

# REF 2014

Code of Practice  
which governs the selection of staff to be  
submitted into the REF

October 2012

*Confidential to Imperial College London*

## Glossary of REF terms

**Category A Staff** – Defined for REF 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’ **or** who has undertaken independent research, leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on a research grant or significant piece of research work. (A member of staff is not deemed to have undertaken independent research purely on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs).

**Clearly Defined Circumstances** – Circumstances which may have significantly constrained the ability of an individual to produce four outputs or to work productively during the assessment period (1 January 2008 – 31 December 2013) where reductions can be calculated through algorithms set out by HEFCE.

**Complex Circumstances** – Circumstances which may have constrained the ability of an individual to produce four research outputs or to work productively during the assessment period (1 January 2008 – 31 December 2013) and which require judgement as to whether the number of outputs can be reduced without penalty.

**Equality Assessments** – A thorough and systematic analysis to determine whether the institution’s staff selection policy for the REF may have a differential impact on particular groups.

**Early Career Researcher** – Those staff who meet the criteria to be selected as Category A staff on the census date, **and** who started their careers as independent researchers on or after 1 August 2009.

**HEFCE** – Higher Education Funding Council for England. HEFCE is a non-departmental public body of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in the United Kingdom which promotes and funds high-quality, cost-effective teaching and research, meeting the diverse needs of students, the economy and society. HEFCE has been responsible for the distribution of funding to Universities and Colleges of Higher and Further Education in England since 1992.

**HEFCE EDAP** – Higher Education Funding Council for England Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel. The Panel has been established to provide advice to the REF team, REF panel chairs and UK funding bodies on the implementation and evaluation of the REF equality and diversity measures, and to consider cases for complex circumstances.

**HEFCE QR Funding** – Quality-related research funding. It is allocated according to research quality (as judged by expert review in the RAE previously and in REF2014), and the volume of staff submitted to the exercise.

**HEI** – Higher Education Institution

**HoD** – Head of Department (Imperial College)

**PRDP** – Personal Review and Development Process (Imperial College)

**REF** – Research Excellence Framework. A process of expert review which provides authorised and comprehensible ratings for research in all disciplines to inform UK Higher Education funding bodies’ allocation of grants for research – the results of REF 2014 will inform HEFCE QR funding for 2015-16 onwards.

**Research Outputs** – defined for the REF as the product of research (the process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared), first brought into the public domain during the publication period of 1 January 2008 - 31 December 2013 or, if a confidential report, lodged with the body to whom it is confidential during this same period and produced or authored solely, or co-produced or co-authored, by the member of staff against whom the output is listed.

**UoA** – Unit of Assessment. Used in the REF to define subject areas.

## Introduction

1. The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the new system for assessing the quality of research in higher education institutions in the UK and replaces the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), last conducted in 2008.
2. The primary purpose of REF2014 is to produce assessment outcomes of research quality for each submission made by institutions:
  - a. The assessment outcomes will be used to inform the selective allocation of the HEFCE grant for research with effect from 2015-16;
  - b. The assessment will provide accountability for public investment in research and produce evidence of the benefits of this investment;
  - c. The outcomes will provide benchmarking information and establish reputational measures, for use within the higher education sector and for public information.
3. The UK Higher Education Funding Councils have stated in their REF2014 Guidance on Submissions document that:

*'Each institution making a submission is required to develop, document and apply a code of practice on selecting staff to include in their REF submissions. On making submissions, the head of institution will be required to confirm adherence to this code'.<sup>1</sup>*

## Purpose of the Code

4. The decisions about which eligible staff, and their research outputs, to select for submission into the REF are at the discretion of the College (and all HEIs making submissions to REF). The purpose of this document, therefore, is to ensure that staff and those making decisions about who to submit to REF are aware of the context in which REF decisions are made. Hence our Code of Practice:
  - a. Accounts for all aspects and stages of the processes involved in selecting staff for submission into REF2014;
  - b. Defines the bodies that are responsible for, or involved in, the selection of staff for the REF;
  - c. Ensures that research by all eligible staff is considered for submission;
  - d. Provides transparent decision-making for the selection of staff for submission;
  - e. Ensures that all decisions are justifiable and are not discriminatory;
  - f. Ensures a consistent and inclusive approach across the College;
  - g. Ensures that these REF decisions comply with current equalities legislation;
  - h. Takes place at various levels and stages – a multi-layered approach;
  - i. Reflects the College's mission for high-quality research and research excellence.

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02\\_11/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02_11/)

## Development of our Code

5. Our Code has been informed by consultation with key College staff and developed with the benefit of input from representatives from established forums such as:
  - The University and College Union
  - The College's Equality and Diversity Committee
  - The College's Staff Advisory Groups
  - The College's Academic Opportunities Committee
  - Human Resources
  - The College REF Steering Group
  - Faculty Principals and the Faculty REF leads
  - An in-depth assessment on how our 2008 RAE Code worked in practice

### External

- Briefing documents provided by the Higher Education Funding Council for England:  
Assessment framework and guidance on submissions: Part 4; REF 02.2011  
[http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02\\_11/02\\_11.pdf](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02_11/02_11.pdf)  
Panel Criteria and working methods REF 01.2012  
[http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2012/01\\_12/01\\_12.pdf](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2012/01_12/01_12.pdf)  
Equality briefing for panel chairs, members and secretaries (July 2011):  
[http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/other/equality/REF\\_equality.pdf](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/other/equality/REF_equality.pdf)
- Current equal opportunities legislation:  
2010 Equality Act: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk>
- Information provided by the Equality Challenge Unit  
<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF>  
<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/documents/ref-materials/staff-disclosure-of-individual-circumstances>  
<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/documents/ref-materials/ref-panel-criteria-complex-case-examples.pdf>

## Approval

6. The College Code has been approved by the Rector.

## Further information

7. This document can be found on the College's internal REF Website at <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/ref>
8. Where necessary and appropriate, the document will evolve in light of any changes to equalities legislation, practice and the Funding Councils' REF Guidance.

## Context for the Code

### The College Mission

9. The College Mission states that:

“Imperial College embodies and delivers world class scholarship, education and research in science, engineering, medicine and business, with particular regard to their application in industry, commerce and healthcare. We foster multidisciplinary working internally and collaborate widely externally”<sup>2</sup>.

### The College Vision

10. The vision of the College is as follows:

- *“To remain a world-leading institution for scientific research and education”.*
- *“To harness the quality, breadth and depth of our research capabilities to address the difficult challenges of today and the future”.*
- *“To develop the next generation of researchers, scientists and academics”.*
- *“To provide an education for students from around the world that equips them with the knowledge and skills they require to pursue their ambitions”.*
- *“To make a demonstrable economic and social impact through the translation of our work into practice worldwide”.*
- *“To engage with the world and communicate the importance and benefits of science to society”.*<sup>3</sup>

### Our Research Excellence

11. The College is extremely fortunate to have a strong community of high-performing, committed staff who make an enormous contribution to its reputation as a world-leading institution for scientific research and higher education.

12. Research excellence is core to the mission of the College and is demonstrated through the following key statistics and achievements:

- Our most recent published statistics show that in December 2010, the College had over 13,900 (Full Time Equivalent: FTE) students and 6,300 (Full Time Equivalent) staff; over half of these (3,392) were academic and research staff. Amongst our employees and those with an honorary association, 68 are Fellows of the Royal Society, 71 are Fellows of the Royal Academy of Engineering, 79 are Fellows of the Academy of Medical Sciences and one is a Fellow of the British Academy. We also have a Fields Medallist winner.<sup>4</sup>
- In RAE2008, 73% of the College’s staff had their research judged as world-leading or internationally excellent (4\* and 3\*), the highest percentage of all UK multi-faculty universities.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/planning/strategy/strategicplan>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/planning/strategy/strategicplan>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/aboutimperial/imperial\\_people](http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/aboutimperial/imperial_people)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/rae/analysis/quality>

## The College Equalities Framework

13. The College is committed fully to equality and this is embedded throughout the organisational structure. The Council, which is the College's governing body, requires us to be proactive, exemplary where possible, and monitors our progress regularly against equality objectives. Our Management Board sets our equality objectives by involving, and listening to, our staff and students. Representatives from a wide range of advisory groups are members of the College's main equality committee, which is responsible for ensuring that ideas and concerns which relate to all protected characteristics are discussed and acted on. The committee is chaired by a Management Board member to help ensure a strong connectivity between the Council, senior staff, and the day-to-day activity that impacts upon our staff and students. Members of the Management Board also act as sponsors for the College's Equality Advisory Groups.
14. The College's Equality and Diversity Unit promotes the College's commitment to equality and inclusion and, through equality initiatives, comprehensive training, and development programmes, many of which are undertaken with input from our diversity networks, it advises on policy development, thereby embedding equality throughout the College. The College's induction programme also attaches significant importance to equality and diversity.
15. Encouraging inclusive participation and eliminating potential discrimination is fundamental to 'Imperial Expectations', a set of seven statements which articulate how Imperial expects its leaders, managers and supervisors to behave. The individual manager's responsibility for equality is therefore integral to our day-to-day management practice.
16. Activities of the College Equality Advisory groups include the following:
  - The Academic Opportunities Committee (AOC), established in 1998, aims to enable a 'level playing field' for women academics at Imperial College by removing barriers that may exist in appointment or career advancement, and to ensure that the numbers of such qualified women in the College are as high as possible.
  - The Harassment Support Contact Scheme (HSC), established in 2003, provides support and enables staff to deal with any issues that are affecting their day-to-day working lives, including the research environment and their productivity.
  - Imperial As One, established in 2005, aims to address any issues of racism, discrimination, fear and prejudice in order to promote an inclusive workplace. Its mission statement is to champion respect, opportunity, unity, transparency and equality.
  - Imperial 600, established in 2006, is the College's LGBT equality advisory group and strives to ensure that Imperial is an exemplary employer. As a Stonewall Champion we demonstrate that we are inclusive and welcoming to staff and students.
  - The Disabilities Advisory Service provides support for disabled students and the Staff Disability Officer provides support for staff. The Disabilities Action Committee was formed in 2009 to remove barriers that may exist in appointment or career advancement for staff with disabilities, to make the College a comfortable and safe working environment, and to ensure that all staff have an equal opportunity to fulfil their potential. In 2012 the College was awarded the Two Ticks Positive About Disability Award.
17. The College also promotes equal treatment through its activities in relation to religious belief and age.
18. The College's REF Code of Practice has been informed by, and is aligned to, College equality policies. These policies are available on the College's Equality and Diversity Unit website at <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/hr/equality>

## The College's REF Submission

### Principles

19. The REF is integral to the College's reputation for research excellence and its financial position. As such, the REF is a key component of the College's activities. Decisions about who, and what, to submit into REF are governed by a strong and stated desire to support our mission and to achieve the optimum quality outcome possible in both reputational and financial terms.

### The decision-making framework

#### Context

20. The decision-making framework for the College's REF submission is shaped by the College's academic organisational structure. Within the College, decisions start with Departments, are then overseen by the relevant Faculty (Natural Sciences, Engineering, Medicine, and the Business School), and finally are considered by the College.
21. In some, but not every, instance the College's organisational structure matches that of the REF Unit of Assessment. Each Department, Faculty and the Business School is responsible for the REF Units of Assessment (UoAs) which most closely match their academic and research profile. The College recognises, however, that there may be cases where the College's organisational structure does not match that of the REF UoA. In these circumstances the College's REF Steering Group will consider these situations carefully and act accordingly.
22. Each Department, its Faculty and the Business School will be responsible for reviewing their own staff and considering whether to submit staff into the REF. The exact roles will vary because this is dependent on the synergies between our organisational units (i.e. our departments) and the subject coverage of the REF UoAs.
23. Each Faculty and Department has staff with responsibility for preparing the College's REF submission. It is their role to manage the initial decisions about which eligible staff will be selected for submission into the REF and into which UoA within the REF structure. The details of the Faculty/Departmental decision-making structures are detailed in Annex 1.
24. All decision-makers will be working within this framework and Code to ensure that all decisions are informed by current equalities legislation and good management practice.

#### College-Level Bodies

##### REF Equality Committee

25. The College has established a REF Equality Committee whose membership and terms of reference are available on the College REF Website at <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/ref> and also detailed in Annex 2. Membership of this panel has been determined by the equalities and REF expertise of members. All members have undertaken comprehensive equalities training.

##### REF Steering Group

26. The REF Steering Group is the project board for the REF project, with ultimate responsibility and accountability to the College Management Board (the College's senior decision-making body) for the delivery of an optimal, accurate and timely REF submission. The Steering Group provides strategic direction, management and oversight of the preparation of the College's REF submission and is the ultimate decision-making body on issues of strategic

importance. Its membership and terms of reference are available on the College REF Website at: <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/ref> and also in Annex 2.

### REF Academic Working Group

27. The REF Academic Working Group is responsible for providing an academic steer on discipline-specific REF requirements to inform the College's REF submission. Its membership and terms of reference are available on the College REF Website at: <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/ref> and are also detailed in Annex 2.

## **Our Decision-Makers**

### **Selecting our decision-makers**

28. Our decision-makers will consider which eligible Category A staff should be selected for submission into the REF. They have been chosen because they:
- a. Have sufficient subject knowledge and subject expertise to make a judgement about the quality of the individual's research during the REF assessment period (i.e. since 1 January 2008);
  - b. Have sufficient knowledge about the individual's work;
  - c. Where appropriate and relevant, have the ability to acquire an awareness of the existence of circumstances (clearly defined or complex) which may have impacted on an individual's research performance and/or productivity during the REF assessment period (i.e. since 1 January 2008);
  - d. Are aware of all relevant current equal opportunities legislation and good management practice so that their decisions can be informed by this.

### **Ensuring Full Awareness of Equality and Diversity**

29. All individuals involved with making decisions must be aware of their personal responsibility for fairness and equality of opportunity. Compulsory attendance at briefing and training sessions is required to ensure that all are aware of existing equalities legislation, the impact of unconscious bias, and, in particular, the issues specific to REF selection. These sessions will take into account the equality-related issues from RAE2008 and the worked examples of tariff reduction of complex circumstances released by the ECU: [www.ecu.ac.uk/documents/ref-materials/complex-circumstances-examples](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/documents/ref-materials/complex-circumstances-examples). The content of these sessions will be made available on the College REF Website at [www.imperial.ac.uk/ref](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/ref) so that individual staff can refer to them and they can continue to be a useful tool.
30. In addition, each Faculty Principal will be charged with a specific equality remit. Their role will be to act as extra scrutiny (i.e. a double-check) to challenge and question each decision made to ensure that it has been made with due regard to equality and fairness.

## **Decision-Making Process**

### **The process of selection**

31. All decision-making groups will ensure that each eligible member of Category A staff has been considered fully to establish whether they should be selected for submission into the REF and, if so, into which UoA. The factors that will be considered are based on the information to be returned in the REF submissions and are<sup>6</sup>:

---

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02\\_11/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02_11/)



- a. Details of publications and other forms of accessible output which they have produced during the publication period of 1 January 2008 - 31 December 2013. This item - the quality of their research outputs - will carry the most weight in the overall decision in line with the REF panel criteria and the weightings attached to each aspect of the submission;
  - b. Their contribution to impact defined as an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life beyond academia;
  - c. Their contribution to the research environment in terms of 'vitality and sustainability', including their contribution to the vitality and sustainability of the wider discipline or research base;
  - d. Any circumstances which may have impacted upon their research performance during the assessment period (see awareness of specific circumstances for individual staff below);
  - e. The assessment criteria of the relevant sub-panel(s). These are available on the Funding Councils REF Website at: [www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/panels/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/panels/).
32. These indicators will be used to judge the research quality of the individual member of staff which will inform the decision about whether to submit them into the REF. Staff whose research is considered to be of insufficient quality relative to other College staff within that UoA (and any relevant sub-areas) are unlikely to be selected for submission into the REF. For staff who are unlikely to be selected for the REF, a positive review will take place to focus on any steps that are, or could be, taken before the REF census date to improve their potential research performance and hence the likelihood of them being selected for submission into the REF.
33. All final decisions and their justification regarding individual submission status will be recorded and will be in accordance with the factors described in paragraph 31 above.
34. The final decision will also be subject to the judgement of the REF Steering Group (or nominees) concerning the best possible REF profile for the College, and for a given UoA.
35. It is recognised that, in some instances, staff will not be submitted into the REF because their focus has been on teaching or other important College activities during the assessment period. In these cases, the commitment and contributions of staff to the College are invaluable but are not specifically recognised in the REF, which measures the College's research excellence. Decisions are, therefore, strategic for the REF exercise.

### Specific Individual Circumstances

36. A range of individual circumstances may have had a material impact on the *quantity* of research outputs that staff have produced over the REF census period. In certain cases, and in line with the HEFCE guidance and criteria, eligible staff may be submitted to the REF with fewer than four research outputs. However, in line with the HEFCE REF guidance, existence of a complex circumstance will not justify a reduction in the overall *quality* of a submission.
37. HEFCE, on behalf of the UK funding councils, has defined two types of circumstances which may have constrained an individual's productivity and ability to produce four high-quality outputs throughout the assessment period<sup>7</sup>.
- a. **Clearly Defined Circumstances.** These circumstances will be collected and held in the College's central REF reporting tool, which is on a secure server and accords to all relevant data protection and confidentiality arrangements. A limited number of staff are able to view this information and it is held and used for REF purposes only. Reductions in

---

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/03\\_11/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/03_11/)

outputs will be calculated according to the algorithms set out in HEFCE's guidance on clearly defined circumstances (see Annex 3)

[www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2012/01\\_12/01\\_12.pdf](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2012/01_12/01_12.pdf)

Clearly defined circumstances are defined by the funding councils as:

- i. Qualifying as an early Career Researcher (ECR);
- ii. Part-time working;
- iii. Maternity, paternity or adoption leave;
- iv. Secondments or career breaks outside of the higher education sector, and in which the individual did not undertake academic research.

b. **More Complex Circumstances.** These are circumstances that are noted by the funding council as requiring a *judgement* about whether a case can be made and, if accepted, the appropriate number of outputs that can be reduced without penalty. These may be accumulated up to a maximum reduction of three outputs; however, if two or more circumstances took place simultaneously, only one circumstance can be taken into account during that period. Complex circumstances are defined by the funding councils as:

- i. Disability. This covers a wide range of impairments including those which are:
  - a) Sensory;
  - b) With fluctuating or recurring effects such as rheumatoid arthritis, depression and epilepsy;
  - c) Progressive, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, HIV and cancer;
  - d) Organ specific, including respiratory conditions and cardiovascular diseases;
  - e) Developmental, such as autistic spectrum disorders and dyslexia;
  - f) Mental health conditions such as depression and eating disorders;
  - g) Caused by injury to the body or brain.
- ii. Ill-health or injury.
- iii. Mental health conditions.
- iv. Constraints related to pregnancy or maternity, in addition to a clearly defined period of maternity leave. (These may include but are not limited to: medical issues associated with pregnancy or maternity; health and safety restrictions in laboratory or field work during pregnancy or breastfeeding; constraints on the ability to travel to undertake fieldwork due to pregnancy or breast-feeding).
- v. Childcare or other caring responsibilities.
- vi. Gender reassignment.
- vii. Any other personal circumstances relating to the protected characteristics consolidated in the 2010 Equality Act which are considered to have had a significant impact on an individual's ability to produce the expected volume of research outputs in the assessment period.

38. It is likely that, in many cases, staff will have made their Head of Department (HoD), manager or another key decision-maker aware of a relevant complex circumstance which may have had an impact on their research during the assessment period. It is also the case that some staff will prefer to keep this information confidential and the College respects, absolutely, their

right to privacy over personal information. In these cases, all staff eligible to be submitted into the REF will be given the opportunity to complete a confidential form regarding any complex circumstances for submission to the Deputy Director of Human Resources. Staff can also request a confidential 'surgery' with their Faculty HR representative to discuss any complex special circumstance.

39. The form is collected by the College for REF purposes only. By completing the form, the individual will be providing their written consent for the information to be considered, on a confidential and sensitive basis, by the College's REF Equality Committee. Where the individual is selected for submission into the REF, then permission will also be being given for this information to be provided, confidentially, to HEFCE's EDAP panel, if required. This system will ensure that any personal information of this kind would not be released into the public domain.
40. The complex circumstances must be in accordance with those set out in paragraph 37b above. These are synonymous with those identified by HEFCE, which can be found at [www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2012/01\\_12/01\\_12.pdf](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2012/01_12/01_12.pdf)
41. HEFCE has been clear that, where an individual returns fewer than the required four research outputs but a valid consideration applies, the EDAP can decide that there is a 'good cause' for this and will confirm that a penalty will not apply (in the form of any missing outputs being assessed as zero in quality terms). However, if 'good cause' is considered by the EDAP not to apply, then the EDAP can reject a case and this penalty would apply (ie the missing outputs would be assessed as zero in quality terms). The acceptance of a case will not alter the assessed quality of the outputs submitted; the case relates to the quantity of expected outputs only.
42. To mirror HEFCE's approach, the College can choose to submit a member of staff to the REF with fewer than the required four outputs *if* the circumstance is considered a 'good cause' **and** if the quality of the remaining cited outputs is sufficient in accordance with the points made in paragraph 31. Equally, if the member of staff has fewer than four outputs without 'good cause', **or** if the circumstance has affected the *quality* of their work, then the College is unlikely to select them for submission into the REF.

### **Communicating the decision-making process and decisions**

43. Decision-makers will communicate their decision-making process and decisions in a timely and appropriate manner. HoDs or nominees will talk to their staff from the outset about any decision being made regarding their likely submission status. For staff whose REF submission status is not certain, a positive review will focus on any steps that are, or could be, taken before the REF census date to improve their research and hence, the likelihood of them being selected for submission into the REF. This would include support measures, including through the College's Personal Review and Development Plan (PRDP) process. Equally, the possibility of selecting the staff member for submission into different UoAs would be considered where appropriate and in line with the research expertise of the individual, the subject coverage of the UoA, and whether the College will be making a submission to that UoA. At any meeting, HoDs or the individual concerned may wish to invite a member of Human Resources to accompany him or her and the member of staff may wish to bring along a Trade Union representative or a work colleague. The member of staff and/or the HoD should notify each other if either wish to be accompanied.

### **Communicating the REF Code of Practice**

44. A rolling programme of briefing sessions on the Code of Practice will be organised for REF decision-makers and attendance will be compulsory. These briefings will focus on making decision-makers fully aware of the Code of Practice and its requirements and on preparing them to answer questions from staff members concerning it, ensuring a consistent approach across the College.

45. The Code of Practice is available for download at [www.imperial.ac.uk/ref/equality](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/ref/equality). When the Code of Practice has been approved by HEFCE, it will be launched formally with extensive publicity, including promotion on the College website, in the staff newspaper and in the fortnightly "Staff Briefing" email, which is sent out to all College staff members. The Code will be made available to all eligible Category A staff members in electronic form or as a physical copy as appropriate. Regular communication updates will be issued about the REF and the Code at suitable points.
46. In addition to departmental contacts, all staff members will have access to their local HR team and faculty office as well as to the Deputy Director of HR to discuss any questions or concerns.

### **The College approach**

47. In accordance with the principles of transparency and fairness, all Category A staff who are eligible to be selected for submission into the REF will receive written confirmation of their REF status at various stages (paragraphs 48-50 below refer).
48. The submission status of each member of staff will be held in the College REF Repository (the College database which captures our REF data). Each individual HoD will be asked to issue a letter to eligible staff informing them of their status. In some instances, an appropriate person who is involved in the decision-making process will be nominated to undertake this task. The written confirmation will make the point that the decision about their REF status may be revised for good reason and is not final at that date.
49. To ensure effective communication, letters will be sent to the home address of individuals who are known to be absent from work at the time when the letters are issued.
50. As part of the process of 'fine-tuning' and optimising each REF submission to a UoA, it is important to recognise that the College will continue to modify and fine-tune its REF submissions right up to the REF submission deadline of 29 November 2013. In some instances this means that decisions will need to be made very close to the deadline. This may also include a reversal of the initial decision.

### **Timescales for the communication of decisions**

51. All eligible Category A Staff who are in post on 1 October 2012 and likely to be in post on the REF census date will receive a letter at the end of October 2012. The letter will state whether they are likely to be selected for submission into the REF.
52. Staff will be contacted again at the following points **only** if their submission status remains uncertain, or if their status undergoes a change:
  - End April 2013 (based on a snapshot on 01 April)
  - By 6 November 2013 (based on a snapshot on the REF census date)
53. All staff will receive written confirmation of their final REF submission status in early December 2013 (i.e. absolute final confirmation after the REF submission deadline).
54. In the unlikely event that a member of staff has not been informed of their likely REF status by the dates specified above, they should contact their HoD for information.

## **Complaints**

55. The provision of a complaints and/or appeals procedure is integral to the REF selection process.

## **Principles**

56. The principles which govern the complaints procedure for the REF are that:

- a. The REF is a qualitative process in which judgements are made about the quality of research of individual members of staff. The judgements are subjective and are based on the factual information then presented.
- b. Any grounds for complaint must focus on why the individual believes that he or she has, unjustly, not been selected for submission into the REF. It would thus be appropriate for an appeal to be made on the grounds of:
  - i. Unfair discrimination.
  - ii. Process (including if it is felt that procedure has not been followed).
  - iii. Previously unavailable evidence.

57. Disagreement with the decision alone would not be appropriate grounds for an appeal.

58. The REF has a fixed deadline for submission – 29 November 2013. This deadline cannot be missed. The College will have a timely and effective complaints process and will keep people informed of their likely submission status on the dates specified above. Some decisions about REF status will, out of necessity, be made near to the submission deadline. It may not be possible in every instance for a complaint to be resolved before our final REF submission although every effort will be made to do so.

## **Appeals process**

59. If an eligible Category A member of staff believes that he/she has grounds for a complaint or appeal based on paragraph 56b, then the following action should be taken as soon as possible after he/she has been informed of his/her likely submission status.

### HoD's Stage

60. The individual should request a meeting with his/her HoD (or the nominee who is responsible for REF matters in the department). In preparation for the meeting, the individual should identify what he/she believes to be the potential grounds for complaint. It would be helpful if these representations were put in writing, although it is recognised that an individual may choose not to. The individual may bring a Trade Union representative or work colleague to the meeting if he/she chooses. The HoD may also choose for a work colleague to be present and they should notify each other if either are to be accompanied.

61. Following receipt of the request and/or written complaint, the HoD (or nominee) should meet with the individual, normally within 10 working days of receipt of the letter, to discuss the matters that the individual has raised.

62. After the meeting, and following full and proper consideration of the matters raised, the HoD (or nominee) will write a formal response. The response will be issued within 7 working days of the meeting.

63. If the individual wishes to proceed to the HoD's Stage in the month prior to the REF submission deadline of 29 November 2013, the letter must be submitted by Monday 11

November 2013. The meeting should take place no later than 2 working days after receipt of the request/written complaint and the response should be issued within 2 working days of the meeting.

### College Panel Stage

64. If the individual continues to believe that he/she has grounds for complaint, formal written notification should be submitted to the Deputy Director of HR, stating what action has been taken to date and the reasons why he/she remains dissatisfied. The notification should be received not later than 7 working days after the receipt of the HoD's (or nominee's) formal response. Following receipt of the letter, the Deputy Director of HR will arrange for a College Panel to meet. The meeting will be convened at the earliest opportunity to ensure that each case is considered as quickly as possible.
65. The Panel will comprise:
- A Rector's nominee, who acts as Chair.
  - A Dean (who is not a member of staff of the faculty concerned).
  - A member or nominee from the REF Equality Committee.
- None of the members of the Panel will have had any previous involvement with the particular case.
- The individual may be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or work colleague. A representative from HR will assist.
66. The HoD, or nominee, will be asked to attend the meeting to answer questions and this will be in the presence of the individual and the person who is accompanying him/her if this is the case.
67. The Chair may choose to ask the relevant Faculty Principal to attend to answer questions. This will also be in the presence of the individual and his/her companion.
68. After the meeting, and following full and proper consideration, the Chair will write a formal response which will normally be issued within 7 working days after the meeting. If the College panel meets in the month prior to the submission deadline, then the formal response will be issued within 2 working days after the meeting. Any meetings of the College panel in the month prior to the submission deadline will take place by Tuesday 26 November.
69. Appeals will be dealt with as expediently as possible. The early communication of decisions is intended to ensure that all appeals will be completed before the final submission is made.
70. This concludes the complaints process.

### **The College profile**

71. The focus of our subject mix, being medicine, science and engineering, coupled with our central London location means that our College population is both cosmopolitan and diverse. Our 2010-11 full-time student admission came from over 100 different countries. 43% were UK citizens, 15% European (non-UK) citizens and 42% were non-European citizens.<sup>8</sup>
72. Of our academic staff in post at November 2011, 70.8% were classified White, 19.3% were from Black, Minority or Ethnic groups and 9.9% have not disclosed their ethnic grouping. In terms of gender and age in 2011, 21.3% of the academic staff were female, and 78.7% were

---

<sup>8</sup> <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/planning/statistics/nationalitystatistics>

male.<sup>9</sup> They were grouped in the following age brackets: 20-24 = 1.31%, 25-29 = 15.17%; 30-34 = 28%; 35-39 = 17.09%; 40-44 = 10.01%, 45-49 = 9.71%, 50-54 = 5.84%, 55-59 = 5.23%, 60-64 = 3.84%, 65+ = 3.7%.

73. While the Code was being developed, an extensive consultation process was undertaken during February and March 2012 with the aim of being as inclusive as possible. Meetings were held with and feedback received from a wide range of representatives, outlined in paragraph 5 above. The College's Staff Advisory Groups (consisting of (a) the Disability Action Committee, (b) Imperial As One, for BME staff, and (c) the Academic Opportunities Committee, for female academic staff) were actively involved in analysing the Code to determine whether it might have a differential impact on any particular group. Input was also received from members of the College's Equality and Diversity Committee, who are knowledgeable about equality matters and themselves have a range of protected characteristics.
74. In order to ensure that the College's positive duty to promote equalities is being met and that there will be no negative impact on any particular group, a thorough and systematic analysis of all staff members eligible for selection (at both institutional and UoA level) has been, and will continue to be, undertaken at key stages of the selection process. This analysis will be in respect of protected characteristics for which data are available.
75. This analysis will be provided to Faculty Principals to support them in undertaking their equality remit and extra scrutiny. It will also be provided locally to HoDs (or nominees) and will be kept under review by the REF Steering Group and regularly, including at the notification and decision points outlined in paragraphs 51-53 and in relation to the complaints and appeals processes if required. To complement this quantitative analysis, the review will also be informed by qualitative information gained through contact with representatives from the Staff Advisory Groups, UCU, and the Equality and Diversity Committee. Any concerns will be raised with those undertaking the selection process for appropriate consideration and relevant action. An analysis will also be published after the College has made its REF submission, together with a record of any actions taken to advance equality.
76. As stated in paragraph 29, the College's briefing sessions for decision-makers will highlight any equality-related issues that arose during RAE2008. The learning points gained from assessing the 2008 equality issues, together with qualitative and quantitative analysis and use of ECU's equality material in relation to complex circumstances, will continue to be used as part of our EIA process throughout.
77. The profiles of the College's REF decision-makers have also been considered.
78. The collection of accurate data, and its subsequent monitoring and analysis, are vital to ensure that the College:
  - a. Meets its equality and diversity objectives;
  - b. Takes action if the statistics reveal patterns of concern;
  - c. Complies with the law.

---

<sup>9</sup> Snapshot of the College's equality profile taken in November 2011:  
[www.imperial.ac.uk/equality/monitoring](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/equality/monitoring)



## **Annex 1 – Faculty and Departmental Decision-Makers**

### **Faculty of Medicine**

#### **Faculty Committees responsible for REF decision-making:**

##### **Faculty Board**

###### Membership

Faculty Principal (Chair)  
Faculty Deputy Principal (Education)  
Faculty Deputy Principal (Research)  
Heads of Departments, Schools and Institutes  
Faculty Operating Officer  
Deputy Faculty Operating Officer  
Faculty Finance Officer  
Head of Research Strategy  
Senior HR Manager

###### Terms of Reference (related to REF)

- To provide a forum for discussion and decision-making for all aspects of the Faculty's REF2014 submissions, subject to final approval by the Faculty Principal and the College Management Board.
- To ensure that all decisions are informed by current equalities legislation and good management practice in line with the College's REF Code of Practice.

##### **Faculty REF Advisory Committee**

###### Membership

Faculty Deputy Principal (Research) (Chair)  
Heads of Divisions, Sections and Sub-Sections  
Faculty Impact Lead  
Head of Research Strategy  
Faculty REF Coordinator

###### Terms of Reference

- To evaluate the Faculty's REF submission in terms of data concerning staff, outputs, impact and environment.
- To contribute to the formulation of statements required for the submission (i.e. Impact and Environment).
- To review the progress of the submission against targets.
- To be responsible for the collection and interpretation of data for the REF submission, liaising with SIDs where necessary.
- To provide recommendations about REF submission to the Faculty Board.
- To support the Faculty in meeting both internal and external deadlines.
- To ensure that all decisions are informed by current equalities legislation and good management practice in line with the College's REF Code of Practice.

#### **Faculty of Medicine Department committees/individuals responsible for REF decision-making:**

<u>Department</u>	<u>REF Decision-Makers</u>
Medicine	Head of Department Heads of Divisions
Surgery and Cancer	Head of Department Heads of Divisions



National Heart and Lung  
Institute (NHLI)      Head of Institute  
   Heads of Sections

School of Public Health      Director of School  
   Director of MRC Centre  
   Heads of Departments

Institute of Clinical  
Sciences      Head of Institute  
   Head of Section

## Faculty of Natural Sciences

### Faculty Committee responsible for REF decision-making:

#### Faculty REF Committee

##### Membership

Faculty Deputy Principal (Chair)

Faculty Principal

Heads of Departments, Director of Centre and Unit of Assessment Leads

Faculty REF Co-ordinator

##### Terms of Reference

To oversee departmental preparations of the REF submission within the Faculty, namely:

- To provide a forum for discussion between Departments regarding all aspects of the submission.
- To establish and share best practice in the preparation of submissions.
- To ensure that HEFCE guidance and the College strategic steer are well understood, and to advise departments on any uncertainties they have.
- To discuss and implement a Faculty strategy for REF2014.
- To communicate College-level REF activity to Department leads, including activity within the REF Academic Working Group and REF Steering Group.
- To provide input to Funding Council consultations on REF2014.
- To ensure that all decisions are informed by current equalities legislation and good management practice in line with the College's REF Code of Practice.

### Faculty of Natural Sciences Department committees/individuals responsible for REF decision-making:

<u>Department</u>	<u>REF Decision-Makers</u>
Physics	Head of Department Heads of Groups
Chemistry	Head of Department Heads of Sections
Maths	Head of Department Deputy Head of Department Unit of Assessment Lead Head of Group
Life Sciences	Head of Department Unit of Assessment Lead Heads of Divisions
Centre for Environmental Policy	Director of Centre

## Faculty of Engineering

### Faculty Committees responsible for REF decision-making:

#### Faculty Management Committee

##### Membership

Faculty Principal (Chair)  
Heads of Departments  
Faculty Operating Officer

##### Terms of Reference (related to REF)

- To oversee the Faculty's submission to REF and to ensure that all decisions are informed by current equalities legislation and good management practice in line with the College's REF Code of Practice.

#### Faculty REF Advisory Committee

##### Membership

Faculty Deputy Principal (Research) (Chair)  
Faculty Principal  
Heads of Departments and Directors of Research/ Departmental REF Leads

##### Terms of Reference

To oversee the preparation and optimisation of the REF2014 submission within the departments of the Faculty, to include:

- Providing a forum for discussion and decision-making for all aspects of the Faculty's REF2014 submissions, subject to final approval by the Faculty Management Committee and the College Management Board.
- Ensuring a shared understanding of the HEFCE and College REF2014 requirements.
- Establishing and sharing best practice in the preparation of submissions.
- Providing a forum in which cross-Departmental submission issues can be raised and a resolution path identified.
- Supporting the identification and drafting of impact case studies and impact statements.
- Providing input to Funding Council consultations on REF2014.
- Ensuring that all decisions are informed by current equalities legislation and good management practice in line with the College's REF Code of Practice.

### Faculty of Engineering Department individuals responsible for REF decision-making:

##### Department

Aeronautics  
Bioengineering  
Chemical Engineering  
Civil and Environmental Engineering  
Computing  
Earth Science and Engineering  
Electrical and Electronic Engineering  
Materials  
Mechanical Engineering

##### REF Decision-Makers

Head of Department  
Head of Department  
Head of Department  
Head of Department  
Head of Department  
Head of Department  
Head of Department  
Head of Department  
Head of Department

## **Imperial College Business School**

### **Business School Committee responsible for REF decision-making:**

#### **Research Strategy Group**

##### Membership

Faculty Deputy Principal (Chair)

Heads of Groups

Academic REF Co-ordinators

Strategic Research Manager

##### Terms of Reference

- To advise the School's Principal and Management Board on the REF2014 submission.
- To ensure that College and HEFCE guidance on REF 2014 is appropriately disseminated and understood across the School.
- To provide a forum for discussion and decision-making on selection of staff and outputs for REF2014, subject to final approval by the School's Principal and Management Board.
- To oversee the selection, evidence-gathering and drafting of impact case studies for REF2014.
- To ensure that the School's preparations for the REF are appropriately resourced.
- To ensure that all decisions are informed by current equalities legislation and good management practice in line with the College's REF Code of Practice.

### **Research Group individuals responsible for REF decision-making:**

<u>Research Group</u>	<u>REF Decision-Makers</u>
Organisation and Management	Head of Group
Health Care Management	Head of Group
Finance	Head of Group
Innovation and Entrepreneurship	Head of Group

## **Annex 2**

### **REF Steering Group**

#### Membership

Director of Strategic Planning (Chair)  
Deputy Rector  
Pro-Rector (Research)  
Deputy Principal Business School  
Faculty Principal Engineering  
Faculty Principal Medicine  
Faculty Principal Natural Sciences  
Project Director (Strategic Planning Division)  
Project Manager (ICT)  
Senior Supplier (ICT)

#### Terms of Reference

The REF Steering Group is the project board for the REF project, with ultimate responsibility and accountability to the Management Board for the delivery of an optimal, accurate and timely REF 2014 submission.

The group will provide management and oversight of the preparation of the College's REF 2014 submissions and will be the ultimate decision-making body on issues of strategic importance. This will include:

- Decisions on the configuration of units of assessment (including which units to make submissions to, which staff and research groups should be presented in each submission, etc.).
- Strategic choices which will inform the College's submission (including submission decisions about staff, the treatment of multiple citations of the same work, etc.).
- Guidance to inform the preparation of the Research Strategy (within Environment) aspects of the REF submission.
- Guidance to inform the preparation of Impact in the REF submission.
- Input to, and sign-off of, Funding Council consultations on REF 2014 for recommendation to Management Board.
- Reviewing and sign-off of the College's REF submissions.
- Providing reports to Management Board as appropriate.
- Ensuring that all decisions are informed by current equalities legislation and good management practice in line with the College's REF Code of Practice.

## **Academic REF working group**

### Membership

Deputy Rector (Chair)  
Director of Strategic Planning  
Project Director (Strategic Planning)  
REF sub-panel members and Departmental representatives

### Terms of Reference

To provide an academic steer and/or Departmental view on discipline-specific REF requirements to inform the College's REF 2014 submission. This will include the provision of:

- Feedback from REF sub-panel meetings to ensure a shared understanding.
- Input to guidance to inform the preparation of the Research Strategy (within Environment) aspects of the REF submission.
- Input to guidance to inform the preparation of Impact in the REF submission.
- Input to Funding Council consultations on REF 2014.

## **Imperial College REF Equality Committee**

### Membership

The College's REF Equality Committee is comprised of individuals who are familiar with the REF and who are well trained and fully aware of equality issues. It will meet termly and more frequently if required.

Faculty Principal Business School and Chair of College Academic Opportunities Committee  
(Chair)

Deputy Rector and member of College Academic Opportunities Committee

Faculty Principal Engineering

Faculty Principal Medicine

Faculty Principal Natural Sciences

Member of College Academic Opportunities Committee

Member of College Equalities Committee

Deputy Director Human Resources

Member of Strategic Planning Division - Secretary

### Terms of Reference

The REF Equality Committee will undertake the following responsibilities to:

- Ensure that all decisions are informed by current equalities legislation and good management practice in line with the College's REF Code of Practice.
- Oversee the implementation of the Code of Practice within the College and handle any equalities related issues if, and as, they arise.
- Consider all complex circumstances consistently in light of equalities legislation, advice from the ECU, and HEFCE guidance to determine whether and how they may be handled.
- Advise decision-makers where a complex circumstance applies, including on the appropriate reduction of output(s), recognising that it is still for the decision-maker to decide who to submit to the REF.
- Ensure confidentiality in the process of disclosing and handling of special circumstances.

## Annex 3

Algorithms provided by HEFCE for Clearly Defined Circumstances:

**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

**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 working, 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

### Paternity/Maternity Leave

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

- 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.
- Additional paternity or adoption leave lasting for four months or more, taken substantially during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2013.