

University of Essex

REF 2014: Code of Practice on the Selection of Staff

Introduction and Background

The University is required by the Higher Education Funding Council for England to develop, document and apply a Code of Practice to ensure fair and transparent processes for the selection of staff for inclusion in our Research Excellence Framework (REF) submissions. The purpose of the Code of Practice is 'to aid institutions in including all their eligible staff in submissions who are conducting excellent research, as well as promoting equality, complying with legislation and avoiding discrimination'¹.

This Code of Practice has been produced following discussion amongst the University Steering Group (USG)², the Research Strategy Committee (RSC), the Equality and Diversity Committee, the Director of Human Resources and with University staff through the University and College Union (UCU). It was approved by the USG, the RSC and Senate during the Summer Term 2012.

On making our submission, the Vice-Chancellor will confirm adherence to this Code of Practice.

Legislative context

This Code of Practice has taken into account the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (see Appendix 1 for details) and relevant employment law and should be read in conjunction with the University's [Equality Policy and Strategy 2011-14](#). As such, we will ensure that we do not discriminate unlawfully against individuals on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

¹ REF 2014: *Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions* (Ref REF 02.2011), July 2011, p. 34, para. 187. For details of 'eligible staff' see Appendix 5 of this document.

² Membership includes the Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-Vice-Chancellors, the Registrar and Secretary, the Director of Finance and the Director of Communications and External Relations.

The University Equality and Diversity Policy Statement

'The University of Essex recognises the value of diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity within the University. We expect students and staff to be treated with dignity and respect and solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, political beliefs and affiliations, family circumstances or other irrelevant distinction.'

We will seek to avoid discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristic mentioned in the University Equality and Diversity Policy Statement, which includes those mentioned in the Act.

The Basic Principles

Our Code of Practice is based on the following four principles:

Transparency: This Code clearly explains the processes related to the selection of staff for inclusion in our REF submissions. In addition to circulating it to all academic and research staff, including those absent from work, the Code has been made available on the University's REF website (<http://www.essex.ac.uk/ref/>) and can be produced in an alternative format, for example in large print or on disc, if requested from Sarah Manning-Press (Tel: +44 1206 873561; email: sarahm@essex.ac.uk).

Consistency: The four basic principles will be applied to all aspects and stages of the staff selection process. The RSC will have responsibility for ensuring this consistency of application across the University.

Inclusivity: Every member of academic staff whose contract requires them to engage in research (i.e. academic staff on A+R contracts) will be eligible to be included in the 2014 REF submission. In addition, research staff in post on the census date and who meet the Funding Councils' definition of independent researchers will be eligible. Eligible individuals will be selected for inclusion on the basis of the quality of their research taking into account the relevant main and sub-panels published criteria and working methods, including those relating to individual staff circumstances.

Accountability. The Research Strategy Committee (RSC) will act as the REF Steering Group (see Appendix 4 for their Terms of Reference). The RSC will have responsibility for developing the REF submission and for the selection of staff and of outputs to be included in the submission, based on information provided by individual members of staff and their department.

Communication

During the Summer term the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) held a series of meetings with all departments at which he explained the process and timetable for the development of the Code of Practice on the Selection of Staff, the purpose of the Code and the process for disclosing individual staff circumstances. He encouraged staff to consider whether they had individual staff circumstances to disclose and explained that it would always be in the University's interests to view such disclosures sympathetically.

Following the meeting of Senate on 4 July 2012 at which the Code of Practice was approved, an invitation was sent, both electronically and in hardcopy to departmental addresses, to all staff potentially eligible for selection asking them to complete an 'Individual Staff Circumstances Disclosure' form about their individual circumstances (see Appendix 7). The invitation contained a link to the Code of Practice on the University REF website (<http://www.essex.ac.uk/ref/>). In addition, all eligible staff on leave of absence, maternity leave, research leave or sick leave were sent a copy of the invitation to their home address.

At the review meetings with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and the relevant Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor to be held in late October or early November 2012, Heads of Department and departmental Research Directors will be asked to remind colleagues when they feed back the results of the review about the Code of Practice and the invitation to disclose individual staff circumstances.

The Research Strategy Committee

The RSC is a Committee of the Senate of the University, chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise).

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise), who is appointed from the academic staff by the University's Council on the nomination of the University's Senate, has responsibility for all aspects of the University's policy and strategy on research.

Members of the RSC are senior members of the academic staff selected on the basis of relevant experience in research and international recognition of their personal research. All members of the RSC are experienced at assessing research within and beyond their own personal disciplines.

The membership of the RSC is:

Professor Neil Cox, School of Philosophy and Art History
Dr Pam Cox, Dean of the Graduate School and Department of Sociology (until 31 December 2012)
Professor Anthony Forster, Vice-Chancellor (from 6 August 2012)
Professor Marco Francesconi, Department of Economics
Professor Hani Hagra, School of Computer Science and Electronic Engineering
Professor Edward Higgs, Department of History
Dr Janice Pittis, Director of the Research and Enterprise Office
Professor Colin Riordan, Vice-Chancellor (until 5 August 2012)
Professor Debi Roberson, Department of Psychology (from 1 August 2012)
Professor David Sanders, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and Department of Government
Professor Christine Temple, Department of Psychology
Professor Graham Underwood, School of Biological Sciences
TBA, Dean of the Graduate School (from 1 January 2013)

Equality training

All staff involved in the selection of staff for inclusion in the REF submission will have appropriate training on equality and diversity in order to ensure that they have a suitable level of understanding of the Equality Act 2010, the University's Equality Policy and Strategy 2011-14 and this Code of Practice. There will be two distinct elements to the training. The first is general equality training; all relevant staff will be required to complete the University's online Equality and Diversity Essentials training package which outlines the basic concepts of equal opportunities and diversity and gives an overview of the Equality Act 2010. The second is face-to-face equality training which has been specifically tailored to the REF processes. This training will include an overview of the University's Equality Policy and Strategy 2011-14 and will use case studies to explore issues such as the implications of dealing with personal circumstances in the process of selecting staff for inclusion in the submission.

Individual Staff Circumstances

All staff potentially eligible for selection will be asked in July 2012 to complete an 'Individual Staff Circumstances Disclosure' form about their individual circumstances (see Appendix 7). These will be reviewed by the REF Individual Staff Circumstances Review Group to ascertain whether there is evidence to support a reduction in the number of research outputs required in order to be selected for inclusion in the REF submission. The membership of the REF Individual Staff Circumstances Review Group is Professor David Sanders, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise), Professor Debi Roberson, Research Strategy Committee member, Sarah Manning-Press, Research Governance and Planning Manager, and Karen Bush, Equality and Diversity Manager. It should be noted that it is always in the University's interests to view sympathetically requests for individual staff circumstances to be considered.

In deciding whether or not an individual will be selected for inclusion, consideration will be given to the following circumstances and the extent to which they have significantly constrained the individual's ability to produce the expected volume of research outputs of suitable quality in the assessment period, as guided by the published panel criteria.

Clearly defined circumstances:

- Status as an early career researcher (ECR). These are individuals of any age who meet the criteria to be selected as Category A or Category C staff on the census date (31 October 2013) **and** who started their career as independent researchers on or after 1 August 2009.
- Part-time working or other flexible working arrangements.
- Absence on maternity, paternity, parental or adoption leave and arrangements on return to work following these periods of leave.
- Prolonged absences (absences for more than six months consecutively in the assessment period) but which do not fall into one of the categories above. They include:
 - Secondment to non-academic positions outside the higher education sector, and in which the individual did not undertake academic research.
 - Career breaks for purposes unconnected with research, teaching or other academic duties.

Complex circumstances:

- Disability, ill-health and injury, including:
 - Any disability to which the Equality Act 2010 applies, including both permanent disabilities and any temporary disability (see Appendix 1);
 - Absence from work on the advice of a registered medical practitioner.
- Constraints related to pregnancy or maternity, in addition to a clearly defined period of maternity leave, including:
 - Medical issues associated with pregnancy or maternity;
 - Health and safety restrictions in laboratory or fieldwork during pregnancy or breastfeeding;
 - Constraints on the ability to travel to undertake fieldwork due to pregnancy or breastfeeding.
- Time spent acting as a carer or other domestic commitments.
- Gender reassignment (see Appendix 1).
- Other absences which the institution is legally obliged to permit including:
 - Time off for religious observance;
 - Absence arising out of involvement as a representative of the workforce.
- Any other personal circumstances which are considered to have significantly constrained an individual's ability to produce the expected volume of research outputs in the assessment period.

For clearly defined circumstances, there is a clearly defined reduction in the number of outputs that may be submitted without penalty in the assessment. Where an individual has had a combination of circumstances with clearly defined reductions in outputs, these may be accumulated up to a maximum reduction of three outputs.

For more complex circumstances, the University will make a judgement on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs to be submitted based on worked examples published by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) (<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/documents/ref-materials/complex-circumstances-examples>). If an appropriate worked example does not exist, the University will seek advice from the ECU. As part of the REF submission, the University will provide a rationale for its judgement on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs which will be considered by the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) on a consistent basis across all Units of Assessment. The EDAP will make recommendations about the appropriate number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty to the relevant main panel chairs, who will make the decisions.

Fixed-term and Part-time Staff

As part of its commitment to equal opportunities, the University has developed policies to support all staff, including those on fixed-term contracts and those who work part-time. In particular, Learning and Development provide advice, information, training and support for contract research staff to assist them in pursuing a career both within academia and outside the sector. The University's [Human Resources Strategy](#) details our commitment to the development of all staff and all staff have the opportunity to engage in both personal and professional development.

Criteria for Selection

The following three criteria will be consistently applied to the research activity of all eligible staff (see Appendix 5 for the definition of eligible staff) considered for submission:

1. The volume of high-quality research activity generated by the individual within the assessment period meets the criteria stated by the relevant main panels, having regard to any individual staff circumstances cited and the University's need to submit an appropriate number of Impact Case Studies to each UoA.
2. The quality of research activity generated by the individual (including outputs and, where appropriate to the discipline, research income) corresponds to the threshold level of excellence determined by the RSC in relation to each Unit of Assessment (UoA) to be entered, as measured against the criteria published by the REF panels³.
3. The research activity generated by the individual is in keeping with the research strategy cited in the University's submission in an identifiable UoA.

Those eligible staff whose research activity meets all three of the selection criteria will be selected for submission.

The table below sets out the REF assessment criteria and the definitions of the starred levels for the outputs sub-profile⁴.

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| The criteria for assessing the quality of outputs are 'originality, significance and rigour'. | |
| Four star | Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour. |
| Three star | Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence. |
| Two star | Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour. |
| One star | Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour. |
| Unclassified | Quality that falls below the standard of nationally recognised work. Or work which does not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of this assessment. |

The four main panels have explained in more details, within their statements on the panel criteria and working methods, how their group of sub-panels will apply the assessment criteria and interpret the level of definitions in developing the sub-profiles (see Appendix 6).

³ *Panel Criteria and Working Methods* (Ref REF 01.2012), January 2012

⁴ *REF 2014: Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions* (Ref REF 02.2011), July 2011, p. 43, Table A2.

'World-leading' quality denotes an absolute standard of quality in each unit of assessment. 'World-leading', 'internationally' and 'nationally' in this context refers to quality standards. They do not refer to the nature or geographical scope of particular subjects, nor to the locus of research nor its place of dissemination. Equally, work with an international focus might not be of 'world leading, internationally excellent or internationally recognised' standard.

Selection Process

The selection of staff and of outputs to be included in the submission will be based on information provided by individual staff members and their department.

1. Annual research plans and outcomes monitoring forms are requested from all staff eligible to be selected for inclusion in the REF submission. The forms include details of research outputs, indicating up to four outputs which might be submitted, together with research-related information relevant for inclusion in REF submissions for the period from 1 January 2008.
2. Research plans and outcomes monitoring forms are submitted each year by individual staff members to their Departmental Administrator⁵. The monitoring forms are then reviewed by the Head of Department (HoD), the departmental Research Director and, normally, the Departmental Research Committee. This involves a critical review of what has been done and what is in progress, and the Department is required to satisfy itself that each individual's work (a) aligns with Departmental research strategy and (b) is of appropriate quality judged by the standards of the subject.
3. The HoD and the departmental Research Director discuss colleagues' monitoring forms and the results of the review with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and their Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor.
4. Each HoD is responsible for ensuring that feedback is provided to staff within his or her department. This should be given in person, normally by the Head of Department, by the departmental Research Director or by the individual's mentor and must include details of the research outputs selected for a putative REF submission, the scores that have been given and the individual's current status with regard to submission.
5. All staff eligible to be selected for inclusion in the REF submission will be asked at the end of the Summer term 2012 to provide an updated list of their putative REF outputs by 30 September 2012. The lists will be reviewed by the HoD, the departmental Research Director and, normally, the Departmental Research Committee. The HoD and the departmental Research Director will then discuss the results of the review with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and the relevant Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor at a meeting to be held in late October or early November 2012.
6. The RSC, at its meeting on 27 November 2012, will consider the results of the review meetings, in conjunction with any additional information provided by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise), in order to make preliminary decisions about which eligible staff will, or will not, be submitted to each UoA.
7. Preliminary decisions, together with reasons for the decision based on the criteria for inclusion or other clear statement of reason for exclusion, will be communicated to members of staff by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) by 31 January 2013.

⁵ For the purpose of this Code of Practice, 'Department' refers to one of the University's Departments, Schools, Centres or Institutes.

8. Should an individual not be satisfied that their research has been appropriately judged, they can request that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) seek an opinion based on the REF assessment criteria from a suitably qualified impartial external reviewer. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) will then decide, in consultation with the RSC, whether or not to solicit an external opinion or opinions.
9. All staff eligible to be selected for inclusion in the REF submission will be asked by their departments to provide updates on their research outputs at regular intervals during 2013.
10. The updates will be reviewed by the HoD, the departmental Research Director, and normally, the Departmental Research Committee. The results of the review will be sent to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and their Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor and meetings will be held to discuss the updates of staff who have not yet met the criteria for inclusion in the REF submission.
11. The RSC will finalise decisions about which eligible staff and outputs will or will not be submitted to each UoA during the Spring and Summer terms 2013.
12. Decisions, together with reasons for the decision, will be communicated in writing to members of staff by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) by 30 June 2013.

Appeals

Any member of staff who is eligible to be selected for submission has the right to appeal against a decision to exclude them on the following grounds:

- potential discrimination related to one or more of the protected characteristics mentioned in the University's [Equality and Diversity Policy Statement](#); or
- potential discrimination as a result of pattern of work, e.g. part-time employment or employment on fixed-term contracts; or
- a procedural fault; or
- a significant error of material fact.

All appeals, clearly stating the grounds for appeal, must be submitted in writing to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) by 31 July 2013.

Once an appeal has been received by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) the following process will be followed:

1. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) will appoint an appropriate person to act as Chair of an Appeals Panel. The Chair will be a Pro-Vice-Chancellor not involved in the original decision-making process i.e. from a different Faculty to that of the appellant.
2. The Chair will consider the appeal and make a judgement as to whether a *prima facie* case for appeal exists.
3. If the Chair decides there is no case s/he will provide a report to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and the RSC giving the reasons as to why a *prima facie* case does not exist. Following confirmation by RSC the appellant will be informed of the decision.

4. If the Chair decides there is a case s/he will inform the appellant and will form an Appeals Panel. The members of the Panel, in addition to the Chair, will be a Professor from the same Faculty as the appellant, but not the same department, nominated by the Vice-Chancellor and a Professor from a different Faculty, nominated by UCU. No Appeals Panel member can have been involved in the original decision-making process i.e. not a member of the RSC.
5. The Appeals Panel will consider all available information previously considered by the appellant's HoD and Research Director, Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and the RSC.
6. The appellant will be entitled to meet with the Appeals Panel accompanied by a representative (either a trade union representative or a University of Essex colleague) in order to set out fully their grounds for appeal and answer any questions. The relevant HoD, Research Director, Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) may also be interviewed during the course of the hearing. The appellant and their representative will be present throughout and may direct questions via the Chair of the Panel.
7. The Appeals Panel can decide either to reject or uphold the appeal. The Appeals Panel decision is final.
8. Once the Appeals Panel has made its decision, appropriate action will be taken and will be communicated to the appellant by no later than 31 October 2013.

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

The University will produce a profile, in terms of age, disability, gender, ethnicity and employment status, of all staff eligible for selection who are identified as being 'at risk of not being submitted' and those who have been identified as 'not submissible' at key stages of the selection process. If any discrimination is identified, the University will take action to change the relevant part of its REF procedures. These key stages are:

- In June 2012, following a monitoring exercise of all eligible staff and before submitting the final version of our Code of Practice
- In January 2013, following preliminary decisions about which eligible staff will or will not be submitted
- In June 2013 after the RSC has finalised decisions about which eligible staff and outputs will or will not be submitted to each UoA
- When considering any appeals
- When preparing the final submission

The University will also conduct a University-wide EIA, together with breakdowns by department, six months before the REF submission date. This will enable the University to investigate any areas where there is a differential impact on a particular group before the submission deadline.

In addition, The University will provide a website profile http://www.essex.ac.uk/ref/e_and_d/, in terms of age, disability, gender, ethnicity and employment status, of all staff who were eligible for submission on the census date, indicating those who were submitted and those who were not. If a prima facie imbalance is found relative to the total potential, the University will provide an account for it and seek to take steps to address this, where appropriate.

Relevant Legislation and Definitions

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) replaced the majority of previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. The Act protects people from discrimination on the basis of 'protected characteristics'.

The protected characteristics under the Act are:-

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Types of Discrimination

There are four types of discrimination; direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation. All of these are illegal and are defined under the Act as follows:-

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person **because of** a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (**discrimination by perception**), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (**discrimination by association**). Under the Act, disabled people are protected from **discrimination 'arising from disability'** which occurs when someone has been treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability as opposed to 'because of' the disability itself.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when a rule, policy or practice is neutral on the face of it but its impact particularly disadvantages people who share a particular protected characteristic.

Harassment

Harassment is defined as ‘unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual’.

Under the Act staff can complain of behaviour they find offensive even if the behaviour is not directed at them.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an individual is treated detrimentally because they have made a complaint about discrimination or harassment or have given evidence relating to such a complaint or because they are suspected of doing so.

Summary of Legislative Coverage

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| Age | <p>All employees within the higher education sector are protected from unlawful age discrimination and harassment in employment under the Equality Act 2010. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or if they are associated with a person of a particular age group.</p> <p>Age discrimination can occur when people of a particular age group are treated less favourably than people in other age groups. An age group could be, for example, people of the same age, the under 30s or people aged 45-50. A person can belong to a number of different age groups.</p> <p>Age discrimination will not be unlawful if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. However, in the context of the REF, the view of the funding bodies is that if a researcher produces excellent research an HEI will not be able to justify not submitting them because of the researcher’s age group.</p> <p>It is important to note that early career researchers are likely to come from a range of age groups. The definition of early career researcher used in the REF is not limited to young people.</p> <p>Panels should also note that the default retirement age was abolished from 1 October 2011.</p> |
| Disability | <p>The Equality Act 2010 prevents unlawful discrimination relating to disability. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to have a disability or if they are associated with a person who is disabled. For example, if they are responsible for caring for a disabled family member.</p> <p>A person is considered to be disabled if they have or have had a physical and/or mental impairment which has ‘a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. Long-term</p> |

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| | <p>impairments include those that last or are likely to last for at least 12 months.</p> <p>Cancer, HIV, multiple sclerosis and progressive/degenerative conditions are disabilities too, even if they do not currently have an adverse effect on the carrying out of day-to-day activities.</p> <p>'Normal day-to-day activities' are taken to mean activities that people, not individuals, carry out on a daily or frequent basis.</p> <p>While there is no definitive list of what is considered a disability, it covers a wide range of impairments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ sensory impairments ▪ impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as rheumatoid arthritis, depression and epilepsy ▪ progressive impairments, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, HIV and cancer ▪ organ-specific impairments, including respiratory conditions and cardiovascular diseases ▪ developmental impairments, such as autistic spectrum disorders and dyslexia ▪ mental health conditions such as depression and eating disorders ▪ impairments caused by injury to the body or brain. <p>Equality law requires HEIs to anticipate the needs of disabled people and make reasonable adjustments for them. Failure to make a reasonable adjustment constitutes discrimination. If a disabled researcher's impairment has affected the quantity of their research outputs, they may be submitted with a reduced number of outputs.</p> <p>For the purpose of the REF census period it is important to note that people who have had a past disability are also protected from discrimination, victimisation and harassment because of disability.</p> |
| Gender reassignment | <p>The Equality Act 2010 protects from discrimination trans people who have proposed, started or completed a process to change their sex. Staff in HE do not have to be under medical supervision to be afforded protection because of gender reassignment and staff are protected if they are perceived to be undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment. They are also protected if they are associated with someone who has proposed, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment.</p> <p>Trans people who undergo gender reassignment will need to take time off for appointments and in some cases, for medical assistance. The transition process is lengthy, often taking several years and it is likely to be a very difficult period for the trans person as they seek recognition from their family,</p> |

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| | <p>friends, employer and society as a whole of their new gender.</p> <p>The Gender Recognition Act 2004 gave enhanced privacy rights to trans people who undergo gender reassignment. A person acting in an official capacity who acquires information about a person's status as a transsexual may commit a criminal offence if they pass the information to a third party without consent. Consequently, panel members must ensure that information they may receive about gender reassignment is kept confidential.</p> <p>It is easy for people to change their names. While not all people undergoing gender reassignment will choose to change their name, where they do, panels should be aware that this may affect citation data.</p> <p>Staff whose ability to work productively throughout the REF assessment period has been constrained due to gender reassignment may be submitted with a reduced number of research outputs.</p> |
| <p>Marriage and civil partnership</p> | <p>Under the Equality Act 2010 individuals are protected from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of marriage and civil partnership status. The protection from discrimination is to ensure that people who are married or in a civil partnership receive the same benefits and treatment in employment. The protection from discrimination does not apply to single people.</p> <p>If REF panels use citation data it is important that they are aware that people entering a civil partnership or marriage may change their name, and this may affect the citation data associated with their research outputs.</p> |
| <p>Pregnancy and maternity</p> | <p>Under the Equality Act 2010 women are protected from unlawful discrimination related to pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p>Consequently, if a researcher has taken time out of work because of pregnancy and/or maternity this should be taken into consideration when deciding how many research outputs they are expected to contribute to the submission.</p> <p>In addition, researchers who are pregnant or on maternity leave should not be overlooked during an HEI's submissions process.</p> <p>It is important to note that primary adopters have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave.</p> |
| <p>Race</p> | <p>The Equality Act 2010 protects HEI staff from unlawful discrimination connected to race. The definition of race includes colour, ethnic or national origins or nationality. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular race.</p> <p>Panels should be aware of not making any judgements on the quality of outputs based on a researcher's race or assumed race (for example based on their name).</p> |

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| <p>Religion and belief including non-belief</p> | <p>The Equality Act 2010 protects HEI staff from unlawful discrimination to do with religion or belief. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular religion or belief.</p> <p>Panels should be aware of not making any judgements on the quality of outputs based on a researcher's actual or perceived religion or belief, including non-belief. 'Belief' includes any structured philosophical belief with clear values that has an effect on how its adherents conduct their lives.</p> |
| <p>Sex (including breastfeeding and additional paternity and adoption leave)</p> | <p>The Equality Act 2010 protects HEI staff from unlawful discrimination to do with their sex. Employees are also protected because of their perceived sex or because of their association with someone of a particular sex.</p> <p>The sex discrimination provisions of the Equality Act explicitly protect women from less favourable treatment because they are breastfeeding. Consequently the impact of breastfeeding on a women's ability to conduct research needs to be considered in the context of the REF.</p> <p>From 3 April 2011, partners of new mothers and secondary adopters were entitled to up to 26 weeks of additional paternity and adoption leave. People who take additional paternity or adoption leave will have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave and barriers that exist to taking the leave, or as a result of having taken it, could constitute unlawful sex discrimination. Consequently in the context of the REF, additional paternity and adoption leave should be taken into consideration when deciding how many outputs the partners of new mothers are expected to contribute to the submission.</p> |
| <p>Sexual orientation</p> | <p>The Equality Act 2010 protects HEI staff from unlawful discrimination to do with sexual orientation. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with someone who is of a particular sexual orientation.</p> <p>Sexual orientation is defined as person's sexual orientation towards persons of the same sex, persons of the opposite sex or persons of either sex. This means the Act protects bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people.</p> <p>Panels should be aware of not making any judgements on the quality of outputs based on a researcher's actual or perceived sexual orientation.</p> |

Table adapted from a version published in the document REF 2014: Equality briefing for panels, July 2011

Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002

Under the Fixed-term Employees Regulations 2002 a fixed-term employee has the right not to be treated by his or her employer less favourably than the employer treats a comparable permanent employee.

Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000

Under the Part-time Workers Regulation a part-time worker has the right not to be treated by his or her employer less favourably than the employer treats a comparable full-time worker.

Relevant University of Essex Policies and Procedures

Adoption Leave: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/personnel/Pol&Proc/Leave/adoption.htm>

Equality Policy and Strategy 2011-14: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/eo/codespolicies/codesdefault.htm>

Grievance Procedures: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/academic/docs/cal/ordinances.shtm#41>

Guidelines for Dealing with Harassment and Bullying:
http://www.essex.ac.uk/academic/docs/regs/harassment_and_bullying.pdf

Ordinance relating to Research Leave and Leave of Absence:
<http://www.essex.ac.uk/academic/docs/cal/ordinances.shtm#40>

Maternity Leave: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/personnel/Pol&Proc/Leave/maternity.htm>

Parental Leave: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/personnel/Pol&Proc/Leave/parental.htm>

Paternity Leave: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/personnel/Pol&Proc/Leave/paternity.htm>

Additional Paternity Leave: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/personnel/Pol&Proc/default.htm>

Whistleblowing Policy: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/academic/docs/regs/whistle.shtm>

REF 2014 documentation

REF 2014 *Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions* (REF 02.2011) (includes the criteria and definitions of starred levels for each of the three elements of the assessment – outputs, impact and environment): <http://www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/2011-02/>

REF 2014 *Panel criteria and working methods* (REF 01.2012): <http://www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/2012-01/>

REF 2014 *Equality briefing for Panels*: <http://www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/equalitybriefingforpanels/>

Equality Challenge Unit REF 2014 Equality Materials: <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/documents/ref-materials>

Equality Challenge Unit REF 2014 Complex Circumstances Examples:
<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/documents/ref-materials/complex-circumstances-examples>

Senate Committee which reports annually

Research Strategy Committee

Terms of Reference

The Committee will:

- Have oversight of research strategy at University and departmental levels;
- sustain and improve the University's research performance;
- take responsibility for the preparation of the University's submission to the Research Excellence Framework;
- establish and promote models of good practice for the management of research at departmental level, and to ensure that all departments have suitable structures in place;
- advise departments on the strategic use of the centrally-provided research funds available to them, and receive annual reports from departments on their strategic research investments and the outcomes;
- make an annual report to Senate on departments' research performance, and any other research-related matters of which it wishes Senate to be aware.

Staff eligible to be selected for submission

The following is taken from *REF 2014: Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions* (July 2011)

Staff selected for submission must be listed in one of two possible categories, A or C.

Category A staff

78. Category A staff are defined as academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater and on the payroll of the submitting HEI on the census date (31 October 2013), and whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'teaching and research'⁶.

79. Regardless of their job title, all staff who satisfy the definition at paragraph 78, along with the supplementary criteria in paragraphs 79-81, are eligible as Category A staff:

- a. Staff who hold institutional/NHS joint appointments **are** eligible to be returned as Category A. These staff should be returned with an FTE less than 1.0, reflecting their contract of employment with the institution.
- b. Pensioned staff who continue in salaried employment contracted to carry out research and meet the definition at paragraph 78 **are** eligible to be returned as Category A staff.
- c. Academic staff who are on unpaid leave of absence or on secondment on the census date **and** are contracted to return to normal duties up to two years from the start of their period of absence or secondment are eligible to be returned as Category A, provided that any staff recruited specifically to cover their duties are not also listed as Category A.
- d. Academic staff who are employed by the submitting HEI and based in a discrete department or unit outside the UK are eligible **only** if the HEI demonstrates that the primary focus of their research activity on the census date is clearly and directly connected to the submitting unit based in the UK. Staff whose connection cannot be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the REF manager, as advised by the relevant panel, will be discounted from the assessment and removed from the REF database.
- e. Staff absent from their 'home' institution but working on secondment as contracted academic staff at another UK higher education institution on the census date, may be returned by either or both institutions. In such a case the individual and both institutions concerned should agree how the return is to be made. Their total FTE may not exceed their contracted FTE with their main employer.

⁶ These are staff returned to the HESA Staff Collection with an activity code of 'Academic Professional' (currently identified as code '2a' in the ACT1, ACT2 or ACT3 fields) and an academic employment function of either 'Research only' or 'Teaching and research' (currently identified as codes '2' or '3' in the ACEMPFUN field). Revised guidance on the coding of these staff in HESA returns will be issued following the review of the HESA staff record, which is due to conclude in September 2011.

- f. Other than individuals on secondment on the terms described in sub-paragraph e, an individual may **only** be returned as Category A by more than one HEI if they have a contract with and receive a salary from more than one HEI. In such cases:
 - i. The two HEIs must ensure that the total FTE value of the individual sums to no more than the lower of 1.0 or the individual's total contracted FTE duties. If any individual is returned in submissions with a contracted FTE that sums to more than 1.0, the REF team will rectify this through verification, and will apportion the FTE to each HEI pro-rata to the individual's contracted FTE at each HEI.
 - ii. The same research outputs may, but need not be, listed in each submission.
- g. No individual may be returned in more than one submission, except as described at sub-paragraphs e and f. Where an individual holds a joint appointment across two or more submitting units within the same institution, the HEI must decide on one submission in which to return the individual.
- h. Staff whose salary is calculated on an hourly or daily basis are eligible **only** if they meet the definition at paragraph 78 **and** on the census date have a contract of employment of at least 0.2 FTE per year over the length of their contract.
- i. Staff who hold more than one contract for different functions within the HEI, are eligible if one of those contracts satisfies the definition of Category A staff at paragraph 78. Such staff should be returned with an FTE that is no greater than that of the qualifying contract.

Research assistants

80. Research assistants are individuals who are on the payroll of and hold a contract of employment with the institution. They are academic staff whose primary employment function is defined as 'research only'. They are employed to carry out another individual's research programme rather than as independent researchers in their own right (except in the circumstances described in paragraph 81). They are usually funded from research grants or contracts from Research Councils, charities, the European Union (EU) or other overseas sources, industry, or other commercial enterprises, but they may also be funded from the institution's own funds. Individuals who meet this definition may be described in HEIs' grading structures as something other than research assistant (for example research associate, assistant researcher).

81. Research assistants, as defined in paragraph 80, are **not** eligible to be returned to the REF unless, exceptionally, they are named as principal investigator or equivalent on a research grant or significant piece of research work on the census date **and** satisfy the definition of Category A staff in paragraph 78. Research assistants must not be listed as Category A staff purely on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs.

Category C staff

82. Category C staff are defined as individuals employed by an organisation other than an HEI, whose contract or job role (as documented by their employer) includes the undertaking of research, and whose research is primarily focused in the submitting unit on the census date (31 October 2013).

83. Category C staff may be employed by the NHS, a Research Council unit, a charity or other organisation except for an HEI. Submitted outputs by Category C staff will inform the quality profiles awarded to submissions, but these staff will not contribute to the volume measure for funding purposes. For clarity, the following are **not** eligible to be returned as Category C staff:

- a. Any staff employed by the HEI, including vice-chancellors or heads of HEIs; HEI staff on non-academic contracts, including those working in university museums and libraries; or retired staff who are still active in research. (Where they satisfy the definition at paragraph 79i or, for retired staff, paragraph 79b, these staff are eligible to be returned as Category A staff.)
- b. Visiting professors, fellows and lecturers employed by other HEIs.

Main Panel Generic Criteria for Assessing Outputs and Starred Quality Level Definitions

The following is taken from *REF 2014: Panel Criteria and Working Methods* (January 2012)

Main Panel A

Criteria and level definitions

55. This section provides a descriptive account of how the sub-panels will interpret and apply the generic criteria for assessing outputs and the starred quality levels. This descriptive account expands on and complements the generic criteria and definitions in Annex A, Table A2 of 'guidance on submissions', but does not replace them.

56. In assessing outputs, the sub-panels will look for evidence of the quality of the output in terms of its originality, significance and rigour, and will apply the generic definitions of the starred quality levels.

57. The sub-panels will look for evidence of some of the following types of characteristics of quality, as appropriate to each of the starred quality levels:

- scientific rigour and excellence, with regard to design, method, execution and analysis
- significant addition to knowledge and to the conceptual framework of the field
- potential and actual significance of the research
- the scale, challenge and logistical difficulty posed by the research
- the logical coherence of argument • contribution to theory-building significance of work to advance knowledge, skills, understanding and scholarship in theory, practice, education, management and/or policy
- applicability and significance to the relevant service users and research users
- potential applicability for policy in, for example health, healthcare, public health, animal health or welfare.

58. Unless there is sufficient evidence of at least one of the above, or the definition of research used for the REF is not met, research outputs will be graded as 'unclassified'.

59. The sub-panels will use citation information, where available, as part of the indication of academic significance to inform their assessment of output quality. These arrangements are discussed at paragraphs 52-54.

Main Panel B

Criteria and level definitions

64. This section provides a descriptive account of how the sub-panels will interpret the generic criteria for assessing outputs – originality, significance and rigour – and will apply them at each of the starred quality levels. This descriptive account expands on and complements the generic criteria and definitions in Annex A of ‘guidance on submissions’, but does not replace them.

Interpretation of generic criteria

65. The criteria for assessing outputs will be interpreted as follows:

- **Originality** will be understood as the extent to which the output introduces a new way of thinking about a subject, or is distinctive or transformative compared with previous work in an academic field.
- **Significance** will be understood as the extent to which the work has exerted, or is likely to exert, an influence on an academic field or practical applications.
- **Rigour** will be understood as the extent to which the purpose of the work is clearly articulated, an appropriate methodology for the research area has been adopted, and compelling evidence presented to show that the purpose has been achieved.

66. Where appropriate to the output type, subpanels may consider editorial and refereeing standards as part of the indication of rigour, but the absence of these standards will not be taken to mean an absence of rigour.

67. Some sub-panels will use citation information, where available, as part of the indication of academic significance to inform their assessment of output quality. These arrangements are discussed at paragraphs 59-63.

Interpretation of generic level definitions

68. In assessing outputs, the sub-panels will look for evidence of originality, significance and rigour and apply the generic definitions of the starred quality levels as follows:

- a. In assessing work as being **four star** (quality that is world leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour), sub-panels will expect to see evidence of, or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics:
 - agenda-setting
 - research that is leading or at the forefront of the research area
 - great novelty in developing new thinking, new techniques or novel results
 - major influence on a research theme or field
 - developing new paradigms or fundamental new concepts for research
 - major changes in policy or practice

- major influence on processes, production and management
 - major influence on user engagement.
- b. In assessing work as being **three star** (quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence), sub-panels will expect to see evidence of, or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics:
- makes important contributions to the field at an international standard
 - contributes important knowledge, ideas and techniques which are likely to have a lasting influence, but are not necessarily leading to fundamental new concepts
 - significant changes to policies or practices
 - significant influence on processes, production and management
 - significant influence on user engagement.
- c. In assessing work as being **two star** (quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour), sub-panels will expect to see evidence of, or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics:
- provides useful knowledge and influences the field
 - involves incremental advances, which might include new knowledge which conforms with existing ideas and paradigms, or model calculations using established techniques or approaches
 - influence on policy or practice
 - influence on processes, production and management
 - influence on user engagement.
- d. In assessing work as being **one star** (quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour), sub-panels will expect to see evidence of, or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics:
- useful but unlikely to have more than a minor influence in the field
 - minor influence on policy or practice
 - minor influence on processes, production and management
 - minor influence on user engagement.
- e. Research will be graded as '**unclassified**' if it falls below the quality levels described above or does not meet the definition of research used for the REF.

Main Panel C

Criteria and level definitions

68. This section provides a descriptive account of how the sub-panels in Main Panel C will interpret the generic criteria for assessing outputs – originality, significance and rigour – and will apply them at each of the starred quality levels. This descriptive account expands on and complements the generic criteria and definitions in Annex A of ‘guidance on submissions’, but does not replace them.

Interpretation of generic criteria

69. The criteria for assessing outputs will be interpreted as follows:

- **Originality** will be understood in terms of the innovative character of the research output. Research outputs that demonstrate originality may: engage with new and/or complex problems; develop innovative research methods, methodologies and analytical techniques; provide new empirical material; and/or advance theory or the analysis of doctrine, policy or practice.
- **Significance** will be understood in terms of the development of the intellectual agenda of the field and may be theoretical, methodological and/or substantive. Due weight will be given to potential as well as actual significance, especially where the output is very recent.
- **Rigour** will be understood in terms of the intellectual precision, robustness and appropriateness of the concepts, analyses, theories and methodologies deployed within a research output. Account will be taken of such qualities as the integrity, coherence and consistency of arguments and analysis, such as the due consideration of ethical issues.

70. Sub-panel 18 (Economics and Econometrics) will use citation information, where available and appropriate, as part of the indication of academic significance to inform its assessment of output quality. These arrangements are discussed at paragraphs 65- 67.

Interpretation of generic level definitions

71. In assessing outputs, the sub-panels will look for evidence of originality, significance and rigour and apply the generic definitions of the starred quality levels as follows:

- a. In assessing work as being **four star** (quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour), sub-panels will expect to see evidence of, or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics:
 - outstandingly novel in developing concepts, techniques or outcomes
 - a primary or essential point of reference in its field or sub-field
 - major influence on the intellectual agenda of a research theme or field
 - application of exceptionally rigorous research design and techniques of investigation and analysis, and the highest standards of intellectual precision
 - instantiating an exceptionally significant, multi-user data set or research resource.

- b. In assessing work as being **three star** (quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence), sub-panels will expect to see evidence of, or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics:
- an important point of reference in its field or sub-field
 - contributing important knowledge, ideas and techniques which are likely to have a lasting influence
 - application of robust and appropriate research design and techniques of investigation and analysis, with intellectual precision
 - generation of a substantial, coherent and widely admired data set or research resource.
- c. In assessing work as being **two star** (quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour), sub-panels will expect to see evidence of, or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics:
- providing valuable knowledge to the field or sub-field and to the application of such knowledge
 - contributing to incremental and cumulative advances in knowledge in the field and subfield
 - thorough and professional application of appropriate research design and techniques of investigation and analysis.
- d. In assessing work as being **one star** (quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour), sub-panels will expect to see evidence of, or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics:
- useful knowledge, but unlikely to have more than a minor influence in the field
 - an identifiable contribution to understanding, but largely framed by existing paradigms or traditions of enquiry
 - competent application of appropriate research design and techniques of investigation and analysis.
- e. Research will be graded as 'unclassified' if it falls below the quality levels described above or does not meet the definition of research used for the REF.

Main Panel D

Criteria and level definitions

76. This section provides a descriptive account of how the sub-panels will interpret the generic criteria for assessing outputs – originality, significance and rigour – and will apply them at each of the starred quality levels. This descriptive account expands on and complements the generic criteria and definitions in Annex A of ‘guidance on submissions’, but does not replace them.

Interpretation of generic criteria

77. When assessing the quality of outputs, the subpanels will apply the same criteria to all outputs regardless of their form. In so doing they will seek to identify the highest quality research wherever it exists, with four star being a realistic and attainable quality level in all components of the assessment.

78. The criteria for assessing outputs will be interpreted as follows:

- **Originality:** a creative/intellectual advance that makes an important and innovative contribution to understanding and knowledge. This may include substantive empirical findings, new arguments, interpretations or insights, imaginative scope, assembling of information in an innovative way, development of new theoretical frameworks and conceptual models, innovative methodologies and/or new forms of expression.
- **Significance:** the enhancement or deserved enhancement of knowledge, thinking, understanding and/or practice.
- **Rigour:** intellectual coherence, methodological precision and analytical power; accuracy and depth of scholarship; awareness of and appropriate engagement with other relevant work.

Interpretation of generic level definitions

79. The terms ‘world-leading’, ‘international’ and ‘national’ will be taken as quality benchmarks within the generic definitions of the quality levels. They will relate to the actual, likely or deserved influence of the work. There will be no assumption of any necessary international exposure in terms of publication or reception, or any necessary research content in terms of topic or approach. Nor will there be an assumption that work published in a language other than English or Welsh is necessarily of a quality that is internationally benchmarked.

80. In assessing outputs, the sub-panels will look for evidence of originality, significance and rigour and apply the generic definitions of the starred quality levels as follows:

- a. In assessing work as being **four star** (quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour), sub-panels will expect to see evidence of, or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics across and possibly beyond its area/field:
 - a primary or essential point of reference
 - of profound influence
 - instrumental in developing new thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences
 - a major expansion of the range and the depth of research and its application

- outstandingly novel, innovative and/or creative.
- b. In assessing work as being **three star** (quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence), sub-panels will expect to see evidence of, or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics across and possibly beyond its area/field:
- an important point of reference
 - of lasting influence
 - a catalyst for, or important contribution to, new thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences
 - a significant expansion of the range and the depth of research and its application
 - significantly novel or innovative or creative.
- c. In assessing work as being **two star** (quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour), sub-panels will expect to see evidence of, or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics across and possibly beyond its area/field:
- a recognised point of reference
 - of some influence
 - an incremental and cumulative advance on thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences
 - a useful contribution to the range or depth of research and its application.
- d. In assessing work as being **one star** (quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour), sub-panels will expect to see evidence of the following characteristics within its area/field:
- based on existing traditions of thinking, methodology and/or creative practice
 - a useful contribution of minor influence.
- e. A research output will be graded '**unclassified**' if it is either:
- below the quality threshold for one star; **or**
 - does not meet the definition of research used for the REF.

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX

From: Professor David Sanders, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise)

To: All members of staff eligible for return in REF 2014

Date: July 2012

REF 2014: Consideration of individual staff circumstances

The University of Essex is committed to ensuring that decisions about selecting staff for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) are made in a fair, transparent and consistent manner. Information on how eligible staff will be selected for submission to the REF can be found in the University of Essex REF 2014: Code of Practice on the Selection of Staff which can be found at http://www.essex.ac.uk/ref/e_and_d/documents/Essex_CoP.pdf.

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

In determining whether eligible staff may be submitted to the REF with fewer than four research outputs, the University and the Research Strategy Committee will take the following circumstances into consideration:

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

If your research output has been affected by other circumstances, not including teaching and administration that are not listed above, please detail them on this form as they may be considered. Please note that it will always be in the University's interests to view sympathetically requests for individual staff circumstances to be considered.

In determining the number of outputs staff are required to submit, the institution will observe the definitions of individual staff circumstances provided in the published REF 'Panel criteria and working methods' (January 2012) available at www.ref.ac.uk under 'Publications' and included in the University of Essex REF 2014: Code of Practice on the Selection of Staff http://www.essex.ac.uk/ref/e_and_d/documents/Essex_CoP.pdf.

What action do I need to take?

If you are eligible for REF submission you are encouraged to complete the attached form and submit it to Sarah Manning-Press, Research Governance and Planning Manager, by e-mail (sarahm@essex.ac.uk) by 30 June 2013.

If further information is required about any circumstances disclosed, you will be contacted by Sarah Manning-Press.

Who will see the information that I provide?

Within the institution, the information that you provide will be seen by the REF Individual Staff Circumstances Review Group, the membership of which is Professor David Sanders, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise), Professor Debi Roberson, Research Strategy Committee member, Sarah Manning-Press, Research Governance and Planning Manager, and Karen Bush, Equality and Diversity Manager.

Members of the REF Individual Staff Circumstances Review Group handling individual staff circumstances will observe confidentiality and information will be stored securely.

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

- For **circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs**, information will be seen by the relevant REF sub-panel, the REF panel secretariat and the UK funding bodies' REF team. This will be information about early career researcher status, part-time working, career breaks or secondments, and periods of maternity, additional paternity or adoption leave taken.
- For **more complex circumstances**, information will be seen only by the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, the REF Main Panel Chairs and the UK funding bodies' REF team. This will be information to explain the impact on your research of circumstances such as disability, ill health, injury, mental health conditions, gender reassignment, caring responsibilities or constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding, adoption and paternity (in addition to the period of leave taken). This information will **not** be seen by the REF sub-panel.

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

The *REF Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions*

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

What if my circumstances change?

The University recognises that staff circumstances may change between 1 January 2008 and 31 October 2013. If your circumstances change you can download another copy of the attached form at http://www.essex.ac.uk/ref/e_and_d/documents/ISC_disclosure_form.docx.

Individual staff circumstances disclosure form

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Name | |
| Department | |
| Unit of Assessment | |

Section one:

Please select one of the following:

- I have no individual circumstances that I wish to be taken into consideration for the purposes of the Research Excellence Framework (REF).
- I have individual circumstances that I wish to make known but I am not seeking a reduction in outputs. (Please complete sections two and three)
- In completing this form I am seeking a reduction in research outputs. (Please complete sections two and three)

Section two:

Please select as appropriate:

- I would like to be contacted by a member of human resources staff to discuss my circumstances and requirements and/or the support provided by the University of Essex. My contact details for this purpose are:

| | |
|--|--|
| Email | |
| Telephone | |
| Preferred method of communication | |

- I do **not** wish to be contacted by a member of human resources staff

Section three

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

Please provide information required on relevant circumstance/s, boxes will expand but continue onto a separate sheet of paper if necessary:

| Circumstance | Information required |
|--|--|
| Early career researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2009) | Date on which you became an early career research |
| Information | |
| Part time employee | FTE and duration in months |
| Information | |
| Career break or secondment outside of the higher education sector | Dates and duration in months |
| Information | |
| Maternity leave, statutory adoption leave, or additional paternity leave (taken by partners of new mothers or co-adopters) | For each period of leave state which type of leave was taken and the dates and duration in months |
| Information | |
| Disability (including conditions such as cancer and chronic fatigue) | Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months |
| Information | |
| Mental health condition | Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months |
| Information | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Ill health or injury | Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months |
| Information | |
| Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding, paternity, adoption or childcare in addition to the period of maternity, adoption or additional paternity leave taken. | Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months |
| Information | |
| Other caring responsibilities (including caring for an elderly or disabled relative) | Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months |
| Information | |
| Gender reassignment | Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months |
| Information | |
| Other exceptional and relevant reasons, not including teaching or administrative work | Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months |
| Information | |

Please select as appropriate:

- I confirm that the information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances.**
- I recognise that the information provided will be used for REF purposes and will be seen by members of the REF Individual Staff Circumstances Review Group.**

I realise that it may be necessary to share information with the UK funding bodies' REF team, who may make the information available to REF panel chairs, members and secretaries and/or the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel. Where permission is not provided the University of Essex will be limited in the action it can take.

Signature: Date:
(Staff member)

For official use only

Following consideration of the personal circumstances described above, the REF Individual Staff Circumstances Review Group:

- Will progress the staff member's inclusion in the REF submission with [insert number] of research outputs subject to the University's criteria for selection set out in the University of Essex REF 2014: Code of Practice on the Selection of Staff. Rationale for the proposed number of outputs (e.g. this decision is based on the tariffs outlined in the panel criteria):

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

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

If [insert name of staff member] wishes to appeal against the decision of the REF Individual Staff Circumstances Review Group they will need to do so by 31 July 2013 and details of the appeals process can be found at http://www.essex.ac.uk/ref/e_and_d/documents/Essex_CoP.pdf.

Signature: Date:

(Professor David Sanders, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise))

Signature: Date:

(Sarah Manning-Press, Research Governance and Planning Manager and REF Manager)