

## RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2014

### Code of Practice on the fair and transparent selection of staff for submission to the 2014 Research Excellence Framework

#### INTRODUCTION

- 1 This document is Glyndŵr University's Code of Practice on the fair and transparent selection of staff for submission to the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014). It has been approved by the University's Research and Enterprise Committee, the Executive and Senate.
- 2 The Code identifies a series of equality and diversity principles relating to the submission of academic staff to the 2014 Research Excellence Framework and supports the requirements placed upon the University by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW).
- 3 The purpose of this Code is to:
  - provide guidance on how to ensure that staff embrace diversity and prevent unlawful discrimination when defining and implementing REF 2014 processes and criteria;
  - ensure that everyone involved with the University's REF 2014 submissions understands the University's commitment to comply with statutory obligations in relation to equality and diversity and promote best practice.
- 4 The Code is mandatory and applies to all Units of Assessment and to all individuals involved with drafting Unit of Assessment submissions and selecting staff for inclusion within those submissions. Underlying this Code is the fundamental commitment to supporting and encouraging staff with regard to their engagement in research and scholarship and to the advancement of the University's overall research capacity and its impacts within and outside the University.
- 5 This Code will assist all involved with REF 2014 to:
  - understand and meet their responsibilities to promote equality and diversity;

- adopt and put into practice effective processes and criteria designed to ensure equality of opportunity for all and prevent unlawful discrimination or harassment;
  - help to create an environment where people feel they are respected and valued;
  - draw on the talents, skills, experience, networks and different cultural perspectives of the diverse university community;
  - foster good relations in the academic community and workplace;
  - contribute to an overall quality profile consistent with the University's mission.
- 6 The Code is based on the principle that the University has an overriding obligation to ensure that it best meets the generic and specific requirements of REF 2014 in terms of research quality in order to maximize the outcome for the University but with due regard to equality and diversity.
- 7 The main guiding principle to be adopted is that the REF is an assessment of research quality of Units of Assessment and that individuals will be judged for inclusion within Unit of Assessment submissions on the basis of an evaluation of their research track record, particularly their research outputs, in light of the wider strategic objectives of the University with reference to the specific panel and generic requirements for REF submission.
- 8 Further to the above paragraph, the selection of staff (past, present or future) for inclusion within the University's REF 2014 submissions will be based on criteria that are objective and non-discriminatory. This means as a fundamental principle, the University will not tolerate unjust decisions, practices or requirements that qualify or exclude an individual from submission to the REF on the basis of that individual's age, colour, disability, ethnic origin, marriage or civil partnership status, race, religious belief or affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, nationality, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity and paternity or any other irrelevant distinctions. The University will also not tolerate unjust decisions about submission of individuals to the REF where those individuals have been affected by personal circumstances that might have influenced their creation of research

outputs or other evidence of research activity and where these are in accord with REF requirements, as indicated in Appendix 1.

- 9 The University's commitment to comply with statutory obligations in relation to equality and diversity and to promote inclusivity applies to all staff irrespective of role, duration of contract of employment, or mode of employment.

## **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 10 The University has undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to inform this Code of Practice and to determine whether its staff selection policies for the REF may have a detrimental impact on particular groups. Supported by analysis of data on staff eligible for selection and in consultation with staff from protected groups, the EIA will be reviewed periodically during the selection process, to inform review of policy and processes and to ensure that any necessary changes to prevent discrimination or promote equality are implemented prior to the submission deadline. EIAs will be published following the REF submission, including the outcomes of any actions taken to prevent discrimination or advance equality.

## **THE PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES TO BE ADOPTED**

- 11 Selection of staff for submission will take place during the first 6 months of 2013, following dissemination of the Code of Practice, dissemination of information about policies and processes and selection criteria, and relevant training for individuals involved in the selection of staff.
- 12 The Research and Enterprise Committee's Work Plan for 2011/12 includes *"Reviewing the requirements of the Research Excellence Framework [REF] and assessing the University's performance against it; developing and overseeing the implementation of a strategy for preparation of the REF submission."*
- 13 Formally the Executive<sup>1</sup> will make the final decision on which Units of Assessment to submit to the REF 2014 and on which individuals to submit in

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<sup>1</sup> The membership of the Executive is provided in Appendix 3.

any such Units of Assessment based on objective non-discriminatory criteria. In order to achieve this, the Executive will receive from the Research and Enterprise Committee<sup>2</sup> draft submissions together with an account of how the selection criteria have been applied. The draft submissions will be prepared by the Deans of the University Institutes (Arts, Science and Technology, and Health, Medical Sciences and Society) in association with relevant Academic Heads of Departments and Heads of University Research Centres.

- 14 All individuals who are under consideration for inclusion in the University's submissions will be required to complete an "Individual staff circumstances disclosure form". Individuals will be free to choose whether or not to declare any characteristic which would enable a reduction in the number of research outputs required to be included in the REF submission. The forms will be submitted in confidence to the University's Human Resources Department to enable individual circumstances to be taken into account in the drafting of submissions. The REF guidance on individual staff circumstances is available to staff, in the "Panel criteria and working methods", document, at: [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk) under "Publications".
- 15 The Research and Enterprise Committee will consider the drafts on the basis of compliance with this Code of Practice and the need to ensure that they best meet the generic and specific requirements of REF 2014 in terms of research quality in order to maximize the outcome for the University. The Research and Enterprise Committee's consideration of draft submissions may take place during the regular scheduled meetings or at meetings convened for that purpose. When the Research and Enterprise Committee is satisfied that draft submissions best meet the generic and specific requirements of REF 2014 in terms of research quality in order to maximize the outcome for the University, the committee will make recommendations regarding submissions to the Executive.
- 16 When it meets to consider draft submissions from the Research and Enterprise Committee, the Executive will be provided with anonymized statistical data on the diversity of individuals included within each draft

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<sup>2</sup> The Terms of Reference and Membership of the Research and Enterprise Committee are provided in Appendix 2.

submission in line with the University's Equality and Diversity policy in order to ensure appropriate monitoring. This monitoring will endeavour to ensure that the institution is legally compliant and that best practice in the sector is followed, bearing in mind the need to obtain the maximum outcome for the University from the REF submissions. Any issues will be referred to the Research and Enterprise Committee for reconsideration before the submissions are finalised.

- 17 All members of committees that are involved in selecting individuals for submission to the REF are expected to declare to the Chair of that committee any relevant interests related to those individuals, and to withdraw from any discussion relating to those individuals.

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

- 18 The specific objective criteria that will be used to select individuals will be formally agreed and unambiguously documented and published by Executive following its consideration of recommendations made by the Research and Enterprise Committee. The Research and Enterprise Committee may take advice from external advisors and/or other committees of the University in drawing up and refining such criteria and in formulating the draft submissions. All committees involved in this process, up to and including the Executive, will ensure that the selection criteria adopted are non-discriminatory, and that they comply with the overarching requirements of this Code of Practice and facilitate the optimal performance of the University in terms of REF criteria.
- 19 The main guiding principle to be adopted is that the REF is an assessment of research quality of Units of Assessment. As a result, individuals will be judged for inclusion within Unit of Assessment submissions on the basis of an objective evaluation of their research track record, particularly their research outputs, in light of the wider strategic objectives of the University with reference to the specific panel and generic requirements for REF submission. This process will take into account the provisions enabling a reduction in the number of research outputs required to be included in the REF submission in respect of individuals in certain circumstances.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF**

- 20 The University aims to ensure that it identifies all eligible staff who have produced excellent research which can be submitted to the REF, and that its policies and processes are implemented consistently across the institution.
- 21 The University will ensure that all staff are aware of this Code of Practice and the policies, processes and selection criteria for the REF, and that everyone involved with the selection of staff for inclusion within the University's REF 2014 submissions understands the Code and the University's commitment to comply with statutory obligations in relation to equality and diversity and to promote inclusivity at all stages in the selection process.
- 22 This Code of Practice and the University's processes and criteria for the selection of staff will be disseminated widely, via
- Heads of University Research Centres and Academic Leaders
  - University's internal and external communication vehicle "Glynfo"
  - The weekly staff electronic newsletter
  - Workshops for staff enabling issues to be raised and processes explained
- 23 The University will ensure that eligible staff absent from work are informed by letter about this Code of Practice and the processes and criteria for the selection of staff.
- 24 The results of selection decisions and appeals will be communicated to staff individually.

#### **TRAINING OF THOSE INVOLVED IN STAFF SELECTION FOR SUBMISSION**

- 25 In order to ensure that all individuals involved in selecting individuals for submission to the REF are able to implement the Code of Practice and the University's policies and processes consistently, a programme of training led by a senior member of staff nominated by the Vice-Chancellor will be put in place for individuals in the following categories:
- Members of the Executive
  - Members of the Research and Enterprise Committee

- Academic Leaders and Heads of Research Centres
- Members of the REF Appeal Panel (see below)

26 The training will cover the nature and application of this Code. Those individuals will also be required to undertake training on equality and diversity tailored to the REF process, using case studies as appropriate, to ensure that they have an awareness of the key legislation, its impact in terms of selection of staff for the REF, and an understanding of best practice in terms of ensuring that there is no discrimination in selecting staff for the REF.

## **DATA PROTECTION**

27 Personal data collected in the course of preparing and making submissions to the REF will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Individuals have a right to check or amend the data held, to know what it is being collected for and how it will be used. Due care will be taken to ensure confidentiality. The data collected for the REF will only be used to prepare and make submissions to the REF and to inform future University research strategy.

## **REVIEW PROCEDURES**

28 Once draft Unit of Assessment submissions have been agreed by the Research and Enterprise Committee and approved by the Executive, this will be publicised and relevant information about individual academic staff will be made available to them by the Chair of the Research and Enterprise Committee on request. Having received this information, staff may informally discuss their inclusion/exclusion with the Chair of the Research and Enterprise Committee within two weeks of the information becoming available. That time limit may be extended if absence from the workplace means that an informal discussion is not possible within two weeks. If the individual is not satisfied with the explanation about their inclusion/exclusion and the outcome of the discussion they may appeal in writing within two further weeks to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Operations) who will convene a REF Appeal Panel to consider such cases consisting of:

- Pro Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
- A professor of the University not involved in the selection of staff, nominated by the Vice-Chancellor
- An external member with significant experience of selecting staff for inclusion in the RAE / REF
- A Senior Member of Human Resources nominated by the Vice-Chancellor
- The Academic Registrar or nominee (Clerk)

29 The acceptable grounds for appeal against exclusion are normally limited to: (i) failure to adhere to this code of practice or (ii) incorrect or inappropriate application of the REF criteria as laid down by the relevant REF assessment panels. The REF Appeal Panel will consider the issues independently and advise the Executive as to whether it agrees or not with the decision to include/exclude the individual, and the reasons for doing so. The REF Appeal Panel will give the appellant and the Chair of the Research and Enterprise Committee (or nominee) the opportunity to provide oral and/or written comments. The Chair of the Panel will formally write to any appellants, outlining the reasons for the Panel's final recommendation on their inclusion in, or exclusion from, particular submissions. The Executive will make the final decision as to the inclusion/exclusion of individuals in particular REF submissions after receiving the advice from the REF Appeal Panel. In cases where the Executive decides against the advice of the REF Appeal Panel, it will provide a written explanation to the individual member of staff of its reasons for doing so and advise the Panel of the same.

30 The Chair of the Appeal Panel will not be present in the meeting(s) of the Executive when either draft submissions or the recommendations of the Appeal Panel are considered.

### **BREACHES OF THE CODE**

31 Breaches of the Code may be regarded as misconduct and treated seriously by the University under the disciplinary policy/procedures.

### **CONTACT FOR ENQUIRIES**

32 Staff may contact the Head of Research Services for information and/or advice about the REF.

## **Appendix 1: Circumstances affecting individuals' production of research outputs that should be taken into account for reasons of equality and diversity**

The list is intended to provide guidance on the personal circumstances individuals may be experiencing (or have experienced in the past) that might have constrained their ability to produce four outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period<sup>3</sup>:

- a. Circumstances with a **clearly defined** reduction in outputs, which are:
  - i. Qualifying as an early career researcher (on the basis set out in paragraph 72 and Table 1 of "Panel criteria and working methods").
  - ii. Absence from work due to working part-time, secondments or career breaks (on the basis set out in paragraphs 73-74 and Table 2 of "Panel criteria and working methods").
  - iii. Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave (on the basis set out in paragraphs 75-81 of "Panel criteria and working methods").
  - iv. Other circumstances that apply in Units of Assessment 1-6, as defined at paragraph 86 of "Panel criteria and working methods".
  
- b. **Complex circumstances** that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:
  - i. Disability. This is defined in 'Assessment framework and guidance on submissions' Part 4, Table 2 under 'Disability'.
  - ii. Ill health or injury.
  - iii. Mental health conditions.
  - iv. Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of – or justify the reduction of further outputs in addition to – the allowances made in paragraph 75 of "Panel criteria and working methods".
  - v. Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member).
  - vi. Gender reassignment.
  - vii. Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed at paragraph 190 of 'Assessment framework and guidance on submissions' or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

It is a fundamental principle of this Code that where individuals have an incomplete track record of research performance as a result of any of these reasons, they will be considered for submission on the basis of the quality of their incomplete track record. Where that limited track record meets the threshold for submission determined by the University through its relevant committees in terms of quality though not necessarily quantity, the individual concerned will be submitted alongside others with a more complete track record and the circumstances of their incomplete record will be reported in the submission narrative – insofar as this is in accord with the criteria for the panel concerned for the REF. Meeting the panel criteria in such cases will take precedence over all other considerations.

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<sup>3</sup> The list reflects the guidance in the publications REF 01.2012 Panel Criteria and Working Methods) and REF 02.2011: Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions which are available at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk) under "Publications".

## **Appendix 2: Research and Enterprise Committee – Terms of Reference and Membership**

### **Research and Enterprise Committee**

- Status:* A committee of Senate
- Reporting:* Reporting to Senate and acting in accordance with the Standing Order on the Conduct of Committees
- Rationale:* To support the Senate in its discharge of responsibility for research and enterprise across the University, in particular through the development of relevant policies and procedures
- Frequency of meetings:* 3 per annum

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 1 To recommend to Senate the establishment and development of policies and procedures to support and embed research and enterprise activity in the University.
- 2 To recommend an annual work plan that ensures oversight, review and further development of strategy and policies relating to the development and embedding of research and enterprise activities across the University.

#### **MATTERS FOR REPORT (Delegated Powers)**

- 3 To review the status of research proposals and research grants throughout the University and monitor progress against strategic targets for research activity and its impacts.
- 4 To set Key Performance Indicators to underpin the objectives in the University's Strategic Plan relevant to research and enterprise activity.
- 5 To advise the Vice-Chancellor and the Core Executive on research and enterprise activities.
- 6 To commission the collation, production and dissemination of an Annual Research Report and/or other reviews of research output.
- 7 To receive reports from the Research Ethics Sub-Committee regarding the exercise of the procedures for consideration of research ethics proposals.
- 8 To consider, approve and report on draft University responses to consultation papers relating to research and scholarship from external bodies such as the University of Wales, QAA, Research Councils etc.

- 9 To act as a forum for the identification and dissemination of good practice in research and enterprise across the University and to consult and communicate with the Institutes on such matters.
- 10 To provide a report annually to Senate and to external bodies as appropriate (such as the Research Councils) on cases of research misconduct.
- 11 To determine the standards, policies and procedures in relation to the inclusion of research outputs in the Research Repository and to receive an annual report from the User Services Manager regarding the Research Repository.
- 12 To determine an annual plan of work and to provide for Senate:
  - an annual report on the work it has conducted in the previous year,
  - a biennial evaluation of the committee's effectiveness,
  - regular reports (as appropriate) consistent with its terms of reference, including information with regard to its sub-committees.
- 13 To authorise the Chair to take such Executive action as may be necessary to expedite urgent business in between meetings, provided that the Chair is content that the full Committee would approve the decision and that a report of such action is provided to the Committee.

### **Research and Enterprise Committee (REC)**

#### **Composition of membership 2012/13**

<b>COMPOSITION</b>	<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) (Chair)	Prof Peter Heard
Associate Director, Graduate School	Dr Alison Green
Dean or nominee (1 from each Institute)	
Institute of Arts, Science & Technology	To be confirmed
Institute of Health, Medical Sciences & Society	Prof Chris Lewis
Heads of University Research Centres	Prof Richard Day (Materials, Engineering and Manufacturing) Prof Sam Wamuziri (Management) Dr Rich Picking (Creative and Applied Research for the Digital Society) Dr Lynne Kennedy (Health, Wellbeing and Society) Dr Mandy Robbins (Psychology)
Academic staff (two, one from each University Institute, nominated by the Dean, normally Professors)	<i>Institute of Arts, Science &amp; Technology</i> Prof Saphwan Al-Assaf

	<i>Institute of Health, Medical Sciences &amp; Society</i>  Prof Patrick Costello
Academic Leader leading business engagement activity	Prof Chris Jones, Academic Head of Department for Business and Management
Postgraduate research student representative	vacant
Member of research staff representative	vacant
Up to two members co-opted by the Chair	Prof David Walker Prof Fiona Irvine
<b>BY INVITATION</b>	
External Member	Prof Andy Cobb
<b>IN ATTENDANCE</b>	
Clerk/Secretary	Mr Stewart Milne

### **Appendix 3: Membership of the Executive**

#### **Membership by virtue of their Office:**

Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive (Chair)  
Pro Vice-Chancellor, Operations (Vice-Chair)  
Pro Vice-Chancellor, Teaching, Learning and Assessment and Head of the School for Undergraduate Studies  
Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Head of the Graduate School  
Executive Director, Finance and Estates  
Executive Director, Corporate Development  
Executive Director, Campus Management and Commercial Services  
Students' Guild President

#### **By Invitation:**

Dean of the University Institute for Health, Medicals Sciences and Society  
Dean of the University Institute for Arts, Science and Technology  
Director of Glyndŵr University London  
Professor of Early Childhood Studies

**Clerk:** Senior Executive Officer/PA

#### **In Attendance:**

Head of Corporate Communications / Executive Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor