

## REF 2014

### Code of Practice on the Selection of Staff

#### 1. Purpose of the Code

##### 1.1 *The University of Bristol's Submission Policy*

The general framework for assessment in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) requires each institution making a submission to develop, document and apply a code of practice on the fair and transparent selection of staff. The University of Bristol's strategic submission policy will be developed separately. It will set out the quality thresholds to be applied in determining the selection of individuals to be included in the submission. The threshold criteria will relate solely to the quality of the research outputs included for each individual, and common threshold conditions will be applied across all the units of assessment to which the University makes a submission. The threshold conditions will also take appropriate account of the fact that, as set out in the REF 2014 Guidance and in this Code, individuals may be included in the submission with fewer than four outputs without penalty if they satisfy the conditions set out in Annex C of this Code.

The draft submission policy will be referred to the Individual Circumstances Group that is responsible for developing the Code of Practice for comment on any implications for staff selection processes and equality of opportunity. The submission policy will be determined by the Vice-Chancellor on recommendation from the University Research Committee, via the University Planning and Resources Committee, and will be communicated to all eligible staff and made available internally on the University website. The submission is an institutional one; therefore in selecting staff for inclusion, the interests of individuals need to be balanced against the need for the University to maximise its performance as whole.

##### 1.2 *The Code of Practice*

The Code of Practice has been developed to ensure that the University of Bristol's staff selection processes for inclusion in REF 2014 are fair and based on the principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity, as highlighted in the REF2014 document *Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions*. Up to four research outputs must be listed against each member of staff included in the REF submission. Where circumstances have constrained an individual's ability to work productively during the course of the assessment period, institutions may reduce the number of research outputs that are submitted. The application of this Code will enable such individuals to be considered.

The Code will also set out the decision-making structures to be used in the development of the University of Bristol's submission and to set out the responsibilities of all individuals who have a role in the REF decision-making process. This will assist the inclusion of all eligible staff who are conducting excellent research in our institutional submission, as well as helping to frame our decision-making processes in the context of the principles of equality and diversity and other relevant legislation. Timescales that are relevant to the Code are included as Annex A. The content of the Code will be communicated to all eligible staff through various means. Training will be provided to those staff directly involved in the decision-making processes to enhance their understanding of how equality should be considered in their REF roles and to facilitate a consistent approach to dealing with a range of individual circumstances.

## **2. Decision-Making Processes**

### **2.1 Key Principles**

The Code has been developed in accordance with other relevant policy, in particular the Equality and Diversity Policy, as well as guidance from REF2014 and the Equality Challenge Unit. In terms of decision-making processes, the following principles will be applied:

- All decisions on the selection of staff for inclusion should be made by the appropriate committee.
- Decision-making should be at the appropriate level, with procedures for review if required.
- All decision-making processes must be clear and transparent, applied consistently and fairly, and be appropriately documented.
- All staff involved in decision-making will receive equality and diversity training that is relevant and appropriate to REF 2014 to help ensure that staff experience is in line with the content of the University's Code of Practice.
- Appropriate and timely feedback will be given to individuals about decisions that relate to them.
- The Code will apply to all staff, including those on fixed-term or part-time contracts, and in applying the Code to contract research staff the University will be mindful of the principles enshrined in the Concordat to facilitate the Career Development of Researchers.

### **2.2 Roles and Responsibilities**

The **Vice-Chancellor** will have overall responsibility for the submission, including both the Code of Practice and the Institutional Submission Policy.

The **University Research Committee** will have responsibility for consulting and developing the policy on, and subsequently advising the Vice-Chancellor on, strategic and academic decisions relating to the submission, including the configuration of individuals and groups of staff into REF units of

assessment. It will also review recommendations made by Unit of Assessment (UOA) Committees on individual staff to be included, and the UOAs to which they will be returned and make decisions accordingly. All decisions and the reasons for them will be recorded and fed back to the relevant UOA Academic Coordinators, Heads of School and Deans.

**UOA Committees** will be convened that will have responsibility for making initial recommendations concerning the selection of staff for inclusion in the submission, determining which outputs for each selected staff member are to be included, for approving the selection of impact case studies to be included in the submission and for drafting the REF5 environment template and the REF3a impact template. ***Membership of each UOA Committee will be reviewed by the Individual Circumstances Group prior to approval by University Research Committee to ensure that it reflects the diversity of the research community.*** A list of UOA Committee members will be maintained and will be available on the UOB REF 2014 website.

The University's **Individual Circumstances Group** will have responsibility for both the development and implementation of the Code of Practice on the selection of staff. It will also review cases relating to those members of staff whose personal circumstances have constrained their ability to work productively during the course of the assessment period, advising individuals and UOA Committees accordingly on any subsequent reduction in research outputs. Decisions relating to individual circumstances will be appropriately documented and communicated to the individual making the case and the relevant UOA, without compromising confidentiality. The Group will also consider other policy and selection processes linked to the REF in terms of any implications for equality of opportunity (such as the diversity of membership of each UOA Committee) and the results of ongoing monitoring in this area.

**UoA Coordinators** will be appointed by the University Research Committee. They will chair the relevant UOA Committee, be responsible for coordinating the development of the submission and will sign off the submission when completed. The general expectation is that the UoA Coordinator will be the first point of contact for any member of staff wishing to submit a case for individual circumstances. The UOA Coordinator does not need to know details of the circumstances submitted, but will be informed of the decision made by the Individual Circumstances Group. One or more deputy UOA Coordinators may be identified as necessary to provide support to the UoA Coordinator.

Each **Faculty Research Director** will take responsibility for overseeing the strategic and academic decisions for an appropriate set of units of assessment, together with a second ('cognate') Research Director where needed and as appropriate for the subject area. The Research Directors will work closely with the UoA Coordinators, the Deans of Faculty and Head(s) of School(s).

**Heads of School** will be responsible for the provision of timely feedback to individual staff on any decisions taken by UOA Committees in relation to the selection and inclusion of staff in the submission.

**The Division of Research and Enterprise Development** will provide project management for the development of the submission and expert advice to the University Research Committee and all other staff on the interpretation of REF2014 guidance. The Division will also have responsibility for developing systems to support and manage data collection, ensuring the quality of the data submitted.

The University may make use of **external assessors** who have appropriate expertise in the relevant subject field. Assessors may be asked to comment on the quality of an individual's research. The

assessors will not determine who should be submitted to the REF nor will they be provided with details relating to any individual staff circumstances.

Further information on University committees with designated REF responsibility is provided as Annex B.

### 3. Individual circumstances

#### 3.1 Definitions

REF 2014 permits a maximum of four outputs to be listed against each member of staff included in the submission. However, individuals may be returned with fewer than four outputs and without penalty if one or more of the following circumstances have significantly constrained their ability to produce four outputs or to work productively during the course of the assessment period:

- a. **Clearly defined circumstances**, which are:
  - i. Qualifying as an Early Career Researcher.
  - ii. Absence from work due to working part-time, secondments or career breaks.
  - iii. Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave.
  - iv. Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 01-06.
  
- b. **Circumstances that are more complex** and require a judgement about the appropriate number of outputs that can be reduced without penalty. These circumstances are:
  - i. Disability.
  - ii. Ill health or injury.
  - iii. Mental health conditions.
  - iv. Constraints related 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 3.1.a.iii above.
  - 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 covered by the Equality Act 2010 – age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief – or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

Where an individual circumstance has been disclosed and in subsequently determining any reduction in the required number of outputs, the Individual Circumstances Group will refer to the relevant REF2014 guidance included as Annex C.

### **3.2 Submitting a case**

All eligible staff will be invited to describe any circumstances that have constrained their ability to work productively during the course of the assessment period, confidentially, in the University's REF 2014 Staff Disclosure Form (see Annex D). The Individual Circumstances Group will review cases relating to individual circumstances to ensure consistent application of the Code of Practice at institutional level and will advise individual members of staff and UOA Committees accordingly on any potential reduction in research outputs. Completed Staff Disclosure forms should be submitted via hard copy to the Secretary of the Individual Circumstances Group.

The general expectation is that the UoA Coordinator will be the first point of contact for any member of staff wishing to submit a case for individual circumstances. The UOA Coordinator does not need to know details of the circumstances submitted or see the information provided by the individual on the Staff Disclosure Form. All information provided in relation to individual staff circumstances will be treated in the strictest confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act. In the interests of confidentiality, the details of an individual circumstance will not be shared with the UOA Committee or the UOA Coordinator; it is sufficient for the UOA Committee/Coordinator to know who is being considered and the outcome.

Exceptionally and where circumstances prevent a member of staff from submitting a case for themselves, the UOA Coordinator may submit a case to the Individual Circumstances Group on behalf of an individual provided that they have given their informed written consent for this to occur.

### **3.3 Consideration of cases by the Individual Circumstances Group**

Where an individual circumstance has been disclosed, the Group will firstly decide, on the basis of the evidence presented, whether a case has been made for any reduction in the number of outputs required. In subsequently determining what the reduced number will be, it will refer to the relevant REF2014 guidance included as Annex C.

#### **a. Clearly defined circumstances**

Where an individual has one or more clearly defined circumstances the number of outputs that may be reduced will be determined by the Individual Circumstances Group in accordance with the REF2014 guidance included as Annex C.

#### **b. Complex circumstances**

Where an individual has one or more complex circumstances the Individual Circumstances Group will make a judgment on the appropriate number of outputs to be reduced in accordance with the guidance included as Annex C.

### **3.4 Inclusion of cases in the University's REF 2014 submission**

Following consideration by the Individual Circumstances Group, details of the individual circumstances and subsequent reduction in outputs may then be included as part of the University's submission on the REF form REF1b.

### **3.5 How the submitted cases will be assessed by the HEFCE REF Panels**

- a. Clearly defined circumstances** will be considered by the relevant UOA sub-panel. Provided that the guidance has been followed correctly, all sub-panels will accept cases for a reduction in outputs and will assess the remaining number of submitted outputs without penalty.
  
- b. Complex circumstances** will be considered by the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) on a consistent basis across all UOAs<sup>1</sup>. The EDAP has been introduced by the four Funding Councils to make recommendations about the appropriate number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty to the relevant main panel chairs, who will then make the decisions. The University's Individual Circumstances Group will review cases to ensure consistent application of the Code of Practice at institutional level before they are submitted for consideration by the EDAP. It should be noted that there is no right of appeal in relation to decisions made by the EDAP; where there is insufficient evidence in support of a reduction in outputs, the 'missing' outputs will be graded as 'unclassified'. Sub-panels will be informed of the EDAP's decision but will not be given access to any details of the submitted cases.

## **4. Feedback**

Individual members of staff will be informed by their Head of School of any decisions made by UOA Committees relating to the inclusion of themselves and/or their outputs in the submission, and of the reason for the decision. The Head of School may delegate the provision of feedback to an appropriate individual, who must be fully aware of the decision and its rationale. Feedback will be given as soon as possible after the decision has been made, and normally within a maximum of seven working days.

The Secretary of the Individual Circumstances Group will communicate any decisions made to the individual member of staff who has submitted the case for consideration. The UOA Committee will also be informed of the decision, but will not be informed of the circumstances surrounding the case. The decision made by the Individual Circumstances Group will be provided as soon as possible and normally within seven working days.

## **5. Appeals**

All eligible staff will have the right to request that the Individual Circumstances Group reviews any decisions made, providing supplementary evidence as appropriate, and may subsequently access the appeal procedure set out in Annex E.

Where a member of eligible staff believes that there has been a procedural error in relation to a decision made by a UOA Committee they are able to access the appeals process set out in Annex E.

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<sup>1</sup> Membership and terms of reference for the EDAP are available at [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/equality/Equality\\_diversity\\_advisory\\_panelTOR.pdf](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/equality/Equality_diversity_advisory_panelTOR.pdf)

All requests for reviews of decisions made and any subsequent formal appeal will be dealt with expeditiously in recognition of the deadline required by the University's REF submission timetable.

## **6. Communication of the Code**

The Code of Practice will be disseminated to all eligible staff via email, and in hard copy as appropriate, and will be made available on the University of Bristol REF2014 website at [website at http://www.bris.ac.uk/red/research-policy/ref/code](http://www.bris.ac.uk/red/research-policy/ref/code). Heads of School are responsible for ensuring that eligible staff who are absent from the University – for example due to illness, maternity/paternity/adoption leave, or some other reason – are provided with a copy of the Code. Staff requiring the Code in alternative formats should contact the Equality and Diversity Team directly. Additionally, those with specific roles under the REF will receive training on how the Code should be applied to the processes related to the selection of staff for submission.

## ANNEX A

<b>Timescales – key milestones relevant to the Code</b>	
16 <sup>th</sup> December 2011	Deadline for data collection for first for first formal UoB Mock REF exercise (outputs and impact case studies).
By end January 2012	Final Panel criteria and working methods published.
Mid January – Mid April 2012	Mock REF outputs Faculty Review Panels meet. Impact Expert Support Teams reviews submitted impact case studies.
1 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	URC meeting to discuss outputs Review Panel reports.
By end of March 2012	Feedback to Schools from URC on output reviews. Impact case study Review Panels meet – feedback provided during meetings.
26 <sup>th</sup> April 2012	URC meeting to discuss impact case study review panel reports.
27 <sup>th</sup> April 2012	UoB draft Code of Practice submitted to HEFCE for approval by the EDAP.
By end of September 2012	URC determines indicative UOA configurations and formal UOA Coordinators. Formal processes initiated for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checking eligibility (contractual) of staff to be included in the submission</li> <li>• Identifying Early Career Researchers and the number of outputs to be submitted</li> <li>• Identifying staff with individual circumstances and cases to be made for reduction in number of outputs</li> </ul>
By end of July 2012	Feedback from EDAP on Code of Practice.
End of September 2012	UoB REF2014 Code of Practice published.
October 2012 – December 7th)	Data collection for second formal mock UoB REF exercise. Outputs, draft environment statements and impact templates, impact case studies.
January – February 2013	UoB internal panel reviews of the data and feedback to UOA Coodinators
January 2013	Latest date for publication of UoB submission policy.
April – September 2013	Formal selection process for inclusion of staff in the UoB submission.
<b>31 October 2013</b>	<b><i>Census date for staff in post to be included in the submission.</i></b>
<b>29<sup>th</sup> November 2013</b>	<b><i>Deadline for submission to be received by Hefce.</i></b>



## ANNEX B

The following key individuals and University committees will have designated REF responsibilities:

### 1. University Research Committee

The membership, terms of reference and methods of working of the University Research Committee are available on the University website at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-policy/urc/>

In reviewing recommendations from UOAs on the submission of individuals, their outputs and the UOA to which they will be returned, all decisions and the reasons for them will be recorded, and fed back to the relevant UOA Academic Coordinators, Heads of School and Deans.

### 2. UOA Committees

The membership of each UOA Committee will comprise at least:

- The UOA Coordinator
- The UOA Deputy Coordinator(s), if any
- At least one other academic staff member from the School(s) contributing significant numbers of staff to the UOA submission
- The Faculty Research Director and the 'cognate' Faculty Research Director allocated to the UOA
- The Heads of School potentially contributing significant numbers of staff to the UOA (who may delegate as appropriate)

The academic members of each committee will be nominated by the relevant Head(s) of School and the UOA coordinator for approval by the University Research Committee, advised by the relevant Faculty Research Director. The size of the Committee may vary according to the subject scope of the UOA and the number of staff to be submitted, but it must be sufficient to adequately represent the research expertise required to cover the subject scope. Membership of each UOA Committee will be reviewed by the Individual Circumstances Group prior to approval by University Research Committee to ensure that it reflects the diversity of the research community.

Each Committee will be chaired by the UOA Coordinator. The Chair must satisfy him/herself that there is adequate attendance at each UOA Committee meeting to ensure the effectiveness and appropriateness of decision-making. A list of UOA Committee members will be maintained and will be available on the UOB REF 2014 website at <http://www.bris.ac.uk/red/research-policy/ref/roles/>.

Decisions on (1) the inclusion of specific outputs for individual staff, and (2) the inclusion of staff themselves will be determined in accordance with the quality threshold limits set out in the institutional submission policy.\* All decisions on the selection of outputs and of staff for inclusion in the submission must be formally recorded. The reasons for exclusion of staff should also be recorded. A standard proforma will be provided for this. Discussion leading up to decisions is not expected to be recorded.

Decisions on the UOA to which individuals or groups of staff should be allocated may require strategic management. Where there is the possibility that an individual or group may be submitted to either of two or more UOAs, the relevant UOA Coordinators and Research Directors should agree

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\* This guidance will be amplified if necessary when the institutional submission policy has been agreed.

and put forward to the University Research Committee an allocation which it is considered will give the greatest benefit to the submission as a whole. If such an agreement cannot be reached then the issue, including a brief options appraisal, must be referred to the University Research Committee who will make a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor.

### **3. UOA Coordinators**

UOA Coordinators and Deputy Coordinators will be nominated by the relevant Head(s) of School and approved by the University Research Committee, on the advice of the relevant Faculty Research Director. UOA Coordinators are senior research-active members of the academic community who are chosen on the basis of their research expertise in the relevant subject area(s).

### **4. Individual Circumstances Group**

The Individual Circumstances Group will support the REF's aim of promoting equality and diversity in research careers and ensure that the selection process takes account of relevant equality and employment legislation. In particular, it will ensure that the arrangements for determining any reduction in outputs relating to individual staff circumstances are applied consistently and fairly across the institution to support the University's submission to the REF2014 and in advance of cases being considered by the national REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel. Membership and terms of reference are available at <http://www.bris.ac.uk/red/research-policy/ref/code>.

## ANNEX C

### Staff and individual circumstances – extract from HEFCE guidance

**Amendment to ‘guidance on submissions’:** Following consultation on the draft panel criteria, the arrangements concerning maternity, paternity and adoption leave in ‘guidance on submissions’ have been amended, and are now superseded by the guidance as stated below.

For completeness, the full set of arrangements concerning individual staff circumstances are set out in paragraphs 64-91 of this document, which replace paragraphs 88-95 of ‘guidance on submissions’.

63. The criteria for determining which staff are eligible to be included in institutions’ submissions are common for all UOAs, and are set out in ‘guidance on submissions’ (paragraphs 78-83).
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**

<b>Date at which the individual first met the REF definition of an early career researcher:</b>	<b>Number of outputs may be reduced by up to:</b>
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:

- a. part-time working
- b. 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**

<b>Total months absent between 1 January 2008 and 31 October 2013 due to working part-time, secondment or career break:</b>	<b>Number of outputs may be reduced by up to:</b>
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 leave<sup>2</sup> 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:

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<sup>2</sup> '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'.

- 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.
- 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](http://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](http://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 these 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).



## ANNEX D: REF2014 INDIVIDUAL STAFF CIRCUMSTANCES DISCLOSURE FORM

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Name:

Job Title and Department:

REF2014 Unit of Assessment (if known):

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**Please use this form to provide details of any individual circumstances that you consider have had a material impact on your ability to produce four outputs of work or work productively during the period 1st January 2008 – 31st October 2013.**

The University of Bristol's Code of Practice on the Selection of Staff has been developed to ensure that the University's staff selection processes for inclusion in REF 2014 are fair and based on the principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity, as highlighted in the REF2014 document [Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions](#). Up to four research outputs must be listed against each member of staff included in the REF submission. Where circumstances have constrained an individual's ability to produce four outputs or work productively during the course of the period (1st January 2008 – 31st October 2013), institutions may without penalty reduce the number of research outputs that are submitted. The information requested on this form is to enable the University to determine your eligibility for a reduction in outputs due to your individual circumstances. It will be used for REF purposes only, stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and shared on a confidential basis with members of the [University's Individual Circumstances Group](#). It may also be necessary to share this information with the UK funding bodies' REF team, who may make the information available to REF main and sub panel chairs, members and secretaries and/or the REF [Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel](#).

For **circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs**, information will be seen by the University's Individual Circumstances Group, relevant REF sub-panel, the REF panel secretariat and the UK funding bodies' REF team. This will be information about:

- Early Career Researchers (your eligibility will need to be confirmed by completing the [REF2014 Early Career Researcher form](#))
- part-time working
- career breaks or secondments
- periods of maternity, additional paternity or adoption leave taken
- junior clinical academics

For **more complex circumstances**, information will be seen only by the University's Individual Circumstances Group, REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, the REF Main Panel Chairs and the UK funding bodies' REF team; it will **not** be seen by the REF sub-panel. This will be information to explain the impact on your research of circumstances such as:

- disability
- ill health
- injury
- mental health conditions
- gender reassignment
- caring responsibilities
- constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding, adoption and paternity (in addition to the period of leave taken)

**1. Early Career Researcher**

**a) Have you been confirmed as an Early Career Researcher? Yes / No**

If yes, what date did you first qualify as an Early Career Researcher? .....

If you believe that you may qualify as an Early Career Researcher and have not had your status confirmed, please download and complete the REF2014 Early Career Researcher form

[\[https://www.bris.ac.uk/red/research-policy/ref/code/\]](https://www.bris.ac.uk/red/research-policy/ref/code/).

**b) Are you a junior clinical academic? Yes / No**

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.

**2. A broad description of the nature of the individual circumstances to be considered**

**3. The timing and duration of the circumstances (e.g. from Jan 2010 – September 2010)**

**4. The impact that the individual circumstances have had on your ability to carry out research activities**

I declare that the information given here is correct and hereby give my permission for it to be made available to the Individual Circumstances Group and others as appropriate.

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**The completed form should be returned in HARD COPY to Kimberley Wooster (Secretary to the Individual Circumstances Group), Human Resources, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Senate House.**

## ANNEX E

### REF 2014 APPEALS PROCESS

#### 1. Grounds for an appeal

All eligible staff will have the right to an appeal against:

- i) a decision made by the Individual Circumstances Group
- ii) the determination of a decision made by a UOA on procedural grounds

It will not be possible to appeal the reasons given for non-selection or the academic judgement that has been made in relation to the quality of the research produced. However, the procedure that led to the decision being made can be challenged.

#### 2. Informal resolution

##### 2.1 *Where the appeal relates to a decision made by the Individual Circumstances Group*

If a member of staff believes that their case has been judged unfairly by the Individual Circumstances Group they should raise this initially with the Secretary to the Group at the earliest opportunity and normally within seven working days of the communication of the decision made. Supplementary evidence may then be submitted to the Individual Circumstances Group for further consideration if necessary. The Group will then review their original decision, taking into account any supplementary information as appropriate.

If the member of staff remains dissatisfied with the decision made by the Individual Circumstances Group and believes that there was a procedural irregularity or that the Code of Practice was not applied correctly, the individual has the right to submit a formal appeal under this procedure.

##### 2.2 *Where the appeal relates to a decision made by the UOA Committee*

If a member of staff disagrees with a decision on selection made by a UOA Committee they should normally approach their Head of School within seven working days of the communication of the decision, who will then discuss the matter further with them. If any relevant individual circumstances are disclosed at this stage that were not previously taken into account and if the research quality would otherwise qualify the member of staff for consideration for submission, a case may be submitted to the Individual Circumstances Group. The UOA may then be asked to review their original decision.

If the member of staff believes that there was a procedural irregularity in the UOA's decision-making and where this cannot be resolved through informal means, the individual has the right to submit a formal appeal under this procedure.

#### 3. Formal resolution

If informal resolution fails, the individual member of staff may invoke a formal appeal under this procedure where their case will be independently reviewed. The appeal must be notified, in writing, to the Organisational Development Manager (Diversity) normally within 7 working days of communication of the decision against which the appeal is to be launched. To lodge the appeal the member of staff must set out clearly in writing:

- the basis of the appeal
- the information on which the appeal is based
- details of any attempted informal resolution
- the remedy sought

A panel of at least three will be appointed by the Director of Human Resources to consider the appeal, none of whom shall have had any prior involvement in the case. A panel shall normally include:

- the Director of Human Resources, or a nominated substitute, in the Chair
- a Dean
- a member of academic staff

The Organisational Development Manager (Diversity) shall act as secretary to the Panel, to give advice and assistance as necessary. The Head of Research and Enterprise Policy will also be in attendance. The Panel shall first determine whether the information presented constitutes a case falling under its remit. If it does not, the member of staff will be informed that they can pursue the complaint via the Grievance Procedure. If it appears to the Panel that the issue/s raised fall within both the appeal process and the Grievance Procedure arrangements will normally be made to combine both procedures or to hear the case in parallel. If the Panel finds that the written information presented by the person bringing the appeal discloses no prima facie case, it shall dismiss the appeal at this stage. Where the case falls within the remit of the Panel and a prima facie case is made, the Secretary, on behalf of the Panel, shall normally call for any additional written statements and documents appropriate to support the appeal, and for a written response to the appeal, plus any written statements and documents from other parties involved. The Panel will normally consider the written information and attempt to decide the appeal on this basis. All written information will be made available to the person bringing the appeal and they will have the opportunity to comment on such information before a decision is reached. Where the Panel concludes that it is not possible to decide the matter on the written information a hearing will be arranged. The person bringing the appeal may be present at all hearings, and may be represented by an adviser, friend, trade union or other representative. The University may be represented by a member of staff or other representative. Copies of all relevant information shall normally be made available to the Panel, the person bringing the appeal, any person required to give information and the University representative at least seven working days before the hearing.

The order of proceedings and conduct of the hearing shall be at the discretion of the Panel although the person bringing the appeal, or their representative, will normally be expected to present their appeal first and then the University will respond. The additional information presented at a hearing shall normally be oral, given by individuals appearing in person. These individuals may, at the discretion of the Panel, be called by the person bringing the appeal, any person whose action is the substance of the appeal, the University or the Panel itself. All such individuals may be questioned by all parties. The Panel may accept a written statement where it is impracticable for the witness to attend, or where in the opinion of the Panel it is for some other reason in the interests of justice to do so. If the Panel accepts a written statement, it shall give reasons for doing so. The Panel may ask for additional enquiries to be undertaken, and may call for additional individuals to attend. The Panel shall refuse to admit information or testimony that is, in its opinion, irrelevant to the issues raised.

The Panel shall ensure that the proceedings are dealt with expeditiously in recognition of the deadline required by the University's REF submission timetable. It may impose time limits on

addresses and submissions, and may specify dates by which any stage of the proceedings must be completed.

The Panel shall decide and/or take such action to resolve the appeal as it thinks fit. It shall give a reasoned written report of its decision/action to the person bringing the appeal and/or their representative and to other appropriate individuals involved in the appeal. A copy of the written report shall be sent to the Research Committee for information. The decision of the Panel shall be final.