



The Open
University

Code of Practice for the OU REF 2014

**Research School
May 2012**

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Contents

Section 1: Why we need a code of practice.....	1
Section 2: When the REF will take place.....	1
Section 3: Who will carry out selection, submission and review	3
REF Coordination Team.....	4
Committees and Advisory Bodies	4
Institutional Research Review Team (IRRT)	4
OU REF UoA Panels	5
REF Equality Panel	6
REF Appeals Panel	6
Training	6
Record keeping	6
Section 4: Factors to be considered in selection of staff.....	7
Selection of submission areas (Units of Assessment).....	7
Selection of staff.....	7
The selection process.....	8
Factor 1: Fit with research strategies	9
Factor 2: Research quality and Minimum Requirements for Excellence (MRE)	9
Factor 3: Individual circumstances	10
Fixed Term and Part Time Staff.....	12
Section 5: Process for selection of staff	12
Equality analysis.....	12
UoA Statement of Intent (Sol).....	13
Methodology.....	13
Allowing for individual circumstances	13
Decisions on inclusion of staff	14
Communication of selection decisions.....	14
Appeals	15
Data Protection and Freedom of Information issues	16
Feedback	16
Appendix A: OU groups supporting the REF	17
Appendix B: Training requirements for staff with REF responsibilities	19
Appendix C: Summary of equality legislation	20
Appendix D: REF 2014 Summary Timetable.....	25
Appendix E: Template for UoA Statement of Intent (Sol)	26
Appendix F: Template for Minimum Requirements for Excellence (MRE)	27
Appendix G: Glossary of terms	29

Section 1: Why we need a code of practice

1. It is a requirement of the Research Exercise Framework 2014 (hereafter referred to as 'the REF') that the Open University develops, documents and applies an internal code of practice on selecting staff to include in its REF submission.
2. This **Code of Practice for the OU REF 2014** outlines the policies and procedures that will apply to the REF selection, submission and review process. It aims to make the procedures during the REF process clear, transparent and consistent across the University. It has been informed by the use of the Code of Practice developed for the OU Mock REF exercise.
3. In line with the OU's Equality Scheme and related policies¹ and the Equality Act 2010, the University seeks to include in its REF submissions the work of all eligible staff who are conducting research in an appropriate field at an appropriate level (see Section 4), including those whose individual circumstances have significantly constrained their ability to produce four research outputs during the REF publication period. These circumstances include issues covered by equality and employment legislation.
4. The policies and procedures outlined here are designed to support research management and the delivery of the OU's new Strategic Plan including the Research and Scholarship Strategic Priority Mandate. They will also enable the University to meet its legal responsibilities, and the UK HE funding bodies to meet theirs, as the OU prepares for the REF 2014. This code of practice will be submitted to the national REF team by 31 July 2012 for use in the University's 2014 REF selection and submission processes from 2012 to submission in November 2013.
5. The guidance in this Code of Practice is for all staff involved in the OU's REF preparations, including individual researchers. Those with REF management responsibilities must read it and act upon it.
6. This Code of Practice will be widely disseminated and publicised within the University, and published on the University intranet. Heads of Department will ensure that staff who are away from the University on long-term absence for any reason, receive a copy of the Code.

Section 2: When the REF will take place

7. The submission deadline for the REF is 29 November 2013. Review of our submission will take place during 2014. The outcome will be published in December 2014.
8. The University will launch its formal REF 2014 preparations in October 2012. The OU REF submission will be developed over the subsequent months, culminating in submission to HEFCE in November 2013. The main elements of the OU REF preparations are:

Stage 1: Collection of information about individuals (1 Nov 2012 – 4 Jan 2013)

All eligible staff (central academic, regional academic and research staff) will take part by:

¹ See the OU Equality Scheme and related policies at <http://intranet.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/policies.shtml>

- a) Updating and verifying an individual, online Research Profile of their research activity since the 2008 RAE.
- b) Submission of their publication list for the REF (including those published, accepted/under contract), via the online REFable Publications Facility.
- c) If applicable, submission of an individual circumstance(s) disclosure form.

It is an institutional requirement that all staff with contracts of employment that include research take part in the above process.

Stage 2: Preparation of REF submissions by OU Unit of Assessment (UoA) Panels (January – April 2013)

Approved Unit of Assessment Panels will develop REF submissions for review by the Institutional Research Review Team (IRRT).

Stage 3: Institutional review (May – September 2013)

- a) Review of submissions by the IRRT.
- b) Approval of REF submission by Research Committee and VCE.

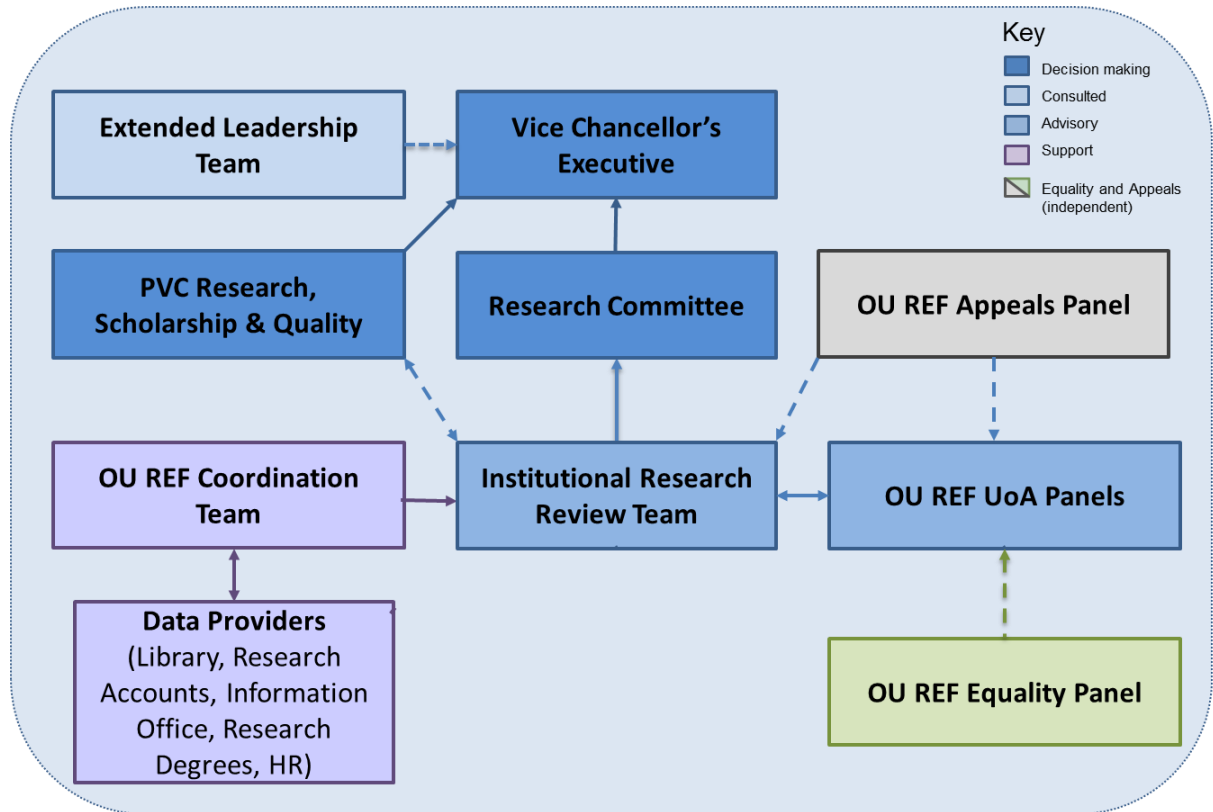
The review of UoA submissions by the IRRT may be informed by the use of external advisors.

9. The OU REF timetable can be found at Appendix D. More details of the staff selection elements of these stages are given in sections 3 – 5. Information about all elements of the REF will be on the REF intranet site². Note the official REF 2014 timetable is at <http://www.ref.ac.uk/timetable/>.

² <http://intranet.open.ac.uk/research-school/ref/index.shtml>

Section 3: Who will carry out selection, submission and review³

Diagram 1: Summary chart of committees and groups involved in preparations for REF 2014



10. The **Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Scholarship & Quality)** is the Senior Responsible Officer for the REF 2014 submission and is responsible for the University's REF submissions process, with input from Deans, Associate Deans (Research) or their equivalent, Heads of Department, Directors of University Research Centres, Heads of Discipline and other senior members of University staff.

11. The project management and quality assurance of the REF will be overseen by the **Director of Research, Scholarship & Quality (DoR,S&Q)**, as Senior Accountable Executive for the University's REF 2014 submission. This includes ensuring that adequate resource is made available for the development of the submission, monitoring progress against key milestones and managing any risks and issues identified. The DoR,S&Q will be responsible for escalating significant risks and issues to the PVC (R,S&Q). At a day-to-day level, this responsibility will be delegated to the Head of Research Strategy Information and Governance (HoRSIG).

³ Staff in the panels and teams listed in this section were selected for their posts via the normal OU recruitment processes. The various groups are summarised in Appendix A.

REF Coordination Team

12. A central REF Coordination Team will provide administrative support, including:

- Answering queries from individuals.
- Data and reports for UoA Panels.
- Administrative support for the IRRT in their review process.
- Organisation of equality training for IRRT, UoA Panels and others (see Appendix B).
- Equality impact assessment; including collation of equality monitoring data, analysis of that data and publication of the findings and actions.
- Providing guidance to ensure clear records of UoA Panel processes and decisions are kept.

13. The team will be supervised by the REF Manager, who is also the designated REF 2014 institutional contact. The REF Manager will report to the HoRSIG, who reports to the DoR,S&Q and the PVC (R,S&Q). The HoRSIG is responsible for the work of the REF Coordinating Team overall.

14. Members of the REF Coordination team are listed on the REF intranet site and include the OU's designated REF Technical Contact. The team will work closely with 'Data Providers', including HR, Information Office, Library Services, Research Accounts, Research Degrees and the Communications Unit.

Committees and Advisory Bodies

15. The **Vice-Chancellor's Executive (VCE)** has overall institutional responsibility, for the OU REF submission and, along with Research Committee, will approve the recommendations for submission areas and the final submission. The University's **Extended Leadership Team** will be consulted at regular intervals as REF preparations proceed.

16. The University's **Research Committee** has approved this Code of Practice. It will also, along with VCE, approve the recommendations for REF submission areas and the final OU REF submission. The mode of operation, terms of reference and membership of Research Committee is published on the Governance site of the University intranet.⁴ The University's **Extended Leadership Team** will be consulted on the final submission.

Institutional Research Review Team (IRRT)

17. Detailed review of the submission will be undertaken by the Institutional Research Review Team (IRRT), chaired by the PVC (R,S&Q). The IRRT reports to Research Committee. Its mode of operation, terms of reference and membership were approved by Research Committee in November 2011 and are available on the OU's REF intranet site⁵ The Team's role is to review the quality of the OU REF submission, make recommendations on its development and content and provide feedback to the OU REF UoA Panels to inform their work for the REF. The IRRT has a reasonable balance in terms of experience of research management, peer review or strategic activities linked to the assessment of research quality, and discipline expertise.

⁴ Available at <http://intranet6.open.ac.uk/governance/main/>

⁵ <http://intranet.open.ac.uk/research-school/ref/index.shtml>

18. The IRRT will call upon external experts where necessary, subject to approval by the PVC (R,S&Q). These will be selected on the basis of relevant research expertise and seniority in the field, which must include:

- A research CV of world-leading or internationally excellent quality.
- High-level peer review experience.
- A high level of familiarity with REF procedures.

External experts involved in the review phase will receive an equality briefing and be required to abide by this Code of Practice. They will sign a contract stipulating the need for confidentiality and submit a written report of their findings.

OU REF UoA Panels

19. The appointment of OU UoA chairs and panel members for OU REF submissions will be discussed by the IRRT and approved by the PVC-R,S&Q in autumn 2012. Relevant Deans and Directors will be consulted on Panel Chairs and membership nominations. Full details of OU UoA Panel memberships will be available on the REF intranet site: <http://intranet.open.ac.uk/research-school/ref/index.shtml>.

20. The UoA Chair is the main contact point between the UoA Panel and the REF Coordination Team (see below) and will manage activities associated with the preparation of the UoA's REF submission, including consultation with staff, normally via relevant Heads of Department and/or Deans and Directors. The Chair will also be responsible for ensuring all relevant eligible staff are considered, in liaison with the REF Coordination Team. UoA Chairs will be selected on the basis of:

- Relevant knowledge and expertise, including research management.
- Expertise in the relevant discipline(s).
- Experience of independent external research evaluation at national level or above, e.g. major research council peer review or similar.

21. Panel members will include:

- Associate Dean(s) of Research, or a nominee acting in that capacity, of the appropriate Central Academic Unit(s) (CAU).
- Head(s) of appropriate discipline(s), or nominee.
- In the case of University Research Centres, the Director(s) of relevant Centre(s).

22. Each UoA Panel is responsible for:

- Drawing up a **Statement of Intent (Sol)** outlining how the Panel will carry out its staff selection and submission development processes for the REF.
- Making recommendations on the REF submission status of staff for that UoA.
- Keeping clear records of agreed processes and decisions.
- Contributing to discussions with the IRRT on finding alternative 'UoA homes' for individuals in their 'home' faculty/unit whose research is outside their own panel's remit.
- Drawing up a draft REF submission for the UoA.

23. Details of the tasks above are outlined in Sections 4 and 5 of this document. A minimum of four panel members must participate in all UoA Panel meetings. Any changes to Panel membership must be approved by the PVC R,S&Q.

REF Equality Panel

24. This central panel will receive and consider individual circumstance(s) disclosure forms from individuals, with the aim of ensuring maximum confidentiality and consistency. The Panel includes representatives from HR, the Equality & Diversity Management Group and Central Academic Units. Two senior research leaders, neither of whom are involved in the IRRT or the UoA Panels, will represent academic units.

REF Appeals Panel

25. The Appeals Panel's role is to consider individual appeals against recommendation and decisions of UoA Panels and the IRRT respectively. Appeals will only be considered on the grounds of procedural irregularities, or on issues relating to equal opportunity. The Panel will be chaired by a member of VCE.

Training

26. Appendix B outlines the training requirements for all individuals involved in REF selection, submission and review processes. This includes attendance at REF-specific workshops on equality and diversity, record-keeping, taking minutes, data protection and communication of recommendations to individuals.

Record keeping

27. Throughout the OU REF selection process any decisions concerning the selection of staff must be documented formally, in a manner broadly consistent with the University guidelines for recruitment and selection procedures⁶. Detailed guidance on record keeping will be given at the training workshop (See paragraph 26).

28. Reports to committees concerning any aspect of the REF, must make clear the basis for discussion, and any such discussion must be minuted. When individual research performance in relation to the REF is discussed by any group or committee, and the individual is not present, it is the responsibility of the Chair and Secretary to ensure that the committee or group is provided with all the necessary and relevant information about that individual. Information relating to individuals must remain confidential, and be handled with due regard to data protection requirements.

⁶ See: <http://intranet6.open.ac.uk/human-resources/policies-and-procedures/r>

Section 4: Factors to be considered in selection of staff

Selection of submission areas (Units of Assessment)

29. Potential REF UoA submissions were identified by the IRRT following the 2010 Audit of Research and approved by the Research Committee at its June 2011 meeting. The IRRT drew on a range of criteria in making its recommendations. These included:

- Performance of the department/group/centre in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), if applicable.
- Strategic importance of the discipline for the University.
- Potential critical mass of active researchers in the discipline at the time of the REF 2014 submission.
- Information drawn from the 2010 Audit of Research⁷.

30. Outcomes from the University's Mock REF exercise, held between January and November 2012, will be used to inform the refinement and update of the overall REF submission intentions of the University. The Mock REF was governed by its own Code of Practice and further details can be found on the University intranet⁸.

31. The final decision on Units of Assessment for submission to the REF, as informed by the outcomes of the OU Mock REF exercise and recommended by the IRRT, will be reviewed by Research Committee and approved by the Vice Chancellor's Executive in November 2012. The ELT will be consulted.

Selection of staff

32. The University's intention is to submit to the REF as REF Category A staff⁹ all its excellent researchers if their research area aligns with one of the UoAs approved for submission to REF 2014 by VCE in November 2012. Selection for inclusion will depend on a researcher's contribution to the institutional strategy of achieving a REF overall quality profile¹⁰ of at least:

- 70% 3*/4* in institutionally strategic OU REF UoA submissions. These are research areas with an established track record and sustainable critical mass.
- 50% 3*/4* in all other OU REF UoA submissions.

33. Three factors will be considered in the selection of staff for submission to the REF as Category A staff:

1. Alignment of their research area with the agreed, institutional REF 2014 submission strategy.
2. Research quality.
3. Individual circumstances.

⁷ See: <http://intranet.open.ac.uk/research-school/audit/>

⁸ See: <http://intranet.open.ac.uk/research-school/ref/mock-ref.shtml>

⁹ See Part 3, Section 1 of *Assessment framework and guidance on submissions* (<http://www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/2011-02/>) for requirements of REF Category A staff.

¹⁰ See *Assessment framework and guidance on submissions*, Annex A - Assessment criteria and level definitions

34. The strategy for the OU REF 2014 submission was approved by the University's Council in February 2012. The final designation for UoAs (i.e. 'strategic' or 'other') will be made by the PVC (R,S&Q) in consultation with Research Committee and the IRRT, and be clearly evidenced using available data. Subject to appropriate discipline alignment, the institutional submission will include those staff whose research is excellent but whose individual circumstances have significantly constrained their ability to produce four research outputs during the REF publication period. To support equality and diversity in research careers, there are arrangements within the REF 2014 submission process to flag such researchers in the submission and to include details of how an individual's circumstances have affected their research outputs.

35. Early career researchers (ECRs) who are on a REF 3*/4* trajectory will also be included in the OU REF submission if their research falls within the discipline areas of the selected UoAs. For REF 2014 purposes, early career researchers are those who started their careers as independent researchers on or after **1 August 2009**¹¹. The definition of an ECR is stated in paragraph 49i below.

The selection process

36. The Category A staff selection process for the REF is designed to be free from discrimination, either direct or indirect. It will take into account the Equality Act 2010, which covers the protected characteristics of:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- care and dependency
- political opinion (in Northern Ireland).

37. A summary of the equality legislation with which the University must comply and which should be taken into account in the REF staff selection, submission and review processes is included in Appendix C.

38. The REF 2014 'Assessment framework and guidance on submissions' and 'Panel criteria and working methods'¹² include guidance on individual staff circumstances, as does the Equality Challenge Unit website¹³. All staff involved in the REF selection and review must consult these.

¹¹ See full definition of ECRs in *Assessment framework and guidance on submissions*, paragraphs 85 – 87.

¹² See *Panel criteria and working methods* (REF 03.2011), available on the 2014 REF website at <http://www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/2012-01/>

¹³ www.ecu.ac.uk/

Factor 1: Fit with research strategies

39. The first consideration in the selection of individual, Category A staff for the REF is that their research should support the strategic aims and objectives of the OU and its agreed aim of submitting an optimal REF 2014 submission. Their research must align with agreed institutionally strategic areas of research or other agreed areas of research that are considered to effectively contribute to an institutionally optimal, overall research excellence profile for the University. There must also be alignment with the research strategy of the UoA for which they are being considered.

Factor 2: Research quality and Minimum Requirements for Excellence (MRE)

40. The second criterion relevant to the selection of Category A staff will be the quality profile of the individual's research. The initial responsibility for assessing this lies with the relevant OU UoA Chair and Panel, reflecting the fact that quality is determined in different ways by different disciplines. A starting point will be to refer to:

- Panel criteria and working methods of the REF 2014 Panel(s) to which the submission will be made¹⁴.
- Outcomes from the OU Mock REF.
- Institutional research metrics derived from the Research Profile System and other data sources.
- Annual benchmark metrics derived from Evidence Ltd¹⁵.

41. In line with the University's strategy to demonstrate both peaks of excellence and universally high quality in research, the strategy for each UoA submission to the IRRT should be to achieve a research quality profile that aligns with the appropriate institutionally agreed quality threshold for that UoA (see paragraph 32). Staff recommended for inclusion by a UoA Panel will make a contribution in terms of:

- Production of four **research outputs** (or fewer than four, depending on factors outlined in paragraph 48-50).
- The OU **research environment**, e.g. through externally funded research grants, supervision of postgraduate research students, contributions to training and development of early career researchers, collaborations and contributions to the discipline.

42. If any of an individual's potential four research outputs (or fewer where individual circumstances apply) are assessed as REF 1* or unclassified (u/c) quality, it is unlikely that the researcher will be selected for inclusion in any OU UoA REF submission in 2013 unless most of their other outputs are very clearly of REF 3* and/or 4* quality. It is also unlikely that researchers will be selected for submission if most of their potential REF outputs are judged to be 2*, unless they have early career status (see paragraph 49i). Early career and other individual circumstances will be taken into account with regard to volume of outputs required, as allowed by HEFCE REF guidelines, but will not affect the baseline expectations about quality of outputs for the submission as a whole. Final REF 2014 decisions on individual researchers will be made with regard to the overall quality profile¹⁶ across 3* and 4* that the

¹⁴ The final REF panel criteria and working methods are available at <http://www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/>

¹⁵ Latest issue of Evidence Ltd's UK Higher Education Research Yearbook (these metrics will be circulated to UoA Panels).

¹⁶ The REF 'overall quality profile' is based on the three sub-profiles of outputs, impact and environment.

University has identified for the UoA submission concerned.

43. Staff not recommended for submission as Category A staff to the REF may, however, make a significant contribution to an OU UoA's REF submission research environment and/or impact elements.

44. Taking into account Factors 1 and 2 above, a profile of **Minimum Requirements for Excellence (MRE)** for individuals should be drawn up by each UoA Panel in conjunction with relevant Research Centre Directors and Associate Deans (Research). The template in Appendix F should be the starting point for this.

45. The purpose of the MRE is to establish a transparent 'quality threshold' for the evidence-based assessment of substantive, independent research, including externally peer-reviewed research outputs, e.g. a peer-reviewed article in a leading internationally recognised journal and being principal investigator on a peer-reviewed research grant or equivalent. The appropriate REF 2014 UoA Panel criteria are a useful starting point for developing the MREs.

46. The UoA MRE should outline clearly the minimum requirements for inclusion in the UoA submission in terms of research excellence. The requirements should relate to a 'typical' researcher with no individual circumstances that might significantly adversely affect research productivity or research outputs. By establishing this baseline quality threshold, the UoA Panel has a benchmark against which individual circumstances can be allowed for. The MRE should make explicit the requirements for each of the following:

- a) Research outputs – number, type and quality.
- b) Contributions to the research environment.
- c) Contributions to research impact.

47. For some UoAs, it may also be appropriate to make explicit requirements for:

- d) Number of postgraduate research students supervised during the REF assessment period.
- e) Number of research doctoral degrees awarded.
- f) Research income awarded during the REF assessment period.

Factor 3: Individual circumstances

48. All those involved in the selection process must take into consideration circumstances that may have affected an individual's research output during the assessment period (from 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2013). Staff who are carrying out research that meets required standards of excellence must not be excluded solely on the basis of low research volume if one or more of the following circumstances has significantly constrained their ability to produce four outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period.

49. Clearly defined circumstances:

i. Qualifying as an Early Career Researcher (ECR).

- Early career researchers are defined as members of staff who meet the criteria to be selected as Category A or Category C staff on the census date, and who started their careers as independent researchers on or after 1 August 2009. For the purposes of the REF, an individual is deemed to have started their career as an independent researcher from

the point at which:

- They held a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, which included a primary employment function of undertaking 'research' or 'teaching and research', with any HEI or other organisation, whether in the UK or overseas, and
- They undertook independent research, leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on a research grant or significant piece of research work. (A member of staff is not deemed to have undertaken independent research purely on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs.)

ii. **Absence from work due to:**

- working part-time, or
- secondments or career breaks outside of the higher education sector, and in which the individual did not undertake academic research. Secondment to a non-research role, or undertaking management and/or administrative responsibilities within an HEI does not qualify for any reduction in outputs.

iii. **Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave:**

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

50. Circumstances that are more complex and require a judgement about the appropriate number of outputs that can be reduced without penalty. These circumstances are:

- i. Disability. This is defined in Appendix C under 'Disability'.
- ii. Ill health or injury.
- iii. Mental health conditions.
- iv. Constraints related to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of – or justify the reduction of further outputs in addition to the allowances made for iii) a) and b) above.
- 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 36.

Fixed Term and Part Time Staff

51. Fixed-term and part-time academic and research staff have the same terms and conditions of employment as permanent full-time academic and research staff and they share the same access to training and development. They will be treated no less favourably than full-time permanent staff in terms of their recommended status for the OU REF submission.

Section 5: Process for selection of staff

Equality analysis

52 In late 2010, an audit of research outputs was carried out, as a starting point for work on the REF 2014 submission. The equality profile of those who took part in the audit was compared with the overall profile of eligible staff. This analysis was considered by the University Research Committee, and has informed the approach to equality issues in the REF 2014.

53 In preparing policies and procedures for selecting staff for the REF, the OU has from the outset considered whether their application is likely to result in any differential impact on particular groups of academics or researchers. Throughout the Mock REF exercise we have taken measures to mitigate any such adverse impacts or barriers to participation, and the knowledge gained from the Mock exercise will be carried forward into the REF 2014. The Code of Practice for the Mock exercise has been well publicised within the University, as have the arrangements for the consideration of special circumstances. We are confident that these measures have been successful, with 10% of eligible staff submitting special circumstances cases for consideration by the Mock REF Equality Panel. Colleagues involved in selecting staff for the OU REF submission and Equality Panel members have already had appropriate equality training to inform Mock REF activities, and will have further training before the formal REF 2014 staff selection process commences.

54 We carried out extensive consultation with colleagues in preparing the Code of Practice for the REF, and have taken account of input from groups including the Equality and Diversity Management Team, to ensure that the processes described are fair and transparent.

55 The next stage of our equality analysis will involve comparing the overall equality profile of all current central academic, regional academic and research staff with the equality profile of those staff included in the Mock REF submissions. The analysis is being undertaken at institutional and at Unit of Assessment level. The Equality Panel will then consider the data in the light of the Mock REF selection process to identify any likely or actual adverse impacts. If required, the Panel will propose adjustments to the process to mitigate these. The Equality Panel will continue to review both the analysis and new data and information at key points during the REF selection process to ensure that any required changes to prevent discrimination and promote equality are made prior to the submission deadline.

56 A similar data comparison exercise will be undertaken for the REF, to inform best practice in relation to equality and diversity for the future management of research at the OU.

57 The final REF equality analysis, along with the outcomes of any actions taken to prevent discrimination and advance equality, will be published on the OU website, after the submission has been made.

UoA Statement of Intent (Sol)

58 Each UoA Panel will produce a **Statement of Intent (Sol)** to document how it will carry out its recommendation and submission process. Sols must be produced by October 2012 and should follow the guidelines outlined in this Code of Practice. A template will be provided to ensure consistency and transparency of practice across all OU UoA Panels (see Appendix E).

Methodology

59. In October 2012 all eligible staff, including those on long-term absence, will be directed to the OU REF 2014 Code of Practice (on the REF intranet) and required by the PVC (R,S&Q) to engage with in the OU REF 2014 submission preparations between 1st November 2012 and January 4th 2013 by:

- a) Verifying and updating their **individual profile** on the University's Research Profile System (RPS)¹⁷.
- b) Verifying and updating the summary of their **REFable publications** on the University's REFable Publications Facility (RPF)¹⁸.

60. At the same time and within the same time period, all eligible individuals, including those on long-term absence, will be asked by the OU REF Equality Panel Chair to submit a disclosure form, detailing any individual circumstances that have affected their research activity since 1 January 2008, to the OU REF Equality Panel.

61. From November 2012, eligible staff in all appropriate discipline areas, including those absent from work, will be directed to:

- i) The OU REF 2014 **Code of Practice**
- ii) The relevant faculty and/or centre **research strategy**
- iii) Relevant UoA Panel's **Statements of Intent**
- iv) Relevant UoA Panel's **Minimum Requirements for Excellence**

Allowing for individual circumstances

62 For those who submitted an individual circumstances disclosure form to the REF Equality Panel, the circumstances may need to be verified by their HoD or HR. The Equality Panel Secretary will liaise with the relevant HoD or HR where necessary, following Data Protection guidelines and ensuring confidentiality. The individual disclosure forms will be anonymised before being sent to the Equality Panel for consideration. The Panel will assess the circumstances in confidence, applying the tariffs published in the 'REF 2014 Panel criteria and working methods' (REF01.2012). The Secretary will then inform the relevant UoA Panel Chair of the Panel decision.

¹⁷ Research Profile System: <http://intranet.open.ac.uk/research-school/rps/index.shtml>

¹⁸ The REFable Publications Facility: <http://radar.open.ac.uk/refable-pubs/>

63. Individuals will be informed of the Panel's decision and the basis on which it was made by the Secretary to the Panel.

64. Once the circumstances are deemed admissible, the UoA's standard MRE research outputs requirements will need to be adjusted as indicated by the Equality Panel before a fair judgement can be made about the individual's research outputs and suitability for inclusion. In effect, a customised version of the MRE will be drawn up against which their research can be measured.

Decisions on inclusion of staff

65. UoA Panel(s) will review and make judgements on the research quality profile of each member of staff being considered by it in the form of a 'recommendation' on their inclusion in the UoA's REF submission, taking into account how each individual's research profile and REFable publications (research outputs) align with the appropriate UoA strategy and MRE (or a customised version of it if there are individual circumstances that warrant one). The reasons for the recommendation must relate clearly to the evidence available and the relevant criteria and must be defensible. In each case, the decision must be recorded in a formal and appropriate manner, taking account of relevant Data Protection issues. UoA Panel members must be excluded from decisions relating to their own selection.

66. As part of the REF review/preparations, each UoA Panel will make a recommendation to the IRRT on the REF Category A submission potential of individuals. The Panels will do this by completing a standard REF recommendations form, assigning one of the following categories to each individual:

- R = recommended for inclusion in the OU REF submission to this UoA.
- N = not recommended for inclusion in REF submission to this UoA (either does not meet the UoA Panel's MRE or their research area does not align with the UoA subject coverage).

67. The IRRT will then undertake a detailed review of the UoA Panel submissions to determine the size and shape of each UoA submission, this will include confirmation (or not) of the submission status of individuals, to optimise the OU REF submission overall.

Communication of selection decisions

68. It is required that all individuals considered by a UoA Panel and the IRRT for inclusion in the OU REF submission will be informed of their REF status (R or N) in writing by their HoD no later than 20 working days after the submission has been considered by the IRRT. [HoDs will be notified by the IRRT of the REF status of their staff within 10 working days of the IRRT review]. This letter should be copied to the Dean/Director, and if appropriate, the Research Centre Director.

69. Where the UoA Panel and/or IRRT are not recommending an individual as R, the letter/email should:

- Outline the reasons for this (which should be based entirely on the criteria laid out in Section 4 and the Panel's Sol and MRE).
- Notify them of the right to appeal against the decision within 10 working days of receipt of the written confirmation.

70. Decisions on the REF status of individuals will not be disseminated beyond the individual, the relevant UoA Panel, the IRRT, the Appeals Panel, the individuals' HoD, Research Centre Director and/or Dean.

71. It is important to emphasise that the University values all research and scholarship activities supporting the OU and its mission, whether or not the staff undertaking these activities are included in the REF submission. The OU Code of Practice for Research¹⁹ includes a summary of the University's responsibilities in relation to the conduct of research activity. The REF is not about measuring research activity, rather research excellence which is a type of scholarship recognised and agreed by Senate.

Appeals

72. If an individual disagrees on procedural grounds with a UoA Panel's recommendation and/or the IRRT's decision on their REF status, they may appeal against the recommendation/decision on the grounds of procedural irregularities only. In the first instance they should discuss matters with their Associate Dean (Research) or equivalent, their HoD and Dean/Director. If the individual is still not satisfied with the outcome, and wishes to appeal, they should write to the Secretary to the independent REF Appeals Panel within **10 working days** of the notification.

73. A person submitting an appeal may submit a request to the Secretary of the Appeals Panel to attend the hearing in person.

74. Appeals will only be considered by the REF Appeals Panel where the individual argues for their case to be reconsidered on the grounds of:

- procedural irregularities which may reflect deviation from the published OU REF 2014 CoP, **SoI** and **MRE** of the UoA Panel.
- issues relating to equal opportunity.

75. The independent **Appeals Panel** will be made up of:

- Two members of VCE, not PVC (R,S&Q), co-Chairs.
- Dean of Faculty, not appellant's home faculty.
- A senior research-active professor from cognate discipline not previously associated with the UoA panel concerned.
- The OU Head of HR or delegate.
- A co-opted member of the Equality & Diversity Management Group whose attendance would only be required in the event of an appeal concerning issues of equal opportunity.

76. This Panel will review the case by considering:

- The University's submission strategy
- The relevant UoA's Statement of Intent
- The UoA Panel's MRE
- The appellant's RPS profile
- The appellant's submitted REFable publications summary (research outputs)

¹⁹ See: <http://intranet.open.ac.uk/research-school/strategy-info-governance/index.shtml>

- The minutes of the relevant UoA Panel and IRRT meetings
- If appropriate, the appellant's disclosure form for individual circumstances
- For equality-related appeals, relevant Equality Challenge Unit case studies, or ECU advice
- A statement from the appellant (maximum 500 words)
- A summary from the UoA Panel on its recommendation concerning the appellant (maximum 500 words)
- A summary from the IRRT on its decision concerning the appellant (maximum 500 words)

77. The documents made available to the Appeals Panel will also be sent to the individual concerned.

78. Having considered these, the Chair of the Panel will inform the individual and the relevant UoA Panel Chair of the Appeals Panel findings. The Appeals Panel's decision on the issue will be final as far as the OU's procedures are concerned and the individual must be notified of this decision within **20 working days** of the Appeal Panels' receipt of the appeal.

79. Where an appeal is upheld by the REF Appeals Panel, the individual will be reconsidered for inclusion in the OU REF submission by the relevant UoA panel and IRRT.

Data Protection and Freedom of Information issues

80. The University has an obligation to provide some personal information on staff for the purposes of the REF. It will only share information which it is under an obligation to provide. Further details on the Data Protection Act, including who to contact if you have a query, can be found at: <https://intranet-gw.open.ac.uk/planning/dp/>. Further details on the Freedom of Information Act can be found at: <http://www.open.ac.uk/foi/>.

81. Staff have the right of access to data held which relates to them personally and due care will therefore be taken in record-keeping during REF preparations to ensure that accurate records of decisions are kept and that these are defensible, particularly as regards any matters of opinion rather than fact.

Feedback

82. We welcome feedback on this document and are interested to hear of any concerns about any possible adverse impact of the Code and the way it operates with respect to a particular group of staff. Feedback should be sent by email to [Research-Ref](#), for the attention of the REF Manager.

83. The code of practice is available on the REF intranet site.

This code has been developed in consultation with the PVC (R&S), the Head of Research Strategy, Information & Governance, the Equality and Diversity Management Group, the Head of Human Resources for Central Academic Units, the Research Committee, VCE, the Deans and Directors Group, other members of University staff and the University and College Union (UCU). It has been informed by guidance from HEFCE on requirements for a Code of Practice for the REF 2014. Advice on its content has also been sought from representatives of the IRRT. This code of practice builds on the one approved by Research Committee in November 2011 for the OU Mock REF exercise. It has been approved by IRRT and Research Committee, and by the Pro Vice Chancellors.

Appendix A: OU groups supporting the REF

Name	Membership	Role
Vice-Chancellor's Executive (VCE) ²⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vice Chancellor Director, Students Finance Director PVC, Academic PVC Learning and Teaching PVC Research, Scholarship & Quality Director of Business Development Chief Information Officer University Secretary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall institutional responsibility for the REF
Extended Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCE + Deans and Directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To advise on the preparation of the REF submission
Institutional Research Review Team (IRRT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PVC (RS&Q) A representative of the Deans The Associate Deans, Research, or equivalent individuals, from each Central Academic Unit; at least one from each CAU. One of the Senate representatives on Research Committee Other individuals may be co-opted as deemed appropriate or necessary by the PVC (RS &Q), including experts external to the University 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review OU UoA Panel submissions for the REF
REF Appeals Panel	<p><i>No member of the Appeals Panel is involved in any other aspect of selection for the REF</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two members of VCE, not PVC (R,S&Q), co-chairs Dean/Director of Unit, not individuals home unit Senior 'Research' Professor from cognate discipline not associated with UoA panel concerned Head of HR or delegate For equality related appeals, a member of the Equality and Diversity management Group (EDMG) who is not on the Equality Panel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To judge individual appeals.
REF Equality Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Members of EDMG 2 HR advisors 3 senior research leaders who are not members of the IRRT or any UoA Panel, one of whom will be chair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receives individual circumstances disclosures from individuals; determines reduction in outputs allowed
REF UoA Panels	<p>At least 4 people, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associate Dean(s) Research or a nominee acting in that capacity Head(s) of appropriate discipline(s) UoA Chair Director of Centre (if appropriate). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement of Intent Minimum Requirements for Excellence Recommendations on staff Drafting UoA REF

²⁰ See: www8.open.ac.uk/about/main/admin-and-governance/executive-team

		submission
REF Coordination Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REF Manager • Senior Manager, Research Knowledge & Information • Designated REF Technical contact • Administrative and support staff in the Research School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data gathering at an institutional level • Administrative support for REF
REF Data Providers	Nominated representatives from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR • Information Office • Library Services • Research Accounts • Research Degrees Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure data quality and work with the REF Coordination Team in the provision of data for the REF.

Appendix B: Training requirements for staff with REF responsibilities

Taking into consideration the equality requirements of the REF, as advised by the Equality Challenge Unit, and the advice of the OU's Equality & Diversity Management Group, the following groups and individuals are required to complete equality and diversity training in advance of REF selection and review processes:

- PVC (R,S&Q), as Senior Responsible Owner
- Associate Deans (Research)
- Institutional Research Review Team Members
- REF Appeals Panel members
- REF Equality Panel members
- REF UoA Chairs
- REF UoA Panel Members
- Director, Research, Scholarship and Quality, as Senior Accountable Executive
- Head of Research Strategy, Information and Governance, as Research and Scholarship Priority Manager and Line Manager of the REF Manager and Senior Manager Research Knowledge and Information
- REF Manager (Institutional REF Contact)
- Senior Manager, Research Knowledge and Information (Institutional REF Data Contact)
- Secretaries to Appeals and Equality Panels

The above groups and individuals are required to:

1. **Read** the April 2011 Information Bulletin from the Equality and Diversity Team on the main legislative changes arising from the 2010 Equality Act. This is available on the intranet at <http://intranet.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/news/docs/Informationbulletinforallstaff-EqualityAct-Apr2011.doc>
2. **Read** the REF 2014 *Assessment framework and guidance on submissions* and Final panel criteria and working methods documents.
3. **Read** the relevant part of the Equality Challenge Unit website (<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF>)
4. **Attend** a half-day workshop on REF equality matters ahead of the OU Mock REF Exercise
5. **Undergo** refresher training before commencing of the REF selection and review processes.

Equality Panel members are required to undergo additional and more detailed training.

The REF Coordination Team will issue detailed guidance to the groups and individuals above.

Appendix C: Summary of equality legislation

Age	<p>All employees within the higher education sector are protected from unlawful age discrimination in employment under the Equality Act 2010 and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or if they are associated with a person of a particular age group.</p> <p>Age discrimination can occur when people of a particular age group are treated less favourably than people in other age groups. An age group could be for example, people of the same age, the under 30s or people aged 45-50. A person can belong to a number of different age groups.</p> <p>Age discrimination will not be unlawful if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. However, in the context of the REF, the view of the funding bodies is that if a researcher produces excellent research an HEI will not be able to justify not submitting them because of their age group.</p> <p>It is important to note that early career researchers are likely to come from a range of age groups. The definition of early career researcher used in the REF (see paragraph 85) is not limited to young people.</p> <p>HEIs should also note that given developments in equalities law in the UK and Europe, the default retirement age will be abolished from 1 October 2011 in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.</p>
Disability	<p>The Equality Act 2010, the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) (Northern Ireland only) and the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 prevent unlawful discrimination relating to disability. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to have a disability or if they are associated with a person who is disabled, for example, if they are responsible for caring for a disabled family member.</p> <p>A person is considered to be disabled if they have or have had a physical and/or mental impairment which has 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. Long-term impairments include those that last or are likely to last for at least 12 months.</p> <p>Cancer, HIV, multiple sclerosis and progressive/degenerative conditions are disabilities too, even if they do not currently have an adverse effect on the carrying out of day-to-day activities.</p> <p>The definition of disability is different in Northern Ireland in that a list of day-to-day activities is referred to. There is no list of day-to-day activities for England, Scotland and Wales but day-to-day activities are taken to mean activities that people, not individuals, carry out on a daily or frequent basis.</p> <p>While there is no definitive list of what is considered a disability, it covers a wide range of impairments including:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sensory impairments • impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as rheumatoid arthritis, depression and epilepsy • progressive impairments, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, HIV and cancer • organ-specific impairments, including respiratory conditions and cardiovascular diseases • developmental impairments, such as autistic spectrum disorders and dyslexia • mental health conditions such as depression and eating disorders • impairments caused by injury to the body or brain. <p>It is important for HEIs to note that people who have had a past disability are also protected from discrimination, victimisation and harassment because of disability.</p> <p>Equality law requires HEIs to anticipate the needs of disabled people and make reasonable adjustments for them. Failure to make a reasonable adjustment constitutes discrimination. If a disabled researcher’s impairment has affected the quantity of their research outputs, they may be submitted with a reduced number of outputs (see paragraphs 90-100 and the panel criteria).</p>
<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 protect from discrimination trans people who have proposed, started or completed a process to change their sex. Staff in HE do not have to be under medical supervision to be afforded protection because of gender reassignment and staff are protected if they are perceived to be undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment. They are also protected if they are associated with someone who has proposed, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment.</p> <p>Trans people who undergo gender reassignment will need to take time off for appointments and in some cases, for medical assistance. The transition process is lengthy, often taking several years and it is likely to be a difficult period for the trans person as they seek recognition of their new gender from their family, friends, employer and society as a whole.</p> <p>The Gender Recognition Act 2004 gave enhanced privacy rights to trans people who undergo gender reassignment. A person acting in an official capacity who acquires information about a person’s status as a transsexual may commit a criminal offence if they pass the information to a third party without consent.</p> <p>Consequently, staff within HEIs with responsibility for REF submissions must ensure that the information they receive about gender reassignment is treated with particular care.</p>

	<p>Staff whose ability to work productively throughout the REF assessment period has been constrained due to gender reassignment may be submitted with a reduced number of research outputs (see paragraphs 90-100, and the panel criteria). Information about the member of staff will be kept confidential as described in paragraph 98.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 as amended, individuals are protected from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of marriage and civil partnership status. The protection from discrimination is to ensure that people who are married or in a civil partnership receive the same benefits and treatment in employment. The protection from discrimination does not apply to single people.</p> <p>In relation to the REF HEIs must ensure that their processes for selecting staff do not inadvertently discriminate against staff who are married or in civil partnerships.</p>
Political opinion	<p>The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 protects staff from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of political opinion.</p> <p>HEIs should be aware of not making any judgements about the selection of staff for REF submissions based on their political opinion.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 women are protected from unlawful discrimination related to pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p>Consequently researchers who have taken time out of work or whose ability to work productively throughout the assessment period because of pregnancy and/or maternity, may be submitted with a reduced number of research outputs, as set out in paragraphs 90-100 and in the panel criteria documents.</p> <p>In addition, HEIs should ensure that female researchers who are pregnant or on maternity leave are kept informed about and included in their submissions process.</p> <p>For the purposes of this summary it is important to note that primary adopters have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave.</p>
Race	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination connected to race. The definition of race includes colour, ethnic or national origins or nationality. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular race.</p> <p>HEIs should be aware of not making any judgements about the selection of staff for REF submissions based on their race or assumed race (for example, based on their name).</p>

<p>Religion and belief including non-belief</p>	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination to do with religion or belief. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular religion or belief.</p> <p>HEIs should be aware of not making any judgements about the selection of staff for REF submissions based on their actual or perceived religion or belief, including non-belief. 'Belief' includes any structured philosophical belief with clear values that has an effect on how its adherents conduct their lives.</p>
<p>Sex (including breastfeeding and additional paternity and adoption leave)</p>	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination to do with sex. Employees are also protected because of their perceived sex or because of their association with someone of a particular sex.</p> <p>The sex discrimination provisions of the Equality Act explicitly protect women from less favourable treatment because they are breastfeeding. Consequently the impact of breastfeeding on a women's ability to work productively will be taken into account, as set out in paragraph 90-100 and the panel criteria documents.</p> <p>From 3 April 2011, partners of new mothers and secondary adopters will be entitled to up to 26 weeks of additional paternity and adoption leave. People who take additional paternity or adoption leave will have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave and barriers that exist to taking the leave, or as a result of having taken it, could constitute unlawful sex discrimination. Consequently researchers who have taken additional paternity and adoption leave may be submitted with a reduced number of outputs, as set out in paragraphs 90-100 and in the panel criteria documents.</p> <p>HEIs need to be wary of selecting researchers by any criterion that it would be easier for men to comply with than women, or vice versa. There are many cases where a requirement to work full-time (or less favourable treatment of people working part-time or flexibly) has been held to discriminate unlawfully against women.</p>
<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>The Equality Act 2010 and the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination to do with sexual orientation. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with someone who is of a particular sexual orientation.</p> <p>HEIs should be aware of not making any judgements about the selection of staff for REF submissions based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation.</p>

Welsh Language	<p>The Welsh Language Act 1993 places a duty on public bodies in Wales to treat Welsh and English on an equal basis. This is reinforced by the provisions of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.</p> <p>The arrangements for the assessment of outputs in the medium of Welsh by the REF panels are set out in paragraphs 128-130.</p>
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Appendix D: REF 2014 Summary Timetable

Month	What	Responsibility
Stage 1		
Oct 2012	Code of Practice and arrangements for REF published on the OU intranet; programme of dissemination begun to ensure all staff are aware of the Code of Practice and to explain the process of selection that will take place.	REF Coord. Team
Oct 2012	Eligible staff notified that they will be required to verify and update profile on Research Profile System (RPS), complete list of 'REFable' publications, and where applicable, submit individual circumstances form (using standard template provided).	REF Coord. Team
Oct 2012	UoA Panels submit Statements of Intent and Minimum Requirements for Excellence to REF Coordination Team.	UoA Panels
Oct 2012	UoA Panels briefed on REF processes	REF Coord. Team
Oct 2012	Initial Equality Analysis	REF Coord. Team
Dec 2012	Equality Training refresher	REF Coord Team
1 Nov 2012 – 4 Jan 2013	All eligible staff will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update their individual online Research Profile of their research activity since the 2008 RAE. Submit their personal publication list for the REF, via the REFable Publications Facility. If applicable, submit an individual circumstances disclosure form. 	All eligible staff
Stage 2		
Jan – April 2013	UoA Panels develop REF submissions for review by IRRT.	UoA Panels
Jan 2013	Equality Panel considers individual circumstances.	Equality Panel
Stage 3		
May – July 2013	IRRT review of UoA submissions.	IRRT
Sept – Oct 2013	Research Committee and ELT review of REF submission, VCE approval.	REF Coord. Team
Nov 2013	OU submission sent to REF National Team.	REF Coord. Team

Appendix E: Template for UoA Statement of Intent (Sol)

The template below is for use by UoA Panels to help them create a UoA-specific Sol for the REF. Essentially, this is a document to capture how the UoA Panel will carry out its REF review of individuals, its recommendation and submission processes.

Statement of Intent for the UoA XX for REF 2014

The UoA XX REF 2014 Panel Membership

General Principles and UoA XX Approach (to include statement on compliance with OU REF 2014 CoP and summary of overall REF 2014 Strategy for the UoA)

Criteria for selection

Procedure for selection

Communication of decision and feedback to individuals

Timetable

Conflicts of interest

Training

Record keeping, confidentiality and Data Protection

Enquiries/Contacts

Glossary of definitions (to include UoA-specific/REF compliant definitions for Category A staff and early career researchers)

References

Appendix F: Template for Minimum Requirements for Excellence (MRE)

The template below is for use by UoA Panels to help them create a UoA-specific profile of minimum requirements for inclusion in the REF. Essentially, this is a document that outlines the 'research quality threshold' for recommended inclusion of individuals. It should take account of appropriate research strategies (see Section 4 of this document) and relevant REF 2014 panel criteria and working methods.

<p>Research outputs (1 Jan 2008 – 31 Dec 2013)</p> <p>Number:</p> <p>Types*:</p> <p>Quality:</p> <p>Citations (where appropriate)²¹:</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<p>Number of research doctoral degrees awarded (1 Aug 2008 – 31 Jul 2013)</p> <p>Number of degrees awarded to students supervised:</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<p>Postgraduate student supervision (1 Aug 2008 – 31 Jul 2013)</p> <p>Number of students supervised:</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<p>Research income (1 Aug 2008 – 31 Jul 2013)</p> <p>Average annual research income:</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<p>Contributions to research environment (1 Jan 2008 – 31 Jul 2013)</p> <p>Types*:</p> <p>Comments:</p>

²¹ For details of those REF sub-Panels that will make use of citation data please see Part 2 of the *REF 2014 Panel criteria and working methods* (REF 03.2011), available on the 2014 REF website at: <http://www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/2012-01/>

Contributions to research impact (1 Jan 2008 – 31 Jul 2013)

Types*:

Comments:

** See below for an indicative list, but refer to panel criteria for sub-panel specific guidance on types*

Research outputs

Any form of publicly available, assessable output embodying research as defined for the REF may be counted²², as can confidential outputs that are not publicly available. Outputs may include, but are not limited to:

- Books or book chapters
- Journal articles and conference contributions
- Physical artefacts
- Exhibitions and performances
- Other documents
- Digital artefacts (including web content)

Contributions to the research environment

These might include:

- Contributions to training and development of early career researchers
- National and international collaborations

Contributions to research impact²³

Impact might include, but is not limited to, an effect on, change or benefit to:

- the activity, attitude, awareness, behaviour, capacity, opportunity, performance, policy, practice, process or understanding
- of an audience, beneficiary, community, constituency, organisation or individuals
- in any geographic location whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.

²² REF definition of research: Annex C, Assessment framework and guidance on submissions (REF 02.2011)

²³ REF definition of impact: Annex C, Assessment framework and guidance on submissions (REF 02.2011)

Appendix G: Glossary of terms

Institutional Research Review Team (IRRT) – Central review body for the OU REF 2014 preparations and the REF submission.

Minimum Requirements for Excellence (MRE) – A document outlining the quality threshold for an individual's inclusion in a potential REF submission (subject to appropriate allowance for individual circumstances). To be drawn up by a UoA Panel in conjunction with research heads of faculties/departments/centres involved. [See template in Appendix D and guidance in Section 4]

OU UoA Panel – A potential submitting unit at the Open University for the REF 2014.

Research profile – An online profile of an individual's research, held within the University's [Research Profile System](#). To be verified and completed by research active staff by.

Statement of Intent (Sol) – A document outlining how the UoA Panel will carry out its selection and submission processes during the REF. To be drawn up by the UoA Panel. [See Section 5]