



**UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON**

**CODE OF PRACTICE ON THE PREPARATION OF SUBMISSIONS AND  
SELECTION OF STAFF FOR REF 2014**

1. *Introduction*

- 1.1. The primary purpose of this Code of Practice is to ensure fairness and equality of treatment of all staff in our preparations for our submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014, and to aid us in ensuring that all eligible staff are considered for selection. We are committed to maximising the opportunities, both for individual colleagues and for our University, which will result from a successful engagement with the REF.
- 1.2. We subscribe to and endorse the REF's position that institutions should promote equality and diversity when preparing submissions to the REF, including the promotion of an inclusive environment.
- 1.3. Managerial decisions will have to be made as part of our preparations for the REF, including selection of individual members of staff and their research outputs, and other contributory information. This Code of Practice sets out the principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity governing this process. It ensures that our selection procedures are fair and promote equality and diversity, provides the basis for all stages and aspects of the process, and lays down operating criteria and responsibilities for all concerned.
- 1.4. This Code of Practice is informed by various existing documents forming our Staff Handbook, including but not limited to the Equality and Diversity Policy and framework for action; the Grievance Procedure; the Code of Practice for the Management of Sickness Absence; the Flexible Employment Policy; and the Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave Policy. All of the named documents are available online at <http://www.uel.ac.uk/hrservices/services/handbook/>. The Director of HR Services has confirmed that the Code of Practice is consistent with the above-listed documents.
- 1.5. This Code of Practice is available on our Intranet (<https://www.uel.ac.uk/secure/research/ref-internal.htm>) and will be well-publicised throughout our University. Hard copies can be obtained on request from the REF Manager. A detailed Communications Plan follows as Appendix 2.
- 1.6. This Code of Practice has been established in the light of a REF requirement that such a policy is developed, adopted and documented. It will be submitted to the REF team at HEFCE for approval, attending to all the equal opportunities legislation in force on the submission date. Our Vice-Chancellor will confirm to the REF team that in making our preparations this Code of Practice has been adhered to.
- 1.7. This Code of Practice has been developed with the assistance of our Equality and Diversity Committee and was endorsed by them at their meeting of 14 February 2012. The initial draft was also submitted to and approved by REF Advisory Group, Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee and Academic Board. (See sections



5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 below for further information about the role of these committees within the institutional governance structure). This draft was approved by HEFCE in December 2012.

- 1.8. We are committed to periodically reviewing the Code of Practice to ensure that it takes into account and matches the emerging experience of managing the cycle of preparations for REF 2014. We expect that such review will follow each mock REF round.
- 1.9. The University recognises its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, the Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 and the Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002. We also undertake to fulfil any obligations resulting from future legislative activity including providing training for designated staff on any such new legislation. (See section 12 below for further information around training).

## 2. *Underlying Principles*

- 2.1. The precepts laid down in this Code of Practice will be consistently applied, mindful of the need to avoid unlawful discrimination in terms of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, in accordance with the University's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.2. Our aim is to ensure that our overall research profile is appropriately reflected in the results of REF 2014 and maximises our institutional academic reputation.
- 2.3. The Committees and Groups involved in our preparations for REF 2014 are: Academic Board; Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee; the Equality & Diversity Committee; the UEL REF Advisory Group (RAG); the Code of Practice Working Group; and a number of UoA working groups. These Committees and Groups are discussed and defined in more detail below (see sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11).
- 2.4. Operational or managerial requirements may necessitate the creation of other working groups in order to progress our REF preparations. This Code of Practice applies to all groups engaged in REF preparations, whether identified within it or not.
- 2.5. Recommendations and decisions in relation to quality of research and appropriate thresholds for UoAs are made on the basis of the professional judgement of designated individuals, identified as discussed below (see section 4), with appropriate expertise and experience who are fully cognisant with this Code. The assessment of the research of potential Category A and C staff, undertaken as part of the internal peer and research management evaluations, will be supplemented by advice from external reviewers (see section 13 below) who have, wherever possible, both subject expertise and RAE assessment experience.
- 2.6. Decisions relating to the content and nature of the submission will be taken by the Vice-Chancellor in his capacity as Chair of Academic Board (see section 6 below), acting on the recommendation of Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (see section 8), or by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, acting specifically with the delegated authority of the Vice-Chancellor in this respect.



- 2.7. Schools have the primary responsibility, carried out through their UoA Working Group(s) (see section 11), to identify potential Category A and C staff, to carry out internal reviews of the research of staff, including wider research activity as defined for REF under research environment and the impact of research, and to make recommendations on which individuals should be submitted to REF 2014.
- 2.8. Individual researchers have a responsibility to provide, in a timely fashion, their research portfolio for review by UoA Working Groups. It is the responsibility of each potentially submittable member of staff to provide such information as is necessary for the relevant UoA Working Group to carry out a timely internal and external assessment of the research of that member of staff. The failure to supply the relevant information in a timely, accurate and complete form may prejudice any future appeal against non-inclusion in the REF submission, due regard being taken by the University of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.9. The UEL REF Advisory Group (see section 9 below) assists in the institutional review and quality checking process and together with each UoA Coordinator will make recommendations for consideration by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and subsequently by the Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (as outlined in paragraph 2.6 above).
- 2.10. We encourage full consultation between all stakeholders prior to making our institutional return to REF 2014. We recognise the value of providing detailed feedback to staff members being considered for submission in timely fashion, particularly where such advice may be central to professional development activity or other work on which REF submission may depend.
- 2.11. Our Research & Knowledge Exchange Strategy 2011-2014 includes various opportunities such as mentoring, a professional development programme, and access to institutional research sabbaticals and a scheme providing research interns. These are open to all members of staff, enabling them to build upon and enhance their research strength and profile.
- 2.12. The primary objective of such investment is to increase the capacity for and profile of research and scholarly excellence within our University, taking into account the need to fulfil our staff, student and institutional aspirations in line with our mission. Nevertheless we recognise that from time to time it will be necessary to adjust our overall investment strategy to align with timescales imposed upon us by HEFCE and the REF, and subject to budgetary constraints.
- 2.13. The University also subscribes to the *Concordat on the Career Development of Researchers*, and has implemented its key principles, including those around recruitment and retention of excellent researchers, who are an essential part of the development and delivery of world-class research. We seek to equip and support our researchers to be adaptable and flexible in the global research environment, recognising and promoting the importance of personal and career development, and lifelong learning, at all career stages. We aim to promote diversity and equality in all aspects of the recruitment and career development of researchers.



### 3. Underlying Practice

- 3.1. In brief the role of the various committees and working groups outlined below (see sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11) is to provide assistance, support and advice in the preparation of draft submissions for consideration by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and to enable the Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor to make decisions as described above (see paragraph 2.6). This will occur through several activities:
- Initial mapping/data collection exercises
  - Development of draft/mock UoA submissions
  - Preparation of final recommendations for UoA submissions.
- 3.2. The general aim of the mapping/data collection exercises is to consider information and recommendations concerning individuals who have provided evidence justifying their inclusion in the University's draft REF submission and to:
- Determine if there is sufficient 'critical mass' of high quality research going on in the relevant subject area, which justifies a submission.
  - Establish under which UoAs, if any, we propose to make submissions.
  - If we are unable to establish that a viable submission can be made within a given UoA, establish if there is research of sufficient quality and fit that could contribute to other UoAs.
  - Agree how we propose to allocate named researchers within given UoAs.
- 3.3. Later, when giving consideration to draft UoA-based submissions, consideration will be given to evidence developed by individual UoA Working Groups (see section 11 below), including their internal assessment of the research portfolio of each potential Category A and C member of staff. It is expected that information related to individual researchers will include:
- The number and quality of outputs within the assessment period
  - Other issues, including personal circumstances, which are relevant to the University's duty in complying with Equality and Diversity legislation.
- 3.4. This evidence will be reviewed in the context of:
- Published panel, sub panel and other relevant REF criteria
  - A variety of benchmark data
  - Subject, discipline or unit of assessment norms
  - Comments received from external reviewers
- Recommendations will then be made to assist in the further development of submissions.
- 3.5. The criteria used during the above activities are the totality of the appropriate guidance published by the REF team at HEFCE, specifically the *Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions* (REF 02/2011), the *Panel Criteria and Working Methods* (REF 01/2012), and any supplementary guidance published by the REF team, all of which can be downloaded from the REF website at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk). All personnel involved have been fully informed about personal and institutional responsibilities with regard to equal opportunities. The decision-making and selection processes referred to above and the criteria used are in accordance with the above-listed legislation. UEL policies and procedures relating to personal circumstances (see section 16 below) are available online at <http://www.uel.ac.uk/hrservices/services/handbook/>.

- 3.6. All committees and working groups recognise that they cannot proceed with discussions of an individual's research activity in the absence of that individual or without being fully cognisant of all facts relating to that individual's research activity.
- 3.7. The REF Advisory Group (see section 9 below) and all UoA Working Groups (see section 11 below) will keep records of their recommendations which can be obtained on request from the appropriate Group Chair or Servicing Officer. Notes of meetings of the REF Advisory Group can be downloaded electronically at <https://www.uel.ac.uk/secure/research/ref-internal.htm>.
- 3.8. The preparations for REF 2014 will necessarily go through a number of iterations. It is expected that by the end of July 2013 the University's preparations will be sufficiently far advanced to have confidence in the final shape and size of each UoA's submission to REF 2014. By this point, staff will be advised of the situation through their Schools/UoAs. However, as noted above, we recognise the value of providing timely feedback and ideally all staff will be kept fully informed of progress and recommendations by their UoA coordinators as submissions are developed.
- 3.9. In the event that circumstances change significantly between July 2013 and the UEL deadline for submission to REF on 15 November 2013, modifications can still be made where a justifiable case can be made. This includes both the production of additional eligible research outputs, and material changes to individual personal circumstances (see section 16 below).
- 3.10.A Communications Plan follows as Appendix 2 which explains how we will communicate the criteria, timescales for selection of staff, provision of feedback on decisions, and appeals mechanisms, to all staff.

#### 4. *Designated Staff*

- 4.1. Senior management personnel who have *ex officio* roles in preparations for the REF 2014, including the selection of staff for submission are:
  - a. Vice-Chancellor
  - b. Deputy Vice-Chancellor
- 4.2. Centrally-located personnel who have *ex officio* roles in preparations for the REF 2014, including the selection of staff for submission are:
  - a. The REF Manager
- 4.3. School-located personnel who have *ex officio* roles in UEL's preparations including the selection of staff for submission for the REF 2014 are:
  - a. Deans of School
  - b. Research and Knowledge Exchange Leaders (or equivalent, due to certain local arrangements)
  - c. UoA Coordinators (who may also be Research and Knowledge Exchange Leaders; see role descriptor at 4.7a/b below)
- 4.4. All *ex officio* personnel and UoA Coordinators will be fully cognisant of this Code of Practice, the REF Guidance appropriate to UEL's likely submission, and the relevant legislation.



- 4.5. The roles undertaken by the following appointed *ex officio* personnel are:
- a. The Vice-Chancellor is the chief executive of the University of East London and will make the decision on the institutional submission to REF 2014 in his capacity as Chair of Academic Board, acting on the recommendation of Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee.
  - b. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, is Chair of the Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee, REF Advisory Group and the Code of Practice Working Group, and is the senior officer responsible for overseeing our institutional response to the REF. As discussed above (at paragraph 2.6) the Vice-Chancellor may specifically delegate the decision on the institutional submission to REF 2014 to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
  - c. The REF Manager is responsible for providing advice and support on REF requirements, and for coordinating institutional preparations, at a technical level. He is Servicing Officer to the REF Advisory Group and Code of Practice Working Group, and is a co-opted member of the R&KE Committee and several of the UoA Working Groups.
  - d. Deans of School are responsible for management and strategic development of the activities of their Schools, including the research activities undertaken within them. All Deans are members of Academic Board, and representatives of the Deans sit on the REF Advisory Group.
- 4.6. The post-holders of the appointed *ex officio* roles listed in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.5 above were appointed to the University of East London in accordance with the University's appointment procedures, and their roles include job descriptions which include management and support of the REF.
- 4.7. The roles undertaken by the following allocated *ex officio* personnel are:
- a. Research and Knowledge Exchange Leaders, or equivalent, are responsible for the leadership and direction of research and knowledge exchange activities within their Schools, including enhancement and development of such activities. All R&KE Leaders or equivalent post-holders are members of R&KE Committee. Depending on the exact arrangements in their Schools, R&KE Leaders may be themselves UoA Coordinators, or may be overseeing the work of several UoA coordinators.
  - b. UoA Coordinators are responsible for the preparation and development of a single UoA submission for REF, supported by a UoA Working Group or equivalent within their Schools. All UoA Coordinators are members of the REF Advisory Group.
- 4.8. The post-holders of the allocated *ex officio* roles listed in paragraph 4.7 above were appointed to the University of East London in accordance with the University's appointment procedures, typically on an academic contract as Principal Lecturer, Reader or Professor. Their role as specified here was allocated to them by their Dean of School.



## 5. *The Institutional Governance of the University of East London*

- 5.1. As a higher education corporation, whose structures of governance derive from the 1988 Education Reform Act and the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, the governing arrangements of the University of East London are set out in an instrument of government (defined in the 1988 Act), and articles of government, which are generally very similar, having all been subject to the approval of the Secretary of State for Education.
- 5.2. The constitution and terms of reference of those committees germane to the REF framework is described in more detail in the following sections (6 to 8). Their place within our overall committee structure is defined by the Instrument and Articles of Government and has at its head the Board of Governors, which is responsible for defining the overall educational mission of the institution. By statute, we are required to have an Academic Board, which is responsible for the academic framework (see section 6 below). In order to carry out these responsibilities the Board is entitled to establish standing committees with clearly defined remits. One of these is the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (see section 8).
- 5.3. The Equality and Diversity Committee (see section 7 below) has been established to aid the fulfilment of our statutory obligations under equality legislation. Although not a Committee reporting to the Academic Board, or a standing committee of the Board of Governors, in fulfilment of those statutory obligations it is required, *inter alia*, to report to Governors on the delivery of our equality and diversity strategies.

## 6. *Terms of Reference and Membership of UEL Academic Board*

- 6.1. The Terms of Reference and Membership for Academic Board are as follows.
- 6.2. There shall be an Academic Board of no more than forty members, comprising the Principal (who shall be Chair) and such other members of staff and students as may from time to time be approved by the Board of Governors. The Principal may nominate a Deputy Chair from among the members of the Academic Board to take the chair in his or her Place. The period of appointment of members and the selection or election of members shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Governors.
- 6.3. The Academic Board shall consist of the following:
  - a. the Principal [the Vice-Chancellor]
  - b. up to three holders of senior posts;
  - c. not fewer than twenty but not more than twenty four holders of such posts as Dean of Faculty, Head of School or Head of other teaching or nonteaching Departments, or their equivalent as may be determined from time to time by Bye Laws
  - d. a teaching staff member elected by and from each Faculty or School, or their equivalent, as may be identified within the University's establishment;
  - e. two non-teaching members elected by and from the non-teaching staff
  - f. two members elected by and from all staff, representing the University as a whole;
  - g. three students nominated by the student body; and
  - h. up to four co-opted members, if membership drawn from the foregoing provisions permits.



6.4. The Academic Board shall be responsible for:

- a. general issues relating to the research, scholarship teaching and courses at the University including criteria for the admission of students; the appointment and removal of internal and external examiners; policies and procedures for assessment and examination of the academic performance of students; the content of the curriculum; academic standards and the validation and review of courses; the procedures for the award of qualifications and honorary academic titles including the powers to revoke such awards in accordance with section 76 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992; and the procedures for the expulsion of students for academic reasons: such responsibilities shall be subject to the requirements of validating and accrediting bodies;
- b. considering the development of the academic activities of the University and the resources needed to support them and for advising the Principal and the Board of Governors thereon;
- c. advising on such other matters as the Board of Governors or the Principal may refer to the Academic Board.

6.5. A number of Committees report to Academic Board, including the Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee (see section 8 below), the approved minutes of which are submitted to Academic Board on a regular basis.

7. *Terms of Reference and Membership of UEL Equality & Diversity Committee*

7.1. The Equality & Diversity Committee exists to promote inclusive ways of working at the University of East London. To that end the Committee looks for role models and exemplar institutions from whom it can learn, and, through the dissemination of good practice, the Committee seeks to encourage an active commitment to inclusive practices by students and staff.

7.2. The Committee seeks to work with our internal community to ensure that current and future equality legislation of whatever nature is embedded in our policies and practices and that all forms of discriminatory behaviour are eliminated, and that diversity is actively celebrated.

7.3. The Committee's main responsibilities are:

- a. To sponsor effective development and implementation of equality policies and action plans in conjunction with the Equality & Diversity Unit.
- b. To provide practical support through its members to the work of the Equality & Diversity Unit and to UEL's schools and services.
- c. To keep under regular review all of our functions with regard to equality and diversity, and to disseminate best practice.
- d. To raise awareness of equality and diversity issues amongst staff and students through providing practical support to the organisation of awareness-raising events, such as Black History Month and International Women's week.
- e. To receive and review statistical data from schools and services in relation to the monitoring of equality and diversity activity and targets, including case work on appeals, complaints and discipline.
- f. To receive items for discussion from the Race Network, the Gender Network, LGBT Network, and the Disability Sub-Committee.
- g. Generally to do all such things as will promote equality and diversity among our university community.



- h. To make regular reports to the University Management Team on the implementation of the equality action plan and the achievement of equality targets.

7.4. The membership of Equality & Diversity Committee is as follows:

- a. Vice-Chancellor (*ex officio*)
- b. Pro Vice-Chancellor (Services and Infrastructure) (*ex officio*)
- c. Senior HR Manager (Policy and Operations) (*ex officio*)
- d. Director of the Mentoring and Equality Unit/NMC (*ex officio*)
- e. Chairs of sub-committees and networks (disability, race, gender, and LGBT) (*ex officio*)
- f. Two deans of school (appointed by UMT)
- g. Two directors of service (appointed by UMT)
- h. Two students (appointed by UELSU)
- i. Three members of staff (appointed by the joint unions)
- j. Six school and service Equality & Diversity Leaders (appointed)
- k. Other members may be co-opted by the Committee for their particular expertise

8. *Terms of Reference and Membership of UEL Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee*

8.1. The Terms of Reference of Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee are as follows:

- a. To stimulate a culture of research, enterprise and innovation
- b. To monitor at an institutional level the implementation and delivery of our Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy
- c. To advise Academic Board on policy and strategy for our research, and knowledge exchange activity, and to raise the external profile of the University in these areas
- d. To determine benchmarked performance indicators for our research and knowledge exchange activity and to keep these under regular review
- e. To ensure there is synergy between the strategies and policies to promote research and knowledge exchange and other institutional strategies
- f. To develop appropriate and effective procedures relating to the conduct of research and knowledge transfer and to monitor their implementation
- g. To oversee institutional preparations and arrangements for the Research Excellence Framework exercise (and any successor procedure) and to receive from the DVC (Academic) recommendations for the distribution of funding derived from any such assessment exercise
- h. To receive from schools and services the research and knowledge exchange sections of their annual strategic plan
- i. To make recommendations to Academic Board on the approval and monitoring of Research Institutes and Centres
- j. To oversee staff and professional development activities to ensure that staff have the requisite skills and expertise to support the University's objectives in terms of research and knowledge exchange
- k. To review policy and procedure for the appointment of fixed term contract research and knowledge exchange staff
- l. To advise University Management Team on the resources necessary for the successful conduct of research, knowledge exchange and related activities

8.2. The membership comprises:

- a. Director of Intellectual Property (*ex officio*)
- b. Director of Library and Learning Services (*ex officio*)
- c. Director of the Graduate School (*ex officio*)
- d. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair) (*ex officio*)
- e. School Research and Knowledge Exchange Leaders (*ex officio*)
- f. A Director of a Research Institute (nominated)
- g. A representative of External and Strategic Development Services (nominated)
- h. A representative of the Learning and Teaching Committee (nominated)
- i. Two representatives of the Readers and Professors (elected)
- j. Two research and knowledge exchange contract research staff (elected)
- k. Up to two co-options (co-opted)

9. *Terms of Reference and Membership of UEL REF Advisory Group*

9.1. The UEL REF Advisory Group acts as an umbrella panel to help steer and shape the University's REF submission. The REF Advisory Group has the following terms of reference:

- a. Advise the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on any emerging implications of REF proposals, criteria and submission guidelines.
- b. Ensure that effective and appropriate institutional action is undertaken to support research productivity, grant capture and research student progression in line with REF proposals.
- c. Assist in peer review and assessment of external assessors' reports and advise on final selection of UoAs and submittable staff, outputs and relevant evidence of impact for submission to REF.
- d. Advise on and evaluate impact statements and case studies.
- e. Advise the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on activity elsewhere in the sector in preparation for REF.
- f. Advise the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on equal opportunity issues in respect of institutional preparations for REF.

9.2. The REF Advisory Group has the following membership:

- a. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
- b. The REF Manager
- c. Up to five members of central/departmental staff whose ordinary job role/remit involves REF in some way (e.g., colleagues responsible for research degree students or research grant capture)
- d. Up to two members of staff with prior RAE, and/or current REF panel membership experience
- e. Up to two Deans of Schools
- f. Up to two representatives of Early Career Researchers
- g. The Unit of Assessment Coordinators

9.3. Deputies are permitted to attend in the absence of their principals. On occasion the Advisory Group will also include members drawn from Strategic Planning, HR and Financial Services, where and if necessary.

9.4. The REF Advisory Group operates in practice as a working group of the R&KE Committee (see section 8 above), and reports on its activities are a standing item for the R&KE Committee's agenda.

## 10. *Terms of Reference and Membership of Code of Practice Working Group*

10.1. COP Working Group was established in October 2011 to undertake on behalf of RAG the key role of drafting the required *Code of Practice on the Development of Submissions and Selection of Staff for REF 2014*, and to consider and act upon equality and diversity issues in relation to REF. The Code of Practice Working Group will:

10.2. Develop a Code of Practice on Selecting Staff for inclusion in REF 2014 submissions. This will:

- a. Follow the guidance provided by HEFCE/REF to assist HEIs in the development of their Code of Practice, including materials developed by the Equality Challenge Unit.
- b. Adhere to relevant legislation, notably the Equality Act (2010) but including all pertinent Acts and other regulations.
- c. Ensure that the precepts laid down within it are consistently applied, mindful of the need to avoid unlawful discrimination in terms of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, in accordance with the University's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- d. Follow principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity in providing clear details of the processes and structures to be used by the University, encompassing role definitions, committee membership and formation, individual and committee responsibilities and terms of reference; selection criteria, communications methods, appeals processes, timescales and record keeping, etc.
- e. Include a programme of communication activity to disseminate the Code of Practice and explain the processes related to the selection of staff for submission embodied therein.
- f. Be submitted to the REF team not later than the deadline of 31 July 2012
- g. Ensure that the REF Code of Practice is developed and implemented within the context of UEL's existing policies and commitments on equality, diversity and human rights i.e. the Code of Practice will be incorporated within the institution's equality and human rights framework for action and updated or amended as required in line with the broader aims and objectives of that framework

10.3. Ensure that the Code of Practice takes account of and complements institutional research strategy and activity.

10.4. Monitor the operation of the Code of Practice through systematic and thorough equality impact assessments (EIAs) at an institutional level, and at UoA level as deemed necessary (see section 14 below).

10.5. Revise and improve the Code of Practice as required based on lessons learned during early stage monitoring.

10.6. Communicate and embed the Code of Practice in REF activities across the institution including, *inter alia*:

- a. Recommending, implementing and mandating relevant training on equality and diversity tailored to the requirements of the REF

- b. Overseeing publication of the Code of Practice including its communication to members of staff on periods of extended leave, secondment, etc
- c. Providing briefing materials on the Code of Practice for external assessors

10.7. Act as the institutional equivalent of the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel. This includes:

- a. Receiving and considering individual claims for reductions in the number of outputs to be submitted to ensure consistency of approach and treatment across the institution
- b. Providing advice and guidance on any equality and diversity issues arising where related to the preparation of REF submissions

10.8. Undertake and publish, after the submission deadline on 29 November 2013, an EIA based on the final version Submission, as submitted to REF for assessment.

10.9. To meet as required to discharge its responsibilities under this Code of Practice until at least the end of the 2013 calendar year.

10.10. Membership comprises:

- a. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor
- b. The REF Manager
- c. Up to six members of REF Advisory Group
- d. A representative of HR Services
- e. A representative of the Vice-Chancellor

10.11. The Code of Practice Working Group is a sub-group of the REF Advisory Group (see section 9 above), and submits its approved minutes to the latter on a regular basis.

## 11. *Terms of Reference and Membership of UoA Working Groups.*

11.1. Much of the detailed preparatory work for the REF will be undertaken by UoA Working Groups. As noted above the precise spread and remit of UoA Working Groups is as dictated by the needs and requirements of our ongoing preparations and will evolve over time. Different Schools have varying structures depending on local circumstances. All Schools, for example, have their own Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee, which in some cases also act as the School or UoA Working Group, especially where the School is home to only a single UoA. In those with multiple UoAs, dedicated Working Groups may have been created, some possibly dealing with two UoAs where boundary issues are presently unclear. It is not appropriate nor would it be effective, to constrain UoA-level preparations by imposing a standard structure upon them.

11.2. Nonetheless the need for a consistent operational approach across the University in each of these UoA Working Groups however constituted is essential, hence the single set of Terms of Reference and core membership applying to all UoA Working Groups following below.

11.3. The terms of reference for the UoA Working Groups are:

11.4. To support the UEL REF Advisory Group in the management of the REF process. This includes:



- a. Making reports either as requested by the REF Advisory Group or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on specific preparations and progress within the UoA(s) assigned to it;
- b. Raising any issues and concerns, or examples of good practice, to help promote effective and appropriate action across the University to meet REF preparations;
- c. Keeping the REF Advisory Group, and, as appropriate, the REF Manager and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor fully informed.

11.5. To undertake preparations for and steer and shape the submission of the specific UoA or UoAs assigned to it, and assist other UoA Working Groups with their preparations as may be required, as part of our University's overall submission to REF 2014. Such activities take place within the operational framework established in the Code of Practice for the Preparation of Submissions and Selection of Staff for REF 2014. This includes:

- a. Assessing and recommending for selection individual staff outputs through a process of peer review;
- b. Advising on and evaluating the development of required text statements relating to outputs, the research environment and research impact statements and case studies;
- c. Assessing external reviewers' reports and other statistical and other data as may be provided;
- d. Advising on final selection of UoAs and submittable staff, outputs and relevant evidence of impact for submission to REF.

11.6. The Working Group consists of senior members of the School and, where appropriate, from research areas identified for submission to the UoA which are based in different Schools. All members are cognisant of the breadth of research being undertaken within that School and/or research area. Membership must include:

- a. The UoA Coordinator(s) of the UoA(s) assigned to the Working Group, who will act as Chair. Where two or more UoAs are assigned, the Chair shall alternate between the Coordinators.
- b. Any other member of staff for whom a specific role has been identified within the School or UoA in REF preparations, for example impact champions, data administrators, etc.

11.7. Membership may include:

- a. Chairs, Coordinators or Representatives of relevant Research Groups
- b. Directors, Co-Directors or Representatives of relevant Research Institutes and Centres
- c. School Research and Knowledge Exchange Leader
- d. School Research Degrees Leader
- e. School Equality and Diversity Leader
- f. The REF Manager

## 12. Training

12.1. All staff of the University of East London have been required to undertake online training modules which deal with the Equality Act 2010. This ensures that they are aware of their own and the University's legal obligations in respect of equality. It is



also mandatory of all staff involved in selection panels for job vacancies to have undergone UEL's Recruitment & Selection training.

12.2. REF Advisory Group members (see section 9 above) have in addition received REF-specific training dealing with the context and emphasis in REF on equality and diversity and the specific requirements for REF; the requirements and implications of the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation, and the process for carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment (see also section 14).

12.3. Code of Practice Working Group (see section 10 above) members and other designated staff (see section 4 above) have in addition received REF-specific training using materials and best practice provided by the Equality Challenge Unit, in respect of the selection of staff for submission to REF.

12.4. We recognise that both the designated staff involved in our preparations for REF 2014, and the legislative and policy context in terms of equality and diversity matters, may change prior to the completion of submissions in November 2013. We will ensure that any new designated staff joining our REF preparations are trained as is outlined above, and that additional training is arranged, where appropriate, to deal with new policy and legislation.

### 13. *External Reviewers*

13.1. External peer review is crucial to our REF preparations and forms an important and objective element in the process, whereby recommendations related to each UoA are developed. It has therefore been agreed that External Reviewers are to be engaged for each UoA under consideration.

13.2. External Reviewers will be supplied with a template pro-forma to complete which will enable the capturing of a standardised set of feedback about individual staff and their outputs, the quality of internal preparatory processes and the resulting draft submission as a whole.

13.3. External Reviewers will not be sent any information relating to individual staff circumstances.

13.4. External Reviewers will not be asked to comment on individual researchers except in relation to the quality of the outputs submitted for that individual.

13.5. External Reviewers are only asked to supply advice on the basis of their best professional judgement. External Reviewers do not make decisions on which staff to select for submission and will not be asked to do so. Any such decisions are the sole responsibility of the Vice-Chancellor, acting on the recommendation of Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, as outlined above.

### 14. *Equality Impact Assessment and Monitoring*

14.1. The University recognises the importance of monitoring and evaluating the effect of its staff selection policies for the REF on equality, both in order to ensure that this process is conducted in a fair, transparent and consistent manner and to demonstrate its compliance with the requirements of the public sector equality duty



of the Equality Act 2010. This will be achieved through a series of systematic and thorough Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) of the implementation of the policies and procedures for selection set out here. We will publish our EIAs, as required by the funding bodies, after the submissions have been made.

- 14.2. As well as conducting an EIA on UEL's final submission to the REF in autumn 2013, assessments will be conducted on UEL's mock REF submissions, enabling these policies and procedures to be refined in subsequent iterations of the Code of Practice in line with the findings of those assessments. We will review the EIA at key stages of the selection process, and ensure that any necessary changes to prevent discrimination or promote equality are taken prior to the submission deadline. Where appropriate, such changes will be reported to the REF team.
- 14.3. To this end, an EIA of UEL's first full mock REF submission (submitted 30th March 2012) was undertaken both at Unit of Assessment level and then at an institution-wide level between April and May 2012. The Assessment included a numerical analysis of staff selected for submission to this mock exercise against all eligible staff within the institution, using protected characteristics data drawn from the University's central HR records.
- 14.4. This EIA returned positive results with regard to ethnicity in particular, for example, the inclusion of BME staff is proportionately higher than that of white staff in 9 out of the 14 UoAs, proportionate to the number of BME staff in each of those UoAs. The data in other areas, such as grade, employment pattern and age is broadly neutral or positive. Two areas of concern were raised, namely the lower selection rate of women in five UoAs, and a slightly lower selection rate of staff with disabilities overall, proportionate to their representation in the UEL workforce. UEL is already tackling issues of female representation in science, engineering and technology through its membership of Athena Swan, which seeks to recognise and celebrate good employment practice for women working in HE and research; we are currently working towards a bronze level award. Furthermore, since the 2008 RAE, UEL has developed a new Equality and Diversity Strategy following extensive consultation to ensure that we meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. One of its specific objectives is to increase the representation at senior management and academic level of women and black and minority ethnic groups, and of younger staff in academic roles.
- 14.5. These issues are being discussed by the Code of Practice Working Group. Consideration will need to be given to any specific measures to address these areas of concern, including structural issues (such as the relatively small numbers of women in engineering more broadly) and longer-term developmental actions for supporting and increasing the research and scholarly activity of women in some academic areas. The COP working group will advise on any necessary changes to the guidelines pertaining to staff selection for the REF and its recommendations will feed into subsequent iterations of the selection policies set out in the Code of Practice. These will be fully reviewed to ensure equality in the selection of staff for submission to the REF.
- 14.6. A second Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken of the second mock submission and a further review in spring 2013 as appropriate. The results of those assessments will be used to refine and finalise staff selection policies set out in the Code of Practice before the final selection is made in autumn 2013, and a final impact assessment will be undertaken for publication after submission.

14.7. In order to ensure the continued equality of its staff selection policies, the Code of Practice working group and REF Advisory Group will review the EIAs produced after each of the mock REF submissions, as well as for the final submission in autumn 2013. These assessments will also be used to inform decisions about individual appeals.

## 15. Appeals Process

15.1. The Appeals Process is described in detail in Appendix 1 below. It is hoped that most appeals can be resolved informally without resorting to the formal Appeals Process described below.

15.2. Appeals are permitted only on the following grounds:

- a. That there is evidence of procedural irregularity (including administrative error) in the conduct of the assessment of a colleague's portfolio of potentially REF-able evidence of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the resulting decision with regard to submission to REF 2014 or to a specific UoA Panel might have been different if there had not been such irregularity.
- b. That there are allegations of unlawful discrimination, including on the grounds of personal circumstances.
- c. Colleagues may not otherwise challenge the academic judgement of staff involved in UEL's assessment and selection procedures for REF 2014.

15.3. The Appeals Process is intended to ensure that when a problem is identified it is dealt with quickly and resolved as far as possible to avoid feelings of dissatisfaction. The organisation of the process is intended to allow every opportunity to resolve appeals within the relatively constrained timescale within which REF submissions will be developed.

## 16. Personal Circumstances

16.1. The Main Panels and Sub-Panels formed for the assessment of REF 2014 have produced guidance on how they will deal with personal circumstances that might have had an effect on an individual's contribution to a submission. These include

- a. Qualifying as an Early Career Researcher (as defined in paragraphs 85-86 of the REF *Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions* (REF 02/2011))
- b. Part-time working
- c. Maternity, paternity or adoption leave, including related constraints in addition to a defined period of leave
- d. Secondments or career breaks outside the higher education sector, and in which the individual did not undertake academic research
- e. Disability
- f. Ill-health or injury
- g. Mental health conditions
- h. Constraints related to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, and adoption, such as medical issues, health and safety considerations and constraints on the ability to travel or undertake fieldwork during pregnancy or breast-feeding.
- i. Childcare or other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member)
- j. Gender reassignment



- k. Other circumstances related to the protected characteristics defined under the Equality Act 2010 and listed at paragraph 190 of the REF *Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions* (REF 02/2011)
  - l. Other circumstances relating to activities protected by employment legislation.
- 16.2. REF documentation, specifically the *Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions* (REF 02/2011), the *Panel Criteria and Working Methods* (REF 01/2012), and any supplementary guidance published by the REF team can be downloaded from the REF website at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk). Further details on UEL policies and procedures relating to these personal circumstances are available on the UEL web pages: <http://www.uel.ac.uk/hrservices/services/handbook/>.
- 16.3. We recognise that information relating to staff and their personal circumstances can very often be sensitive. At the same time in order to prepare robust submissions for the REF and to ensure that there is a consistency and equality of treatment across the University, it will be necessary to share such information among a limited number of people. The arrangements set out here are intended to enable individuals to disclose the information in a confidential manner, and enable consistent treatment of complex circumstances across the exercise.
- 16.4. Using the template form and guidance provided by the Equality Challenge Unit, UEL has developed a standard form for use by all academic staff to disclose personal circumstances that may have restricted their research capacity during the period of assessment, and so enable their submission to REF 2014 with fewer than the standard four outputs. Although UoA Coordinators are asked to advertise its existence and function within their own Units, the dissemination of the form itself and of associated guidance, as well as the receipt and processing of completed forms for referral to the Code of Practice Working Group, is managed centrally by the REF Manager. Staff are advised that any queries relating to their completion of a disclosure form may be addressed *either* to their UoA Coordinator; *or* to the Senior HR Manager (Policy and Operations), who is also a member of the Code Of Practice Working Group); *or* to the REF Manager. However, completed forms are to be returned directly to the REF Manager alone. The form has so far been sent to all eligible staff three times (once at the beginning and once at the end of Summer 2012, and once in January 2013) and will be sent again at least once before the census date. It is now included in information packs sent to all new members of academic staff and is available via the 'Internal Activities' page of the University's REF web pages (<http://www.uel.ac.uk/ref/>) to enable existing staff to submit new or updated disclosures as necessary.
- 16.5. To ensure the confidentiality of individuals' completed staff disclosure forms, their circulation is strictly limited to the University's REF Manager and the members of the Code of Practice Working Group, which acts as an institutional Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel in determining likely output reductions accruing to individual members of staff. All individuals involved in these processes have signed a declaration undertaking to keep the information received strictly confidential. The guidance attached to that form includes an explicit statement about its accessibility and use and explains the mechanisms in place to protect confidentiality. Completed forms are received and processed by the REF manager, who will also check claims made in them against HR records where appropriate. The REF Manager will then pass them on to the Code of Practice Working Group for its consideration. Any UoA Coordinators who are also members of the Code of Practice Working Group will not be given access to disclosure forms relating to staff from within their UoA and will be



excluded from consideration of those cases. Individual staff will be advised of the Group's decisions by the REF Manager, who will also ensure that they are aware of both their right to and the processes for appeal against that decision. UoA Coordinators and administrators will then be informed of which staff within their Unit have submitted successful disclosure forms, and of decisions about the number of outputs with which those staff may be returned to the REF. Although individual staff may choose to waive their right to confidentiality in this respect by discussing their personal circumstances with their Unit Coordinator, details of the circumstances that have been disclosed will not be shared with Unit Coordinators by the REF Manager or the Code of Practice Working Group.

- 16.6. Operational requirements that cannot be foreseen here may require that the information needs to be shared with other individuals. In such cases this may happen only with the agreement of the UEL Code of Practice Working Group on receipt of a written case for doing so from the relevant UoA Coordinator, and with the permission of the individual member of staff concerned.
- 16.7. Other members of the UoA Working Groups and REF Advisory Group will know that a decision has been taken about the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs to submit without penalty for an individual staff member, but will not have access to any other information about the reasons for the decision.
- 16.8. All of the information collected for submission to the REF in respect of personal circumstances will be submitted in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and all other legal obligations.
- 16.9. We also note that equivalent information will be supplied to the REF team at HEFCE as part of our submission. This information, submitted in form REF 1b, will be kept confidential to the REF team and the panel members (for clearly defined circumstances) and the REF Equality and Diversity Panel (EDAP) and main panel chairs (for complex circumstances), who are all subject to confidentiality undertakings in respect of all information contained in submissions. Information submitted to the REF team at HEFCE in form REF1b will only be used for the purposes of assessing the submission. On completion of the assessment, the REF team will destroy their copies of the assessment.

## 17. *Joint Submissions*

- 17.1. If appropriate this Code of Practice will be made available to collaborating institutions in respect of joint submissions. Joint decision-making will not compromise adherence to this Code of Practice.



## APPENDIX 1

### The REF 2014 Appeals Process

1. It is hoped that most appeals from individual staff about such matters as their exclusion from the UEL REF submission can be resolved informally without resorting to the Appeals Process described below. (Most routine complaints and appeals are best resolved informally with the appropriate UoA Coordinator in the first instance). The Process is intended to ensure that when a problem is identified it is dealt with quickly and resolved as far as possible to avoid feelings of dissatisfaction. Solutions will sometimes involve compromise and for that reason it may not be possible to resolve every issue to the total satisfaction of the member(s) of staff.
2. The organisation of the process is intended to allow every opportunity to resolve appeals within the relatively constrained timescale within which REF submissions will be developed. It is assumed that formal appeals lodged by 15 August 2013 will have sufficient time to progress through the Appeals Process prior to the UEL deadline for submission on 15 November 2013. However every effort will be made to ensure that appeals received after this date will be processed as swiftly as possible.
3. Appeals are permitted only on the following grounds:
  - 3.1. That there is evidence of procedural irregularity (including administrative error) in the conduct of the assessment of a colleague's portfolio of potentially REF-able evidence of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the resulting decision with regard to submission to REF 2014 or to a specific UoA Panel might have been substantively different if there had not been such irregularity.
  - 3.2. That there are allegations of unlawful discrimination, including on the grounds of personal circumstances.
  - 3.3. Colleagues may not otherwise challenge the academic judgement of staff involved in our University's assessment and selection procedures for REF 2014.
4. The general principles covering the Appeals Process are:
  - 4.1. The Process applies to all members of our academic staff eligible for submission to REF.
  - 4.2. While colleagues are encouraged to seek a resolution to their appeal on an informal basis, this is not mandatory. Staff members may initiate an appeal directly at Stage 1 or Stage 2 at any time.
  - 4.3. A staff member may be accompanied at any formal meeting, discussion or hearing by a friend acting in a non-legal capacity or by their trade union representative.
  - 4.4. All parties will receive copies of the Stage 2 Appeals Form and any supporting evidence prior to the formal hearing.
  - 4.5. The time limits in the Process are provided to ensure prompt decisions and are in the interests of both parties. All communications, provision of information etc discussed below will usually be provided electronically and all timescales are based on electronic communications being used. However, it is recognised that electronic communications may not always provide the most appropriate method of communication and in such cases the time limits may be modified by mutual agreement.

- 4.6. To comply with UEL's equality and diversity policies, the REF Manager on behalf of the University, will record and report on the number of Stage 2 Appeals raised, by gender, ethnic origin and disability.
5. Stage 1 of the Appeals Process is as follows.
- 5.1. Staff members should appeal in writing to the Coordinator of the appropriate UoA, copied to the REF Manager, explaining their reasons for seeking an appeal. It should be specified whether the appeal is on the grounds of procedural irregularity or allegations of unlawful discrimination.
  - 5.2. The UoA Coordinator should respond in writing, copied to the REF Manager, within ten working days of receipt.
  - 5.3. If the response of the UoA Coordinator does not address the issues raised to the staff member's satisfaction, the staff member should explain in writing the reasons for his or her appeal and dissatisfaction with the UoA Coordinator's response, to their Dean of School or Director of Service (or their nominated deputy), copied to the REF Manager. The staff member must specify whether the appeal is on the grounds of procedural irregularity or allegations of unlawful discrimination, and should be made not more than ten working days after receipt of the response of the UoA Coordinator.
  - 5.4. The Dean of School or Director of Service (or their nominated deputy) should respond within ten working days of receipt of the staff member's appeal, copied to the REF Manager.
  - 5.5. If the staff member still feels that their problem is not being adequately addressed, he or she may initiate a Stage 2 appeal by providing the REF Manager with the information requested in the Formal Appeals Form included in this Appendix, and any supporting evidence.
6. Stage 2 of the Appeals Process is as follows.
- 6.1. Staff members should provide the REF Manager with the information requested in the Formal Appeals Form included in this Appendix, and any supporting evidence.
  - 6.2. The REF Manager will initially ask the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Services and Infrastructure) (or his nominee) to consider whether there are grounds for an appeal.
  - 6.3. Should the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Services and Infrastructure) (or their nominee) consider that there are grounds for an appeal, the REF Manager will arrange, within ten working days of receipt of the appellant's information, for an Appeals Panel to be convened to consider the appeal. The Panel will consist of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Services and Infrastructure), the Head of Governance and Legal Services, (or their nominees) and one other member of staff, and serviced by a member of VCG support staff, all of whom are not otherwise involved in REF preparation or selection.
  - 6.4. The only evidence which will be considered at Stage 2 of the Appeals Process is that which is submitted in writing with the Formal Appeals Form.
  - 6.5. As soon as possible and within five working days after either the decision of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Services and Infrastructure) (or their nominee) that there are insufficient grounds for an appeal, or the Appeals Panel meeting the decision and the reasons for it will be provided in writing to the appellant, the UoA Coordinator, the Dean of School or Director of Service concerned, and copied to the REF Manager.
7. Appellants are reminded that Deans of School/Directors of Service and the members of the UEL REF Appeals Panel are neither expected nor qualified to recommend that a particular member of staff is or is not included in a submission. Their remit is only to examine the evidence and determine that, if appropriate, the UoA Working Group and/or an External Advisor needs to reconsider the case. A successful appeal at any stage of the process guarantees only that the evidence will be reconsidered for submission in



accordance with the processes set out in this Code of Practice; it does not guarantee inclusion in the REF.

8. The decision of the UEL REF Appeals panel is final. There is no further right of referral of a complaint or appeal within this Appeal Process beyond Stage 2. The University's Staff Grievance Procedure cannot be used to challenge the decision of the UEL REF Appeals Panel.



## Appendix 2

### REF Communications Plan

1. This Communications Plan is informed by and sits within the framework established by the REF Communications Strategy agreed by REF Advisory Group on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011.
2. We regard the dissemination of our Code of Practice and explanation of the processes related to the selection of staff for submission as being a crucial part of our obligations to ensure consistency, transparency and the promotion of equality and diversity through REF.
3. To this end we shall use “All Staff” email to:
  - 3.1. Circulate a copy of the draft Code of Practice as submitted to REF for approval by the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, both shortly after the initial submission and any submission of revised versions
  - 3.2. Circulate a copy of the Code of Practice, on receipt of confirmation from HEFCE that it has been approved
  - 3.3. Circulate a copy of any revised Code of Practice based on the requirements of the University as demonstrated by its Equality Impact Assessments and other relevant experiences
  - 3.4. In addition, circulate a copy of the Code of Practice at the beginning of each round of mock exercises undertaken by the University, except where the Code has previously been circulated within thirty working days.
4. The Code of Practice will be published on UEL’s established REF web pages (<https://www.uel.ac.uk/secure/research/ref-internal.htm>). The definitive version of the Code of Practice will always be that available on the website.
5. All published versions of the Code of Practice will carry a version control number and date of publication. Each circulation of revised versions of the Code will be accompanied with an explanation of the changes made and the reasons for them.
6. The University will publish its final Code of Practice on its external web pages shortly after making our final submissions to the REF in November 2013.
7. While “All Staff” email is the most effective way of ensuring that the Code of Practice is disseminated, we also wish to ensure that the Code is also made available to potential Category A and C members of staff who are absent from the University for any extended period during our REF preparations, for example because of maternity, paternity or adoptive leave, ill-health, gender reassignment, sabbatical or secondment arrangements. Every time an “All Staff” email is to be issued as discussed above, we shall obtain from HR Services a list of all potential Category A and C staff absent from work and their addresses, and send the Code of Practice to them in hard copy as well as placing a copy on UEL’s website.
8. Hard copies of the Code of Practice can be obtained on request from the REF Manager.

9. In addition we recognise that the format of the Code of Practice as a standard Word document made available electronically and in hard copy may not be appropriate for some members of staff. The REF Manager will supply, on demand, hard copies of the Code of Practice in large-text format and on yellow backgrounds.
10. Managers of staff needing Braille printing facilities, screen-reading or other assistive devices to carry out their ordinary duties are in any case required to ensure that such technology is made available to them, and in publishing the Code we are mindful of the file format types that are and are not compatible with such technology (for example, at present Portable Document Format (PDF) and Power Point files cannot be accessed by screen-reading software). Should additional formats of the Code be requested and where it is reasonable to do so, we undertake to produce them as specified within fifteen working days of the request.
11. All designated staff, when providing briefings on REF matters as part of their REF-related activities, are required to draw their audience's attention to the Code of Practice.
12. In addition to the widest circulation of the Code of Practice we recognise the value of clearly explaining the processes related to the selection of staff which are governed by this Code. Primarily we recognise this as being part of the essential activities of UoA Coordinators in shaping their submissions and in providing feedback and advice to enable the development of our staff and their research capacity.
13. In addition we shall hold open briefing meetings on REF not less than twice annually, at which the processes for the selection of staff will be clearly explained. Such briefing meetings do not need to be focussed solely on REF.