

January 2015

# Equality and diversity in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework

A report by the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel  
(EDAP)

**REF2014**

## **Foreword by the panel chair**

Since the evaluation of RAE 2008, the funding bodies have been working to improve the management and support of equality and diversity in REF. Through the establishment of the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG) and, subsequently, our Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP), and through considerable consultation with the sector, the funding bodies have ensured that equality and diversity considerations have been handled more sensitively, fairly, and consistently than in previous assessment exercises.

As a result of this, higher education institutions (HEIs) have developed and applied effective codes of practice, and have been more confident in submitting the excellent research of a wider range of staff. Indeed, we are extremely encouraged that the proportion of staff submitted with individual circumstances that had impacted on their research productivity has risen from 12 per cent in RAE 2008 to 29 per cent in REF 2014. The procedures put in place to collect and review information about these staff circumstances, whilst increasing the burden on HEIs, have ensured that cases have been considered fairly, using transparent and consistent processes and expert judgement, with individual anonymity being protected. As a result of this, reassuringly only 0.38 per cent of clearly defined circumstances and 2 per cent of complex circumstances have resulted in unclassified outputs. This outcome will hopefully encourage HEIs to further their support for staff with individual circumstances so that they can make a maximum contribution to the research excellence of the institution and so that they are able to progress in their careers on an equal footing with staff who do not have equality-related circumstances.

Our panel is also encouraged that the REF equality impact assessments showed that a good number of institutions are taking steps to imbed broader cultural change in promoting and supporting equality and diversity across their institutions. We very much hope that, in the coming months and years, this broader cultural change will be seen across the sector as a whole.

Professor Dianne Berry OBE  
Chair of EDAP.

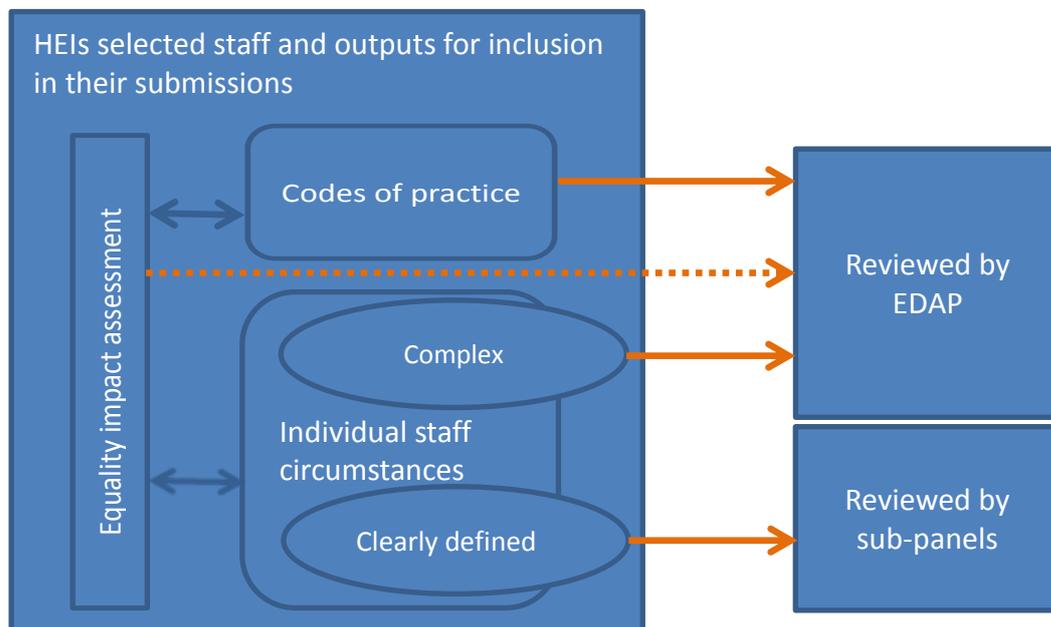
## Introduction

1. The UK funding bodies are committed to supporting and promoting equality and diversity in research careers and put in place a number of measures to enhance equality and diversity in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF).
2. Initially, the funding bodies appointed the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG) to advise on and help develop equality and diversity policies and procedures for the REF. Subsequently, our REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) was established to help the REF team, the REF panels and the funding bodies to implement the REF equality and diversity measures, throughout the submission and assessment phases of the exercise. Further detail of these measures and our key responsibilities are provided at Annexes A and B.
3. This report provides an explanation of our panel's work, providing public accountability and assurance that issues of equality have been taken seriously in the exercise. It also provides our observations on the effectiveness of the equality measures and recommendations for the future.
4. Having reviewed a range of evidence throughout the REF process, we conclude the equality measures undertaken as part of the REF have highlighted a clear commitment to equality and diversity across the higher education sector. We commend the work of all those involved across the sector in adopting practices that represent a systematic improvement since the previous assessment exercise. Overall, the measures have supported the inclusion of a wider pool of individuals who might have been excluded previously.
5. We also conclude that the REF has helped raised the profile of equality and diversity in research careers, seeking to influence genuine cultural change. We believe the REF equality measures have helped influence cultural and management changes within the sector with REF-like processes being applied within institutions in key areas such as promotion and reward. It is important to build on the positive advances made within the sector and we urge all concerned to maintain momentum for future improvements. It is our intention that this document acts to encourage HEIs toward continued improvements in equality and diversity in the higher education sector.

## Background

6. In summary, the equality and diversity (E&D) policies and procedures in the REF were:
  - a. All HEIs were required to have a **code of practice (COP)** setting out fair and transparent procedures for selecting staff to be included in their REF submissions. The COPs were reviewed by EDAP for adherence to the guidelines, and following any necessary amendments were approved by the funding bodies, as a condition of submission to the REF.
  - b. HEIs could submit staff with fewer than four research outputs where **individual staff circumstances** had affected the individuals' ability to produce research:

- i. **Clearly defined circumstances** were reviewed by the REF sub-panels for adherence to the criteria.
  - ii. **Complex circumstances** were reviewed by EDAP and the decisions approved by the four main panel chairs.
- c. HEIs carried out **equality impact assessments (EIAs)** to inform their selection procedures and analyse the impact of their selection decisions. EDAP reviewed the final EIAs at sector level to identify good practice.
  - d. In appointing the **REF panel membership**, the funding bodies sought to reflect the diversity of the community and took advice from EDAP on the appointment processes.
  - e. In the **research environment** aspect of submissions, the REF panels invited HEIs to provide evidence of their support for E&D and this formed part of their judgments about the quality of the research environment. (Reflections on this aspect of the REF are covered in the REF panels' overview reports rather than in our report.)
  - f. The funding bodies will analyse the **selection rates** of staff for the REF and have sought advice from our panel on the scope of the analysis.
7. The below diagram outlines the main equality and diversity elements of the REF:



### Codes of practice on the selection of staff

8. During 2012, our panel reviewed Codes of practice for all HEIs who intended to submit to the REF and were impressed with their overall quality. The majority of Codes were judged to adhere to the guidance and a number of them contained good practice that exceeded the minimum requirements in one or more areas. Nearly half of the codes

fell short of meeting some aspect of the guidance but many of these were straightforward for the institution to remedy; some of the codes required more substantial revision.

9. In October 2012 we provided a [report](#) on our review of the Codes, highlighting the areas of good practice and the common areas where Codes had fallen short of the guidance.

10. Following our review, the funding bodies required all Codes that fell short of the guidance to be revised by the institutions concerned, as a condition of submitting to the REF. Our panel considers that:

- a. Overall, Codes were high in quality with clear improvement from the previous exercise.
- b. The mandatory nature of the process helped ensure that the documents were taken seriously.
- c. The iterative process to improve Codes was effective and brought additional benefits, ensuring that HEIs properly addressed their E&D processes, and promoted further learning and development of good practice.
- d. Submission of a Code of practice should remain a mandatory requirement for a future exercise.

11. Reassuringly, the equality impact assessments confirmed that the Codes of practice were living documents that had been used throughout the process and not simply created to comply with REF requirements. For a future exercise, further guidance should be provided to help HEIs explicitly link their Code and EIA.

## Recommendations

Our panel makes the following recommendations:

- a. Submission of a Code of practice should remain a mandatory requirement for a future exercise.
- b. Further guidance should be provided to help HEIs explicitly link their Code and EIA.

## Individual staff circumstances

12. HEIs were able to submit staff with fewer than four research outputs where they had individual circumstances that had affected their ability to undertake research during the REF period. These arrangements were greatly improved for the REF. All staff circumstances were submitted against the same set of criteria, with 'tariffs' for **clearly defined** circumstances (that is, those based on clear periods of absence from work). More **complex** circumstances that necessarily involved an element of judgement were reviewed by our panel. All circumstances were reviewed with a more consistent approach than the RAE, and arrangements put in place to respect confidentiality of sensitive personal information.

13. The table below sets out the numbers of staff submitted with individual circumstances:

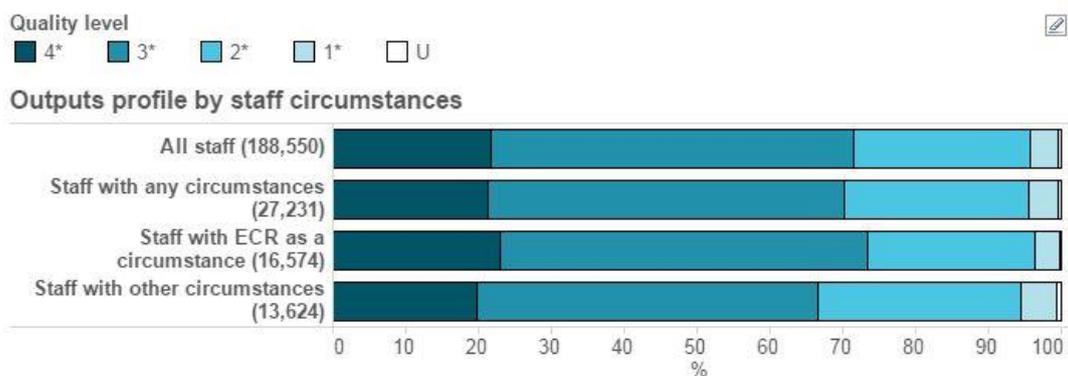
	Total	MPA	MPB	MPC	MPD
Total Category A and C staff (headcount) submitted	<b>56,079</b>	14,760	13,969	15,490	11,860
Number and percentage of staff with any individual circumstances	<b>16,361 (29.2%)</b>	4,302 (29.1%)	3,142 (22.5%)	4,819 (31.1%)	4,098 (34.6%)
Number and percentage of staff with <b>clearly defined</b> circumstances	<b>15,329 (27.3%)</b>	4,097 (27.8%)	3,021 (21.6%)	4,433 (28.6%)	3,778 (31.9%)
Number and percentage of staff with <b>complex</b> circumstances*	<b>1,033 (1.84%)</b>	205 (1.39%)	121 (0.87%)	386 (2.49%)	321 (2.71%)

\* Circumstances submitted as 'Complex' may include elements of clearly defined circumstances.

14. In RAE 2008 7,016 individuals were submitted with fewer than 4 outputs (12.2 per cent of staff). Our panel was impressed by the extent to which the proportion of staff submitted to the REF with circumstances has significantly increased – to 29.2 per cent – since the RAE. This increase indicates that the new arrangements have enabled institutions to be more inclusive in their submissions, and that staff trusted the process and were provided with a safe environment in which to disclose their circumstances.

15. However, the proportion of staff with circumstances varies between panels, with seemingly fewer circumstances being disclosed within Main Panel B. We recommend that the apparent lower rate of circumstances in Main Panel B be further explored.

16. The chart below shows that research outputs by staff submitted with individual circumstances were judged by the REF panels to be of equally high quality to outputs by all staff. Our panel concludes that the more systematic approach to output reductions has been a positive step towards improved equality and diversity in the sector. The arrangements were more transparent and fair to staff, and have succeeded in enabling institutions to submit staff who had produced excellent research but may not otherwise have been included.



Note: Any outputs requested as double weighted are only counted once in this chart. The number of outputs in each category is shown in brackets.

17. Our panel recognises that the arrangements for output reductions were burdensome for institutions, but we are confident that this was justified by the genuine and substantial improvements they led to. We anticipate that the burden of operating a similar process in future should reduce now that HEIs have developed their internal processes, and could be reduced further by clarifying aspects of the guidance.

### Clearly defined circumstances

18. The table below provides a breakdown of the types of circumstance submitted as clearly defined, together with data on outcomes:

	<b>Total</b>	MPA	MPB	MPC	MPD
Total number of staff with clearly defined circumstance	<b>15,329</b>	4,097	3,021	4,433	3,778
Staff with ECR as a clearly-defined circumstance*	<b>10,099</b>	2,595	2,435	2,972	2,097
Staff with part-time working, career break or secondment as a clearly-defined circumstance*	<b>3,358</b>	772	410	886	1,290
Staff with maternity, paternity or adoption leave as a clearly-defined circumstance*	<b>2,601</b>	822	276	806	697
Percentage of submitted clearly defined circumstances which resulted in unclassified outputs	<b>0.38%</b>	0.37%	0.25%	0.65%	0.25%

\* Staff could be submitted with more than one type of clearly defined circumstance, so the sum of these types of circumstance is greater than the total number staff with clearly defined circumstances.

19. In comparison to RAE 2008, our panel considers the guidance and criteria relating to clearly defined circumstances to be much improved. Standardised ‘tariffs’ were provided for maternity, paternity and adoption leave; for part-time working, career breaks and secondments; and for early career researchers.

20. We recognise that allowances were not made for staff who had held ‘Teaching only’ contracts during the assessment period, and recommend that this be considered for a future exercise.

21. The panel secretariat checked that all clearly defined staff circumstances met the criteria and that the calculations against the ‘tariffs’ were correct. The REF team provided training to the secretariat to ensure consistent checking and application of the criteria. The sub-panels were responsible for making the decisions on these output reductions, based on the recommendations of the panel secretariat.

22. The panel secretariat have fed back that for many circumstances the checking process was straightforward. However, a small number of HEIs had systematically failed

to provide sufficient information to enable the secretariat to check whether the criteria had been applied correctly. Further information was required from these HEIs via ‘bulk’ audit.

23. The criteria for early career researchers involved a degree of interpretation, and the information provided by institutions varied. Where necessary the panel secretariat sought advice from their sub-panels to determine the appropriate point at which individuals were considered to be undertaking independent research. Further information was requested through audit where it was needed – in total 6.2 per cent of staff submitted with clearly defined circumstances were audited.

24. The secretariat recommends that for any future exercise, a template should be developed to clarify what information is required for particular circumstances, and further guidance given on the appropriate level of detail to be provided.

25. Having checked and audited the clearly defined circumstances, the sub-panels confirmed that the overwhelming majority of output reductions had met the criteria. A very small percentage (0.38 per cent) did not, resulting in one or more unclassified outputs.

### Complex circumstances

26. The table below provides the number of complex staff circumstances submitted, together with data on outcomes.

	<b>Total</b>	MPA	MPB	MPC	MPD
Total number of staff with complex circumstances	<b>1,033</b>	205	121	386	321
Percentage of submitted complex circumstances which resulted in unclassified outputs	<b>2.0%</b>	2.5%	1.7%	2.6%	1.3%

27. At least two members of EDAP reviewed each complex circumstance submitted to the exercise. Care was taken throughout to maintain confidentiality; a substantial improvement compared with the previous exercise. The majority of complex circumstance statements provided by HEIs were completely anonymous (HEIs had been advised to do so). Information relating to the specific units of assessment (UOAs) and HEI that had submitted the case was withheld from our panel members to further preserve anonymity. The sub-panels did not have access to the complex circumstances statements.

28. Our panel undertook a calibration exercise to establish key principles to guide its review. The panel generally sought to equate any months absent and other constraints on an individuals’ research work to the tariff for clearly defined reductions; and applied judgement to boundary cases as appropriate. We recognised the potential additional impact of multiple circumstances affecting an individual, and took due account of this when making recommendations.

29. We were impressed with the number of individuals who had been submitted with complex circumstances, which indicated that HEIs had recognised that complex

circumstances do not represent any kind of personal failure on the individual's part. Disclosed complex circumstances covered a range of conditions, with the majority relating to acute physical illnesses and ongoing disabilities, as well as caring responsibilities. A smaller number related to mental health conditions, the impact of bereavement on mental well-being, and other circumstances. Given the nature of the circumstances, we found it invaluable to include a general practitioner on the panel, and recommend that in future a clinical psychologist should also be included.

30. The majority of institutions provided an appropriate level of information to explain complex circumstances and the impact on the individual's ability to do research. However, a number of cases lacked a clear estimate of the proportion of an individual's productivity that had been affected by the circumstance(s); while some cases provided more information than was necessary. As this was the first time that individual circumstance information was collected and considered in this way, where cases were not well explained or where the estimates were missing, our panel sought as far as possible to make judgements by considering the available information in a positive light. For any future exercises, we recommend that a template is developed to clarify what information is required for particular circumstances, and further guidance given on the appropriate level of detail to be provided.

31. Our panel instigated audit queries only where further information was strictly necessary and could have a material effect on the recommendation made. We audited 5.4 per cent of complex circumstances. When raising audit queries, a need to maintain the professional integrity of the panel and ensure procedures and decisions were robust was balanced with a need to be sensitive and not discourage HEIs from disclosing circumstances, or use these processes in the future. Many of the audits related to the clearly defined element of cases or where an insufficient explanation of the impact of the circumstance was provided.

32. The overwhelming majority of complex cases were judged to have justified the output reductions. We were very encouraged by the relatively few cases that resulting in unclassified outputs. Of the 1,033 complex circumstance cases submitted to the REF, only 21 (2 per cent) were considered to be insufficient to justify the reduction in outputs and so resulted in an unclassified output. A number of these related to circumstances that were considered to be ineligible and did not relate to equality and diversity. No circumstance resulted in more than one 'missing output'.

33. No general misunderstanding of the guidance was found for a particular HEI, and the unclassified outputs were spread across institutions and type of complex circumstance. Our panel was impressed by statements which showed that the institution's employer responsibilities were being taken seriously. It is important that HEIs recognise that staff cannot be expected to routinely conduct their research outside of standard working hours, and the associated equality implications if this is not the case. Institutions should advocate an appropriate work-life balance and should play an active role in managing staff working hours. We recognised the particular pressures that might be associated with contracts for both teaching and research and the needs for this to be managed effectively.

34. The REF has provided a safe way for individuals to disclose circumstances of a sensitive nature, but it is important that HEIs provide support beyond this. Our panel is keen to encourage a cultural shift towards a more proactive duty of care by institutions. This should also help reduce institutional burden if a similar procedure is undertaken in a future exercise.

## **Recommendations**

Our panel makes the following recommendations:

- a. The lower rate of circumstances submitted in Main Panel B should be explored.
- b. Allowances for staff who hold 'Teaching only' contracts during the assessment period should be considered for a future exercise.
- c. For any future exercise, a template should be developed to clarify what information is required for particular circumstances, and further guidance given on the appropriate level of detail to be provided.
- d. Any future panel considering complex circumstances should include a general practitioner as well as a clinical psychologist.
- e. HEIs should give further consideration to their responsibilities in relation to reasonable adjustments for staff with complex circumstances and to the promotion of working cultures that enable an appropriate work-life balance for those with both teaching and research contracts.

## **Equality impact assessments**

35. Following our review of the Codes of practice, we read HEIs' final equality impact assessments, to get a sense of how well the sector had applied their Codes and to identify elements of good practice. We considered that the vast majority of EIAs were at least satisfactory, many with elements of good practice. Very few did not meet the basic requirements. Although we had not set out to review individual EIAs, we notified the relevant funding bodies of these.

36. There were positive elements to a large number of EIAs, with clear improvements made since the RAE. Particularly positive features were:

- EIAs that reflected the Codes as living documents and linked to future actions and anticipated impact
- clear and meaningful contextual information alongside the data analysis
- analysis that combined relevant staff characteristics (e.g. age and gender)
- clear and meaningful conclusions drawn from the analysis, linked to appropriate actions and commitments for improvement
- EIAs with clear contributions from HR and/or equality representatives as well as those who had been involved in REF processes

37. A small number of EIAs lacked a meaningful narrative alongside the data, offered no conclusions on the analysis, or simply accepted inequalities in staff selection as a general 'sector issue'. Work is still needed to improve the representation of minority groups and to improve gender equality within academia. We were impressed with HEIs which recognised these imperfections and made efforts to address them. It is important that institutions proactively address inequalities in staff selection rather than simply accept them as a general 'sector issue'.

38. The data provided in EIAs appeared to display different levels of gender equality in staff selection across the sector. This suggests that an analysis of staff selection for the whole sector (as planned by the funding bodies) would conceal differences at an institutional level. We recommend that the funding bodies' analysis of selection rates by staff characteristics should be undertaken and published at institutional level, as well as sector level. The institutional level analysis should include gender and any other characteristics for which there are sufficient data at this level.

39. EIAs indicated that the arrangements for output reductions have improved inclusion rates for staff. It is important that this approach is built upon in the future to embed real behavioural and cultural change and not just a desire to do well in research assessment.

40. In a future research assessment, a good practice template or a recommended standard of minimal content for EIAs would be beneficial. For smaller HEIs, some additional tailored guidance could help them conduct EIAs that are proportionate to the scale of their submissions.

41. Furthermore, measures which HEIs are undertaking to promote and support equality and diversity across their units, such as those indicated in the more fulsome EIAs, could be more explicitly assessed as part of the research environment element of the REF. This would require further work on identifying appropriate measures and associated data.

## **Recommendations**

Our panel makes the following recommendations:

- a. HEIs should proactively address inequalities in staff selection, rather than simply accept them as a general 'sector issue'.
- b. The funding bodies' analysis of selection rates by staff characteristics should be undertaken and published at institutional level, as well as sector level.
- c. In a future research assessment, a good practice template or a recommended standard of minimal content for EIAs would be beneficial, with additional guidance tailored toward smaller HEIs.
- d. The funding bodies should consider more explicitly assessing measures to promote and support equality and diversity, as part of the research environment element of a future REF exercise.

## Diversity of panel membership

42. The REF panel members and assessors were recruited in two rounds: in 2010 (before the criteria setting phase) and in 2013 (before the assessment phase of the exercise). Our panel provided advice to the funding bodies on the equality and diversity aspects of the recruitment process.

43. An analysis of the characteristics of the panel membership was produced following each round of recruitment, available on the REF website:  
[www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/analysisofpanelmembership/](http://www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/analysisofpanelmembership/)

44. Following the first round of recruitment, our panel was concerned about the representativeness of the membership and suggested additional efforts to make improvements in the second round (these are outlined in the 'Analysis of panel membership' report). Following the second round of recruitment, however, we were disappointed that little progress was made, even with the additional efforts to encourage recruitment from under-represented groups. We therefore concluded that more fundamental changes to the nomination and selection processes will be needed in future, to significantly improve the representativeness of the panels. All those involved in the process of nominating and selecting panel members will need to reflect on these issues and exercise a shared responsibility to advance equality and diversity.

## Recommendation

Our panel makes the following recommendation:

- a. To address the representativeness of future assessment panels, the funding bodies should identify ways of more effectively mainstreaming equality and diversity considerations amongst all participants, at all stages of the recruitment process.

## Conclusions and recommendations

45. This report has highlighted the overall success of the equality measures that were implemented in the REF and has commended the sector on the improvements made in terms of responding to this important agenda. To build on these advances and encourage further improvements in equality and diversity in the higher education sector, we make a number of recommendations for institutions and the funding bodies to consider. These are outlined below.

Recommendations regarding Codes of practice on the selection of staff:

- a. Submission of a Code of practice should remain a mandatory requirement for a future exercise.
- b. Further guidance should be provided to help HEIs explicitly link their Code and EIA.

Recommendations regarding individual staff circumstances:

- a. The lower rate of circumstances submitted in Main Panel B should be explored.

- b. Allowances for staff who hold 'Teaching only' contracts during the assessment period should be considered for a future exercise.
- c. For any future exercise, a template should be developed to clarify what information is required for particular circumstances, and further guidance given on the appropriate level of detail to be provided.
- d. Any future panel considering complex circumstances should include a general practitioner as well as a clinical psychologist.
- e. HEIs should give further consideration to their responsibilities in relation to reasonable adjustments for staff with complex circumstances and to the promotion of working cultures that enable an appropriate work-life balance for those with both teaching and research contracts.

Recommendations regarding equality impact assessments:

- a. HEIs should proactively address inequalities in staff selection, rather than simply accept them as a general 'sector issue'.
- b. The funding bodies' analysis of selection rates by staff characteristics should be undertaken and published at institutional level, as well as sector level.
- c. In a future research assessment, a good practice template or a recommended standard of minimal content for EIAs would be beneficial, with additional guidance tailored toward smaller HEIs.
- d. The funding bodies should consider more explicitly assessing measures to promote and support equality and diversity, as part of the research environment element of a future REF exercise.

Recommendations regarding panel membership:

- a. To address the representativeness of future assessment panels, the funding bodies should identify ways of more effectively mainstreaming equality and diversity considerations amongst all participants, at all stages of the recruitment process.

## **Annex A**

### **Summary of equality and diversity measures in the REF**

#### **Codes of practice**

1. Each institution making a submission to the REF was required to develop, document and apply a code of practice (COP) on their selection of staff to support the fair and transparent selection of staff. Guidance on COPs was published in REF 02.2011 (<http://www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/2011-02/>). Institutions submitted their COPs in advance of the submissions deadline for review by EDAP and approval by the funding bodies, as a condition of making submissions to the REF. EDAP advised the funding bodies on whether each code adhered to the guidance, or identified any areas requiring improvement, in which case the HEI was required to submit a revised COP for approval.

#### **Equality impact assessments**

2. All HEIs were required to conduct an equality impact assessment (EIA) on their policy and procedures for selecting staff for the REF. The EIA informed institution's COP and was kept under review as the submission was prepared. The funding bodies expected every institution to then publish their final EIA after submissions were made. Guidance on EIAs was provided in REF 02.2011 (<http://www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/2011-02/>). Following their review of HEIs' COPs, EDAP decided it would be useful to consider HEIs' EIAs and these were then gathered by the REF team later in the exercise for EDAP to consider at sector level (not making judgements about individual institutions).

#### **Individual staff circumstances**

3. Staff were normally submitted to the REF with four research outputs, and individuals could be returned with fewer than four outputs if they had experienced circumstances that constrained their ability to conduct research during the assessment period. Initial guidance on individual staff circumstances was provided in REF 02.2011. Following the consultation on the panel criteria, some revisions were made and the final guidance was provided in the 'Panel criteria and working methods' (REF 01.2012, <http://www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/2012-01/>).

4. In order to develop a clear and consistent approach, all individual staff circumstances were identified as either 'clearly defined' or 'complex'. Clearly defined circumstances were:

- qualifying as an early career researcher
- absence from work due to working part-time, secondments or career breaks
- qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave
- predefined circumstances relating to particular career pathways were also eligible within UOAs 1-6.

5. The reductions in research outputs for clearly defined circumstances were set out in two tables:

**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

**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

6. Complex circumstances required a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs. These were:

- disability
- ill health or injury
- mental health conditions
- 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 within the clearly defined route
- other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member)
- gender reassignment
- other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed at paragraph 190 of ‘guidance of submissions’ or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

7. Where an individual had experienced a combination of clearly defined and complex circumstances, these were submitted as complex.

8. Sub-panels were responsible for decisions relating to clearly defined circumstances, based on recommendations made by the panel secretariat. The four main panel chairs were responsible for decisions relating to complex circumstances, based on review and recommendations made by EDAP.

## **Panel membership**

9. In appointing the panels, the funding bodies had due regard to the desirability of ensuring that the overall body of members reflected the diversity of the research community, including in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, scope and focus of their home institution, and geographical location.

10. Sub-panel members and assessors were nominated by subject associations, learned societies or other organisations with an interest in research. Nominating bodies were encouraged to nominate individuals that reflected the full diversity of the community. In recommending the membership of panels from amongst those nominated, sub-panel chairs were required to show due consideration of the diversity of the panels.

## **Research environment**

11. As part of the assessment of the 'research environment' element, institutions were invited to include explanation and evidence of how they support and promote equality and diversity. Sub-panels took account of this in assessing the research environment.

## **Analysis of staff selection**

12. The Higher Education Statistics Agency collects data about staff for each academic year (AY). The data for AY 2014/15 covers the REF census date for staff submitted to the REF and provides information on the equality and diversity characteristics of staff submitted to the REF. These data will be analysed to produce a report detailing the relative selection rates of staff according to disability, age, gender, ethnicity, nationality and early career researcher status.

## **Annex B**

### **Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel: Terms of reference and membership**

#### **Background**

1. The four UK higher education funding bodies are committed to supporting and promoting equality and diversity in research careers, and strongly encourage institutions to submit the work of all their excellent researchers to the REF.
2. There are a number of measures in the REF to support and promote equality (set out in REF 02.2011). These were informed by a review of the equality measures taken in the 2008 RAE, and the work of the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG), which was established in 2010 to advise the REF team and funding bodies on developing these measures. The EDAG concluded its work in April 2011.

#### **Terms of Reference**

3. The REF Equalities and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) has been established from 2012 until 2014, to provide advice to the REF team, REF panel chairs and the UK funding bodies on the implementation and evaluation of the REF equality and diversity measures.
4. Specific roles of the EDAP are:
  - a. To examine institutions' codes of practice on the selection of staff for the REF (to be submitted to the REF team by 31 July 2012), and advise the funding bodies on their adherence to the published requirements.
  - b. To consider all cases of complex individual staff circumstances (to be submitted to the REF by 29 November 2013), and make recommendations to the REF main panel chairs on each case.
  - c. To advise the funding bodies on their approach to sector-level analysis of selection rates of staff for the REF in terms of their equality and diversity characteristics; and on the funding bodies' plans for evaluating the equality and diversity measures in the REF.
  - d. To advise the REF team and/or REF panel chairs on general issues relating to equality and diversity aspects of the assessment (for example, the assessment of relevant aspects of the research environment). Any such advice will be of a general nature; the EDAP will not have access to submissions (other than REF1b) or advise on the quality assessment of individual submissions.
5. The chair of the EDAP will undertake an ambassadorial role to explain and promote the measures taken to support equality and diversity in the REF.
6. On conclusion of its work in 2014, the EDAP will produce a report providing an account of its work and general observations about the material it had considered (including identifying good practice and issues for further consideration).

## Working methods

7. The EDAP will meet as necessary throughout 2012-14 to undertake its work, as follows:

- a. **Codes of practice.** During 2012 EDAP will examine all codes of practice submitted to the REF team by the published deadline. It will provide advice to the funding bodies on whether each submitted code adheres to the published requirements (as set out in Part 4 of REF 02.2011). Where EDAP advises that an institution's code does not adhere to the requirements, EDAP will state which specific aspect(s) of the requirements have not been met.
- b. **Complex individual staff circumstances.** During 2014 EDAP will consider all cases of individual staff circumstances that are submitted to the REF by HEIs as 'complex'. It will also consider cases submitted as 'clearly defined' that REF sub-panels refer to EDAP as more suitably being considered as 'complex'. EDAP will make recommendations to the main panel chairs on whether the circumstances in each case justify the reduction in outputs. EDAP may also recommend to the REF team that verification of the submitted information should be sought through an audit. During 2012, EDAP will assist in providing guidance to institutions about complex staff circumstances, by contributing to hypothetical examples that include EDAPs 'recommendations', to be published by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU).
- c. **Decision making.** EDAP will take collective decisions about its advice and recommendations, in accordance with the published requirements and criteria. EDAP will debate the reasons for its decisions in sufficient detail to reach conclusions based on its collective judgement. EDAP will seek to achieve consensus on its decisions; if a consensus cannot be achieved, decisions will be taken by majority vote, with the chair holding a casting vote.
- d. **Reporting.** EDAP will report its advice and recommendations to the funding bodies and the main panel chairs through the EDAP secretariat. The chair of EDAP may also be invited to attend meetings of the REF Steering Group, main panel chairs, and/or the main panels, to explain EDAP's work and advice.
- e. **Confidentiality.** EDAP will have access to those parts of submissions that are required to undertake its role, specifically, institutions' submitted codes of practice and cases of complex individual staff circumstances. EDAP members will be bound by a confidentiality agreement equivalent to that of REF main and sub-panel members.
- f. **Conflicts of interest.** When examining codes of practice and considering complex individual circumstances, EDAP members will adopt the same procedures for declaring and managing conflicts of interest that apply to the REF main and sub-panels.

## Membership

8. The membership has been appointed by the chief executives (or equivalent) of the four UK funding bodies, drawn from nominations made by the four REF main panel chairs, the ECU and the four UK funding bodies.

9. Membership includes individuals with expertise in equality and diversity issues affecting research careers, with experience in research leadership and management, and members drawn from across the four REF main panel areas.

Professor Dianne Berry (chair)	Director of postgraduate research studies and researcher development, University of Reading. Formerly chaired EDAG and the ECU steering group reviewing equality and diversity in the RAE 2008.
Ali Jarvis (deputy chair)	Freelance consultant (formerly Director of the Commission for Racial Equality in Scotland, and Director of Stonewall in Scotland)
Anne Boddington	Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Brighton University <i>Member of Sub-panel 34: Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory</i>
Professor Mary Fowler	Professor of Geophysics and Dean of Science, Royal Holloway, University of London <i>Member of Sub-panel 7: Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences</i>
Professor Lynne Frostick	Professor of Physical Geography, University of Hull <i>Member of Sub-panel 17: Geography, Environmental Studies and Archaeology</i>
Professor Trisha Greenhalgh	Healthcare Innovation and Policy Unit Lead, Queen Mary, University of London <i>Member of Main Panel A</i>
Professor Colin Harvey	Professor of Human Rights Law, Queen's University Belfast <i>Member of Sub-panel 20: Law</i>
Patrick Johnson	Head of Equality and Diversity, University of Manchester
Dr Christine Nightingale	Head of Equality and Diversity, De Montfort University
Professor Tracy Palmer	Head of the Division of Molecular Microbiology, Dundee University <i>Member of Sub-panel 5: Biological Sciences</i>
Dr Terry Threadgold	Pro Vice Chancellor Staff and Diversity, Cardiff University
Professor Chris Wickham	Chichele Professor of Medieval History, University of Oxford <i>Chair of Sub-panel 30: History</i>

The panel secretariat was provided by the REF team.

ECU observers to the panel were Gary Loke and Ellen Pugh.