

The Research Excellence Framework [REF] Goldsmiths' Code of Practice for the Selection of Staff

Introduction

Every institution submitting to the REF is required to develop and disseminate internally a Code of Practice that ensures fairness, transparency, consistency, accountability, and inclusivity in selecting which staff will be included in each submission. The present Code of Practice [CoP] sets out staff selection procedures which embed the principles of equality and diversity legislation and comply with all relevant legislation. It is subject to examination and approval by the REF Equality and Diversity Panel, and will be published as part of the REF submission.

Part 4 from the REF 'Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions' (REF 02/2011), together with an addendum published in January 2012, provides detailed information on requirements for institutional CoPs and sets out the legislative context. This is accessible at www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02_11/.

Responsibility and Accountability

Academic Board (the supreme academic authority within the College's committee system, reporting to Council) has delegated to its Research and Enterprise Committee [REC] responsibility for overseeing the College's participation in national research assessment exercises. This is reflected in the REC terms of reference, attached at Appendix A, which are approved by Academic Board and Council. It is chaired by the Pro Warden Research & Enterprise, on the appointment of the Warden; s/he accordingly has overall responsibility for development and implementation of the College's Code of Practice. The Warden will ultimately be required to confirm that the College has adhered to it throughout the REF process.

In enacting its responsibility for the College's participation in the REF, REC has appointed a REF Panel specifically to make decisions on staff selection for each of Goldsmiths' submissions. Its membership is constituted to reflect the distribution of College disciplines, with at least one member from a discipline falling under each REF main panel and at least one member from a department falling into the College's organisational groupings. The panel will report to REC, and its membership and Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix B.

The consultation process

The principles, processes, and procedures set out in this Code of Practice have been developed with oversight from the College Research and Enterprise Committee and have entailed consultation with the following groups:

- the College's Senior Management Team
- Heads of all academic departments, via the Warden's Advisory Group
- Union representatives
- The College's Equality and Diversity Committee (pending)
- Academic Board

Implementation and Review

This Code will be used to inform the Dry Run scheduled to take place in the Summer term of 2012, and its effectiveness will be monitored at this stage. It may be revised in the light of any further guidance received from the Funding Council.

College policies

The processes involved in staff selection are subject to the Equality Act 2010, and other relevant employment law. Reflecting this, this Code of Practice has been informed by and will conform to the College's employment and equality and diversity policies, specifically:

- i. the Code of Practice relating to Equality and Diversity for Staff and Students
- ii. Equality objectives
- iii. the Disability Scheme
- iv. the Gender Scheme
- v. the policy on Dignity at Work
- vi. the policy on Dignity in the Learning Environment

The College's policies on Equality and Diversity are published in a section of the Governance website at: (www.gold.ac.uk/governance/policies/)

The College takes seriously its responsibilities towards equality of opportunity for those on fixed-term and part-time contracts, in the light of the Fixed-term and Part-time Regulations, and in particular with respect to opportunities for research and for developing a research profile. Such staff are eligible for entry into the REF following exactly the same criteria as those pertaining to full-time established staff, taking into account REF guidance on permissible reductions to the expected number of outputs.

The College has established a Concordat Implementation Group which is working in conjunction with the Research Office, the Staff Development Unit, the Careers Service, the Graduate School, and academic departments to actively address the research training and mentoring needs of fixed-term and part-time staff including contract researchers.

With respect specifically to part-time staff, a forum (www.gold.ac.uk/equality-diversity/networks/part-timeforum/) meets regularly to identify and discuss any issues which may be adversely affecting staff on fractional appointments as well as to identify and disseminate examples of good practice. Issues are monitored by the College's Equal Opportunities Advisor and pursued via the appropriate College policies where necessary.

Principles

Goldsmiths' procedures for selecting staff for inclusion in REF submissions are guided by the following overarching principles:

- We are committed to identifying and including within our submissions internationally excellent research carried out by any of our staff, ensuring that we recognise and respond appropriately to particular circumstances which could constrain a staff member's research productivity, limit the profiling of their research, or adversely bias judgements of it.
- We recognise that since departments are at differing phases in their development it is appropriate that the thresholds for staff selection should vary between submissions. However, the processes by which thresholds are defined and selection is implemented will be the same for all submissions.
- We will be transparent, fair, and consistent in enacting these processes and will communicate clearly at every stage, both College-wide and with individuals
- REF selection decisions will not be taken into account in relation to promotion, progression, or other contractual matters. We recognise that staff may make valuable contributions to REF submissions even if their outputs are not selected for inclusion, for instance by their involvement in impact case studies or doctoral supervision.
- We will comply fully with the principles of equality and diversity which are clearly articulated in the REF Guidance on Submissions, and with all associated legislation. All members of Goldsmiths' REF Panel and the Appeals Panel, the two bodies responsible for selection decisions, will be required to participate in half-day equality and diversity training sessions utilising the materials developed by the Equality Challenge Unit. These sessions will be delivered by the Human Resources REF Officer, the Equalities and Diversity Advisor and the Head of Research Office. Several training sessions will be scheduled during the summer and autumn terms of 2012 to ensure that all relevant staff are able to attend.
- We will encourage and enable staff to bring to our attention, confidentially, any personal circumstances that might have limited their research activity during the REF period, in order to ensure that we accurately identify and apply any permissible reductions in the number of outputs they are required to submit.
- We will respect the confidentiality of personal data.

Transparency and communication

This Code of Practice will initially be accessible to staff of the College only at (<http://www.gold.ac.uk/research/>) and once approved by EDAP, accessible externally. All staff will be notified and subsequently reminded of its location through emails, SMT bulletins, presentations at Warden's Open Meetings, and in personal written correspondence concerning their own selection.

Heads of Department and Chairs of Departmental Research Committees [DRC] will be invited to attend special events, organised in the context of Goldsmiths' DRC Network activities, to explain and discuss the Code of Practice. In addition the Pro-Warden Research & Enterprise and the Head of the Research Office will have separate one-to-one meetings with the Head and DRC Chair from every department to ensure that they have a clear understanding of it

which they can share with their staff individually or in department meetings. The PWRE will give an oral presentation on the Code of Practice to at least one of the Warden's Open Meetings, and she and/or the Head of the RO will additionally be willing to make presentations/answer questions at meetings of individual departments.

Staff who are absent from the College for extended periods will be contacted by email and letter to draw their attention to the Code of Practice. Where such staff may not have ready access to the College website (for instance if they are working in remote locations) they will be sent a hard copy; this will also be available on request to the Research Office or their Head of Department.

All correspondence concerning selection decisions will be sent in hard copy as well as electronically to every individual. For those who are absent over critical periods, letters will be sent to their home address.

Information regarding the College's REF procedures may be released to third parties under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. Through the Data Protection Act, staff have a right of access to data that relate to them personally. Decisions should be appropriately recorded, and records that relate to individuals within the REF process should be both accurate and defensible.

Personally identifiable information relating to any aspect of the REF process (including internal evaluations of research outputs and data relating to personal circumstances) will be used only for the purposes of REF. Any personal identifiers will be deleted from electronic data sets contemporaneously with announcement of REF outcomes in early 2015. Hard copies of such information will be destroyed.

Terminology

- **Units of Assessment [UoAs]:** These are the subject areas defined by the REF within which submissions are made. Each of the 36 UoAs relates to a particular discipline or set of related disciplines, and an associated subpanel comprising academics from these disciplines will evaluate all of the submissions it receives. Goldsmiths will make submissions to approximately 12-15 UoAs, the majority of which correspond closely to one particular department (e.g. History, Psychology). Submissions to some UoAs, however, may include staff from more than one department.
- **REF-eligible staff:** Individuals whose contracts of employment with Goldsmiths render their outputs eligible for inclusion in REF submissions [as set out in the HEFCE Guidelines on Submissions www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2012/01_12/]. In essence, this means staff whose contracts explicitly require them to carry out research as part or all of their duties.
- **'Quality Rating' of outputs:** The perceived 'originality, significance and rigour' of every output is graded as 4* (world-leading), 3* (internationally excellent), 2* (internationally recognised), 1* (nationally recognised) or 'unclassified' (below the standard of nationally recognised work).
- **Grade Point Average [GPA]** refers to the average quality rating of a set of outputs
- **u-GPA:** This refers to the average of all the outputs included within a single submission to a particular UoA (i.e. it is based on the combined outputs of all entered staff)
- **p-GPA:** This is the personal GPA for each staff member, and is based on the number of outputs they are required to submit (normally four, but fewer for early career and part-time staff or those with other special circumstances).
- **Dry Run:** This is a process to be conducted over the summer of 2012 in order to yield quality ratings for eligible outputs which are already published or which are highly likely to be published within the REF period. It will involve internal assessments and reviews by external assessors.
- **Goldsmiths REF Panel [GRP]:** A panel of senior academic staff appointed by the Research and Enterprise Committee [REC] to take an overview of submissions and candidate outputs; and, liaising closely with academic departments, to make decisions on staff selection for each of Goldsmiths submissions. Its membership has been constituted to reflect the distribution of our disciplines, with at least one member from a discipline falling under each REF main panel and at least one member from a department falling into the College's organisational groupings. GRP membership and Terms of Reference of the Panel are attached at Appendix B.
- **REF Equality and Diversity Panel [EDAP]:** This panel comprises individuals with expertise in equality and diversity issues affecting research careers, with experience in research leadership and management, and drawn from across the four REF main panel areas. It will provide advice to the REF team, REF panel chairs and the UK funding bodies on the implementation and evaluation of the REF equality and diversity measures. More detailed information is available at www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/equality/
- **Equality Impact Assessment [EAI]:** This entails construction of profiles - in terms of disability, gender and ethnicity - of staff who are eligible to be included in submissions and of those who are eventually selected for inclusion, enabling disparities to be identified. The profiles will also address contractual status (fixed-term, part-time, and other flexible working). An initial EAI will be carried out after the Dry Run, and the data from it will inform the subsequent process; another will be carried out based on data from the actual REF submissions.

Criteria and processes for staff selection

1. A target u-GPA will be set for each potential submission/UoA separately.

- These will vary between submissions, taking into account an appraisal of the current circumstances and strategic aims of the relevant departments. Decisions will be made by GRP, informed by advice from departments and broader institutional considerations. Thus it may be concluded that the College's interests are best served in some subject areas by including outputs of a broad quality range, whilst in others it is more desirable to concentrate on work at the highest quality levels
- It is noted that REF-eligible staff will definitely be selected for a submission if their estimated p-GPA is at least equivalent to the target u-GPA; and that those with lower p-GPAs will be selected if, with their inclusion, the actual u-GPA remains at or above the target level (see 6 below).

2. Staff will be informed of the target u-GPA for their department/UoA, and its implications for selection decisions, in advance of selection decisions.

- This information, as it relates specifically to the submissions relevant to each department and individual staff member, will be communicated in writing to departments and individual staff prior to the summer 2012 Dry Run which will inform the first phase of selection decisions.

3. The number of outputs required for every REF-eligible staff member will be determined centrally and confidentially, to ensure that permissible reductions to the standard number are appropriately applied where personal circumstances may have constrained research activity

- All staff will be requested to complete and return to Human Resources [HR] or the Research Office [RO] a form identifying whether there are any circumstances which may be relevant, or whether there are none. These include the wide range of factors set out in detail in Appendix C (*e.g. being at an early career stage; working part-time; having had interruptions to academic employment; maternity/paternity/adoption leave; prolonged health absences; complex personal issues*).
- This information will be considered by a panel comprising the Head of the RO and a designated HR officer, who will advise on the number of outputs required. In so doing they will draw closely on published guidance from the REF Equality and Diversity Panel (EDAP) which both explains how REF panels will consider individual circumstances and provides information for institutions to utilise in forming their own judgements. Staff can find this information at www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/other/equality/REF_equality.pdf.
- Personal data will be treated confidentially by the Head of the RO and designated HR Officer: Heads of Department and staff orchestrating submissions will be informed simply of the minimum number of outputs needed for all individuals being considered for inclusion. As set out in point 8 below, all individual staff will receive written notification of their own required number of outputs.
- Any information placed in the public domain about REF, either proactively or in response to Freedom of Information requests, will be in sufficiently large datasets to avoid the possibility of individuals being identified.¹

¹ It is expected that before REF assessments have been made, much information held will also be exempt from Freedom of Information disclosure for other reasons.

4. **Following the Dry Run, all outputs put forward for consideration will be assigned an estimated quality rating and p-GPAs will be calculated for all potentially REF-eligible staff**
 - All potentially REF-eligible staff² will have been requested to provide summary descriptors of their candidate outputs as well as access to the full outputs. These will initially be evaluated within departments.
 - In the context of the Dry Run, external assessors appointed by the College will give ratings and general evaluations in relation to the body of outputs being considered for the submissions on which they are advising.
 - The GRP will subsequently assign estimated quality ratings to every output, informed by both the above sources of information.
 - On the basis of these quality ratings, p-GPAs will be calculated. These will be based on the minimum number of outputs required by each staff member, using those with the highest ratings.
5. **For the whole submission, an initial u-GPA will be calculated by averaging the outputs identified for all REF-eligible staff.**
 - There may be some staff for whom fewer than four outputs are formally required, but who have additional strong outputs. These outputs are eligible for inclusion at the discretion of the institution (up to the maximum of four outputs per individual). u-GPAs will be computed with and without the 'optional' outputs, with a view to including those which benefit the submission as a whole.
6. **If this initial u-GPA is below the target, staff with the lowest p-GPAs will be taken out serially until the target u-GPA is achieved.**
 - All staff remaining in the model will be designated as 'definite' for selection. Once a positive selection decision is made it will not be reversed.
 - All other staff will be designated as 'not definite' for selection at this point. It is noted, however, that future changes to the portfolio of outputs (e.g. new outputs from themselves or other eligible staff) might result in their selection.
7. **An Impact Equality Assessment will be carried out, by the Human Resources department, to identify whether any subgroups of academic staff are disproportionately represented in either the 'definite' or 'not definite' categories at this stage.**
 - The results of this analysis will be provided to the GRP and to REC in order that any anomalies can be taken into consideration and addressed as appropriate in subsequent steps – for example, ensuring that all staff from under-represented groups have had impartial and good advice on which outputs to put forward for consideration, that evaluations have been unbiased, and that any circumstances potentially constraining their research productivity have been appropriately identified and taken into account in determining the requisite number of outputs.
 - The findings will also be utilised to highlight any staff development issues which require attention at departmental and College level.

² This includes staff who are not currently REF-eligible but who may become so through career development. Such staff are invited, but not obliged, to provide information about their outputs.

- 8. By the end of September 2012, all staff who have provided output information in advance of the Dry Run will be notified individually, in writing, of their contractual REF-eligibility. Those who are REF-eligible will additionally be informed of:**
- the minimum number of outputs required in their case;
 - the quality ratings of their outputs;
 - their p-GPA;
 - the target u-GPA;
 - their designation as 'definite' or 'not definite' for selection.
- 9. Within two months of receiving the above information, staff may request reviews of the number of outputs required and/or the quality ratings of their outputs, and appeal a 'not definite' selection decision as follows:**
- a) Number of outputs: Staff may submit to the Head of the RO a request that this judgement is reviewed. They may provide any information that they did not initially make available or which concerns recent changes to their circumstances, and/or an explanation of why they consider the initial decision was inaccurate. In all cases the Head of the RO and the HR officer will re-evaluate the case in light of this additional information and in relation to the EDAP guidance. If they do not consider that this alters the original judgement, they will refer the case on an anonymised basis to GRP for a final decision.
- b) Quality ratings: Staff who consider any individual output to have been inappropriately graded will be invited to submit to GRP a short written account of the basis for their view, providing any information they consider to be relevant.
- For staff currently categorised as 'not definite', any outputs for which a review is requested will automatically be re-evaluated. For staff already categorised as 'definite', this will be at the discretion of GRP following consideration of the request and any additional information.
 - 'Second opinions' will be obtained from assessors appointed by GRP on the basis that they have appropriate knowledge of the discipline and have not previously evaluated the output; they will normally be from within Goldsmiths, but may exceptionally be external. They will not be told what the initial rating was, and if they happen to be aware of it they will be instructed to disregard it.
 - Where there is a difference between the original and second opinion, the output will be assigned the higher of the two ratings.
- 10. By the end of April 2013, the status of all staff who were initially categorised as 'not definite' will have been reviewed, taking account of:**
- any adjustments to the required number or quality ratings of outputs following the above re-evaluations.
 - a recomputed u-GPA, which will incorporate all such adjustments alongside changes to the total body of outputs which might arise due to the publication of new outputs and/or changes to staffing. Any new outputs will have been subjected to internal evaluation.
 - any strategic alterations to the target u-GPA in light of other developments. It is reiterated that whilst this could result in some formerly 'not definite' staff being selected (irrespective of whether they requested reviews), it will not lead to the exclusion of staff who were previously designated 'definite'.

11. By the end of May 2013, all REF-eligible staff who were previously 'not definite' or who have joined the College since the Dry Run will be notified in writing of their current designation and associated information as previously set out in 8 above. They may then request reviews or make formal appeals, by the end of June, as follows:

- Such staff may request (a) a review of the number of required outputs, if new circumstances have arisen or new information has become available in the interim; and / or (b) second opinions on quality ratings of any outputs which were not available at the time of the Dry Run. The procedures here will be as set out in 8(a) and (b).
- They may make a formal appeal *on process grounds only* to a specially constituted REF Appeals Committee comprising those members of SMT, other than the Warden, who are not also on the internal REF panel. These appeals will be considered by the end of July 2013, and where appropriate any further re-evaluations conducted by mid-September.

12. By the end of September 2013, final selection decisions will be communicated in writing to all staff who have not previously been designated 'definite' for selection.

- Final u-GPAs will have been computed, factoring in any adjustments relating to the number of outputs required for individual staff, quality ratings, and changes to the staff projected to be in post on the census date.
- This will result in some staff now meeting the threshold for selection if, with their inclusion, the u-GPA is at or above target. Under no circumstances will there be a reversal of a previous designation as 'definite' for selection.
- At this point all selection decisions will be final, subject only to all identified outputs being in the public domain by December 31st 2013.³ Staff who were formerly 'not definite' will be clearly informed in writing of whether they are now definitely 'selected' or 'not selected'.

13. A second Impact Equality Assessment will be conducted by the Human Resources department between October and December 2013 to identify whether any subgroups of academic staff were under-represented in the final submissions.

- The results of this analysis will be considered by the Research and Enterprise Committee, the Equality and Diversity Committee, and the Senior Management Team in order that any anomalies are systematically noted and will inform future strategies relating to staff selection, support, and career development.

³ In cases where an identified output has not appeared in the public domain by the end of September, its inclusion in the submission will be contingent on provision of a letter from the publisher confirming that it will be published prior to 31 December 2013.

Research and Enterprise Committee 2011-12**Parent body: Academic Board****Terms of Reference**

1. To consider strategic planning and policy development matters relating to research and enterprise, including business relationships and knowledge transfer activities, and to make recommendations to Academic Board and Council as appropriate.
2. To monitor the delivery of aspects of approved College strategy relating to the above.
3. To oversee the College's participation in national exercises to evaluate research performance.
4. To consider matters relating to the establishment, monitoring and closure of individual Research Centres and Units
5. To advise the Pro-Warden (Research and Enterprise) on matters relating to College academic publications.
6. To receive copies of reports on completed periods of study leave.

Terms of office on committees are for three years, renewable for a second term. The letters "eot" against a person's name in membership listings indicates that he or she will reach the maximum term as a member of the body concerned at the date specified. Sometimes there is also reference to "eot Council": this will normally override any later termination date for the term of office on the particular committee.

COMPOSITION**Chair: Pro-Warden appointed by the Warden****Dean of the Graduate School:****Chair of Research Ethics Committee****Director of Business Development:****Holder of a post in the area of business relations, designated by the Chair of the Committee****Head of Research Office****One member of the senior academic staff from each Departmental Group as specified in Ordinance 2****Group A:****Group B:****Group C:****Group D:****MEMBERSHIP***(ex officio membership in italics)*

Professor Jane Powell

*Professor Les Back**Professor Len Platt**Ms Julie Taylor**Ms Lynda Agili*

Dr Dejan Djokic, History (to 2014)

Dr Andrea Phillips, Art (to 2014)

Professor Rosalyn George
Educational Studies (to 2014)

Professor Nick Couldry

Group E:

Secretary: Head of Research Office:

Media and Communications (to 2013)

Dr Elisabeth Hill, Psychology (to
2014)

Ms Lynda Agili

Goldsmiths REF Panel

Terms of Reference:

This panel has been appointed by, and reports to, the College Research and Enterprise Committee. Its remit is as follows:

- To advise on REF outputs;
- To make collective decisions on allocation of staff to UoAs;
- To decide collectively on selection of outputs / entry of staff, with input from Departmental Research Committees;
- To take an overview of REF submissions and fine-tune final versions.

Each panel member will liaise on the submissions led by two or three departments, including their own and, as far as possible, one or two others which fall under the same main panel; they will participate in the Dry Run review meetings for those departments. The Pro Warden Research and Enterprise will be involved in all Dry Run reviews, and will contribute to oversight of all submissions.

Membership

All members have experience and understanding of REF requirements and of evaluating outputs, reflecting their academic seniority (readership or professorial level) and/or involvement in relevant strategic roles.

The constitution of the Panel has been constructed to reflect, as far as possible, the composition of the College in terms of (a) the REF main panels to which our disciplines will be submitting; (b) the current College department groupings (**as defined by the Ordinance on Groups of Academic Departments and Areas**); and (c) the three groups of academic departments line-managed by each of the Pro Wardens.

It is chaired by the Pro-Warden Research and Enterprise, who also chairs REC.

Member	Department	REF Main Panel	Pro Warden Groups	College group
Jane Powell	Psychology	A	2	E
Mark d'Inverno	Computing	B	3	E
Catherine Alexander	Anthropology	C	1	D
Sanjay Seth	Politics	C	1	D
Andrea Phillips	Art	D	2	B
Nick Couldry	Media & Comms	D	2	D
Simon McVeigh	Music	D	3	B

Irit Rogoff	Visual Cultures	D	2	A
Lynda Agili	Research Office	n/a	n/a	n/a

Personal circumstances

The following paragraphs from the addendum to the Guidance on Submissions (REF 02.2011; www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2012/01_12/) are reproduced below and set out the range of personal circumstances to be taken into account in reaching a view on the number of outputs required for each staff member.

63. The criteria for determining which staff are eligible to be included in institutions' submissions are common for all UOAs, and are set out in 'guidance on submissions' (paragraphs 78-83).
64. Up to four research outputs must be listed against each member of staff included in the submission. A maximum of four outputs per researcher will provide panels with a sufficient selection of research outputs from each submitted unit upon which to base judgements about the quality of that unit's outputs. Consultations on the development of the REF confirmed that this is an appropriate maximum volume of research outputs for the purposes of assessment.
65. As a key measure to support equality and diversity in research careers, in all UOAs individuals may be returned with fewer than four outputs without penalty in the assessment, where their individual circumstances have significantly constrained their ability to produce four outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period. This measure is intended to encourage institutions to submit all their eligible staff who have produced excellent research.
66. HEIs are allowed to list the maximum of four outputs against any researcher, irrespective of their circumstances or the length of time they have had to conduct research. A minimum of one output must be listed against each individual submitted to the REF.
67. In order to provide clarity and consistency on the number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty, there will be a **clearly defined** reduction in outputs for those types of circumstances listed at paragraph 69a. Circumstances that are more **complex** will require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs; these are listed at paragraph 69b. Arrangements have been put in place for complex circumstances to be considered on a consistent basis, as described at paragraphs 88-91.
68. Where an individual is submitted with fewer than four outputs and they do not satisfy the criteria described at paragraphs 69-91 below, any 'missing' outputs will be graded as 'unclassified'.
69. Category A and C staff may be returned with fewer than four outputs without penalty in the assessment, if one or more of the following circumstances significantly constrained their ability to produce four outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period:
 - (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 below).
 - 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 below).

- iii. Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave (on the basis set out in paragraphs 75-81).
 - iv. Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6, as defined at paragraph 86.
- (b) **Complex circumstances** that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:
- i. Disability. This is defined in ‘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 below.
 - 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 ‘guidance of submissions’ or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

Clearly defined circumstances

70. Where an individual has one or more circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs, the number of outputs that may be reduced should be determined according to the tables and guidance in paragraphs 72-86 below. All sub-panels will accept a reduction in outputs according to this guidance and will assess the remaining number of submitted outputs without any penalty.
71. In REF1b, submissions must include sufficient details of the individual’s circumstances to show that these criteria have been applied correctly. The panel secretariat will examine the information in the first instance and advise the sub-panels on whether sufficient information has been provided and the guidance applied correctly. The panel secretariat will be trained to provide such advice, on a consistent basis across all UOAs. Where the sub-panel judges that the criteria have not been met, the ‘missing’ output(s) will be recorded as unclassified. (For example, an individual became an early career researcher in January 2011 but only one output is submitted rather than two. In this case the submitted output will be assessed, and the ‘missing’ output recorded as unclassified.)

Early career researchers

72. Early career researchers are defined in paragraphs 85-86 of ‘guidance on submissions’. Table 1 sets out the permitted reduction in outputs without penalty in the assessment for early career researchers who meet this definition.

Table 1 Early career researchers: permitted reduction in outputs

Date at which the individual first met the REF definition of an early career researcher:	Number of outputs may be reduced by up to:
On or before 31 July 2009	0

Between 1 August 2009 and 31 July 2010 inclusive	1
Between 1 August 2010 and 31 July 2011 inclusive	2
On or after 1 August 2011	3

Absence from work due to part-time working, secondments or career breaks

73. Table 2 sets out the permitted reduction in outputs without penalty in the assessment for absence from work due to:
- a. part-time working
 - b. secondments or career breaks outside of the higher education sector, and in which the individual did not undertake academic research.

Table 2 Part-time working, secondments or career breaks: permitted reduction in outputs

Total months absent between 1 January 2008 and 31 October 2013 due to working part-time, secondment or career break:	Number of outputs may be reduced by up to:
0-11.99	0
12-27.99	1
28-45.99	2
46 or more	3

74. The allowances in Table 2 are based on the length of the individual's absence or time away from working in higher education. They are defined in terms of total months absent from work. For part-time working, the equivalent 'total months absent' should be calculated by multiplying the number of months worked part-time by the full-time equivalent (FTE) **not** worked during those months. For example, an individual worked part-time for 30 months at 0.6 FTE. The number of equivalent months absent = $30 \times 0.4 = 12$.

Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave

75. Individuals may reduce the number of outputs by one, for each discrete period of:

- (a) Statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave taken substantially during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2013, regardless of the length of the leave.
- (b) Additional paternity or adoption leave⁴ lasting for four months or more, taken substantially during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2013.

76. The approach to these circumstances is based on the funding bodies' considered judgement that the impact of such a period of leave and the arrival of a new child into a family is generally sufficiently disruptive of an individual's research work to justify the reduction of an output. This judgement was informed by the consultation on draft panel criteria, in which an overwhelming majority of respondents supported such an approach.

77. The funding bodies' decision not to have a minimum qualifying period for maternity leave was informed by the sector's clear support for this approach in the consultation; recognition of the potential physical implications of pregnancy and childbirth; and the intention to remove any artificial barriers to the inclusion of women in submissions, given that women were significantly less likely to be selected in former RAE exercises.

78. The funding bodies consider it appropriate to make the same provision for those regarded as the 'primary adopter' of a child (that is, a person who takes statutory adoption leave), as the adoption of a child and taking of statutory adoption leave is generally likely to have a comparable impact on a researcher's work to that of taking maternity leave.

⁴ 'Additional paternity or adoption leave' refers to leave of up to 26 weeks which is taken to care for a child where the person's spouse, partner or civil partner was entitled to statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave, and has since returned to work. The term 'additional paternity leave' is often used to describe this type of leave although it may be taken by parents of either gender. For the purposes of the REF we refer to this leave as 'additional paternity or adoption leave'.

79. As regards additional paternity or adoption leave, researchers who take such leave will also have been away from work and acting as the primary carer of a new child within a family. The funding bodies consider that where researchers take such leave over a significant period (four months or more), this is likely to have an impact on their ability to work productively on research that is comparable to the impact on those taking maternity or statutory adoption leave.
80. While the clearly defined reduction of outputs due to additional paternity or adoption leave is subject to a minimum period of four months, shorter periods of such leave can be taken into account as follows:
- (a) By seeking a reduction in outputs under the provision for complex circumstances, for example where the period of leave had an impact in combination with other factors such as ongoing childcare responsibilities.
 - (b) By combining the number of months for shorter periods of such leave in combination with other clearly defined circumstances, according to Table 2.
81. Any period of maternity, adoption or paternity leave that qualifies for the reduction of an output under the provisions in paragraph 75 above may in individual cases be associated with prolonged constraints on work that justify the reduction of more than one output. In such cases, the circumstances should be explained using the arrangements for complex circumstances.

Combining clearly defined circumstances

82. Where individuals have had a combination of circumstances with clearly defined reductions in outputs, these may be accumulated up to a maximum reduction of three outputs. For each circumstance, the relevant reduction should be applied and added together to calculate the total maximum reduction.
83. Where Table 1 is combined with Table 2, the period of time since 1 January 2008 up until the individual met the definition of an early career researcher should be calculated in months, and Table 2 should be applied.
84. When combining circumstances, only one circumstance should be taken into account for any period of time during which they took place simultaneously. (For example, an individual worked part-time throughout the assessment period and first met the definition of an early career researcher on 1 September 2009. In this case the number of months 'absent' due to part-time working should be calculated from 1 September 2009 onwards, and combined with the reduction due to qualifying as an early career researcher, as indicated in paragraph 83 above.)
85. Where an individual has a combination of circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs **and** complex circumstances, the institution should submit these collectively as 'complex' so that a single judgement can be made about the appropriate reduction in outputs, taking into account all the circumstances. Those circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs should be calculated according to the guidance above (paragraphs 72-84).

Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6

86. In UOAs 1-6, the number of outputs may be reduced by up to two, without penalty in the assessment, for the following:

- (a) Category A staff who are junior clinical academics. These are defined as clinically qualified academics who are still completing their clinical training in medicine or dentistry and have not gained a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) or its equivalent prior to 31 October 2013.
- (b) Category C staff who are employed primarily as clinical, health or veterinary professionals (for example by the NHS), and whose research is primarily focused in the submitting unit.

87. These allowances are made on the basis that the staff concerned are normally significantly constrained in the time they have available to undertake research during the assessment period. The reduction of two outputs takes account of significant constraints on research work, and is normally sufficient to also take account of additional circumstances that may have affected the individual's research work. Where the individual meets the criteria at paragraph 86, and has had significant additional circumstances – for any of the reasons at paragraph 69 – the institution may return the circumstances as 'complex' with a reduction of three outputs, and provide a justification for this.

Complex circumstances

88. Where staff have had one or more complex circumstances – including in combination with any circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs – the institution will need to make a judgement on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs submitted, and provide a rationale for this judgement.

89. As far as is practicable, the information in REF1b should provide an estimate – in terms of the equivalent number of months absent from work – of the impact of the complex circumstances on the individual's ability to work productively throughout the assessment period, and state any further constraints on the individual's research work in addition to the equivalent months absent. A reduction should be made according to Table 2 in relation to estimated months absent from work, with further constraints taken into account as appropriate. To aid institutions the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) will publish worked examples of complex circumstances, which will indicate how these calculations can be made and the appropriate reduction in outputs for a range of complex circumstances. These will be available at www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF from February 2012.

90. All submitted complex circumstances will be considered by the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP), on a consistent basis across all UOAs. The membership and terms of reference of the EDAP are available at www.ref.ac.uk under Equality and diversity. 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. The relevant sub-panels will then be informed of the decisions and will assess the remaining outputs without any penalty.

91. To enable individuals to disclose the information in a confidential manner, information submitted about individuals' complex circumstances will be kept confidential to the REF team, the EDAP and main panel chairs, and will be destroyed on completion of the REF (as described in 'guidance on submissions', paragraphs 98-99).