REF-2014, where there is unlikely to be any strategic gain to the University resulting from such return, particularly in light of the elimination of QR funding for 2* research from 2012-13.

All decisions concerning selection and submission of research-active staff for REF-2014 will be made in full compliance with this Code of Practice and the University's Equality and Diversity Policy Statement and commitments. The University recognises however, that for strategic reasons, and to allow for optimisation of the overall quality of the submission at a University rather than individual UoA level, not all eligible academic staff will be returned to REF-2014. Furthermore the detailed decisions on which UoAs and which people will be returned to REF-2014 will not be finalised until close to the REF-2014 submission deadline.

Internal Process for Selection

- Each Faculty conducts an annual Interim Review of Research (IRR), in essence a dummy “light-touch REF”, to track the research progress of their eligible staff in each of the Faculty UoAs. Faculties include one or more external reviewers in their internal processes to assist with output quality calibration. This process is normally undertaken by the Faculty Research Committee or a working group thereof (the Faculty REF Working Group) which reports to Faculty Research Committee.
- Faculties know about their fractional staff; early-career researchers and their staff who have Clearly-Defined Circumstance staff but may not be fully aware of complex circumstances that could justify an output count reduction for a small number of staff.
- Academic staff have had multiple opportunities to disclose, and update any previous disclosures of, clearly-defined and complex circumstances through a confidential process operated by the REF Equality and Diversity Group, which will calculate any justifiable output count reductions.
- REF Equality and Diversity Group will notify Faculties of any staff who are eligible for a reduced output count, to ensure that such staff are fully included in the draft UoA return compiled by the Faculty that is considered by REF Strategy Group as a precursor to the final University-optimised REF submission.
- The results of the annual IRR are reviewed by the REF Working Group and REF Strategy Group to track University level progress towards REF-2104.
- REF Strategy Group is responsible for the shape of the final submission to REF-2014 and will be responsible for ensuring that the strategic objectives of the University are met by a submission optimised at a University rather than individual UoA level, as these objectives may sometimes conflict.

Principles for Selection and Safeguarding

The following principles will be safeguarded before, during and following the REF-2014 selection process:

- The University recognises fully that the metrics used by REF-2014 are not universally applicable to all our eligible staff, as not all staff will be undertaking research or publishing research at the required quality level.
- Eligible staff at risk of non-selection for REF-2014 by their Faculty are provided with feedback via their respective Associate Dean (Research) and/or Executive Dean following the internal Interim Review of Research (IRR) process which is conducted annually.

- There is no appeal against non-selection of staff, based on the average research quality of their required number of outputs falling below the internal UoA quality threshold required for inclusion.
- The REF Appeals Process ensures that any cases of alleged discrimination on grounds other than research quality are reviewed, ensuring that such decisions have not been made improperly.
- Inclusion or exclusion of eligible staff from the REF-2014 submission will not be used as a proxy measure for the volume, quality, utility or value of their research activity undertaken or be construed as representing a judgement on the value or significance or contribution to the wider University made by the member of staff.
- Inclusion in the University's submission to REF-2014 will not be used as a primary factor in the Individual Performance Review (IPR) process conducted annually by the University (which can determine pay) or as the driver to address any other performance issues.
- Inclusion or exclusion from REF-2014 will not of itself be used to alter the allocation of time or other resource for research allocated to each member of staff through the annual Workload Allocation Model (WAM).

Feedback to Staff

Each member of University staff who satisfy the definition of Category A staff will be advised by their host Faculty on the likelihood of their inclusion in the REF-2014 submission. They will receive feedback, including the ground(s) upon which the provisional judgement has been reached, from the Associate Dean (Research) of their host Faculty.

A preliminary indication of inclusion in the REF-2014 submission will be provided to staff in January 2013, following completion of the 2012 Interim Review of Research (IRR-2012) in December 2012. A firm indication will be provided in September 2013 as the final shape of the submission is optimised at a University level. It is not anticipated that the indication provided in September 2013 will change significantly, but the University reserves the right to make changes close to the submission date of 29-Nov-2013, to account for late strategic imperatives and exceptional individual circumstances that may arise. The firm schedule of members of staff to be included in REF 2014 will be confirmed by the Director of Research at the first meeting, normally September, of the University Research Strategy and Policy Committee in calendar year 2013-14.

At the initial and final stages of selection, each staff member will have the opportunity to provide additional information to their Executive Dean and Associate Dean (Research) within 10 working days. This may require updating of any clearly-defined or complex circumstances and re-assessment by REF Equality and Diversity Group to re-calculate allowable output count, which may provide grounds for re-consideration. Following full consideration of any new information provided, the outcome in respect of inclusion or non-inclusion in the submission will be confirmed by their Executive Dean.

If non-inclusion in the submission is confirmed and a staff member believes that there is evidence of discrimination, he/she may decide to pursue the matter further under the REF-2014 Appeals Procedure detailed below. There is no other complaint or appeal procedure open to staff members specifically in regard to exclusion from the REF-2014 submission.

The standard University Grievance Procedure remains available to staff who wish to raise a grievance about matters not directly connected to the REF selection process, but which nonetheless they feel may have contributed indirectly to their exclusion from REF-2014.

REF-2014 Appeals Process

This section sets out the procedure through which the University will respond to any appeal arising from exclusion from REF-2014 and ensure that the grounds for the appeal are investigated in a fair and transparent manner. All appeals and their outcomes will be monitored by Human Resources and reported to the REF-2014 Advisory Panel.

The University will ensure that staff members have the opportunity to appeal with regard to their non-inclusion in the REF-2014 submission on the grounds of possible discrimination. All appeals are reviewed by the REF Appeals Panel which is chaired by the Director of Human Resources

It should be noted that there is no right of appeal against the academic or strategic judgement to exclude an individual from the REF-2014 submission on the basis of their research quality or their Unit of Assessment alone, unless there are concerns that the judgement could have been made unfairly, in contravention of the principles of equality and diversity or contract to the Code of Practice.

The University will employ a two-stage process for handling appeals about inclusion or exclusion from the REF-2014 submission.

Stage 1 Appeal: An individual who wishes to have their recommendation for non-inclusion in the REF reviewed should write to their Executive Dean in the first instance, stating clearly the reasons for requesting a review of the decision and outlining the alleged unfairness. This written appeal should be submitted within 10 working days of their being informed of the decision against which they are appealing. The written appeal should contain details of the grounds for the appeal, referring to the criteria for staff selection in this Code of Practice. Any relevant supporting evidence should be provided. The request will be considered by the Executive Dean and the outcome of the appeal will be communicated in writing to the complainant within 15 working days of receipt.

Stage 2 Appeal: Where resolution has not been possible under Stage 1 outlined above, the individual may then appeal to the REF Appeals Panel for a review of their case, which will be conducted within 20 working days of the Stage 2 appeal being made. The individual making the appeal will be invited to appear in person before the Panel and may be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative.

The REF Appeals Panel may uphold an appeal, in which case the Faculty Research Committee, REF Working Group and REF Strategy Panel will be directed to review their original decision. If there are no grounds on which to uphold the Stage 2 appeal, the original recommendation will stand. The REF Appeals Panel will communicate to the appellant its decision within 5 working days of the Stage 2 appeal being heard.

Further Appeal: There will be no further right of appeal under the REF-2014 Appeals Process.

The standard University Grievance Procedure remains available to staff who wish to raise a grievance about matters not directly connected to the REF selection process, but which nonetheless they feel may have contributed indirectly to their exclusion from REF-2014.

Internal Communication Activity to Staff

To ensure complete transparency of the selection process for inclusion of staff in the REF submission, a comprehensive internal communication plan has been developed based on three core principles:

- All personalised communication to staff concerning REF, the Code of Practice and its implementation which needs to be addressed to individual staff is the responsibility of the Deputy Director of Human Resources, who is also the Chair of the REF Equality and Diversity Group. This ensures that all staff, including those who may be absent from the University, are included in all communications in the most appropriate manner. Personalised email with attachments of necessary documents is the normal communication mechanism, supplemented by postal delivery of printed information to staff who are known to be absent from work for extended periods.
- General information concerning REF and associated processes is communicated via the University's intranet, iCity, making use of the special Research Community tab to ensure that such information is visible equally to all staff and students of the University. iCity holds copies of the Code of Practice and other relevant REF documents, up to date information about REF and a developing set of FAQs about the internal processes for selection of staff.
- Public dissemination of key REF-related information, including publication of our Code of Practice for REF makes use of the University's web-site, with the top-level Research tab providing the entry point.

A calendar of planned communications is shown below in Table 1. Dates may be subject to change when our new Vice-Chancellor takes up office on 3-Dec-2012:

| Date | Activity | Channel | Responsibility |
|----------------|---|--|---|
| Aug-2012 | Email to all staff explaining the purpose of REF and staff eligibility. Draft Code of Practice for Selection, guidance on individual circumstances and Individual Circumstances Disclosure form included. | Email and Post | Deputy Director, HR |
| End Sep-2012 | Deadline for return of completed Individual Circumstances Disclosure forms by email | Email and Post | Deputy Director, HR |
| Oct 2012 | Panels held to consider Individual Circumstances held, supplemented by individual interviews as required | Meetings | REF E+D Panel |
| Oct / Nov 2012 | Results of Individual Circumstances Panel meetings communicated to individual staff. | Email and Post | Deputy Director, HR |
| Oct / Nov 2012 | Appeals Panels held as required | Meetings | REF Appeals Panel |
| End Nov 2012 | Results of ratified output count reduction communicated to UoA leaders. No disclosure of the nature of complex circumstances or rationale behind reduction. | Email to Executive Deans and UoA Co-Ordinators | Deputy Director, HR |
| End Nov 2012 | Publication of approved Code of Practice | iCity intranet and University web-site | Research Office |
| Dec 2012 | Submission of University's Survey of Intention to Submit (SIS) data to HEFCE. | Upload via HEFCE extranet | Research Office |
| Dec 2012 | Internal publication of SIS data | iCity Intranet | Research Office |
| Jan 2013 | Internal notification of preliminary indication of inclusion of staff in likely REF submission | Email and Post | Executive Deans and Associate Deans [R] |
| Jan 2013 | Communication of process for appeals against exclusion from REF | Email and Post | Deputy Director, HR |
| Feb 2013 | Internal publication of anonymised results of Interim Review of Research (IRR2012) | iCity Intranet | Research Office |
| Mar 2013 | Internal publication of the University's optimisation strategy for the REF submission | iCity Intranet | Vice-Chancellor and Research Office |
| Apr-May 2013 | Revised list of staff to be included in REF, based on preliminary list and published REF strategy | Email and Post | Executive Deans and Associate Deans [R] |
| Sep-2013 | Publication of firm list of staff to be included in the REF submission | Email and Post | Executive Deans and Associate Deans [R] |

Table 1: Internal Communications Timetable

Roles and Responsibilities of Committees and Senior Managers

This section outlines the respective roles and responsibilities of the committees and groups and their members that will be involved in the staff selection process for the REF-2014 return.

REF-2014 Strategy Group

The REF Strategy Group advises the Vice Chancellor on all aspects of the University's submission to REF-2014, and has the following membership:

- Vice Chancellor (Chair)
- Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic)
- Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research) [currently vacant]
- Director of Research, Innovation and Enterprise
- Director of Research
- External REF advisors (currently three) who have significant experience of RAE and REF and are able to advise the University on the overall strategy for submission
- Deputy Director of Human Resources

All members of the REF Strategy Group have significant experience of conducting and managing research and/or experience of previous Research Assessment Exercises. The REF Strategy Group meets to consider the results from the Interim Research Review (IRR) exercise conducted across the University. The remit of the Research Strategy Group is:

- To provide leadership for the University's participation in REF-2014
- To ensure that the University's strategy for REF-21024 is communicated effectively across the University
- To assist the Vice-Chancellor in optimising the overall submission to gain maximum strategic advantage for the University from participation in REF-2014
- To review the results of the Interim Research Review conducted across the University.
- To review feedback from meetings of the external REF advisors with the Faculty UoA Co-Ordinators, Associate Deans Research, Executive Deans and other Faculty management.

REF-2014 Equality and Diversity Group

The REF Equality and Diversity Group oversees the application of the Code of Practice from staff relating to their selection or otherwise for return to REF-2014. The REF Equality and Diversity Group is chaired by the Deputy Director of Human Resources and has the following membership:

- Deputy Director, Human Resources (Chair)
- Equality and Diversity Policy Advisor
- Director of Research

REF-2014 Appeals Panel

The REF Appeals Panel considers all appeals made by academic staff against their non-inclusion in REF-2014, where such appeals have not been resolved in the Faculty by appeal to the Executive Dean. The REF-2014 Appeals Panel has the following membership:

- Director, Human Resources (Chair)
- Pro-Vice Chancellor Academic
- Director: Research, Innovation and Enterprise

REF-2014 Working Group

The REF Working Group is an operational group responsible for cascading down to UoA level the top-level University REF strategy and for reporting upward to the REF Advisory Panel the status of each UoA and readiness for REF-2014. The REF Working Group is a sub-group of University Strategy and Policy Committee (URSPC) and has the following membership:

- Director of Research (Chair)
- Associate Deans (Research), 1 per Faculty (currently 6)
- UoA Co-Ordinators (1 per UoA)

Faculty Research Committee and Faculty REF Working Group(s)

Each Faculty has a Research Committee which is responsible for identifying eligible staff for potential return to REF-2014 and for the local implementation of the REF Code of Practice to the UoAs aligned to the Faculty. The Faculty Research Committee is normally chaired by the Associate Dean with responsibility for research. Many Faculties may opt to create a Faculty REF Working Group or a series of UoA Working Groups from the Research Committee membership, supplemented by internal and external advisors as required.

Impact Assessment and Monitoring

The University will monitor through the REF Equality and Diversity Group, the equality profile of eligible staff members included or not-included in REF submission as it develops and will report to the REF Strategy Group. The monitoring process is an important way to ensure that the anti-discrimination measures taken, including this Code of Practice, are effective. This plays a critical role in ensuring that equality of opportunity for REF-2014 is a reality within the University.

Data monitoring is carried out by the Human Resources Department on the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 with this data being considered by the REF Equality and Diversity Group. Information will be gathered sensitively, with appropriately worded questions, and confidentiality will be ensured.

Equality and Diversity Training

The Director of Research and his staff have attended the Research Excellence Framework and Equality training programme delivered by HEFCE and the ECU. A series of workshops, based on the ECU training materials, will be delivered to all staff involved in the selection process for REF-2014 in autumn 2012. The training team includes the Director of Research, Research Support Office staff, a senior staff member from Human Resources and the Equality & Diversity Policy Advisor.

Periodic Review of Code of Practice

The effectiveness of this Code of Practice is reviewed by the REF Strategy Group and may be amended from time to time in response to changes in legislation, changes to REF-2014 guidance received from HEFCE and other drivers. When statutory employment law changes, this Code of Practice is held automatically to have been amended by that change and it will be updated as soon as practically possible.

Institution Contact Details

For further information or guidance regarding any issues contained within this institutional Code of Practice please contact:

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|--------------------------------|---|
| Institutional REF Strategy: | Professor David Tidmarsh, Vice Chancellor (until 30-Nov-2012) Tel: +44 (0) 121 331 5555, email: david.tidmarsh@bcu.ac.uk |
| | Professor Cliff Allan, Vice Chancellor (03-Dec-2012 onwards) Tel: +44 (0) 121 331 5555, email: cliff.allan@bcu.ac.uk |
| REF Code of Practice: | Professor Keith A. Osman, Director of Research Tel: +44 (0) 121 331 6858, email: keith.osman@bcu.ac.uk |
| Equality and Diversity Policy: | Mr. Kwabena Osayande, Equality & Diversity Policy Advisor Tel: +44 (0) 121 331 6705, email: kwabena.osayande@bcu.ac.uk |
| Human Resources: | Mr. Mike Crump, Deputy Director Human Resources Tel: +44 (0) 121 331 5569, email: mike.crump@bcu.ac.uk |

Appendix A: Summary of University Obligations under The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti-discrimination law with a single act. The Act consolidates and streamlines the law and introduces new measures which have direct implications for higher education institutions.

The Act identifies nine Equality protected characteristics, which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex [gender], and sexual orientation

The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) and the Higher Education Equal Opportunities Network (HEEON) recommend² the following actions to implement changes in legislation:

The government, with the intent that the Equality Act 2010 will be simpler and lighter in bureaucracy has removed unnecessary process requirements, with the key ('Specific Duty') requirements being:

- To publish information to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty – 31 December 2011,
- To understand the effect of policies and practices on equality, by looking at the evidence and implementing and equality analysis of impacts, and
- To publish one or more equality objectives by April 2012.

There is also an obligation to meet the General Equality Duty, and this means that the University must have "due regard" to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation,
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The University currently meets the General Equality Duty in three principle ways:

- Monitoring of student achievement, and staff statistics, investigating apparent anomalies, and making incremental improvements to practices and taking positive action, evidencing the resulting improvements with relevant statistics,
- Reviewing policies and procedures (for staff and students), including undertaking equality analyses (impact assessments) and developing new policies in relation to those with specific protected characteristics, and
- Delivering training and awareness-raising activities for staff.

² Equality Act 2010 - Briefing: Key Actions for the October provisions - ECU/HEEON

BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT

Birmingham City University promotes equality of opportunity in respect of every aspect of its provision. University policy and practice will seek to provide an environment that is free from discrimination against students, staff and others. The University will ensure that all students and staff, current or prospective, are treated solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential. The University will seek to prevent any form of unlawful or unfair discrimination, and will be concerned with the prevention of direct and indirect, associative and perceptible discrimination on the grounds of age, citizenship, disability, family circumstances, gender, marital or civil partnership status, race, colour or ethnicity, religious or political beliefs, sexual orientation, social and economic status, transgender status or other irrelevant criteria.

The University is committed to fairness in its practices and in meeting the needs of our diverse student and staff bodies. Where appropriate and within our means, the University will take positive action to meet these commitments.

In order to achieve this aim, the University will seek to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or covered by equality legislation,
- advance equality of opportunity between all staff, students, applicants and visitors,
- foster /promote good relations between all members of the University community,
- recognise and develop the diversity of background, skills and talent within its current and potential student and staff body,
- collect and monitor data to assist in the identification and removal of barriers to the equality of opportunity,
- communicate to staff, students and others the promotion of equal opportunities and the University's procedures to sustain it,
- deal with breaches of policies and procedures in accordance with the student or staff disciplinary process.

This Statement applies to all students and staff of the University and to all activities associated with the University, whether or not on University property.

The Board of Governors has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the University's policies, procedures and action plans are being effectively implemented. The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for the overall implementation of this Statement and requires that University procedures and practices are consistent with it. Faculties and Services, through their Executive Deans and Directors, are responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the implementation of the Statement and its underlying policies within their area of responsibility.

This Statement is available in other formats (e.g. large print, etc) on request to equality@bcu.ac.uk.

This Statement will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to meet the requirements of the legislation and the needs of the University.

November 2010

Appendix B: REF Management Structures

REF-2014 Strategy Group

The REF Strategy Group is the top level body which advises the Vice Chancellor on all aspects of the University's submission to REF-2014, and has the following membership:

- Vice Chancellor (Chair)
- Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic)
- Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research)
- Director of Research, Innovation and Enterprise
- University Research Director
- External REF advisors (currently three)
- Deputy Director of Human Resources

REF-2014 Equality and Diversity Group

The REF Equality and Diversity Group will oversee the application of the Code of Practice across the University and review all applications for output count reduction due to Standard or Complex circumstances. REDG has the following membership:

- Deputy Director, Human Resources (Chair)
- University Equality and Diversity Policy Advisor
- Director of Research

REF Appeals Panel

The REF Appeals Panel will consider all appeals made by academic staff against their exclusion from REF, where such appeals have not been resolved in the Faculty by appeal to the Executive Dean, and has the following membership:

- Director, Human Resources (Chair)
- Pro-Vice Chancellor Academic
- Director: Research, Innovation and Enterprise

REF-2014 Working Group

The REF Working Group is responsible for cascading down to UoA level the University REF strategy and for reporting upward to the REF Strategy Group on the status of each UoA and readiness for REF-2014 through the annual Interim Review of Research (IRR) process. The REF Working Group also reports to the joint meetings of University Research Degrees Committee and the University Research Strategy and Policy Committee on progress towards the REF submission. The REF Working Group is a working group of University Strategy and Policy Committee (URSPC) with the following membership:

- Director of Research (Chair)
- Associate Deans Research (1 per Faculty)
- UoA Co-Ordinators (1 per UoA)

Faculty REF Working Groups

Each Faculty has a REF Working Group, normally a working group of the Faculty Research Committee, which deals with all aspects of potential return to REF of a UoA. The Faculty REF Working Group is responsible to the Executive Dean for a REF submission of each Faculty-based UoA. The exact membership is not prescribed, but will typically include:

- Associate Dean Research (Chair)
- Centre of Excellence Director(s)
- Faculty Research Director (if applicable)
- Faculty REF Administrator
- Senior members of the Faculty research community