

Code of Practice on the Selection of Staff Research Outputs for REF 2014 Submission

A. Introduction

The University of Nottingham is a research led University. This document is underpinned by the University's Human Resources and Research and Knowledge Transfer strategies. Both these strategies focus on the attraction, retention and motivation of individuals with high quality research credentials.

The Code of Practice applies to all those involved in the selection and submission of the University's REF2014 return. It provides a framework within which recommendations and decisions are made giving information about how the University will carry out its selection and submission process.

The University's activities around the primary objectives of teaching and research are many and varied. Academic members of staff provide a valuable contribution to these activities in a number of different ways: the University does not measure the value of its staff only by means of whether they are included in its REF return.

The University seeks to make the optimum return for the University taking into account a number of factors including financial return to the University, esteem factors and strategic development.

In seeking to make the optimum return, it is acknowledged that some research activity which would meet a minimum quality threshold for submission may not be returned. This might occur in units of assessment (UOA) where a higher than minimum threshold has been agreed by Management Board. Therefore the University acknowledges that not having outputs submitted to the REF2014 is not an automatic indication of underperformance by the member of staff whose activity has not been submitted.

'As an equal opportunities employer the University seeks to create conditions whereby staff are treated solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of gender, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, age, socio-economic background, disability, religious or political beliefs, Trade Union membership, family circumstance, sexual orientation or any other irrelevant distinction. Full details of the University's Equal Opportunities Policy and can be found at <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hr/guidesandsupport/equalityanddiversitypolicies/index.aspx>'

B. REF – key points (see HEFCE http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02_11/#exec)

".....The REF will be a process of expert review. Expert sub-panels for each of 36 units of assessment (UOAs) will carry out the assessment, working under the leadership and guidance of four main panels.

3. In October 2012 the four UK higher education funding bodies will invite UK higher education institutions to make submissions to the 2014 REF. Each submission in each UOA will contain a common set of data comprising:



- a. Information on staff in post on the census date, 31 October 2013, selected by the institution to be included in the submission.
- b. Details of publications and other forms of assessable output that selected staff have produced during the publication period (1 January 2008 to 31 December 2013).
- c. A completed template describing the submitted unit's approach during the assessment period (1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013) to enabling impact from its research, and case studies describing specific examples of impacts achieved during the assessment period, underpinned by excellent research in the period 1 January 1993 to 31 December 2013.
- d. Data about research doctoral degrees awarded and research income related to the period 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2013.
- e. A completed template describing the research environment, related to the period 1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013.

4. The deadline for submissions is 29 November 2013. Submissions will be assessed by the REF panels during the course of 2014. Results will be published in December 2014, and will be used by the higher education funding bodies to inform research funding from academic year 2015-16."

C. The Legislative Context

The University recognises its obligations as an employer under the following key equal opportunities legislation:

- The Equality Act 2010
- Part-time Workers (prevention of less favourable treatment) Regulations 2000 (amended 2002)
- Fixed-term Employees (prevention of less favourable treatment) Regulations 2002

Further information on the legislation can be found in Appendix 1.

D. General Principles

The following principles will be followed in all stages of preparing REF submissions:

1. The processes concerned with the selection of staff for inclusion in REF 2014 submissions will be transparent.
2. Eligible individuals will be selected for inclusion on the basis of the quality of their research taking into account the main and sub-panels published criteria for research quality.
3. Consideration will be given to any personal circumstances which may apply to an individual as detailed in the personal circumstances process.
4. The Code will be published on the University Website.
5. The Code will be submitted to HEFE in July 2012 in line with HEFCE's requirements.
6. The University will make a decision on a unit of assessment by unit of assessment basis as to the quality threshold for inclusion in the submission. The overriding concern will be to secure the optimum outcome for the University taking into account all the relevant considerations. The optimum submission for

the unit may not be to submit the most number of staff possible under the minimum panel criteria.

E. Selection of Staff to be Returned to the REF

Deans, Heads of Schools and REF Co-ordinators will **recommend** to the REF Steering Group the staff to be returned for each relevant unit of assessment in the REF 2014 submission from the list of eligible staff provided by the Human Resources Department.

The University has developed a Research Administration Tool (RAT) to support the collection of data on eligible researchers and their proposed submission.

Following Management Board **approval**, Heads of School (involving Deans and the Director of Research in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, as appropriate) will be advised of Management Board's decisions for staff in their School and be responsible for informing staff of the outcome. (see section J below for information on the grounds of appeal against non-submission).

F. Criteria for inclusion and exclusion

Eligible members of staff should be included where they have met the threshold for research activity in the relevant unit of assessment taking into account the range and weighting of factors that contribute to the overall quality profile. In applying this criterion Heads of Schools and REF Co-ordinators must take into account the relevant sub-panel and main panel criteria and working methods statements, including those relating to personal circumstances.

The threshold for research activity that will qualify individual members of staff for inclusion is determined by the requirement that to be included staff must have delivered quality research activity in the REF period, as defined by the HEFCE panel criteria. This is defined as that which will contribute to the University's intention for each unit of assessment to achieve an overall quality profile that is consistent with the University's vision as an international centre for the highest quality research and taking into account a variety of factors including, but not limited to, financial return and the strategic development of research.

The threshold for research activity that will qualify individual members of staff for inclusion for an individual unit of assessment will be communicated to them within the relevant unit of assessment, once the REF Steering Group and Management Board have agreed that the way in which the threshold will be applied for each unit of assessment is consistent with the Code of Practice.

Any individual, eligible to be classed as Category A staff, who does not meet the threshold that will qualify individual staff for inclusion for the relevant unit of assessment will be excluded from the University's REF submission.

Each Unit of Assessment should produce a statement of intent giving information about how it will carry out its selection and submission process. This document should state criteria to be used to identify which members of staff will be entered into the REF, which members of staff will be making the decisions (Heads of Schools, REF Co-ordinators etc) and how members of staff were consulted on the statement. These statements will be submitted to the REF Steering Group for approval.

G. Senior Management and Committee Structure for REF Submissions



Management Board has overall responsibility for the REF process. This responsibility is delivered through the Pro-Vice-Chancellors for Research and the Director of Research and Graduate Services (RGS). Pro-Vice-Chancellors are appointed by the Vice-Chancellor following consultation with senior colleagues within the University. All Pro-Vice-Chancellors also have line management responsibility for Heads of Schools.

A REF Steering Group has been established by Management Board. The terms of reference and membership of the Steering Group are contained in appendix 5 of this Code.

A REF Operations Group has been established to organise the planning and preparation of the University's REF submission. The Terms of reference and membership of this Group are contained in appendix 4.

The Deans have been given the responsibility to work closely with Heads of Schools and REF Co-ordinators within their Faculties, to plan and develop REF submissions and bring forward regular reports and recommendations to the REF Steering Group. Heads of Schools have line management responsibility for academic and research staff who are eligible to be included in REF submissions. They will also be required to authorise and "sign-off" the final submissions.

The responsibilities of the REF co-ordinators are contained in appendix 2 and the process for selection in appendix 3.

As a part of the Code of Practice, the University is required to offer training tailored to meet the needs of the REF and in particular the equality considerations of the selection process. This training will be delivered to all members of the REF Steering and Operations Groups, the REF co-ordinators and Heads of Schools during June - September 2012 through the Human Resources Department. The training will encompass the legislative changes arising from the implementation of the Equality Act 2010 and specific training on fair assessment processes.

All staff with REF responsibilities will be provided with a copy of the Code of Practice. Formal and informal discussions, involving members of Management Board, REF Steering Group, Heads of Schools and REF Co-ordinators and which concern the inclusion of staff in, or exclusion of staff from, the University's REF submission must be conducted in accordance with the Code of Practice once it has been formally implemented in November 2012.

Final authorisation of decisions on the inclusion and exclusion of staff in REF submissions will be made by Management Board, taking into account recommendations provided by Heads of Schools and through the REF Steering Group. Heads of Schools or their nominees are responsible for providing feedback to individuals regarding decisions on inclusion or exclusion within 4 weeks of the decision being communicated to them.

H. Appointment of External Advisers

Arrangements for seeking external advice in relation to the inclusion and exclusion of staff and planning of REF submissions must be approved by the Chair of the REF Steering Group, or the relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the School which is seeking the advice.

I. Impact Assessments



The University will undertake an analysis of the staff eligible for submission. The analysis will include age, disability, gender, race, and maternity and clearly indicate staff submitted as part of the REF and those who are not. The University does not collect information on staff sexual orientation or religious belief as part of its normal HR processes. The University will conduct a university wide preliminary impact assessment with breakdowns by unit of assessment six months before the final REF submission date which will enable the University to investigate any areas where there appears to be an imbalance. The Code of Practice has been subject to consultation within the academic community and the various University staff equality networks and staff representatives prior to its finalisation and submission to HEFCE.

J. Appeals Process

An individual has the right to appeal against a decision to exclude them from the REF if they believe the decision is based on the grounds of potential discrimination on any of the protected characteristics. If an individual wishes to make an appeal they should submit a letter in writing to their Head of School stating the grounds of the appeal within five working days from when the decision to exclude them from the REF has been notified to them by the Head of School or their nominee (this deadline may be extended in exceptional circumstances). This will then be investigated by a senior academic of Professorial level, in a cognate area from another Unit of Assessment. A written response will be provided within 10 working days of receipt of the letter. This does not in any way impinge on the rights of individuals under University Statutes.

Eligible members of staff who are excluded have the right to appeal the decision if they believe the decision has been based on the grounds of:

- i) potential discrimination in the assessment of the quality of their outputs (see section J);
- ii) manifest unreasonableness or maliciousness;
- iii) failure to follow procedure such that their activity was not appropriately assessed.

There is a separate appeals process regarding the decisions of the personal circumstances process.

K. Personal Circumstances

All decisions made relating to submissions to the REF will be made in accordance with the principles and criteria for inclusion and exclusion as detailed in this Code of Practice. However, there will be individual personal circumstances which can and should be taken into consideration, as guided by the published criteria for main panels and sub panels. Details of the HEFCE guidance on this area is contained in the "Addendum: Assessment framework and guidance on submissions (REF 02.2011)" which has been included at appendix 6 of this Code.

Details of the University's process to consider individual personal circumstances is available at: ***(insert link to doc)***

The Equality Challenge Unit has produced a number of supportive documents for the REF process, including a series of case studies to illustrate complex circumstances, with example decisions on the reduction of outputs. These have been approved by the four Main panel chairs and by the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel and will be used to support the decision making process at the University. They can be viewed at: <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/documents/ref-materials/complex-circumstances-examples>



L. Fixed-term and Part-time Staff

As part of the University's commitment to equal opportunities the University has developed policies to support fixed-term staff. Information on the career development and support available to all research staff is summarised in the Research Staff webpage: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/researchstaff/index.aspx>.

The Short Course programme run through Professional Development is open to all staff regardless of contract type: <https://training.nottingham.ac.uk/cbs-notts/Portal/DesktopDefault.aspx?GoHome=1>

The Careers and Employability Service is committed to supporting the career development of post doctoral research staff and PhD students at The University of Nottingham. Details of the service can be found at: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/careers/research/index.aspx>

All members of staff within the University Research and Teaching job family, regardless of whether they are fixed-term or permanent, part-time or full-time, are subject to regular appraisals by their line manager to review progress and identify development needs. The University's Staff Development Policy details our commitment to the development of all staff and offers all staff the opportunity for both personal and professional development.

The University has achieved the 'HR Excellence in Research' award which is:

"A UK-wide process, incorporating the *QAA Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*, enables institutions to gain the European Commission's 'HR excellence in research' badge, acknowledging alignment with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for their Recruitment".

M. Joint Submissions

In the case of any joint submissions, the University will exchange their Code of Practice and request the same from the other University in order to ensure compliance.

N. Monitoring

HR will provide statistical data and analysis to the REF Steering Group based on the decisions of returned and non-returned staff on a University wide basis on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age and maternity. The REF Steering Group will consider this information and in any areas where there may be a concern they will request further investigation takes place into the issue. The REF Steering Group will receive a report of the outcome of the investigation and will determine the appropriate course of action.

O. Further Information

Further advice relating to this Code of Practice can be obtained by contacting the Human Resources Department.

Appendix 1

Equality Act 2010

The Act makes it unlawful to directly or indirectly discriminate on the grounds of a person's:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Marriage/Civil partnership (direct discrimination only)
- Pregnancy and maternity (direct discrimination only)
- Race (meaning colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin)
- Religious belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The University is also subject to the Equality Duty. In summary, those subject to the Equality Duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty. The Act helpfully explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The Act states that meeting different needs involves taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities. It describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups. It states that



compliance with the duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others.

The new duty covers the following eight protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Public authorities also need to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status. This means that the first arm of the duty applies to this characteristic but that the other arms (advancing equality and fostering good relations) do not apply.



Fixed-Term Employees (prevention of less favourable treatment) Regulations 2002

These regulations make it unlawful to treat a fixed-term employee less favourably than a permanent employee on the grounds that they are a fixed-term employee unless it can be objectively justified. The regulations limit the successive use of fixed-term contracts to four years unless the further use can be objectively justified. Only service accumulated from 10 July 2002 will count towards the four year limit.

Part-Time Workers (prevention of less favourable treatment) Regulations 2000 (amended 2002)

These regulations make it unlawful to treat a part-time employee less favourably than a full-time employee on the grounds that they are a part-time employee unless it can be objectively justified. The regulations state that part-time employees must receive (pro-rata where appropriate) the same treatment as comparable to a full-time employee regarding; rates of pay, access to pension schemes and pension scheme benefits, access to training and development, holiday pay, entitlement to career break schemes, contractual sick pay, contractual maternity and paternity pay and treatment in the selection criteria for promotion and transfer and for redundancy.

Appendix 2

Research and Graduate Services REF 2014 Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators

For the purpose of REF2014 all 34 Schools within the University of Nottingham have been mapped to 36 Units of Assessment (UOAs). The UOA Co-ordinators have been nominated to be responsible for the preparation and co-ordination of the REF submission for their unit.

The UOA Co-ordinators will form the REF Co-ordinators group as in the Governance and Management Structure. REF Co-ordinators will be supported by the Research Systems Manager in Research and Graduate Services on issues of policy and procedure in the REF submission. The REF Steering Group (chaired by the PVC for Research), Deans and Heads of Schools will have oversight of all academic issues. Co-ordinators will also receive guidance from the REF Operations Group (chaired by the Director of Research and Graduate Services) on practical aspects of preparing the University's submission.

Role of the UOA Co-ordinator

A UOA Co-ordinator is responsible for co-ordinating all three elements of the REF submission for their UOA which includes

- selection of staff
- output selection, ranking and scoring, ensuring that outputs to be returned are of a high enough quality
- selecting and refining the Impact Case Studies
- drafting the Impact statement
- drafting the Environment statement
- ensuring data in the HEFCE submission system is accurate

Staff Eligibility

UOA Co-ordinators are responsible for selecting eligible Category A and C Staff for their UOA, in line with the policies agreed by MB and the REF Steering Group. All UoA Coordinators will need to take part in the University's REF Equality and Diversity training in order to be involved in this process.

Output Selection

For the internal University output reviews, UOA Co-ordinators must ensure eligible researchers within their UOA put forward their highest quality publications for ranking and consideration for submission using the REF Administrative Tool (RAT). The UOA Co-ordinators are responsible for ranking and scoring each output, and deciding which outputs should be submitted against each staff member. When there are outputs with multiple authorships then the UOA Co-ordinators may need to decide which author(s) the publication should be submitted against. UOA Co-ordinators will also identify if any output is or will be judged as 'double weighted' with full justification, and select a high quality reserve should the request for double-weighting be rejected.

Outputs should only be submitted if they are of high quality and exceed any threshold criteria that are set. The overall quality of the submission for the UOA should be considered when deciding upon which outputs to allocate to individuals.

Impact Case Studies and Statement

UOA Co-ordinators must select the Impact case studies that are judged to be highest in quality. They must ensure the underpinning research for the case studies is of at least 2* quality. Case studies must be drafted to the highest quality and there must be clear narrative linking the research and the subsequent impact. The impact needs to be realised demonstrating reach and significance and be evidence based.



As well as case studies, the Co-ordinators are responsible for drafting an overall statement as to UOA's approach to supporting and enabling impact as required for submission. Support and guidance will be available for developing these statements including from the newly appointed Head of Research Outcomes in Research and Graduate Services.

Environment Statement

UOA Co-ordinators are also responsible for drafting an Environment statement for the REF2014 submission, which will contain the following sections

1. Overview
2. Research Strategy
3. People
 - a. Staffing strategy and staff development
 - b. Research students
4. Income, infrastructure and facilities
5. Collaboration and contribution to the discipline

In addition to the statement, environment data is required for the REF4 section of the submission. UOA Co-ordinators will be asked to confirm the accuracy of environment data including numbers of research students, and income within their UOA, as well as any additional data requested by the Main Panels which is required. Support, sharing best practice and guidance on developing environment statements will be available to be organised by the Research Systems Manager in Research and Graduate Services.

Appendix 3

Process for the Selection of REF Coordinators

This document contains an outline of the process for selecting REF Coordinators from the Schools for the University's REF2014 submission.

- In June 2011 an email will be sent to Heads of Schools in the name of Professor Bob Webb, the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research from RIS requesting that they nominate a member of staff from their school to be a REF Coordinator, in consultation with respective Deans. By this point, the potential Units of Assessment configuration of the University will have been agreed by the Management Board. **Annex A** displays the potential mapping of schools to the relevant UOA.
- Normally, there will be one REF Coordinator for each UOA to which the University makes a submission. However, because of the current UOA configuration, some UOA will need more than one Coordinator. Each UOA will need to identify a lead Coordinator with responsibility for preparing the submission.
- The first step is for each Head of School to nominate a potential REF Coordinator, assisted by guidance provided by RIS. As the final deadline for nomination is June 2011 the process should begin as soon as the call goes out.
- REF coordinators should be senior academics who may, for example, have previous RAE experience, such as panel membership and with a strong research record.
- Due to the composition of the Units of Assessment for REF2014 several schools may submit to more than one unit, and some schools may opt to submit to more than one unit. Where this is the case Heads of Schools will need to nominate a REF Coordinator from their school for each Unit they may submit to.
- When more than one school may submit to the same unit or one Schools is opting to submit to more than one unit, Deans of the relevant faculties should consider the nominations and decide which option would be most suitable.
- The REF Steering Group may provide guidance where this is not clear cut and are responsible for approving nominations and finalising the selections, ensuring that one REF Coordinator is selected for either each UoA or each of the discipline areas within the UOA, for example, in the case of UoA6, two coordinators may be selected due to the size of Biosciences and Veterinary Medicine.
- Once the Coordinators have been notified of their selection Research Systems Manager in RIS will form the REF Coordinators Group and will work closely with this Group throughout the process of REF2014 preparation, reporting to and receiving guidance from the REF Operations Group.
- RIS will be responsible for providing the REF Coordinators with an induction which will ensure that they are fully aware of the duties their role encompasses, and provide relevant training.

Appendix 4

The University of Nottingham REF Exercise Operations Group

Terms of reference

1. The Operations Group's role is to organise the planning and preparation of the University's REF submission at operational level to ensure that the policies and systems required for a seamless and successful REF delivery are implemented.

2. The REF Operations Group will:

- oversee the collection and validation of data to be included in the University's submission
- oversee the delivery of the REF submission
- assist the development of policies and procedures required for a successful REF delivery in coordination with RIS
- provide guidance to the REF Coordinators group on issues arising at unit level
- Identify risks to overall programme
- report feedback to the REF Steering Group
- be required to provide comments and feedback by e-mail

3. The Operations Group will meet four times annually between 2010 and 2013.

Membership (April 2012)

1. Richard Masterman (Chair), Director of Research Innovation Services
2. Saul Tendler, Pro-Vice Chancellor
3. David Blackie, Finance
4. John Dicken, Human Resources
5. Laura Atkins, Human Resources
6. Tom Loya, PMID
7. (*Alison Rothera - has since left the University; replacement to be confirmed*), Information Services
8. Dick Chamberlain, Information Services
9. Julie Harrison, Faculty of Engineering

10. Debra Booler, Faculty of Arts
11. Steve Cockbill, Clinical Sciences
12. Jane Watson, Nottingham University Business School
13. Helen Hurman, Research and Graduate Services
14. Soma Mukherjee, Research and Graduate Services (*Secretary to Group*)

Appendix 5

The University of Nottingham REF Exercise Steering Group

Terms of reference

1. The Steering Group's role is to advise the University on the preparation and delivery of the REF to assist in the development of robust, workable and efficient policies and systems for seamless and successful Submission to the REF.

2. In particular, the REF Steering Group will provide advice on:

- the aims and objectives of the University's REF Submissions
- the selection of UOAs and staff
- the establishment of pilot and review exercise panels and how they will operate
- gathering and reviewing feedback from the pilot review exercises carried out within the University
- capturing the knowledge to inform and develop University policies for REF
- reporting feedback to Research and Knowledge Transfer Board and Management Board
- establishment of policies and procedures for successful delivery of REF

3. The Steering Group will meet around four times between January 2010 and December 2010, and may also be asked to comment on items by e-mail.

4. The Steering Group will refer to Operations Group for delivery of REF.

Membership (March 2012)

1. Saul Tendler, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
2. Chris Rudd, Pro-Vice-Chancellor
3. Karen Cox, Pro-Vice-Chancellor
4. Sarah O'Hara, Pro-Vice-Chancellor
5. Richard Masterman, Director of Research Innovation Services
6. Jaspal Kaur, Director of Human Resources
7. Stephen Pinfield, Chief Information Officer
8. Paul Heywood, Dean of Social Sciences
9. Andy Long, Dean of Engineering
10. Stephen Mumford, Dean of Arts and Humanities

11. Martin Schroeder, Dean of Sciences
12. Ian Hall, Dean of Medicine and Health Sciences
13. Jerry Roberts, Dean of Graduate School
14. Catherine Davies, Head of School of Modern Languages
15. Tom Rodden, School of Computer Sciences
16. Chris Hollis, School of Community Health Sciences
17. Giles Foody, School of Geography
18. Sam Kingman, Faculty of Engineering
19. David Garner, School of Chemistry
20. Nabil Gindy, Dean of UNNC Graduate School
21. Graham Kendall, Vice-Provost Research, UNMC
22. Oliver Morrissey, School of Economics
23. Caroline Tynan, Business School
24. John Young, School of History
25. Helen Hurman, Head of Research Policy and Development, RGS
26. Soma Mukherjee (Secretary) Research Systems Manager, RGS

Appendix 6

Addendum: Assessment framework and guidance on submissions (REF 02.2011)

63. In order to provide clarity and consistency on the number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty, there will be a **clearly defined** reduction in outputs for those types of circumstances listed at paragraph 69a. Circumstances that are more **complex** will require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs; these are listed at paragraph 69b. Arrangements have been put in place for complex circumstances to be considered on a consistent basis, as described at paragraphs 88-91.

64. Where an individual is submitted with fewer than four outputs and they do not satisfy the criteria described at paragraphs 69-91 below, any 'missing' outputs will be graded as 'unclassified'.

65. Category A and C staff may be returned with fewer than four outputs without penalty in the assessment, if one or more of the following circumstances significantly constrained their ability to produce four outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period:

- a. Circumstances with a **clearly defined** reduction in outputs, which are:
 - i. Qualifying as an early career researcher (on the basis set out in paragraph 72 and Table 1 below).
 - ii. Absence from work due to working part-time, secondments or career breaks (on the basis set out in paragraphs 73-74 and Table 2 below).
 - iii. Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave (on the basis set out in paragraphs 75-81).
 - iv. Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6, as defined at paragraph 86.
- b. **Complex circumstances** that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:
 - i. Disability. This is defined in 'guidance on submissions' Part 4, Table 2 under 'Disability'.
 - ii. Ill health or injury.
 - iii. Mental health conditions.

- iv. Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of – or justify the reduction of further outputs in addition to – the allowances made in paragraph 75 below.
- v. Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member).
- vi. Gender reassignment.
- vii. Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed at paragraph 190 of ‘guidance of submissions’ or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

Clearly defined circumstances

66. Where an individual has one or more circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs, the number of outputs that may be reduced should be determined according to the tables and guidance in paragraphs 72-86 below. All sub-panels will accept a reduction in outputs according to this guidance and will assess the remaining number of submitted outputs without any penalty.

67. In REF1b, submissions must include sufficient details of the individual’s circumstances to show that these criteria have been applied correctly. The panel secretariat will examine the information in the first instance and advise the sub-panels on whether sufficient information has been provided and the guidance applied correctly. The panel secretariat will be trained to provide such advice, on a consistent basis across all UOAs. Where the sub-panel judges that the criteria have not been met, the ‘missing’ output(s) will be recorded as unclassified. (For example, an individual became an early career researcher in January 2011 but only one output is submitted rather than two. In this case the submitted output will be assessed, and the ‘missing’ output recorded as unclassified.)

Early career researchers

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

Table 1 Early career researchers: permitted reduction in outputs

Date at which the individual first met the REF definition of an early career researcher:	Number of outputs may be reduced by up to:
On or before 31 July 2009	0
Between 1 August 2009 and 31 July 2010 inclusive	1
Between 1 August 2010 and 31 July 2011 inclusive	2
On or after 1 August 2011	3



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

69. Table 2 sets out the permitted reduction in outputs without penalty in the assessment for absence from work due to:

- a. part-time working
- b. secondments or career breaks outside of the higher education sector, and in which the individual did not undertake academic research.

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

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

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

Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave

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

- a. Statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave taken substantially during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2013, regardless of the length of the leave.
- b. Additional paternity or adoption leave¹ lasting for four months or more, taken substantially during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2013.

72. The approach to these circumstances is based on the funding bodies’ considered judgement that the impact of such a period of leave and the arrival of a new child into a family is generally sufficiently disruptive of an individual’s research work to justify the reduction of an output. This judgement was informed by the consultation on draft

¹ ‘Additional paternity or adoption leave’ refers to leave of up to 26 weeks which is taken to care for a child where the person’s spouse, partner or civil partner was entitled to statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave, and has since returned to work. The term ‘additional paternity leave’ is often used to describe this type of leave although it may be taken by parents of either gender. For the purposes of the REF we refer to this leave as ‘additional paternity or adoption leave’.

panel criteria, in which an overwhelming majority of respondents supported such an approach.

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

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

75. As regards additional paternity or adoption leave, researchers who take such leave will also have been away from work and acting as the primary carer of a new child within a family. The funding bodies consider that where researchers take such leave over a significant period (four months or more), this is likely to have an impact on their ability to work productively on research that is comparable to the impact on those taking maternity or statutory adoption leave.

76. While the clearly defined reduction of outputs due to additional paternity or adoption leave is subject to a minimum period of four months, shorter periods of such leave can be taken into account as follows:

- a. By seeking a reduction in outputs under the provision for complex circumstances, for example where the period of leave had an impact in combination with other factors such as ongoing childcare responsibilities.
- b. By combining the number of months for shorter periods of such leave in combination with other clearly defined circumstances, according to Table 2.

77. Any period of maternity, adoption or paternity leave that qualifies for the reduction of an output under the provisions in paragraph 75 above may in individual cases be associated with prolonged constraints on work that justify the reduction of more than one output. In such cases, the circumstances should be explained using the arrangements for complex circumstances.

Combining clearly defined circumstances

78. Where individuals have had a combination of circumstances with clearly defined reductions in outputs, these may be accumulated up to a maximum reduction of three outputs. For each circumstance, the relevant reduction should be applied and added together to calculate the total maximum reduction.



79. Where Table 1 is combined with Table 2, the period of time since 1 January 2008 up until the individual met the definition of an early career researcher should be calculated in months, and Table 2 should be applied.

80. When combining circumstances, only one circumstance should be taken into account for any period of time during which they took place simultaneously. (For example, an individual worked part-time throughout the assessment period and first met the definition of an early career researcher on 1 September 2009. In this case the number of months 'absent' due to part-time working should be calculated from 1 September 2009 onwards, and combined with the reduction due to qualifying as an early career researcher, as indicated in paragraph 83 above.)

81. Where an individual has a combination of circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs **and** complex circumstances, the institution should submit these collectively as 'complex' so that a single judgement can be made about the appropriate reduction in outputs, taking into account all the circumstances. Those circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs should be calculated according to the guidance above (paragraphs 72-84).

Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6

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

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

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

Complex circumstances

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



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

86. All submitted complex circumstances will be considered by the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP), on a consistent basis across all UOAs. The membership and terms of reference of the EDAP are available at www.ref.ac.uk under Equality and diversity. The EDAP will make recommendations about the appropriate number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty to the relevant main panel chairs, who will make the decisions. The relevant sub-panels will then be informed of the decisions and will assess the remaining outputs without any penalty.

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