

Code of practice on selecting staff and preparing
submissions to the Research Excellence
Framework 2014

Effective from October 2011

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Preamble

All University formal documents relate to the policies, strategies, procedures and regulations of the University having been approved by the appropriate formally recognised and constituted body. All University employees and students are required to adhere to the formal processes and regulations of the University.

This document should not be read in isolation as other University processes/formal documents could be relevant. A full listing of all formal documents is available on the University's website.

Any interpretation of the content of this formal document will be at the discretion of the Deputy Vice Chancellor

All previous versions of this document as approved by the Research & Academic Resources Committee shall be rescinded.

The names of committees and titles of posts may change from time to time. This shall not invalidate the powers of the equivalent successor committees or post holders.

We will consider any requests for accessible formats eg Braille, tape, disc, email or a larger font size. Please let us know what you need by contacting the Academic Quality Directorate

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The higher education funding bodies formally invite all eligible higher education institutions (HEIs) to make submissions to the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF). The REF is the new system for assessing the quality of research in HEIs in the UK, and replaces the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), last conducted in 2008.
- 1.2 The REF is a single framework for assessment across all disciplines, with a common set of data required in all submissions, standard definitions and procedures, and assessment by expert panels against broad generic criteria. Expert sub-panels for each of 36 units of assessment (UOAs) will carry out the assessment, working under the leadership and guidance of four main panels.
- 1.3 Each submission in each UOA will contain a common set of data comprising:
 - a) Information on staff in post on the census date, 31 October 2013, selected by the institution to be included in the submission.
 - b) Details of publications and other forms of assessable output that selected staff have produced during the publication period (1 January 2008 to 31 December 2013).
 - c) A completed template describing the submitted unit's approach during the assessment period (1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013) to enabling impact from its research, and case studies describing specific examples of impacts achieved during the assessment period, underpinned by excellent research in the period 1 January 1993 to 31 December 2013.
 - d) Data about research doctoral degrees awarded and research income related to the period 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2013.
 - e) A completed template describing the research environment, related to the period 1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013.
- 1.4 The deadline for submissions is 29 November 2013. Results will be published in December 2014 and will be used by the higher education funding bodies to inform research funding from the academic year 2015-16.
- 1.5 Each institution making a submission is required to develop, document and apply a code of practice on the fair and transparent selection of staff for their REF submissions. On making submissions, the Chief Executive of the University will be required to confirm adherence to this code. The funding bodies require our code of practice to be submitted to the REF team by 31 July 2012. The Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) will examine this in advance of the submission deadline and it will be published alongside the rest of the submissions at the end of the assessment process.
- 1.6 Further information about the REF is available at www.ref.ac.uk.

2 Basic Principles

2.1 Transparency

All the processes connected with the selection of staff for inclusion in REF2014 will be transparent. This code of practice will be publicised to all academic employees across the institution and made available on the OLP website. Presentations will be held on both the High Wycombe and Uxbridge campuses to explain the processes related to selection of staff for submission and a central contact name will be given for any queries relating to any aspect of the REF.

2.2 Consistency

The policy in respect of staff selection will be consistent across the institution and the code of practice implemented uniformly. The principles to be applied to all aspects/stages of the process at all levels within the institution where decisions will be made are documented in Section 5.

2.3 Accountability

Responsibilities for all staff involved in the process will be clearly defined. Individuals and bodies involved in selecting staff for REF submissions will be identified by name or role. The training of those involved in selecting staff will be stated. The operating criteria and terms of reference for individuals, committees and any other bodies concerned with staff selection will be made available to all individuals and groups concerned.

2.4 Inclusivity

The code will promote an inclusive environment enabling the University to identify all eligible staff who have produced excellent research for submission to the REF.

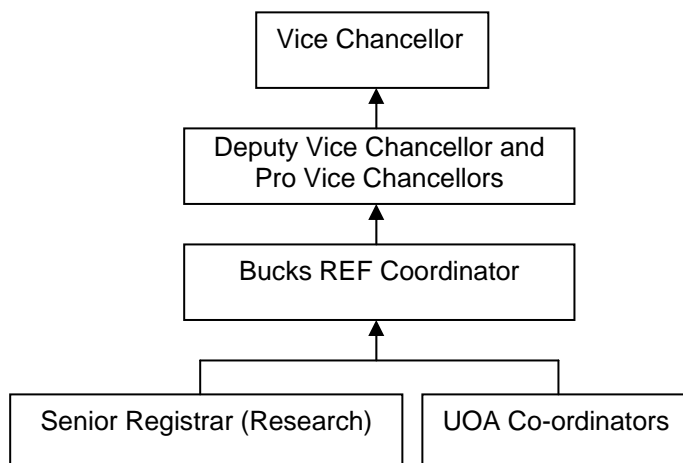
3 The legislative context

3.1 A summary of the equality legislation with which institutions have to comply generally, and which have to be taken into account when preparing the REF2014 submission extracted from HEFCE REF 02.2011 paragraph 201 is shown in Appendix 1.

4 Management of the REF submission

4.1 The management team responsible for the REF process at the University was selected on the basis of experience, leadership and ability and approved by the Chief Executive.

4.2 The organisational structure associated with the exercise is as follows:



4.3 The Chief Executive will be the final signatory for the overall submission on behalf of the University and will approve each UOA submission.

4.4 The Deputy Vice Chancellor will be responsible for confirming the validity of each UOA submission and ensuring that the code of practice has been implemented appropriately.

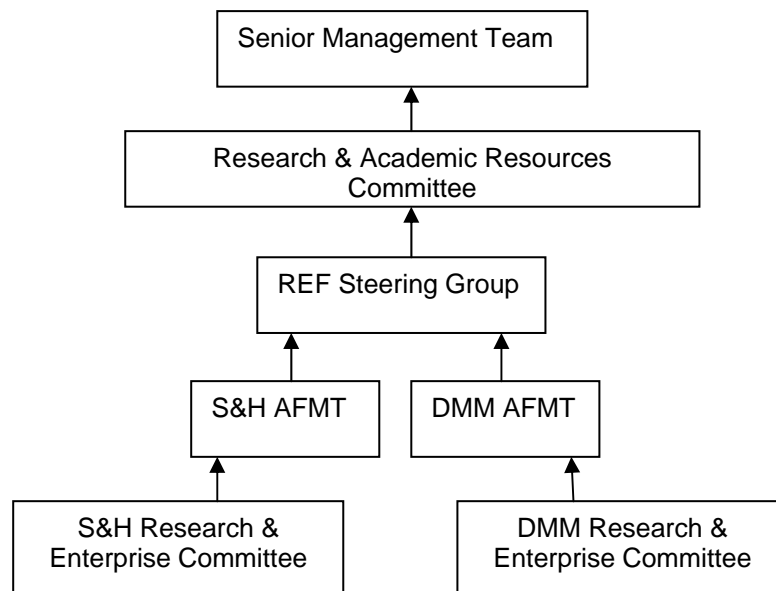
4.5 The Bucks REF Coordinator (Academic Dean, DMM) will be responsible for training each UOA Coordinator and providing advice on the details of the individual submissions. He will be supported in this role by the Senior Registrar (Research). They will prepare the Bucks Code of Practice on selecting staff and preparing submissions to the REF2014 with input from Human

Resources and the Equality & Diversity Service. The Code will be approved by the Research & Academic Resources Committee.

- 4.6 The UOA Coordinators will be responsible for the academic rigour of their submission and ensuring that the submission is in accordance with the Main Panel and Sub-Panel criteria.

5 Committees

- 5.1 The reporting and approval process is as follows:



- 5.2 The key committee is the REF Steering Group.

- 5.3 Prior to confirmation of UOAs which will be submitted the membership of the REF Steering Group will comprise:

Chair: Bucks REF Coordinator
 Secretariat: Senior Registrar (Research)
 Heads of Research

- 5.4 Once UOAs which will be submitted have been confirmed the membership of the REF Steering Group will comprise:

Chair: Bucks REF Coordinator
 Secretariat: Senior Registrar (Research)
 UOA Coordinators

- 5.5 Training on equality and diversity issues tailored to the REF process will be provided by the University's Equality and Diversity Manager. The training will include the use of case studies from the ECU website to explore issues such as the implications of dealing with personal circumstances in the process of selecting staff for inclusion in the submission. All individuals with responsibility for selecting staff for the submission will be required to undertake the training including:

- All members of the REF Steering Group
- The Research & Academic Resources Committee who will be responsible for ratifying decisions taken by the REF Steering Group
- Staff selected to decide appeals
- Administrative staff who are supporting the REF submission

- 5.6 All decisions taken by the REF Steering Group are approved by the Research & Academic Resources Committee. The REF Steering Group will refer decisions affecting more than one faculty to the Research & Academic Resources Committee.
- 5.7 The criteria the REF Steering Group will use to carry out its functions will be based on the criteria in the guidelines for UOA Coordinators (see below).
- 5.8 The REF Steering Group will have regular meetings from October 2011 until the date of submission. The purpose of the Group is to ensure that the process for the submission to each UOA is transparent, equitable and available to all staff.
- 5.9 Feedback from each Steering Group meeting will take the form of notes and action points. The decisions made will be communicated to higher committees at the next available date for comment and/or approval.
- 5.10 When individual performance is discussed and the individual is absent, committees should be made fully aware of all the facts relating to the individual.

6 Guidelines for UOA Coordinators

- 6.1 Guidance will be provided for all UOA Coordinators on the appointment of external advisors to provide advice on the content of the submission.
- 6.2 Recommendations on which staff will be included in any individual UOA will be made by the UOA Coordinator in consultation with the Faculty AFMT.
- 6.3 Eligible Category A staff will meet the following *minimum* criteria:
 - a) In post with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater and on the University payroll on the census date (31 October 2013) and whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'teaching and research'.
 - b) Have four publicly available, assessable outputs of a quality that is recognised internationally with regard to originality, significance and rigour within the publication period (1 January 2008 and 31 December 2013) notwithstanding individual circumstances. 'International' refers to a quality standard and does not refer to the nature or geographical scope of particular subjects, nor to the locus of research nor its place of dissemination.
- 6.4 In the event that an individual has fewer than four outputs of the appropriate standard, they may nonetheless be included in the submission if their volume of research output has been limited for reasons covered by equal opportunities guidelines, or as identified in individual panel criteria and working methods (e.g. early career researchers). All staff will be given an opportunity to disclose their individual circumstances in confidence (see Appendix 2). Applicable data will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- 6.5 The critical mass of staff in a given area of research will also be a consideration for selection.
- 6.6 All submitted staff will be given the opportunity to identify which of their outputs they consider to be of the highest quality. The final decision on which outputs will be included in the submission will, however, be made by the UOA Coordinator who will take into consideration the cohesion of individual outputs in the UOA submission as a whole.
- 6.7 The selection process will be communicated to staff by email and will be available on the OLP website.

- 6.8 This code of practice will be communicated to absent staff via the Human Resources Directorate.
- 6.9 It will be the responsibility of the REF Steering Group to ensure a consistency of approach by all UOA Coordinators and to verify that all decisions are in keeping with the University's policy for selection.
- 6.10 Individual staff who are submitted with fewer than four outputs will be consulted concerning the disclosure of their individual circumstances in the submission with an appropriate degree of confidentiality. Particular regard will be taken in respect of the disclosure of sensitive issues such as ongoing illness or mental health conditions.

7 Equality analysis

- 7.1 The funding bodies require all HEIs to conduct equality analyses on their policy and procedures for selecting staff for the REF. This will comprise of a thorough and systematic analysis to determine whether the institution's staff selection policy for the REF may have a differential impact on particular groups.
- 7.2 Equality analyses will be conducted on data on staff who are eligible for selection in respect of all the protected characteristics for which data are available. The analysis will cover all eligible staff.

8 Mock REF exercise

- 8.1 A mock REF exercise will be conducted in 2012.
- 8.2 External assessors will be utilised to give an independent view of the quality of an individual's research. External assessors will not be involved in the decision making process with regard to which staff are to be submitted to the REF, nor will they be given any information relating to individual staff circumstances.

9 Appeals

- 9.1 Appeals by individual members of staff pertaining to the decision taken regarding the number of outputs they may return without penalty to the submission as a result of individual staff circumstances should be addressed to the Pro Vice Chancellor responsible for equality and diversity issues within the University. The deadline for such appeals is June 2013.
- 9.2 Appeals by individual members of staff pertaining to their inclusion or non-inclusion in the submission on academic grounds should be addressed to the Senior Management Team. Final notifications of which staff will be included in the submission will be announced in September 2013, and staff will be given a three week window to submit an appeal.
- 9.3 Appeals by individual members or groups of staff pertaining to their non-inclusion on grounds of insufficient critical mass should be addressed to the Senior Management Team.
- 9.4 The appeals process in all cases will be concluded before the University submission to the REF is finalised.

10 Personal circumstances

- 10.1 To ensure that REF processes are fair, the University is collecting data on individual circumstances from all staff eligible for submission. The data will be used to identify which staff are eligible for submission with fewer than four outputs.

- 10.2 All staff will be invited to complete an individual staff circumstances disclosure form (see Appendix 2 & 3). This will be emailed to all academics and will also be available on the website.
- 10.3 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.
- 10.4 Clearly defined circumstances include:
- a) Qualifying as an early career researcher (ECR). ECRs are defined as members of staff who meet the criteria to be selected as Category A or category C staff on the census date, and who started their careers as independent researchers on or after 1 August 2009. For the purposes of the REF, an individual is deemed to have started their career as an independent researcher from the point at which:
 - i) They held a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, which included a primary employment function of undertaking 'research' or 'teaching and research' with any HEI or other organisation, whether in the UK or overseas **and**
 - ii) They undertook independent research, leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on a research grant or significant piece of research work. (A member of staff is not deemed to have undertaken independent research purely on the basis that they are named on one or more outputs.)
 - b) Part-time working (see section 11)
 - c) Maternity, paternity or adoption leave. (Maternity leave may involve related constraints on an individual's ability to conduct research in addition to the defined period of maternity leave itself. These cases will be returned as 'complex' as described at paragraph 10.5 below, so that the full range of circumstances can be taken into account in making a judgement about the appropriate number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty.)
 - d) Secondments or career breaks outside of the higher education sector, and in which the individual did not undertake academic research.
- 10.5 Circumstances that are more complex and require a judgement about the appropriate number of outputs that can be reduced without penalty include:
- a) Disability (refer to Appendix 1)
 - b) Ill health or injury
 - c) Mental health conditions
 - d) Constraints related to pregnancy or maternity, in addition to a clearly defined period of maternity leave. (These may include but are not limited to: medical issues associated with pregnancy or maternity; health and safety restrictions in laboratory or field work during pregnancy or breastfeeding; constraints on the ability to travel to undertake fieldwork due to pregnancy or breastfeeding.)
 - e) Childcare or other caring responsibilities.
 - f) Gender reassignment
 - g) Other circumstances related to the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 listed in Appendix 1.
- 10.6 For clearly defined circumstances, the panel criteria statements provide tariffs to determine the number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty in the assessment, depending on the duration of the circumstance (or combination thereof) – see section on staff and individual

circumstances in part 1 of Panel criteria and working methods (http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2012/01_12/)

- 10.7 For more complex circumstances, the University will make a judgement on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs submitted, and the REF EDAP will consider these cases on a consistent basis across all UOAs. Worked examples of complex examples indicating the appropriate reduction in outputs for a range of particular circumstances are available at www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF.

11 Fixed-term and part-time staff

- 11.1 When considering selection of staff to return in the REF, the University will be mindful that under the fixed-term employee and part-time workers regulations, fixed-term employees and part-time workers have the right not to be treated by an employer any less favourably than the employer treats comparable employees on open contracts or full-time workers. The relevant regulations are:

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

12 Further guidance on legislation

Further guidance on legislation can be accessed through the Equality Challenge Unit's website at www.ecu.ac.uk.

Prepared by:	Senior Registrar (Research)	Date:	September 2011
Final Approval by:	Research & Academic Resources Committee October 2011 (minor amendments Feb 2012; April 2012, July 2012)		

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Appendix 1

Table 1: Summary of equality legislation

Age	<p>All employees within the higher education sector are protected from unlawful age discrimination in employment under the Equality Act 2010. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or if they are associated with a person of a particular age group. (These provisions in the Equality Act 2010 are partially in force, but should be fully in place by April 2012.)</p> <p>Age discrimination can occur when people of a particular age group are treated less favourably than people in other age groups. An age group could be for example, people of the same age, the under 30s or people aged 45-50. A person can belong to a number of different age groups.</p> <p>Age discrimination will not be unlawful if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. However, in the context of the REF, the view of the funding bodies is that if a researcher produces excellent research an HEI will not be able to justify not submitting them because of their age group.</p> <p>It is important to note that early career researchers are likely to come from a range of age groups. The definition of early career researcher used in the REF (HEFCE REF 02.2011 paragraph 85) is not limited to young people.</p> <p>HEIs should also note that given developments in equalities law in the UK and Europe, the default retirement age has been abolished from 1 October 2011 in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.</p>
Disability	<p>The Equality Act 2010 prevents unlawful discrimination relating to disability. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to have a disability or if they are associated with a person who is disabled, for example, if they are responsible for caring for a disabled family member.</p> <p>A person is considered to be disabled if they have or have had a physical and/or mental impairment which has 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. Long-term impairments include those that last or are likely to last for at least 12 months.</p> <p>Cancer, HIV, multiple sclerosis and progressive/degenerative conditions are disabilities too, even if they do not currently have an adverse effect on the carrying out of day-to-day activities.</p> <p>The definition of disability is different in Northern Ireland in that a list of day-to-day activities is referred to. There is no list of day-to-day activities for England, Scotland and Wales but day-to-day activities are taken to mean activities that people, not individuals, carry out on a daily or frequent basis.</p> <p>While there is no definitive list of what is considered a disability, it covers a wide range of impairments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sensory impairments • impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as rheumatoid arthritis, depression and epilepsy • progressive impairments, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, HIV and cancer • organ-specific impairments, including respiratory conditions and cardiovascular diseases

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developmental impairments, such as autistic spectrum disorders and dyslexia mental health conditions such as depression and eating disorders impairments caused by injury to the body or brain. <p>It is important for HEIs to note that people who have had a past disability are also protected from discrimination, victimisation and harassment because of disability.</p> <p>Equality law requires HEIs to anticipate the needs of disabled people and make reasonable adjustments for them. Failure to make a reasonable adjustment constitutes discrimination. If a disabled researcher's impairment has affected the quantity of their research outputs, they may be submitted with a reduced number of outputs (see REF 02.2011 paragraphs 90-100 and the HEFCE panel criteria).</p>
Gender reassignment	<p>The Equality Act 2010 protects from discrimination trans people who have proposed, started or completed a process to change their sex. Staff in HE do not have to be under medical supervision to be afforded protection because of gender reassignment and staff are protected if they are perceived to be undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment. They are also protected if they are associated with someone who has proposed, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment.</p> <p>Trans people who undergo gender reassignment will need to take time off for appointments and in some cases, for medical assistance. The transition process is lengthy, often taking several years and it is likely to be a difficult period for the trans person as they seek recognition of their new gender from their family, friends, employer and society as a whole.</p> <p>The Gender Recognition Act 2004 gave enhanced privacy rights to trans people who undergo gender reassignment. A person acting in an official capacity who acquires information about a person's status as a transsexual may commit a criminal offence if they pass the information to a third party without consent.</p> <p>Consequently, staff within HEIs with responsibility for REF submissions must ensure that the information they receive about gender reassignment is treated with particular care.</p> <p>Staff whose ability to work productively throughout the REF assessment period has been constrained due to gender reassignment may be submitted with a reduced number of research outputs (see REF 02.2011 paragraphs 90-100, and the HEFCE panel criteria). Information about the member of staff will be kept confidential as described in REF 02.2011 paragraph 98.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 individuals are protected from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of marriage and civil partnership status. The protection from discrimination is to ensure that people who are married or in a civil partnership receive the same benefits and treatment in employment. The protection from discrimination does not apply to single people.</p> <p>In relation to the REF HEIs must ensure that their processes for selecting staff do not inadvertently discriminate against staff who are married or in civil partnerships.</p>
Political opinion	<p>HEIs should be aware of not making any judgements about the selection of staff for REF submissions based on their political opinion.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 women are protected from unlawful discrimination related to pregnancy and maternity.</p>

	<p>Consequently researchers who have taken time out of work or whose ability to work productively throughout the assessment period because of pregnancy and/or maternity, may be submitted with a reduced number of research outputs, as set out in REF 02.2011 paragraphs 90-100 and in the HEFCE panel criteria documents.</p> <p>In addition, HEIs should ensure that female researchers who are pregnant or on maternity leave are kept informed about and included in their submissions process.</p> <p>For the purposes of this summary it is important to note that primary adopters have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave.</p>
Race	<p>The Equality Act 2010 protects HEI staff from unlawful discrimination connected to race. The definition of race includes colour, ethnic or national origins or nationality. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular race.</p> <p>HEIs should be aware of not making any judgements about the selection of staff for REF submissions based on their race or assumed race (for example, based on their name).</p>
Religion and belief including non-belief	<p>The Equality Act 2010 protects HEI staff from unlawful discrimination to do with religion or belief. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular religion or belief.</p> <p>HEIs should be aware of not making any judgements about the selection of staff for REF submissions based on their actual or perceived religion or belief, including non-belief. 'Belief' includes any structured philosophical belief with clear values that has an effect on how its adherents conduct their lives.</p>
Sex (including breastfeeding and additional paternity and adoption leave)	<p>The Equality Act 2010 protects HEI staff from unlawful discrimination to do with sex. Employees are also protected because of their perceived sex or because of their association with someone of a particular sex.</p> <p>The sex discrimination provisions of the Equality Act explicitly protect women from less favourable treatment because they are breastfeeding. Consequently the impact of breastfeeding on a women's ability to work productively will be taken into account, as set out in REF 02.2011 paragraph 90-100 and the HEFCE panel criteria documents.</p> <p>From 3 April 2011, partners of new mothers and secondary adopters will be entitled to up to 26 weeks of additional paternity and adoption leave. People who take additional paternity or adoption leave will have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave and barriers that exist to taking the leave, or as a result of having taken it, could constitute unlawful sex discrimination. Consequently researchers who have taken additional paternity and adoption leave may be submitted with a reduced number of outputs, as set out in REF 02.2011 paragraphs 90-100 and in the HEFCE panel criteria documents.</p> <p>HEIs need to be wary of selecting researchers by any criterion that it would be easier for men to comply with than women, or vice versa. There are many cases where a requirement to work full-time (or less favourable treatment of people working part-time or flexibly) has been held to discriminate unlawfully against women.</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>The Equality Act 2010 protects HEI staff from unlawful discrimination to do with sexual orientation. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with someone who is of a particular sexual orientation.</p> <p>HEIs should be aware of not making any judgements about the selection of staff for REF submissions based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation.</p>



Individual staff circumstances disclosure form

Research Excellence Framework

Name:	
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Section one:

Please select one of the following:

- I have no individual circumstances that I wish to be taken into consideration for the purposes of the Research Excellence Framework (REF). *(If you have checked this box, you do not have to complete anything else. Please return form by email)*
- I have individual circumstances that I wish to make known. *(Please complete Section 2)*

Section two:

I wish to make the University aware of the following circumstances which have had an impact on my ability to produce four outputs or work productively between 1 January 2008 and 31 October 2013:

Please provide information required on relevant circumstance(s):

Circumstance	Information required
Early career researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2009)	<i>Date on which you became an early career researcher</i>
Information:	
Part time employee	<i>FTE and duration in months</i>
Information:	
Career break or secondment outside of the higher education sector	<i>Dates and duration in months</i>
Information:	

Circumstance	Information required
Maternity leave, statutory adoption leave, or additional paternity leave (taken by partners of new mothers or co-adopters)	<i>For each period of leave state which type of leave was taken and the dates and duration in months</i>
Information:	
Disability (including conditions such as cancer and chronic fatigue)	<i>Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months</i>
Information:	
Mental health condition	<i>Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months</i>
Information:	
Ill health or injury	<i>Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months</i>
Information:	
Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding, paternity, adoption or childcare 'in addition to' the period of maternity, adoption or additional paternity leave taken.	<i>Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months</i>
Information:	
Other caring responsibilities (including caring for an elderly or disabled relative)	<i>Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months</i>
Information:	
Gender reassignment	<i>Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months</i>
Information:	
Other exceptional and relevant reasons, not including teaching or administrative work	<i>Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months</i>
Information:	



Please select as appropriate:

- I confirm that the information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances.
- I recognise that the information provided will be used for REF purposes and will be seen by the University's REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel.
- I realise that it may be necessary to share information with the UK funding bodies' REF team, who may make the information available to REF panel chairs, members and secretaries and/or the HEFCE Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel. Where permission is not provided the University will be limited in the action it can take.
- I would like to be contacted by a member of human resources to discuss my circumstances and requirements and/or the support provided by the University.

Signature*: Date:

(Employee)

*(*electronic signature or supporting email acceptable in place of signature)*

For official use only

Following consideration of the personal circumstances described above, the University's Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel:

- Will progress consideration of the staff member's inclusion in the REF submission with [insert number] of research outputs, subject to institutional criteria specified in the code of practice]. Rationale for the proposed number of outputs: *(e.g. this decision is based on the tariffs outlined in the panel criteria.)*

- Requires further information of the circumstances described as follows: *(e.g. please provide information from your occupational health assessment on the effectiveness of reasonable adjustments provided.)*

- Does not feel that the staff member meets the criteria outlined within the REF 'Panel criteria and working methods' for submitting fewer than four research outputs. The reason(s) for this decision are: *(e.g. circumstances detailed are not recognised within the assessment framework and guidance on submissions.)*

Signature: Date:

(Chair of University REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel)

Guidance for disclosure of individual circumstances for REF 2014

Bucks New University is committed to ensuring that decisions about selecting staff for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) are made in a fair, transparent and consistent manner. Information on how eligible staff will be selected for submission to the REF is included in the University's Code of Practice which can be found after logging in to OLP at https://bucks.ac.uk/en/research/research_excellence/research_excellence_framework_internal_information/.

To ensure that REF processes are fair, the University is collecting data on individual circumstances from all staff eligible for submission. The data will be used to identify which staff are eligible for submission with fewer than four outputs. Summary level data collected may also inform the University's monitoring of staff selection procedures at the institutional level.

In determining whether eligible staff may be considered for submission to the REF with fewer than four research outputs, the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel at the University will take the following circumstances into consideration:

- = Early career researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2009)
- = Part time employment
- = Career break or secondment outside of the higher education sector in which the individual did not undertake academic research
- = Maternity leave, statutory adoption leave, and additional paternity leave (taken by partners of new mothers or co-adopters)
- = Disability (including conditions such as cancer and chronic fatigue)
- = Ill health or injury
- = Mental health conditions
- = Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding, adoption, paternity or childcare **in addition to** periods of maternity, statutory adoption or additional paternity leave taken. This could include for example, pregnancy related illness and health and safety restrictions in laboratory and field work.
- = Other caring responsibilities (including caring for an elderly or disabled relative)
- = Gender reassignment

If your research output has been affected by other circumstances, not including teaching and administration that are not listed above, please detail them on this form as they may be considered.

In determining the number of outputs staff are required to submit, the institution will observe the definitions of individual staff circumstances provided in the published REF 'Panel criteria and working methods' (January 2012) available at www.ref.ac.uk under 'Publications'.

What action do I need to take?

If you are eligible for REF submission you are encouraged to complete the attached form.

If further information is required about any circumstances disclosed, you will be contacted by the Secretary to the University's REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel. The Panel comprises the Careers, Employability & Diversity Manager; Senior Registrar (Research); HR Business Partner(s).

Who will see the information that I provide?

Within the University, the information that you provide will only be seen by Members of the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel.

Members of the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel handling individual staff circumstances will observe confidentiality and information will be stored securely.

Information provided on the form may be shared externally via the HEFCE REF database for the purposes of evidencing any reduction in the number of research outputs:

- = For **circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs**, information will be seen by the relevant HEFCE REF sub-panel, the REF panel secretariat and the UK funding bodies' REF team. This will be information about early career researcher status, part-time working, career breaks or secondments, and periods of maternity, additional paternity or adoption leave taken.
- = For **more complex circumstances**, information will be seen only by the HEFCE REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, the REF Main Panel Chairs and the UK funding bodies' REF team. 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 or constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding, adoption and paternity (in addition to the period of leave taken). This information will **not** be seen by the REF sub-panel.

All REF panel members, chairs and secretaries are bound by confidentiality requirements, and acceptance of the confidentiality requirements is a condition of their appointment to the role. No information relating to identifiable individuals' circumstances will be published by the funding bodies REF Team. All data collected, stored and processed by the UK funding bodies REF Team will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The REF Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions

www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02_11/, requires all higher education institutions participating in the REF to ensure appropriate confidentiality in handling individual staff circumstances.

What can I do if I'm not happy with the outcome?

If you would like to appeal against the decision of the University's REF Equality, Diversity & Advisory Panel, details of the appeals process can be found in the University's Code of Practice for selection of staff on the website at

https://bucks.ac.uk/en/research/research_excellence/research_excellence_framework_internal_information/.

What if my circumstances change?

The University recognises that staff circumstances may change between 1 January 2008 and 31 October 2013. If your circumstances change you can download a copy of the attached form at https://bucks.ac.uk/en/research/research_excellence/research_excellence_framework_internal_information/ (log in to OLP first).