

London Metropolitan University Code of Practice on the Selection of Staff for the Research Excellence Framework 2014

Introduction

1. It is a requirement of the REF2014 that the University establishes a Code of Practice for the selection of staff which operates within the context of all relevant equality legislation as well as the University's own equality and diversity policy.
2. All Codes of Practice are submitted to HEFCE. HEFCE have established an Equality and Diversity Panel (EDAP) for REF. The EDAP will examine all the submitted Codes of Practice and will advise the UK funding bodies if an institution's Code does not adhere to the REF2014 'Assessment framework and guidance on submissions.' An HEI whose Code is not approved will not be able to make a submission to the REF.
3. The University will submit its Code of Practice to HEFCE on or before the 31st July 2012.
4. The University is committed to the principle that the selection of staff for the REF should be on the basis of demonstrable research excellence in the context of the REF and that the process of selection is carried out in a fair and transparent manner. This Code outlines the process by which that selection will take place. The University's aim is to ensure that the optimum number of eligible staff are included in the REF submission, taking into account the published procedures and criteria of the REF2014.

Principles

5. In line with REF Guidance, the Code of Practice seeks to demonstrate fairness to staff by addressing the following principles:
 - **Transparency:** All processes for the selection of staff for inclusion in REF submissions will be transparent.
 - **Consistency:** The policy in respect of staff selection will be consistent across the institution and implemented uniformly.
 - **Accountability:** Responsibilities will be clearly defined, and individuals and bodies that are involved in selecting staff for REF submissions will be identified by name or role.
 - **Inclusivity:** The code will promote an inclusive environment.

Commitment to Equality of Consideration

6. The University recognises its commitments under the law and is committed to providing equality of opportunity by aiming to ensure that its practices and procedures follow legal requirements and good practice as recommended by: the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE); the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC); the Disability Rights Commission (DRC); the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD); and Universities UK (UUK).

7. The University has developed policies in response to these commitments. The policies can be viewed on the University Metranet at:
<https://intranet.londonmet.ac.uk/equality/staff/polrep.cfm>
8. The University's REF process will reflect the commitments made in these policies.

Equalities Impact Assessment

9. Before drafting the Code of Practice, the University conducted an initial equalities impact assessment (EIA) to consider and understand the implications for equalities of the process of selection of staff for inclusion in the REF submission.
10. The initial EIA was conducted by the University's Equalities and Diversity Officer in December 2011. This assessment drew upon:
 - The findings of HEFCE's 'Selection of staff for inclusion in RAE 2008'¹
 - The findings of the Equality Challenge Unit's (ECU) 'The impact of the process to promote equality and diversity in the Research Assessment Exercise 2008'²
 - The University's experience of conducting the RAE2008.
11. The initial EIA concluded that:
 - Research indicates that there are issues of discrimination in higher education in the area of Age, Disability, Gender, Pregnancy/Maternity and Race.
 - Research by HEFCE and the Equality Challenge Unit on the RAE indicates that selection rates differed in regards to gender, disability, age and ethnicity.
12. The EIA confirmed that the University should undertake mitigating actions to reduce the possibility that the selection process may disadvantage any individuals:
 - The University should consider and apply HEFCE's "Assessment framework and guidance on submissions" and "Equality briefing for panels" and HEFCE's guidance on taking account of maternity leave in the REF.
 - In drafting the University's Code of Practice on the Selection of Staff for Inclusion in the REF, the University's REF Working Group (REFWG) should consult with relevant University committees and departments (see Consultation, para. 93)
 - Members of the REFWG and all others responsible for making decisions on which members of staff should be included in the REF should receive appropriate training (see Training, para. 70-71)
 - All eligible staff (including those on long-term absence) should be made aware of the opportunity to be considered for inclusion in the REF submission (see Inclusivity, para. 35-41)
 - Any staff requesting a reduction in the number of research outputs they would be required to submit should be provided with a confidential means of submitting details of their personal circumstances for consideration by a panel separate from the REFWG (see Tariff Adjustment, para 72-89, and Annex B)

¹ 'Selection of staff for inclusion in RAE2008', HEFCE Issues Paper, September 2009/34

² 'The impact of the process to promote equality and diversity in the Research Assessment Exercise 2008', ECU, September 2009

- The appeals process to be established as part of the selection process should provide for the possibility that an individual whose outputs were not selected for submission to the REF might appeal the decision on the basis of equality/diversity (see para. 90-92, and Annex C).
- The process of staff selection should be subject to an EIA at key stages (see next section)

Monitoring equalities throughout the process of staff selection

13. As recommended by the initial assessment and in line with best practice, the University will undertake a process of Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) throughout the REF process. The findings from the EIA will be used to inform the REF process to ensure that the staff selection policy for the REF does not have a differential impact on particular protected groups.
14. The EIA will be an ongoing process with updates provided during the REF process. The EIA will use the University's existing HR data on the protected characteristics of REF eligible staff to establish a profile of the group of potential REF participants at the following stages:
 - At the start of the REF process i.e. the overall profile of all potentially eligible staff (EIA1)
 - After the identification of individuals that meet the quality and tariff requirements for research outputs (EIA2)
 - After the identification of UoAs that are evaluated as likely to achieve an overall quality rating of at least 3* and will be included in the REF2014 (EIA3)
 - At submission (EIA4)
15. The results of the EIA will be reported to the REF Working Group (REFWG) and to the Research and Enterprise Committee (REC). The evaluation of the EIA (including the initial stage) will be published (and made available on University's website) after the REF submission, and will include any mitigating actions taken.

Roles and Responsibilities

16. In accordance with the **principle of accountability** the Code of Practice:
 - Identifies who will be involved in the selection process and identifies what training those staff will have undertaken.
 - Describes the operating criteria and terms of reference for individuals, committees, working groups and any other bodies concerned with staff selection.

17. The **Vice-Chancellor** (V-C) will:
 - Approve the Code of Practice
 - Approve the University's final REF submission

18. The **Deputy Vice-Chancellor** (DVC) will:
 - Appoint the chair of the REF Working Group
 - Receive and decide the outcomes of any appeals from staff who have not been selected for inclusion in the REF submission (including any appeals against decisions regarding the outcome of requests for a tariff reduction).
 - Receive and review written complaints from colleagues regarding any aspect of the operation of the REF process for decision or forwarding to REFWG, REC, Executive Group, or other University body or group for decision.

19. The Research and Enterprise Committee (REC) has devolved responsibility for the University's REF submission to the **REF Working Group** (REFWG). The REFWG is chaired by a Dean and includes the Head of the Research and Postgraduate Office and one representative from each faculty nominated by the relevant Dean. Members of the REFWG have been appointed on the basis of their seniority and relevant research experience. A secretary has been appointed to the REFWG.

20. The Terms of Reference (TOR) and membership for the REFWG can be found in Annex A.

21. Operating within its TOR, abiding by the Code of Practice, and in accordance with the published REF guidance, the REFWG will:
 - Develop and establish the process for the selection of UoAs and individuals for submission to the REF
 - Through the relevant REFWG Faculty representative, act as the co-ordinator for the collection of relevant information for each UoA at each stage of the REF process
 - Oversee the selection and appointment of external assessors of research outputs on the basis of their academic experience and knowledge of the REF process
 - Oversee the selection and appointment of external assessors of research impact on the basis of their relevant experience and knowledge of impact in relation to the REF process
 - Review and evaluate all available relevant information at successive stages of the REF process to support the development of the final REF submission

- In accordance with the University's criteria for research excellence and the Code of Practice, decide which researchers will be included in the REF2014 submission, and to which UoAs individuals will be submitted
 - Notify all affected individuals of decisions at any stage of the REF process as to their exclusion or inclusion from the REF submission, and advise them of the right and process of appealing that decision
 - Compile the final submission for recommendation to the DVC and final sign off by the V-C
 - Undertake all equalities training specified by the Code of Practice
 - Through the Chair and Deputy Chair, report to each REC the progress in the development of the REF submission
 - Monitor the emerging equality profile of the submission and the outcome of equality impact assessments. The results of the equality impact assessments will be reported to the REC.
22. The Chair of the REFWG is responsible for overseeing the process for: the selection of UoAs that will constitute the University's submission, and the selection of staff for inclusion in the REF submission.
23. A **REF Panel for Individual Circumstances** (REFPIC) shall be established to consider all applications for a reduced tariff, see para. 79-89.
24. The **Head of the Research and Postgraduate Office** (RPO) will:
- Act as Deputy Chair of the REFWG
 - Act as Manager for the REF process and direct the Secretary of the REFWG who will act as administrator for the project
 - Provide administrative support, through the Research and Postgraduate Office (RPO), for the University's REF process
 - Maintain, through the Secretary of the REFWG, the papers and minutes of the REFWG, and records of decisions made by other University groups or bodies engaged in the REF process
 - Communicate via the RPO the University's REF Code of Practice to academic and other staff
 - Communicate via the RPO the membership of the REF Working Group to academic and other staff
 - Maintain via the RPO a website and other means for communicating progress updates to University staff
25. The **Research and Enterprise Committee** (chaired by the DVC) will receive the minutes from the REFWG meetings and reports from the Equality Impact Assessment.
26. Individuals and groups involved in the University's REF process shall liaise with the **Executive Group** from time to time.
27. All persons involved in the REF process shall abide by the University's data protection policy, which can be viewed at: <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/staff/data-protection/policy-statement.cfm>
28. All **staff** will provide full and accurate records of research output within the REF period and other relevant information to the REFWG. **NOTE:** knowingly providing

false information in any part of the submission process will be treated as a disciplinary offense and will be dealt with under the relevant HR policies.

The Selection of Staff for REF2014

Criteria for Selection

29. In accordance with the **principle of consistency**, the Code of Practice sets out the criteria to be applied by the University to all aspects/stages of the process at all levels within the institution where decisions will be made, including how individual staff circumstances will be taken into account.
30. The selection of any member of staff for inclusion in the REF will be based upon the principles of research excellence and equality of opportunity. The criteria for selecting an individual for inclusion in the REF submission are:
 - Formal eligibility, as prescribed in the Guidance on Submissions document
 - Research excellence
 - Volume of research, four outputs will be required unless the submission is supported by an application for a reduced submission. (The procedure for making an application for a researcher to submit less than four outputs is described at para. 79-89, and Annex B)
 - The relevance of the research subject to the UoAs to be submitted

Research Excellence

31. The University's Review of Postgraduate Education and Research (2012) recommended a submission to the REF which:
 - Is based on strategically identified niche areas of research excellence
 - Excels in meeting the new criteria of the research assessment in terms of outputs (65%); impact (beyond academia, 20%) and research environment (15%): i.e. is of international excellence – 3* and above
32. The University places high importance on the achievement of demonstrable impacts through its research. It is expected that research will benefit individuals, organisations and nations. The University is committed to carrying new ideas through to beneficial outcomes, across the full range of its academic activity.
33. Research excellence will be interpreted according to the definitions and criteria set out by the Funding Councils and by the relevant REF panels and sub-panels. In considering published outputs, the process will take account of the REF rules and guidance on jointly-authored work in assessing individual contributions.
34. While every effort will be made to ensure that all high quality research (up to the limit of four outputs per person) is included in the University's REF submission, where that work cannot be included within the parameters of any submitted UoA (or would not then meet the volume requirement) it will not be submitted as part of the REF.

Inclusivity

35. In accordance with the **principle of inclusivity** and the findings of the initial stage of the EIA, the process of selection covered by the Code seeks to identify

all eligible staff who have produced excellent research for potential submission to the REF.

36. All staff provisionally identified from HR as meeting the published criteria for inclusion in the REF were e-mailed to confirm that they do meet the criteria. All research staff were e-mailed to invite them to propose up to four pieces of work for possible inclusion in the REF. Potentially eligible staff identified from HR records as being long-term absent were written to updating them on the REF process and inviting them to put forward potential research for consideration. All-staff e-mails provided updates of the REF process and asked any staff who had not previously been identified as REF eligible to do so.
37. All staff were invited to attend a briefing on the REF process, delivered by the Chair of the REFWG (Dean of the Faculty of Life Sciences and Computing) on 26th June 2012. Approximately 80 members of staff chose to attend, and the slides have been made available on the University's REF webpage.
38. Any staff joining the University after the initial selection of researchers for inclusion in UoA submissions who otherwise comply with the published HEFCE Guidance, will be invited to put themselves forward for consideration in the REF. This research will be subject to the same process of external evaluation as that put forward earlier and these researchers will have the same right of appeal as others in the process.
39. Researchers whose inclusion in the REF submission had been provisional, based on the expectation of the publication of work subsequent to the initial selection, will need to achieve the criteria of research excellence for the complete tariff of their work in order to be confirmed as participants in a UoA.
40. The University will review the inclusion of all staff in accordance with HEFCE's published Guidance on the staff census date.
41. The University will adhere to the REF2014 Guidance on individual circumstances. The University will treat equally and fairly those staff on fixed-term and part-time contracts in determining suitability for inclusion in the REF. These staff will have access to the same support as full time and permanent staff.

Process for the selection of staff

42. The process for the selection of staff will be agreed, monitored and operated by the REFWG. It will be subject to the processes of equality impact assessment and appeals, as described at para. 13-15 (EIA) and para. 90-92, and Annex C (appeals).
43. An individual's inclusion in the REF will depend on:
 - The University's selection for submission of a UoA in which their research is relevant
 - The individual's research output being of sufficient quality and quantity to be included in the REF2014 submission.
44. The University will decide which UoAs it will submit to the REF2014. Only UoAs that are judged by the University to be excellent will be included in its REF2014 submission. Inclusion will require a UoA achieving excellence in the following

three components and that the overall expected profile for the UoA will be an average of at least 3*:

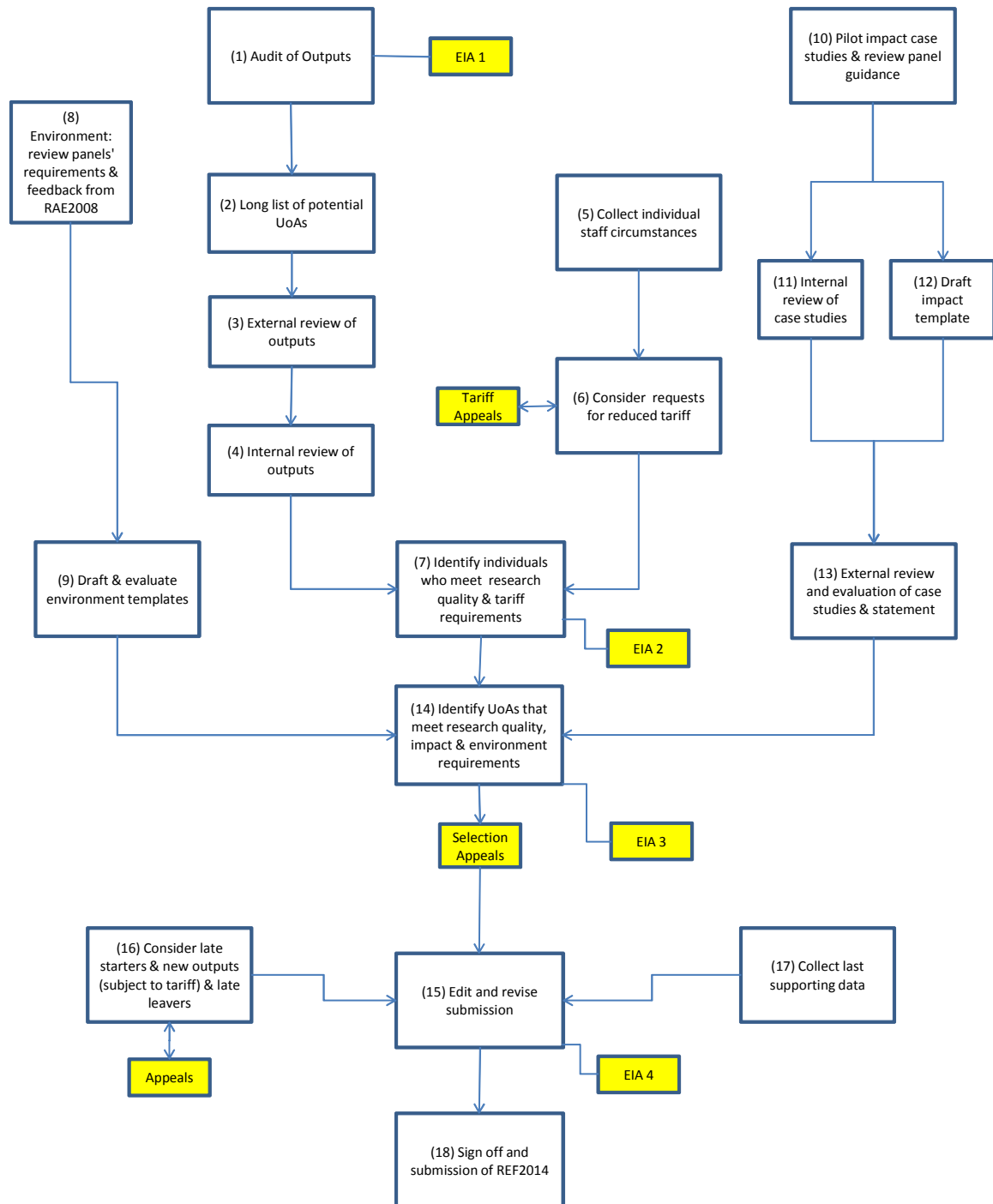
- Research impact, in terms of reach and significance
- Research environment, in terms of vitality and sustainability
- Research output quality, determined by the inclusion only of individual researchers whose outputs have achieved the expected quality standard; it is a normal expectation that a researcher submitted to the REF2014 will have research outputs that have scored an average of at least 3*.

45. Additionally, there may be strategic reasons for not submitting particular UOAs, regardless of the existence of strong researchers within these units. Strategic reasons may include reputation, concentration of excellence, funding implications, etc.

46. Every effort will be made to submit under other UoAs those individuals with excellent research outputs who have been displaced from UoAs that it is decided the University will not submit to the REF. However, it is recognised that it may not always be possible to accommodate all excellent researchers within the UoAs that will be submitted.

Figure 1 - Process Diagram

The overall process for the University's REF submission is shown as Figure 1; numbers on the diagram are referred to throughout the Code.



Research Quality

Audit of Outputs

47. All eligible staff in the University were invited to participate in an audit of research outputs by identifying to their Faculty REFWG representatives up to four pieces of research that could be included in a potential UoA submission (January 2012) (1). The audit identified which UoA(s) the researcher could potentially submit under.
48. The results of the audit were reviewed by the REFWG, leading to the exclusion of a single UoA which was judged to have insufficient potential research to constitute a viable submission (2). Researchers under the discontinued UoA will continue in the REF process with a view to accommodating their work elsewhere.

External Review

49. All research outputs identified by the audit will be evaluated by external reviewers against the definitions and criteria set out by the Funding Councils and by the relevant REF panels and sub-panels (3). The external reviewers of research outputs will be appointed by the University on the basis of their academic experience and knowledge of the REF process. External reviewers will provide an evaluation of each individual research output scoring it 0-4 (corresponding to the scale unclassified to 4*).
50. The REFWG will manage the process of the external review of research outputs. This will be conducted in accordance with the current Code of Practice. External reviewers will be fully briefed on the need to take account of this Code of Practice and will be provided with a copy of the Code of Practice before undertaking their assessment. External assessors will not decide which staff are to be submitted to the REF nor will they be given any information relating to individual staff circumstances.

Internal Review

51. In conducting the internal review, the University will consider the profile of each UoA as a whole. The results of the external review will be tabulated as reports for each Faculty. The Dean of the Faculty will provide feedback on the results from the external review for each UoA that may be submitted by the Faculty (4).

Tariff Reduction

52. No restriction will be placed on the inclusion in the external review of staff with less than the expected four research outputs. All staff eligible for inclusion in REF (irrespective of whether they have participated in the audit of research outputs) will be informed of the opportunity to request a reduced tariff. Those who wish to do so will be asked to complete a confidential form setting out the relevant personal circumstances (5). Each application will be considered and a decision made by the REF Panel for Individual Circumstances (REFPIC) whether to request a reduced tariff for that individual (6). The process for requesting a reduced tariff is described at para. 79-89, and Annex B. Staff may appeal against a decision not to reduce their tariff or the extent to which it will be reduced. The appeals process is described at para. 90-92, and Annex C.

Identify individuals who meet the research quality and tariff requirements

53. The REFWG will use the results of the external and internal reviews and the decisions of the REFPIIC to identify which individual researchers should be further considered for potential inclusion in the REF2014 (7). In this selection, the University will aim to support the achievement of an average of at least 3* overall quality profile for every UoA submitted. In making this identification, REFWG will take account of:

- The decisions of the REFPIIC: it is expected that only researchers who are able to submit four outputs or a number of outputs equal to the agreed adjusted tariff will be considered for inclusion in the REF2014 submission.
- The results of external review for each individual researcher who meets the above standard: it is a normal expectation that a researcher submitted to the REF2014 will have research outputs that have scored an average of at least 3*.
- The feedback from the internal review, to ensure that no researcher whose work may of a standard to be included in the submission has been unreasonably omitted.

Research Impact

54. The University will identify which UoAs have excellent research impact. Only those UoAs which the audit of outputs identified as potentially capable of including work submitted by London Met researchers will be evaluated for impact.

55. Each REFWG Faculty representative had lead responsibility for the preparation of pilot impact case studies (10). The REFWG will provide feedback on the case studies, taking account of the individual panel guidance and other published guidance (11). Each REFWG Faculty representative will have lead responsibility for making any amendments to the impact case studies in the light of this feedback, including the drafting of any replacement impact case study or further case studies needed.

56. Supported by the RPO and in accordance with published guidance (10), each REFWG Faculty representative will have lead responsibility for drafting the research impact template for each shortlisted UoA (12).

57. The draft impact case studies and completed templates will be subjected to external review. The University will engage an academic and a research user for each UoA to obtain an evaluation using the scale 4* to unclassified for research impact. The UoA research impact evaluations will be reported to REFWG (13).

Research Environment

58. The University will identify which UoAs have an excellent research environment. Only those UoAs which the audit of outputs identified as potentially capable of including work submitted by London Met researchers will be evaluated for their research environment.

59. Each REFWG Faculty representative will have lead responsibility for drafting the research environment template (9) for each UoA, taking account of the RAE2008

feedback and specific panel guidance (8). REFWG will review the draft template for each UoA and evaluate it using the scale 4* to unclassified.

Identify UoAs that meet the requirement of an average of at least 3* for overall quality profile

60. REFWG will identify which UoAs have met the criteria for submission to REF2014 (14), taking account of the:
- Research impact
 - Research environment
 - Research quality
61. UoAs that meet this requirement will be submitted to the REF2014. It follows that individuals whose research has been identified for inclusion in a selected UoA and whose individual research meets the quality and quantity requirements will be included in the REF2014 submission. (If such an individual has been identified for possible inclusion in more than one successful UoA, a judgement would be made by REFWG which UoA to submit in.)
62. UoAs that do not meet the expected standard will not be included in the REF2014 submission.
63. For those researchers whose individual outputs do meet the quality/quantity requirements but whose proposed UoA has not been selected for REF2014, every effort will be made to accommodate them in a submitted UoA. However, where this is not possible those researchers will not be included in the University's REF submission.
64. All affected staff will be informed of the outcome of the selection process and advised of the opportunity and process to appeal the decision.
65. Therefore, the stages in the selection process for an *individual researcher* are:
- i) Confirmation that their number of research outputs equals or exceeds the agreed tariff, to a maximum of four.
 - If no, the individual will not be included in the REF submission
 - If yes, the individual will be considered further
 - ii) Confirmation that the individual's (possibly tariff adjusted) output meets the quality threshold
 - If no, the individual will not be included in the REF submission
 - If yes, selection will depend on the viability of their UoA
 - iii) Confirmation that the individual's designated UoA scores an average of at least 3* having taken account of all research outputs, and its research impact and environment
 - If no, the individual will be considered for inclusion in another UoA
 - If yes, the individual will be selected for inclusion in the REF2014
 - iv) For individuals who have achieved the quality/quantity threshold for research but whose designated UoAs have not achieved the thresholds for either or both impact and environment, they will be considered for inclusion in another UoA
 - If no alternative is available, the individual will not be included in the REF submission

If an alternative UoA that meets the required standard is available, the individual will be selected for inclusion in the REF2014

Agreed final list of UoAs

66. The list of UoAs, and their researchers, to be submitted to the REF2014 will be signed off by the Chair of the REFWG after the conclusion of any appeals.

Late inclusions and admissions

67. Subsequent to this, the selected UoAs may be revised and edited (15), including the inclusion of data for the final year of the REF (17). In this period, newly appointed staff or staff with newly completed research may put forward outputs to be included in the REF (16). All such applications will be considered in accordance with the Code of Practice and will be subject to the same decision and appeals processes as other staff/outputs. Staff who have left before the census date will be removed from the submission. REFWG and the RPO will be responsible for compiling the final draft REF2014 submission through use of the HEFCE portal.

Sign off

68. The final submission will be agreed and signed off by the DVC in preparation for final sign off by the V-C and submission on 29th November 2013 (18).

Timetable

69. All dates are end of stage and end of month. Reference numbers are keyed to Figure 1.

Research Outputs

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Audit of outputs (1) | January 2012 |
| Listing of potential UoAs (2) | February 2012 |
| Recruitment of external reviewers (3) | June to July 2012 |
| Conduct of external review of research (3) | July to September 2012 |
| Conduct of internal review of research (4) | October to November 2012 |
| Identify individuals who meet quality & tariff requirements (7) | February 2013 |

Code of practice

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|--|---------------------|
| Draft | June 2102 |
| Consultation & submit | July 2012 |
| <i>Respond to HEFCE feedback if required</i> | <i>October 2012</i> |

Equalities training & Reduced Tariff

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|--|------------------------------|
| Collect individual staff circumstances (5) | July to August 2012 |
| Develop staff training package | June 2012 |
| Deliver staff training package | July to August 2012 |
| Consider requests for reduced tariff (6) | September to November 2012 |
| <i>Tariff APPEALS</i> | December '12 to January 2013 |

Research environment

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Review panel requirements & RAE feedback (8) | April 2012 |
| Draft and evaluate statement (9) | December '12 to February 2013 |

Research impact

| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Pilot impact case studies (10) | December 2011 |
| Review of panel & other guidance (10) | August 2012 to September 2012 |
| Internal review of case studies (11) | October to November 2012 |
| Draft impact statement (12) | October to November 2012 |
| External review of research impact (13) | December '12 to February 2013 |

Complete Submission

| | |
|---|---------------------------|
| Identify UoAs that meet 3 element criteria (14) | March 2013 |
| <i>Exclusion APPEALS</i> | March to April 2013 |
| Sign off of shortlisted UoA | April 2013 |
| Edit and data entry (15) include late data (17) | May to October 2013 |
| Consider late starters/work & departures (16) | July to October 2013 |
| <i>Late APPEALS</i> | September to October 2013 |
| Sign off and submit to HEFCE (18) | November 2013 |

Equalities Training

70. Individual and group general responsibilities in respect of diversity and equal opportunities are specified in the University's Equality and Diversity Policy, which can be viewed on the University Metranet at:

<https://intranet.londonmet.ac.uk/equality/staff/polrep.cfm>

71. Members of the REFWG and all others responsible for making decisions on which members of staff should be included in the REF submission will undertake training on equality and diversity which has been tailored to the REF process. They will complete:

- The online training module 'Equality and Diversity Essentials' provided by HR, **and**
- The additional training/briefing provided on equality and diversity and the REF based on the programme and materials produced by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU). Two members of staff (including the REFWG secretary and a member of HR) attended the ECU's briefing day in the use of the training materials on the 20th March 2012. These staff will be responsible for the delivery of training to colleagues.

Consideration of applications for submissions of less than four outputs by an individual researcher

72. *The REF process makes provision under specific circumstances for staff to submit less than the expected four research outputs*

73. It is an expectation of REF that a researcher included in the process will ordinarily submit four research outputs for consideration. (This is the expected 'tariff'.) In the event of fewer than four outputs being submitted the missing outputs would receive an automatic assessment of unclassified, and this score would be included in the overall result for the UoA and University as a whole. However, it is recognised that individual circumstance may mean that a researcher will not have been in a position during the period of the REF to have produced the expected four outputs. In the interests of fairness and equality, provision is made within the REF process for the University to request the relevant panel to accept less than four outputs (a reduced tariff) from an individual who would otherwise be unable to participate in the REF without the University incurring the penalty of receiving an unclassified rating for each missing piece of work.

HEFCE's requirements for applications for a reduced tariff

74. HEFCE's guidance distinguishes between clearly defined and complex circumstances.³ Applications for a reduced tariff for complex circumstances will need to describe the circumstances in greater detail than is required for clearly defined circumstances.

³ As amended in HEFCE's 'Panel criteria and working methods', para. 69. The tariff adjustments for clearly defined circumstances are set out at para. 72-75. 'Panel criteria' provides detailed guidance on maternity, paternity and adoption leave (para. 75-81) and junior clinical academics (para. 86-87). HEFCE's 'Assessment framework and guidance on submissions' provides detailed guidance on ECR (para. 85-87). These documents are available at: <http://www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/>.

75. Clearly defined circumstances are:

- Qualifying as an early career researcher (ECR)
- Absence from work due to working part-time, secondments or career breaks
- Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave (these cases may be returned as complex depending on specific circumstances, below)
- Junior clinical academics still completing their clinical training in medicine or dentistry

76. Complex circumstances require a judgement by the University about the appropriate number of outputs that can be reduced without penalty:

- Disability
- Ill health or injury
- Mental health conditions
- Constraints related to pregnancy or maternity, in addition to a clearly defined period of maternity leave, above. (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.)
- Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member)
- Gender reassignment
- Other circumstance relating to the protected characteristics listed in the guidance or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

77. For clearly defined circumstances the tariffs have been defined by HEFCE. For complex circumstances, the University will make a judgement of the appropriate reduction in the number of research outputs to be submitted, based on HEFCE's REF guidance. This will be submitted to the REF EDAP for consideration. (Cases involving a mixture of simple and complex circumstances are treated as complex.)

78. If the REF EDAP accepts the claim for a reduced tariff only the submitted outputs will be assessed. If the REF EDAP does not accept the University's request for a reduced tariff for a researcher it will score any missing outputs as unclassified. The University will not be able to appeal this decision nor will it have the opportunity to submit any additional work by that researcher. It is therefore crucial that any requests for a reduced tariff are fully detailed and include all relevant evidence.

University's Process for the Consideration of Individual staff circumstances and their disclosure

79. The approach to the treatment of individual circumstances will be consistent with the range of circumstances and the procedures set out in the guidance and will be consistent across all units of assessment. In considering staff for inclusion in the REF, all staff involved in the process should be aware of, and adhere to, the guidance on individual circumstances. It is a general requirement that all staff with any responsibility for the selection of colleagues for inclusion in the REF must have undergone the REF-specific equalities training organised and delivered by the University.

80. In accordance with the findings of the initial EIA, the University has established a REF Panel for Individual Circumstances (REFPIC) consisting of: a senior member of HR; The Head of the Research and Postgraduate Office; and a senior academic who is not involved in the selection of staff for inclusion in the REF, to consider requests for a tariff reduction. Decisions of this panel may be appealed.
81. All staff eligible to submit research to the REF2014 will be notified of the procedure for requesting a reduced tariff. Any staff who wish to apply for a reduced tariff will be invited to complete a form setting out the personal circumstances they wish to be taken into consideration by REFPIC. The panel may request further information from an applicant if required.
82. Only individuals who wish any personal circumstances to be taken into consideration need complete the form. If individuals do not wish to make an application when first advised of the possibility, they may do so later; however, all such applications must be submitted to REFPIC by July 2013 to be accommodated within the submission process. The University recognises that staff circumstances may change between 1 January 2008 and 31 October 2013. The personal circumstances form will be available on the University's website and copies may be requested from the REFPIC secretary.
83. REF eligible staff who commence work at the University after the call for disclosure applications has been made will be advised of the opportunity to apply for a reduced tariff if they wish to be included in the REF2014.
84. Eligible staff will be informed that if it is not possible to justify a reduced tariff, an individual with less than four research outputs will not be included in the University's REF2014 submission.
85. In the first instance, all applications will be received and held by the secretary of the REFPIC. The REFPIC will consider the details of each application. All the information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence, and handled and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Eligible staff will be notified that to support the claim for a reduced tariff it may be necessary to share details of their personal circumstances with external bodies, as specified in the HEFCE guidance.
86. REFPIC alone will consider each application for a reduced tariff. After due consideration, the REFPIC will notify the REFWG of its decision, stating whether a reduced tariff has been agreed, and if so what number of research outputs will need to be submitted by the individual. REFWG will not be informed of the basis for this decision, nor will REFWG be informed of any of the personal circumstances that have been taken into consideration. A reduced tariff will set the quantity of research outputs that REFWG will require from an individual to be included in the REF2014.
87. The applicant will be informed of the REFPIC's decision whether their application for a reduced tariff has been wholly or partly agreed or rejected. Where the REFPIC decides not to agree a reduced tariff the applicant will be informed how this judgment was made. If the REFPIC agrees a reduced tariff, the applicant will be informed of how many outputs they will need to submit and how this adjustment was arrived at.

88. Applicants will be advised of the opportunity to appeal the decision of the REFPIIC. As described at para 90-92, and Annex C, appeals will need to be made in writing to the DVC. Appellants will be advised that to form a judgment the DVC will need to see details of their personal circumstances. The DVC will be bound by the same confidentiality requirements as the REFPIIC.

89. A copy of the personal circumstances disclosure form is placed in Annex B.

Feedback and appeals

90. This procedure is specific to the REF process. Individual staff will be given feedback on and be able to appeal the decisions of the University:

- After being advised of the outcome of their request for a reduced tariff
- After being advised of the researchers to be included in the selected UoAs

91. Applications for appeal must be made within four weeks of receiving notification in writing of the relevant decision. Appeals must be made in writing to the DVC. The DVC will consider the appeal, taking account of the appellant's case as stated, consulting with the chair of the REFWG and/or REFPIIC, and obtaining any further information as required. The DVC will notify the appellant of the decision, in writing, within four weeks of the appeal being lodged. The decision of the DVC will be final.

92. Further details of the appeal procedure are given in Annex C.

Consultation on the Code of Practice

93. Lead responsibility for drafting the Code of Practice rests with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the REFWG. In preparing the Code, successive drafts were submitted for comments to:

- The REFWG (staff selection process) 25th May and (Code) 29th June 2012
- Members of the Research and Enterprise Committee 26th June 2012
- The Executive Group 4th and 18th July 2012
- Human Resources Department 4th and 18th July 2012
- Sign-off by Vice-Chancellor 24th July 2012

Publication of Code

94. In accordance with the **principle of transparency**, the Code is easily accessible and publicised to all academic and research staff across the institution, including on the University web pages, and is drawn to the attention of those absent from work.

Further information and Guidance

95. Any member of staff requiring further information or guidance on any aspect of the University's REF submission should contact:

- LondonMet REF Manager – Catherine Lee c.lee@londonmet.ac.uk, ext 2429, or
- LondonMet REF Administrator – Jim Price j.price@londonmet.ac.uk, ext 2705 or

- Their REFWG Faculty representative (as listed in Annex A).

ANNEXES

Annex A - REFWG terms of reference and Membership

Annex B – tariff reduction request personal circumstances form

Annex C - Appeals Procedure

Annex A - REFWG terms of reference and membership

The REFWG abides by its terms of reference (TOR) (which may be subject to amendment).⁴ The current TOR are that the REFWG will:

- Develop and establish the process for the selection of Units of Assessment (UoA) and individuals for submission to the REF2014
- Represent the Faculties and their research centres in the REF process, including by co-ordinating the collection of information within each Faculty
- Obtain the agreement of the Deans for all information submitted to the REFWG
- Decide which Units of Assessment the University will submit to REF2014, and which individuals will be included in each submitted UoA. Decisions regarding the inclusion/exclusion of individuals within REF2014 submission will be subject to the appeals process as set out in the Code of Practice on the Selection of Staff for the REF.
- Make recommendations to the Deans, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and others at each stage of the REF process as to the content and management of the University's submission.

The membership of the REFWG comprises one representative of each of the University's Faculties (as they undergo a process of reorganisation). It is chaired by a Dean, and the Deputy Chair is the Head of the RPO. A Secretary to the REFWG has been appointed. The current (July 2012) membership of the REFWG is:

| Name | Title | Faculty/Dept |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Dominic Palmer-Brown (Chair) | Dean of FLSC | FLSC |
| Catherine Lee (Deputy-Chair) | Head of RPO | RPO |
| Helen Mallinson | Principal Lecturer | SJCFAAD |
| Vince Hargy | Associate Dean | FLSC |
| Anna Gough-Yates | Associate Dean (Research) | FSSH |
| Roger Bennett | Professor | LMBS |
| Jeff Haynes | Professor | LGIR |

Jim Price is the Secretary of the REFWG.

⁴ REFWG 29th June 2012

Annex B

Individual staff circumstances disclosure form

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Name | |
| Faculty | |

In completing this form I am seeking a reduction in research outputs.

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

Please provide information required on relevant circumstance/s and continue onto a separate sheet of paper if necessary:

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

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

Please confirm by ticking all the following:

I confirm that the information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances.

I recognise that the information provided will be used for REF purposes and will be seen by members of the REF Panel for Individual Circumstances (REFPIC), consisting of a senior member of HR; The Head of the Research and Postgraduate Office; and a senior academic who is not involved in the selection of staff for inclusion in the REF, and the secretary of the REFPIC.

I recognise that it may be necessary to share information with the UK funding bodies' REF team, who may make the information available to REF panel chairs, members and secretaries and/or the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel. Please note: If permission is not granted the University will not be able to submit a reduced tariff.

Signature: Date:

(Staff member)

For official use only

Following consideration of the personal circumstances described above, the REF Panel for Individual Circumstances (REFPIC):

- Will progress the staff member's consideration for inclusion in the REF submission by notifying the REFWG that tariff has been reduced to [insert number] research outputs. Rationale for the proposed number of outputs:

e.g. this decision is based on the tariffs outlined in the panel criteria.

- Requires further information of the circumstances described as follows:

e.g. please provide information from your occupational health assessment on the effectiveness of reasonable adjustments provided.

- Does not feel that the staff member meets the criteria outlined within the REF 'Panel criteria and working methods' for submitting fewer than four research outputs. The reason(s) for this decision are:

e.g. circumstances detailed are not recognised within the assessment framework and guidance on submissions.

If [insert name of staff member] wishes to appeal against the decision of the REFPIC they will need to do so within four weeks of receipt of the notification of the decision. Details of the appeals process are given in the University's Code of Practice on the Selection of Staff for the REF, which can be found at:

<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research/the-research-and-postgraduate-office/staff/research-excellence-framework.cfm>

Signature: Date:

((insert name of person/chair of committee responsible for decision))

Annex C – Appeals Procedure

The University wishes to ensure that all staff eligible for the REF submission have sufficient opportunity to appeal decisions taken with regard to their inclusion in the submission. An individual may be excluded from the REF on any of the following grounds:

- The quality of their research, in terms of the REF * grading
- The quantity of their research outputs, after consideration of any adjustment of the tariff
- The inability to include an individual in any UoA that the University has selected for submission to the REF.

Appeals against exclusion MAY be made on the basis:

- That the decision was not made in accordance with the procedures set out on the Code of Practice
- That the decision was discriminatory as relates to one or more protected characteristic (in accordance with the findings of the initial EIA)
- That an adjustment or non-adjustment of the tariff did not take full account of the individual's personal circumstances or has otherwise been incorrectly calculated
- That an individual had been unreasonably excluded from one or more of the UoAs that the University will include in its submission

Appeals against exclusion CANNOT be made on the basis of:

- The evaluation of the quality of the research outputs. The University has instituted a robust process of external review of the quality of all research outputs that are put forward by staff for consideration in the REF. External reviewers have been selected on the basis of their scholarly standing in the relevant field and their familiarity with the REF evaluation scale, and are independent of the University. It is not, therefore, considered appropriate that the academic judgement of external reviewers should be subject to appeal.
- The selection of UoAs to be included in the University's REF submission. The University will select the UoAs to be included in its submission on the basis of its strategic interests, taking account of the quality of research, the research environment and the impact of the research. While every effort will be made to include elsewhere researchers displaced by the exclusion from the REF of a UoA, if this is not possible, the researcher will be excluded from the REF2014.

Process

All eligible staff who have put forward research to be considered for inclusion in the REF will be informed of:

- the outcome of any request for a reduction of their tariff
- the decision to include/exclude them from the REF, and if included, the UoA in which they will be submitted.

Individuals will be provided with feedback summarising the basis for the decision and advised of the opportunity and process for lodging an appeal.

All notices of appeal should be made in writing to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) giving full details of the basis of the appeal. The DVC will in the first instance seek a written response from:

- The Chair of the REF Panel for Individual Circumstances (REFPIC), for appeals against tariff decisions
- The Chair of REFWG, for all other appeals. Another member of the REFWG may be asked to respond if there is a potential conflict of interest.

The DVC may request additional information from the appellant. The DVC may obtain further information from the relevant Dean, from HR, or elsewhere in the University as required in order to make an informed judgement. All information provided to the DVC will be treated in confidence.

After due consideration, the DVC will provide the appellant with the decision in writing, setting out the basis for the decision. The DVC may decide to:

- Dismiss the appeal
- Allow the appeal and amend the relevant UoA submission or tariff reduction in the light of this decision
- Make such other recommendations or take such other action as may be appropriate in the circumstances.

The decision of the DVC will be final. The relevant Chair will be provided with a copy of the decision, subject to restrictions on confidentiality.

Timing

A member of staff must lodge an appeal within four weeks of being notified of the relevant decision

The DVC must notify the appellant of the decision within four weeks of receiving the written appeal.