

**Research Excellence Framework 2014**

**Code of Practice  
for the selection of staff**

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## Introduction

1. The University of Kent is committed to recognising diversity and promoting equality amongst its staff in all areas of its activity, and to developing and supporting practices that contribute to these commitments.
2. This Code of Practice (Code) sets out the framework within which decisions on the selection of staff for submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 will be made so as to ensure that such decisions are made in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner.
3. The Code of Practice applies to all academic staff.
4. Adherence to the Code of Practice is a pre-requirement for submission to the REF. The Code will be submitted to the REF Team at HEFCE<sup>1</sup> by 31 July 2012 for approval, without which it will not be possible to participate in the REF. Prior to making the final submission, the University will be asked to confirm that the Code has been adhered to in preparing the submission.
5. The Code is a public document which is available on the University's website, at <http://www.kent.ac.uk/researchservices/kentref/>. It will be published by HEFCE with the other parts of the submission in 2015.

## Principles

### Transparency

6. All processes for the selection of staff for the REF are documented in this Code to ensure transparency and promote equality and diversity. Human Resources will communicate the Code to all members of academic staff, including those absent from work. It is available in a variety of formats. A programme of activity to communicate the contents of the Code will be undertaken via different media, including newsletters, committees, and the University's website.

### Consistency

7. The Code will be applied uniformly in all Schools across the University, and implemented consistently. The REF Steering Group will guarantee this uniformity and consistency by monitoring the University's progress in preparing its REF submission at all stages in the process.

### Accountability

8. The responsibilities of all individuals and groups involved in the selection of staff for the REF are outlined in Appendix 1. Training will be given to those individuals and groups identified by an asterisk. The training will be tailored specifically to the requirements of the REF, and will cover the provisions and implementation of this Code of Practice in detail.

### Inclusivity

9. The University wishes to include the excellent work of all its eligible researchers in its submission. The Code identifies how selection decisions will be made in a fair and non-discriminatory manner.

## Staff selection

10. Unit of Assessment (UOA) Working Groups will recommend to the Faculty Review Groups which individuals to select for submission on the following basis:
  - a. **Contractual eligibility** for inclusion as either Category A or C as defined in *Assessment*

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document, 'HEFCE' refers to the REF team based at HEFCE, which manages the REF on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies.

*framework and guidance on submissions*<sup>2</sup>, paragraphs 77 – 83.

- b. **UOA descriptor.** The research of a submitted unit must relate primarily to the descriptor of the UOA in which it is submitted. As these do not map exactly onto the structure of the University, staff will be returned in the UOA where their research is predicted to fit best and be most highly rated. The University will make submissions to all UOAs where it is predicted that its quality threshold will be reached (see d below).
  - c. **Portfolio.** All members of staff submitted should include four items of research output<sup>3</sup>, unless the HEFCE guidance on 'Individual staff circumstances' has been applied.
  - d. **Quality of research outputs.** In order to maximise the quality<sup>4</sup> of its submissions, the University has prepared a standard quality threshold for research outputs in terms of excellence, to be applied in all UOAs. On behalf of the UOA Working Group, the REF UOA Co-ordinator may seek an adjustment of the standard threshold for their UOA, by request via the Faculty Review Group to the REF Steering Group.
11. Faculty Review Groups will approve the UOA's recommended staff selections, or negotiate an alternative decision with the Working Group.
  12. **Statement of Intent.** For each UOA to which a submission is to be made, a Statement of Intent will be published internally<sup>5</sup>, and notified to all staff initially and following any updates. All members of staff eligible for submission to a UOA will be informed, before decisions are made about inclusion, of the target threshold published in the Statement of Intent.
  13. **Pilot Exercise.** The University will run a Pilot Exercise in 2012, anticipating the deadlines used for the final submission in 2013. The Code will apply during the Pilot Exercise and may be refined in the light of the experience. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken at the conclusion of the Pilot Exercise, in January 2013.

### Individual staff circumstances

14. As a key measure to support equality and diversity in research careers, 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 allowance is intended by HEFCE to encourage institutions to submit all their eligible staff who have produced excellent research. HEFCE has produced guidance as to how REF panels will deal with such circumstances (see *Panel criteria and working methods*<sup>6</sup>, paragraphs 63 -91), summarised below.
15. The allowable reduction in outputs for some types of circumstances have been clearly defined in the HEFCE guidance. These are listed at 16.a. Circumstances that are more complex require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs; these are listed at 16.b.

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<sup>2</sup> *Assessment framework and guidance on submissions*, REF 02.2011, HEFCE, 2011  
<http://www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/2011-02/> and addendum

<sup>3</sup> Unless, exceptionally, the UOA Review Group agrees that an output is of 'extended scale and scope' and therefore merits requesting 'double-weighting' in the assessment - see paragraphs 123-126 in *Assessment framework and guidance on submissions*. The number of outputs required per member of staff is therefore reduced by one for each such item, and the double-weighted item counts as two in the calculation of the quality profile.

<sup>4</sup> All outputs will be assessed by academic members of the UOA Working Groups, at a level of detail sufficient to contribute to the formation of a robust sub-profile for all the outputs in that portfolio. The advice of external assessors may also be considered.

<sup>5</sup> <https://sharepoint.kent.ac.uk/researchservices/ref/default.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> *Panel criteria and working methods*, REF 01.2012, HEFCE, 2012  
<http://www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/2012-01/>

16. The circumstances covered by these arrangements are classified as follows:
- a. Clearly defined circumstances
    - Qualifying as an early career researcher
    - Absence from work due to working part-time, secondments or career breaks
    - Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave
    - Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6
  - b. Complex circumstances that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:
    - Disability
    - Ill health or injury
    - Mental health conditions
    - 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 16.a above.
    - Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member)
    - Gender reassignment
    - Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed at paragraph 190 of *Assessment framework and guidance on submissions*<sup>2</sup> or relating to activities protected by employment legislation

### **Confidentiality**

17. Information about individual staff circumstances will be included as part of the REF submission in form REF1b. It will be kept confidential to the HEFCE REF team and REF panel members (for clearly defined circumstances) and the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) and main panel chairs (for complex circumstances), who are all subject to confidentiality undertakings in respect of all information contained in submissions. REF sub-panels will know that there are complex circumstances and will receive a decision about the appropriate number of outputs to reduce without penalty, but will not have access to further information about the circumstances. These arrangements will enable individuals to disclose the information in a confidential manner, and enable consistent treatment of complex circumstances across the exercise.
18. Information submitted in REF1b will be used only for the purposes of assessing the REF submission in which it is contained, will not be published at any time and will be destroyed on completion of the REF.

### **University process for handling individual staff circumstances**

19. The REF Individual Staff Circumstances Group (ISC Group) will implement the guidance provided by HEFCE and the Equality Challenge Unit, in calculating the number of outputs each member of staff is required to submit.
20. In order to do this, it is necessary to collect personal data from staff members. This will be treated with the utmost confidentiality, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and be made available only to the members of the ISC Group.
21. The ISC Group has circulated a memo explaining the process to all academic staff, together with a form to be returned by all staff members in order to allow identification of those with clearly defined or more complex individual staff circumstances. The memo and form are based on the templates provided by the Equality Challenge Unit, are available for reference on the University's internal REF web pages<sup>7</sup> and may be requested in alternative formats. Hard copies

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.kent.ac.uk/researchservices/local/ref/ref-at-kent.html>

have been sent to staff absent from the University.

22. All staff members are encouraged to review the worked examples of complex individual circumstances provided by the Equality Challenge Unit<sup>8</sup>. Any member of staff considering making a response may ask for support and advice from Human Resources, either from the HR Manager for their faculty<sup>9</sup>, or from the Equality and Diversity Manager.
23. All staff were asked to respond by the 30 June 2012 for the Pilot Exercise. The ISC Group will meet to discuss responses and will arrive at an initial recommendation of the number of outputs for each member of staff. The University has an obligation to identify all Early Career Researchers for the 2013 HESA staff return and will consider all clearly defined circumstances in addition to those reported to the ISC Group.
24. By 31 July 2012 the ISC Group will give confidential feedback to staff who responded by 30 June 2012 about the number of outputs required. By the same date REF UOA Co-ordinators will receive a list of the number of outputs required of staff members who are eligible for inclusion in their UOA. No other details will be supplied to REF UOA Co-ordinators.
25. The University recognises that circumstances may change over time, and also that new members of staff will join the University. Staff members in these categories may submit new or revised forms which will be processed on an ad hoc basis, but no later than 30 June 2013. Special arrangements will be made for any members of staff starting at the University after that date and on or before the REF census date (31 October 2013).

### **Legal responsibilities**

26. As both an employer and a public body, the University will ensure that its REF procedures do not discriminate unlawfully against individuals because of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation or because they are pregnant or have recently given birth.
27. The University will also ensure that the information in REF1b is submitted in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and all other legal obligations.

### **Fixed term and part time staff**

28. The University is committed to developing an employment framework that delivers its research, teaching and other services in an environment that fosters excellence. In support of this, the University values the contribution made by all staff and is committed to the fair and equal application of its procedures to all staff.
29. The University recognises that under the fixed-term employee and part-time workers regulations, fixed-term employees and part-time workers have the right to be treated by an employer no less favourably than the employer treats comparable employees on open contracts or full-time workers. The relevant regulations are:
  - a. Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
  - b. Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002
30. These regulations are embedded in relevant University policies, which seek to ensure that fixed term and part-time workers are treated equally to those on permanent or full-time contracts of employment.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/documents/ref-materials/ref-panel-criteria-complex-case-examples.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.kent.ac.uk/human-resources/staff/index.html?tab=employment-support-amp-resourcing>

## Equality Impact Assessment

31. The University will comply with HEFCE guidance by undertaking Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) that evaluate the outcomes of its policies and procedures for selecting staff for the REF submission.
32. The EIAs will be systematic analyses to determine whether and why the staff selection policy and procedures for the REF have differential impacts on individuals and groups, particularly those protected by the Equality Act 2010. A baseline EIA was conducted on the data arising from the 2011/2012 REF review meetings, and further EIAs will be undertaken following the Pilot Exercise (and reviewed by the REF Steering Group in early 2013) and following the submission on 29 November 2013 (and reviewed by the Steering Group in early 2014).
33. The EIA process is supported by an equality monitoring strategy that has been in place since October 2010 designed to ensure that the University has appropriate baseline data about staff and becomes aware at the earliest opportunities of any differences in the impact of its REF assessment and selection procedures on individuals or protected groups, and that it responds with adjustments and support wherever possible and proportionate.
34. The equality monitoring strategy is intended to ensure that any impacts on individuals and groups are discovered as early as possible in the processes of preparation for the REF submission and are responded to as appropriate. The key components of this approach, which have informed the development of the Code, are:
  - A commitment to consider all individuals eligible as Category A at each stage of the process leading to, and including, the final selection in November 2013
  - Baseline staff population profiles by age, disability and gender conducted annually
  - REF Review meetings held in November-January 2010-11 and again in 2011-12 that considered all Category A staff, and potential Category A staff, in terms of likelihood of submission. These meetings considered the characteristics of the populations of staff likely and unlikely to be submitted and addressed issues of fairness and equality that were apparent
  - A baseline EIA of the 2011/2012 REF review meetings was undertaken, the results of which have informed the development of the Code
  - A special review of the University's Equality and Diversity Policy and Practice conducted by the Oxford Brookes Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practices which included focus group based assessments of understandings and responses to the impact of REF selection on key groups of staff
  - A Stonewall Workplace Index staff survey to measure perceptions of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff (LGBT)
  - The establishment during 2010-11 of Staff Equality Networks to give voice to staff groups focussing on disability, gender, sexual orientation and age. These groups have considered impact of the REF preparations and will be consulted as part of the EIA processes in 2013 and 2014
  - The appointment of Equality Representatives in all academic schools
  - Training following Equality Challenge Unit guidelines for all staff involved in REF selection processes
  - Formulation and dissemination of explicit guidance by the University Promotions Committee to assure staff of the distinction between promotion criteria and REF selection thresholds
  - Consultation with the UCU staff union in preparing this Code of Practice

35. The EIAs are undertaken by the Equality and Diversity Manager and the Director of Research Services and will be considered by the REF Steering Group and the University's Executive Group. They will consider a range of information including:
- analysis of Kent's submission to the RAE 2008 and the findings from any evaluations that followed;
  - analyses of HESA staff data on staff who are eligible to be submitted to the REF and of staff who are selected for the Pilot Exercise, and for the final submission;
  - learning points from the Pilot Exercise including feedback from staff from protected groups.

## Feedback

36. The University will provide feedback to members of staff who are not selected for inclusion in the Pilot Exercise or the final submission. Selection or non-selection for the Pilot Exercise does not predetermine selection for the final submission, and the outcome at either stage will not be detrimental to staff in terms of promotion or any other aspect of employment at the University.
37. Feedback about selection for the Pilot Exercise and final submission will be provided by the REF UOA Co-ordinators within ten working days of a recommendation being accepted by the Faculty Review Group. An excerpt from the guidance to UOA Working Groups on providing feedback is given at Appendix 2.

## Appeals procedure

### Timing

38. Selection decisions will be made throughout the months preceding submission, and associated feedback given (see paragraphs 36-37).
39. In order to ensure that all appeals processes have been completed in time for the outcome of the appeal to be reflected in the University's final REF submission, there is a final date by which all feedback must have been provided to non-selected staff.
40. All non-selection decisions must be made no later than Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2013, and feedback provided no later than **Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2013**.
41. REF UOA Co-ordinators will provide, within ten working days of the decision being made by the Faculty Review Group, feedback to any member of staff not selected for inclusion in either the REF Pilot Exercise or final submission (see Appendix 2). The feedback will include information about this appeals procedure.
42. Individuals not selected for inclusion may appeal against this decision, within four weeks from the date REF UOA Co-ordinator's feedback or by **Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2013**, whichever is the earlier.

### Grounds

43. Appeals may be made on the following grounds:
- a. the procedure in this Code of Practice was not followed;
  - b. the decision was based on incomplete or inaccurate information;
  - c. the decision was made with inappropriate reference to protected characteristics and may be discriminatory.

## **Setup**

44. REF Appeals Panels will be convened according to the membership and terms of reference stated in Appendix 1.
45. All members of REF Appeals panels will have received training which will be tailored specifically to the requirements of the REF, and will cover the provisions and implementation of this Code of Practice in detail.

## **Process**

46. Appeals should be made in writing and addressed to the Chair of the REF Appeals Panel, the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor, stating the grounds for the appeal.
47. For each appeal, the Chair will convene a REF Appeal Panel which will hold a preliminary meeting within five working days of receiving the appeal, to consider the case and determine what, if any, further investigation or evidence is needed.
48. A formal meeting of the REF Appeal Panel will be held within ten working days of the preliminary meeting, at which the appellant may choose to appear in person. They may be accompanied by member of University of Kent staff of their choice, for example a trade union representative.
49. The outcome of the meeting will be communicated to the appellant, in writing, within five working days of the decision being made.

## Appendix 1: Definition of responsibilities

The following section lists those committees and staff members involved in the decision-making process in preparing submissions to REF2014, and summarises their roles. Full details of the post holders can be found at <http://www.kent.ac.uk/researchservices/docs/kentref/ref-postholders.pdf>.

Training will be given to those individuals and groups identified by an asterisk. The training will be tailored specifically to the requirements of the REF, and will cover the provisions and implementation of this Code of Practice in detail. The University recognises that group membership may change over time. New group members will also receive training tailored specifically to the requirements of the REF, as soon as it can be arranged. Decisions may be made by groups in which the majority of the academic members have received the training.

### Board for Research and Enterprise

#### *Terms of reference*

The Board for Research and Enterprise will report to the Executive Group and advise Senate of the progress of the preparation of the REF submission. It will endorse proposals for the conduct of the REF at Kent, but will not be involved in decisions concerning the selection of staff or other elements of the preparations and submission.

#### *Membership:*

- Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise (Chair)
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Finance & Commercial Services
- Academic Registrar
- Lay member appointed by the Vice Chancellor
- Dean of each Faculty and the Graduate School
- Director of Research of each Faculty
- Representative of each Faculty
- Contract research staff representative
- Research Funding Manager (Secretary)

#### *By invitation:*

- Director of Information Services
- Head of the Unit for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching
- Director of Research Services
- Director of Kent Innovation and Enterprise

### REF Steering Group\* (Steering Group)

#### *Terms of reference*

The REF Steering Group will report to the Board for Research and Enterprise on the preparation of the University's Research Excellence Framework submission. To this end, it will:

- monitor the development of the REF by HEFCE and consider the strategic implications for the University
- gather information; advise on criteria and their application that are likely to yield the best outcome
- oversee the University's preparations for the REF including the operation of a REF Pilot Exercise
- approve UOA Statements of Intent
- approve recommendations as to which individuals, outputs and impact case studies are to be included in the submission
- approve the final submission

The Steering Group will receive advice from the Faculty Review Groups, and will endorse its recommendations or enter into a dialogue in order to achieve an agreed position.

#### *Membership*

- Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise (Chair)
- Dean of each Faculty
- Director of Research of each Faculty
- Director of Research Services
- Senior academic representatives of each Faculty
- REF Support Officer (Secretary)

#### **Faculty Review Groups\*** (Review Groups)

##### *Terms of reference*

A Faculty Review Group will be established for each Faculty. Faculty Review Groups will report to the Steering Group. Review Groups will:

- steer preparations for the Pilot Exercise and provide guidance to the UOA Working Groups (Working Groups)
- provide guidance to Working Groups in developing all aspects of submissions (outputs, impact and environment, plus contextual staff data)
- review emerging submissions to the Pilot Exercise, and give feedback on the Pilot submissions to inform preparation of the final submission
- approve Statements of Intent and recommend for final approval to the REF Steering Group
- approve recommendations as to which individuals, outputs and impact case studies are to be included in the submission and recommend for final approval to the REF Steering Group
- sign off all details of the final submission

#### *Membership*

- Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise (Chair)
- Dean
- Faculty Director of Research
- Director of Research Services
- REF Support Officer
- Member of Research Services (Secretary)

#### *By invitation*

- Representative(s) of the UOA Working Groups (usually the REF UOA Co-ordinator and Head of School)

#### **UOA Working Groups\*** (Working Group)

##### *Terms of reference*

A UOA Working Group will be established for each of the UOAs to which the University may make a submission. Working Groups will be led by the REF UOA Co-ordinator, and will:

- prepare a statement of intent for the UOA for approval by the Review Group
- work closely together to develop, populate with data and write the submission to their UOA
- receive reports from the Individual Staff Circumstances Committee stating the number of outputs required for each member of staff
- make recommendations to the Review Groups as to which individuals, outputs and impact case studies are to be included in the submission

### *Membership*

- REF UOA Co-ordinator (Chair)
- Head of School
- Director of Research (if not also the REF UOA Co-ordinator)
- Administrative officer with secretariat responsibility
- Impact officer and other senior members of academic staff as required

### **REF UOA Co-ordinators\***

The University will appoint a REF UOA Co-ordinator for each UOA to which it intends to make a submission. Each REF UOA Co-ordinator will chair the UOA Working Group and be responsible for the drafting of REF2, REF3 and REF5, and checking data in other parts of the submission. The REF UOA Co-ordinator will be the primary point of liaison in the co-ordination of the overall submission.

### **External assessors**

External assessors will be appointed as part of the Pilot Exercise. They may be asked for feedback on any aspect of the submission within their field of expertise. External assessors will have no role in the decision-making process, but will provide written feedback that will be considered by the Working Groups when making decisions about the selection of staff and outputs to be submitted, and other elements of the submission. External assessors will be asked to comment on the quality of outputs rather than individuals.

External assessors will be senior academic staff in their fields, usually at another UK HEI. External assessors will be nominated by REF UOA Co-ordinators following consultation within the school.

External assessors will receive a copy of the Code of Practice and receive a verbal briefing on its application from the REF UOA Co-ordinator seeking their input.

### **REF Technical Group\***

#### *Terms of reference*

To prepare in consultation with REF UOA Co-ordinators and others as appropriate, data for inclusion in the University's REF 2014 submissions in respect of staff data, research income and student data.

To provide support for REF UOA Co-ordinators in the preparation of research output, research environment and impact elements.

To maintain the quality and integrity of data held on the University's databases likely to contribute to REF returns (including the Student Data System, the HR system, the finance system, and the Kent Academic Repository).

The REF Technical Group reports to the REF Steering Group.

### *Membership*

- Director of Research Services (Chair)
- REF Support Officer
- HR Data Manager
- Head of Planning and Business Information
- Research Accounts Manager
- Head of Collection Management
- Learning and Research Development Manager

## **REF Individual Staff Circumstances Group\* (ISC Group)**

### *Terms of reference*

The REF Individual Staff Circumstances Group will have no role in the decision making process, but will operate the procedure inviting academic staff members to disclose their individual staff circumstances, gather information and evidence required in case of audit by HEFCE, and report the number of outputs required for each staff member to the relevant REF UOA Co-ordinator. The ISC Group will also report in broad terms, which cannot be traced to individuals, in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998), on the number and type of clearly defined and more complex staff circumstances.

They will also provide advice where necessary on appeals.

### *Membership*

- Director of Human Resources
- Equality and Diversity Manager
- One member of academic staff with experience of serving on the University's Promotions Committee
- Director of Research Services
- REF Support Officer

## **REF Appeals Panel\***

### *Terms of reference*

A REF Appeals Panel will be convened for each formal appeal lodged with the Chair (see Appeals Procedure, paragraphs 38-49).

For each appeal, the Chair will convene a REF Appeal Panel which will hold a preliminary meeting within five working days of receiving the appeal, to consider the case and determine what, if any, further investigation or evidence is needed. The Appeal Panel will request further evidence in writing and/or request that individuals give evidence at the formal meeting. A formal meeting of the REF Appeal Panel will be held within ten working days of the preliminary meeting. The appellant may choose to appear before the panel in person. They may be accompanied by member of University of Kent staff of their choice, for example a trade union representative. The chair of the Appeals Panel will ensure that the process is expedited for appeals received in September or October 2013 in order to ensure it is completed in sufficient time before 29th November, the closing date for REF submissions.

The Appeal Panel will decide whether the appeal is upheld either in full or in part, or if it is to be rejected. It will give justification for its findings and, in the case of an appeal being upheld, make specific judgements on the necessary remedial action. This action should include, in the case of undue discrimination based upon protected characteristics, arrangements which permit any reconsideration of the appellant's case in a manner which ensures fair treatment. The outcome of the meeting will be communicated, in writing, to the appellant within five working days of the decision being made.

All members of REF Appeals panels will have received training which will be tailored specifically to the requirements of the REF, and will cover the provisions and implementation of this Code of Practice in detail.

### *Membership*

- Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair) or, in his absence, a qualified deputy appointed by the University's Executive Group
- Two senior academics, chosen by the chair and drawn from a pool of six representing two for each Faculty, who have had no role in the UOA decision, or a School- of Faculty-level decision about the appellant
- A member of staff from Human Resources (Secretary)

## Appendix 2: Extract from guidance provided to REF UOA Co-ordinators

The full document is available at: <https://sharepoint.kent.ac.uk/researchservices/ref/default.aspx>.

### Recommendations

1. All *UOA Working Groups* should decide at an early stage the processes they will use to consider outputs and to decide which will be included in a submission, and make details of these processes available to staff covered by the UOA.
2. The University recommends that before a decision is made not to include an individual based on the quality of their outputs, that the quality of their outputs should be reviewed by at least two individuals with relevant expertise.
3. In giving feedback to staff on whether they are to be included in the University's submission to the REF, or the REF pilot exercise, the following guidelines should be used:
  - a. **Who gives the feedback?**
    - i. The REF UOA Co-ordinator or a nominated deputy from amongst the academic members of the UOA Working Group.
    - ii. Not the person's line manager.
  - b. **Who receives feedback?**
    - i. The Code of Practice states that feedback will be given to members of staff NOT selected.
    - ii. Consider extending this to staff members at the margin - those who may be affected by future revisions to the GPA for the UOA in the Statement of Intent.
    - iii. Consider whether any feedback is necessary for staff currently included, for example if inclusion is on the basis of an output which has yet to appear.
  - c. **Timing of feedback**
    - i. The University recommends as good practice, that UOA Working Groups will have continuing dialogue with members of staff in their UOA. Feedback under the terms of the REF Code of Practice should not represent the first contact.
    - ii. Within 10 working days of response from Faculty Review Group.
    - iii. In order to allow for the full appeals process, the final date for feedback to be provided to non-selected staff is **Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2013**. However, the expectation is that decisions will be made, and associated feedback given, well in advance of this deadline.
    - iv. Make an appointment sufficiently in advance, notify the staff member what the meeting is to be about. Schedule during the individual's normal working hours.
  - d. **Location of the meeting**
    - i. Somewhere quiet and private, conducive to giving and receiving confidential feedback without interruption.

**e. Overall approach**

- i. Base feedback around the four REF selection criteria (contractual eligibility, fit with UOA, portfolio and quality).
- ii. Avoid reference to personal characteristics.

**f. What to cover at the meeting?**

- i. Refer to the Code of Practice and UOA Statement of Intent.
- ii. Reiterate that inclusion or non-inclusion in the pilot exercise do not determine whether there is inclusion in the final REF submission; outline the possibility that the University may, as a result of the pilot exercise, decide to be more selective in the final submission.
- iii. Review the four criteria for inclusion (contractual eligibility; fit with UOA descriptor; portfolio; quality).
- iv. Outline the general decision making process - who was involved in making decisions, what types of evidence were considered, what internal or external advice was received. If this information has already been communicated per the recommendation in paragraph 9, confirm that the processes have been operated as stated.
- v. List the specific evidence (research outputs) which have been used in making decisions about including the individual.
- vi. Ask the individual to confirm that the evidence is complete and accurate.
- vii. Provide a formal written feedback note in addition to the discussion. Give clear reasons, both in the feedback note and at the meeting, why the person has not been included, or is near the margin. Refer to recommendations made by UOA Working Groups, and any response made by Faculty Review Groups.
- viii. Reiterate, if necessary, that the REF and the pilot exercise assess some aspects of academic work but are not associated with performance management and have no link to individual career development within the University.
- ix. Ask for questions.
- x. Both the giver and recipient of feedback should sign and date the written feedback note.

## **Appendix 3: References**

Assessment framework and guidance on submissions, REF 02.2011, HEFCE, 2011

<http://www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/2011-02/> and addendum

Panel criteria and working methods, REF 01.2012, HEFCE, 2012

<http://www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/2012-01/>

Equality Challenge Unit

<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF>

Kent REF Website

<https://www.kent.ac.uk/researchservices/local/ref/ref-at-kent.html>

## **Appendix 4: Accessibility**

The information produced in this document is available in a range of formats, including large print, Braille and audio.

Please contact Research Services to discuss, or email [kentref@kent.ac.uk](mailto:kentref@kent.ac.uk).