

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The ultimate purpose of this *Code of Practice* is to ensure that the maximum number of staff conducting excellent research at the university have their work included in the *REF 2014* submissions. Clearly managerial decisions on which staff to submit are at the discretion of the university but, in preparing its submissions and selecting staff for inclusion, the university will also have regard to all the relevant equality equal opportunities legislation in force on the submission date. The *Code of Practice* will therefore guide the work of all those involved in the preparation of submissions and the selection of staff for inclusion.

Decision Making/Governance

The university's *Code of Practice* has been developed in consultation with the university community, including consideration by the Research Institute Directors, Units of Assessment (UoA) Co-ordinators, Deans of Faculty, Research Co-ordinators, the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group and the relevant trade unions. It has been considered and endorsed by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee on 30 May 2012, the Strategic Planning and Resources Group on 31 May 2012 and Academic Council on 13 June 2012, prior to its approval of the Board of Governors on 21 June 2012.

CONTEXT AND ENVIRONMENT

This *Code of Practice* is intended to provide a guide to the way in which decisions are to be made. It is intended to provide a clear, concise and consistent basis for preparing submissions to the *REF 2014* and the selection of staff for inclusion.

It describes how the requirements of equality legislation will be met with respect to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, political opinion, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief including non-belief, sex (including breastfeeding; additional paternity leave and adoption leave), sexual orientation and part-time and fixed-term employment [*Assessment framework and guidance on submissions, REF 02.2011, (July 2011), part 4: Codes of Practice on Selection of Staff*].

In all aspects of this *Code of Practice*, including its procedures, processes and implementation, consideration will be given to equality and diversity issues in order to eliminate discrimination, promote equality, and foster good relations between all protected characteristics whilst maintaining the excellent quality and integrity of submissions.

The university commits itself to conduct equality impact assessments on its policies and processes for selecting staff for the *REF 2014*.

The *REF 2014* process is subject to the requirements of the various laws concerning data confidentiality and handling.

Fixed-Term and Part-Time Staff

The university policy is that indefinite contracts are the normal form of employment relationship between the university and its employees. Where staff are engaged on a fixed-term or part-time basis they are treated no less favourably than employees on open-ended contracts or full-time workers.

Fixed-term and part-time staff are:

- provided with equality of opportunity in all aspects of employment;
- engaged on the same terms and conditions of employment to those in comparable jobs with indefinite employment in the university;
- given access to the same opportunities as other staff to use services to assist better performance such as involvement in the Employee Performance Review (EPR) process and staff development;
- provided with information on, and the opportunity to apply for, other positions within the university.

Since the implementation of the National Framework Agreement on pay modernisation in 2006 the university no longer has separate policies in respect of fixed-term contracts.

THE BASIC PRINCIPLES

- It is essential that practice in respect of *REF 2014* submissions is transparent, fair and consistent across the university.
- The *REF 2014* exercise will be conducted in a way that will respect the confidentiality of all staff as far as possible.
- Feedback on decisions regarding the inclusion of individuals in the *REF 2014* submissions will be handled confidentially and with sensitivity.
- Responsibilities will be clearly defined and the operating criteria and terms of reference will be made readily available at the appropriate time to individuals, Schools/ Departments, Research Institutes and Faculties and those with executive responsibility who are concerned with the *REF 2014*.

All relevant documentation will be published on the university website and the existence of this *Code of Practice* will be well publicised throughout the university, with copies being made freely available as needed. Individuals acting as external advisers or reviewers as part of the university's *REF 2014* preparations will be made aware of this *Code of Practice* and will be encouraged to apply its principles in their work.

MANAGING THE PROCESS

University Responsibility

The major responsibility for managing the REF processes and making key decisions will be the Principal and Vice-Chancellor (or his nominee), Deputy Principal and Vice-Chancellor, the REF Manager (Vice-Principal and Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Commercialisation), Deans of Faculty and Research Institute Directors.

REF Manager

The university's REF Manager (Vice-Principal and Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Commercialisation) is the responsible individual for the management and co-ordination of the *REF 2014* submission.

REF 2014 Management Working Group

There will be a *REF 2014 Management Working Group* comprising the REF Manager as Chair, Deans of Faculty, Research Institute Directors, nominated Faculty representatives, the Research and Enterprise Director, Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators, Head of Human Resources, the Research Support Manager (Research and Enterprise Services), Director of Library Services; Research Degrees Officer (Academic Affairs), and Cost Accountant (Finance).

The membership and remit of the *REF 2014 Management Working Group*¹ is at [Annex A](#).

This group will report to the Strategic Planning and Resources Group (SPARG), Academic Council and the Board of Governors through the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. The decisions of the *REF 2014 Management Working Group* will be informed by the recommendations of the Unit of Assessment (UoA) Co-ordinators co-ordinating submissions, including identifying potential staff. Records will be kept in the minutes of the appropriate meetings.

Training on Equality and Diversity

As part of the university's *Equality and Diversity Policy* all individuals are expected to:

- be aware of, and comply with, the university's *Equality and Diversity Policy*;
- complete mandatory training in equality and diversity;
- treat everyone with respect;
- eliminate discrimination;
- advance equality and promote good relations across all protected characteristics;
- actively promote equality and diversity; and
- co-operate with the university in complying with any requirements or duty imposed under any relevant legislation.

Relevant university staff will be given generic equality and diversity training.

Those involved in selecting staff including members of the REF2014 Management Working Group and relevant members of senior management will have been given training on their specific responsibilities in terms of their REF role. This training will be tailored to the REF processes and include case studies that are used to explore issues, such as the implications of dealing with individual/complex circumstances.

The following individuals will be required to undertake the training:

- those who have the responsibility for selecting the staff;
- those who handle appeals;
- those who will be providing feedback to those staff not selected.

¹ Annex A *REF 2014 Management Working Group* in terms of the *Code of Practice for Equality and Diversity in the Submission Process: Staff Selection*. A fuller remit of this group will be available on the university's *REF2014* webpages.

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

EIA assessments of various human resource policies including the recruitment and selection policy have been conducted and these were again reviewed before end June 2012. An EIA assessment was also conducted prior to the revised Equality and Diversity Policy being ratified by the university's Board of Governors.

The university will continue to conduct EIAs on its policies and procedures for the selection of staff for the REF at various stages throughout the process. This will include a comparative quantitative report on the diversity characteristics of those submitted and not submitted for the *REF 2014*.

The REF Manager will be responsible for assessing and determining whether the staff selection policy for the REF may have a differential impact on particular groups. The REF Manager will be supported in this by internal equality practitioners. EIAs will be informed by an analysis of data on staff who are eligible for selection in respect of all the equality protected characteristics for which data are available. The equality profiles will be made available by the university's Human Resources Department to the *REF 2014 Management Working Group*.

The findings of EIAs will be reported by the *REF 2014 Management Working Group* to other relevant committees to ensure appropriate actions on equality and diversity are taken in amending policies and procedures in research and other areas.

In order to prevent discrimination, the *REF 2014 Management Working Group* will meet to review the EIAs when newly-recruited staff submissions have been examined, when considering appeals (Summer 2013), and when preparing the final submission (Autumn 2013).

In the development of the Code of Practice by involving the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group and Equality Champions, including individuals who are research active in informing equality impact assessments, the university is committing to best practice in the area of equality and diversity. All equality impact assessments will be made available upon request after the *REF 2014* submissions have been made.

DISSEMINATION OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE

The university's *Code of Practice for Equality and Diversity in the Submission Process: Staff Selection* is aimed at making its REF preparations and submissions fair. Transparency will be achieved through the following programme of dissemination and communication:

- The REF team will publish the university's *Code of Practice for Equality and Diversity in the Submission Process: Staff Selection* as part of its submission.
- The university's preparations for the *REF 2014* will be partly guided by a timeline of actions and activities that has been prepared by the REF Manager. This timeline will be developed, discussed and agreed with the *REF 2014 Management Working Group*. Information on the university's REF preparations, process and procedures and timescales involved, including the publication of the *Code of Practice* will be made available to staff across the university via fit-for-purpose *REF 2014* webpages.
- There will be a regular schedule of updates to formal internal groups and committees:
 - Strategic Planning and Resources Group (SPARG)

- Research Institute Directors
 - Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators
 - Senior management groups
 - Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC)
 - Academic Council
 - Board of Governors
- Research Institutes, in co-ordination with Research and Enterprise Services, to develop and establish a mechanism that will allow all relevant information and arrangements relating to the REF to ensure they are transmitted via email bulletins to all relevant staff across the university, and on the university's dedicated *REF 2014* webpages. This process will be reinforced by the activities of the *REF 2014 Management Working Group* and UoA Co-ordinators.
 - There will be discussions with relevant higher education institutions on potential joint working in the context of the Research Pooling initiative in Scotland. In any case, the university will aim to ensure that joint decision-making across institutions does not compromise adherence to the *Code of Practice*.
 - An appropriate communication with research staff across the university will be undertaken. In this, staff will be given the opportunity to flag confidentially if they have any personal circumstances that they wish to be taken into account with respect to their potential inclusion in the university's *REF 2014* submission. This will be based on the staff member wishing to submit fewer published research outputs for assessment than would normally be required for submission and assessment, but their proposal must be within the terms and conditions identified by the relevant UoA Panel criteria and working methods [*REF 01.2012, January 2012*].

DECISIONS ON INCLUSION

- The proposed aggregation of staff into UoAs will be based on a range of considerations that will include:
 - relevance of the research to the UoA;
 - quality profile of research outputs.
- In advance of *REF 2014*, external reviews of potential submissions in relevant UoAs have been already undertaken in 2011. A further review of updated submissions will be performed in early 2013. These reviews will use the same scoring mechanism that was used in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), which uses a profile of the star ratings and also an unclassified level which relates to contributions that do not achieve a nationally recognised standard of research quality. The results of these reviews will be analysed by the UoA Co-ordinators; Research Institute Directors, Deans of Faculty and REF Manager and thereafter discussed, in confidence, with the *REF 2014 Management Working Group*.
- The above process will provide an early indication of the strength and breadth of contributions to the future REF submission that are likely to be made by staff, and it will reveal any gaps that may need to be filled in order to maximise the strength of each UoA submission.

- With the above information, discussions will be held with the Research Institute Directors, Deans of Faculty and Heads of School/Associate Deans and other colleagues as appropriate, to agree how the most strategically important gaps will be filled, and agree timescales when this can be done. The process will also identify cases where individuals are unlikely to be able to achieve the required number and quality of contributions that will be necessary in order to be included in the final submission to the *REF 2014*.
- Simultaneously to the above, following consultation with relevant stakeholders, the university will decide the minimum expected quality threshold that should be applied for each submission to the REF. This is intended to help the university achieve suitably beneficial profiles that will position the university appropriately in the final results when published. These threshold standards will be formed into a proposal for consideration by the *REF 2014 Management Working Group*, the Strategic Planning and Resources Group and the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. The decisions reached by the *REF 2014 Management Working Group* will be presented to Academic Council via the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee for endorsement and ultimately to the Principal for approval, prior to presentation to Academic Council.
- In addition to internal forms of self-assessment and analysis, a number of external assessors (external to the university) will be identified and commissioned to act on behalf of the university. The assessors will assist with the assessment of output quality and will provide an independent source of help and advice during relevant stages of the preparations process for the final submission. This is intended to maintain the rigour and integrity of the university's internal processes and procedures, and to strengthen and complete the final submissions. The input of assessors is guided by the university's agreed targets for its performance in the *REF 2014*.
- Data on research income, research students and research studentships will also be secured and analysed for their contributions to the eventual submissions the university chooses to make. Impact case studies will be produced as per the requirements of the national REF Team, and these will be fed at appropriate stages into future internal assessments of quality and progress towards final submission status.
- Based primarily on the decisions taken with respect to minimum quality standards, and following the annual update reviews, provisional decisions on the inclusion status of individual staff will be considered and decided.

CONSIDERATION OF INDIVIDUAL/COMPLEX CIRCUMSTANCES

Decisions taken about which staff to submit to *REF 2014* will be based on the key principle of the quality of research, taking account of the specific guidance supplied by the national *REF Units of Assessment (UoA) Panels* in their *Panel Criteria and Working Methods* statements [*REF 01.2012, January 2012*]. The normal expectation is that up to a maximum of four items of excellent research output will be submitted by those selected for inclusion in the university's return, unless there are mitigating circumstances or the national REF UOA Panels have set a lower number. The REF Manager, in consultation with the *REF 2014 Management Working Group*, makes the final decision about the Units of Assessment to which the university will submit and those staff to be included in the submissions.

Disclosure of Individual Staff Circumstances

As a measure to support equality and diversity, the *REF 2014 Management Working Group* will consider a defined number of *individual/complex circumstances* that may have significantly constrained the academic's ability to produce four outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period. The quality of publications of staff with such circumstances will be assessed in the same manner than those of staff without special circumstances.

Eligible Individual Staff Circumstances

Individual staff circumstances which may have significantly constrained their ability to produce four outputs or work productively throughout the assessment period:

- early career researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2009);
- junior clinical academic staff who have not gained a Certificate of Completion of Training by 31 October 2013;
- part-time employment;
- career break or secondment outside of the higher education sector in which the individual did not undertake academic research;
- maternity leave, statutory adoption leave, and additional paternity leave (taken by partners of new mothers or co-adopters);
- disability (including conditions such as cancer and chronic fatigue);
- ill health or injury;
- mental health conditions;
- constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding, adoption, paternity or childcare that are in addition to periods of maternity, statutory adoption or additional paternity leave taken. This could include, for example, pregnancy-related illness and health and safety restrictions in laboratory and field work;
- other caring responsibilities (including caring for an elderly or disabled relative);
- gender reassignment;
- other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics described in the Equality Act 2010, and as listed at paragraph 190 in *Assessment framework and guidance on submissions* [*REF 02.2011, July 2011*], or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

The university may be required to provide information describing any circumstances that have significantly adversely affected an individual's contribution to the submission [see [Annex B](#)].

All national REF Panel chairs, members and secretaries are bound by confidentiality requirements, and acceptance of these requirements is a condition of appointment. No information relating to individual/complex circumstances will be published by the funding bodies' REF Team. All data collected, stored and processed by the national REF Team will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Procedures related to Individual/Complex Circumstances

- The university has put in place the procedures to enable staff to disclose their circumstances in an appropriate and confidential manner.
- All staff eligible for selection will be asked to complete a form [see [Annex B](#)] about their individual/complex circumstances. In order to ensure the appropriate level of confidentiality, this process will be managed centrally by the REF 2014 Management Working Group. Consequently all forms should be returned to the Research Support Manager, Research and Enterprise Services, on behalf of the REF 2014 Management Working Group and all forms will be treated as confidential.
- At this point, an initial check of the information provided will be undertaken by the Research Support Manager, Research and Enterprise Services (RES), to ensure that the disclosure falls within the circumstances, and contains a clearly defined reduction in outputs as stipulated in the *Panel criteria and working methods [REF 01.2012, January 2012]*. The Research Support Manager will advise the REF2014 Management Working Group on the reduced research outputs that are appropriate.
- Where an individual's circumstances are deemed 'complex' and requires a judgement to be made on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs submitted, in accordance with the *Panel criteria and working methods [REF 01.2012, January 2012]*, the form(s) will then be immediately referred to a convened *Individual Circumstances Selection Panel* (comprising the REF Manager, Head of Human Resources or nominee, and an appropriate member of the university's Equality and Diversity Advisory Group).
- The *Individual Circumstances Selection Panel* will report the judgement of reductions to outputs to the REF 2014 Management Working Group, which, in turn, will adjust individual submissions accordingly.
- This process will take into account relevant equal opportunities legislation and guidance, in addition to all guiding rules and regulations of the REF.
- The outcome of this process will be notified to the staff member, and will be dealt with appropriate confidentiality and sensitivity.

The REF Manager will monitor the proposed submissions to ensure that all relevant actions have been taken to ensure equitable and appropriate representation, and to ensure that all relevant equality and diversity issues have been appropriately taken into account.

The above process will be initiated following the mock REF review in Spring 2011 and then repeated following update audit/mini REF assessments in 2012 and 2013. It is intended that the final stage of decision-making with respect to an individual's inclusion in the university's REF 2014 submission will be made by June 2013, and communicated forthwith to the relevant staff.

Individuals who are being considered for inclusion in the *REF 2014* submission will be advised of their provision (or final) inclusion status at several stages throughout the preparations process normally, as stated, following the conclusion of the most recent audit update process. Decisions taken about which staff to submit to *REF 2014* will be based on the key principle of the quality of research, taking account of the specific guidance supplied by the national *REF Units of Assessment (UoA) Panels* in their *Panel Criteria and Working Methods* statements [*REF 01.2012, January 2012*]. Consideration will also be given to a range of other contributions to the *REF 2014* that will be taken into account in the final assessment by UoA Sub Panels. These will include contributions to the *research environment* and *research impact*, and will also take into account any relevant factors that are identified by the *Panel criteria and working methods* [*REF 01.2012, January 2012*].

Once individuals have received notification of their final inclusion status, those not included and wishing to appeal against the decision reached in their own case, within the context of this *Code of Practice* (ie. on the basis of equality issues) may invoke a process of appeal. This process is outlined in the [next section](#) of this *Code of Practice*.

The university will continue to support its fixed-term and part-time staff in relation to equality and diversity in the same manner as its full-time staff.

FEEDBACK ON INCLUSION AND APPEALS

In the period prior to the final recommendations on inclusion, the *REF 2014 Management Working Group* will ensure there is ample provision for an individual's research output to be discussed confidentially, including both feedback from external review and any possible mitigating circumstances that an individual may wish to be taken into account.

Once a final decision on inclusion/non-inclusion of staff has been made, this will be conveyed to individuals through confidential discussions with their UoA Co-ordinators. Previous discussions should ensure that expectations are managed.

Any individual who is dissatisfied with a decision may lodge an appeal in writing to a *REF 2014 Appeals Panel*. All such appeals must be lodged with the Research Support Manager, Research and Enterprise Services, by **19 July 2013** and a decision will be reached by **16 August 2013**, with communication back to the appellant by **23 August 2013, or within two weeks of the decision being received if this is later than 19 July 2013**. In any appeal the grounds of any perceived discrimination should be fully set out. Issues relating to the quality or otherwise of research outputs will not be considered.

The *REF 2014 Appeals Panel* will constitute the Deputy Principal, a Dean of Faculty or nominee through which the appellant was considered for submission, the Executive Director (Human Resources) (or nominee), and an equality practitioner. It will be chaired by the Deputy Principal. The individual lodging the appeal may choose to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at the appeal meeting.

Following the date of receipt of the letter from the *REF 2014 Appeals Panel*, the staff member will have five working days in which to submit a formal appeal to the Principal and Vice-Chancellor via the REF Manager. The Principal will then consider the case for invoking an independent review. This review will normally involve two senior academics who have not been involved in the decision-making process to date and who are independent of the appellant. This review will be concluded within fifteen working days of receipt of the formal appeal being received by the Principal.

The decision reached by the independent review will be subject to confirmation by the Principal. The Principal's decision will be considered final and will be communicated confidentially and directly to the staff member concerned.

The final appeals process will be concluded by the end of September 2013.

MONITORING

The *REF 2014 Management Working Group* will receive and analyse, prior to final submission to the *REF 2014*, a report on the equality and diversity profile for all staff who are:

- eligible for submission; and
- submitted.

The group will determine if a further equality impact assessment is required.

This will be conducted and analysed annually by the *REF 2014 Management Working Group* and the results of outcomes of any equality impact assessments undertaken and reported to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee via the university's Equality and Diversity Advisory Group.

FINAL SUBMISSION

At the completion of the appeals process, the Research Support Manager, Research and Enterprise Services, will liaise with the *REF 2014 Management Working Group* to see that a final check on the proposed staff submission is made in terms of any outstanding equality and diversity issues.

Once completed, relevant information with respect to research staff being included, and for whom appropriate individual/complex circumstances that may have adversely affected their ability to produce the standard minimum number of research outputs has been deemed as such by the university, will be entered into the confidential section of the *REF 2014* submission for that Unit of Assessment.

A report highlighting the equality profile of the university's final submission will be produced, and also on a Unit of Assessment/by Unit of Assessment basis, to serve as a final check on the proposed submission in all relevant areas. The results of the equality impact assessments will be published at an appropriate stage following submission.

The university will make its submission to the *REF 2014* by the deadline: 29 November 2013.

See [next section](#) for the timeline for *REF 2014*.

Weblinks for further information:

REF 2014 website: www.ref.ac.uk

RGU REF website: www.rgu.ac.uk/research

TIMELINE FOR 2014 REF

January 2012	Publication of panel criteria and working methods
31 July 2012	HEIs intending to make submissions to the REF submit their codes of practice on the selection of staff
Autumn 2012	Pilot of the REF submissions system
October 2012	Invitations to HEIs to make submissions; invitation to request multiple submissions; and start of survey of submissions intentions
December 2012	Launch of submissions intentions complete and deadline for multiple submissions
January 2013	Launch of submissions systems and accompanying technical advice
31 July 2013	End of assessment period (for research impacts, the research environment and data about research income and research doctoral degrees awarded)
31 October 2013	Census date for staff eligible for selection
29 November 2013	Closing date for submissions
31 December 2013	End of publication period (cut-off point for publication of research outputs, and for outputs underpinning impact case studies)
Throughout 2014	Panels assess submissions
December 2014	Publication of outcomes
Spring 2015	Publication of submissions, panel overview reports and sub-profiles

ANNEX A: REF 2014 MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

NAME	REF 2014 Management Working Group (REF 2014 MWG)
PROCESS OWNER:	Vice-Principal (Research and Commercialisation) [REF Manager]
MEMBERSHIP:	Vice-Principal (Research and Commercialisation) (Convener) [REF Manager] Research Institute Directors Deans of Faculty (or nominees) Research and Enterprise Director Unit of Assessment (UoA) Co-ordinators Head of Human Resources (or nominee) Research Support Manager (or nominee) Director of Library Services (or nominee) Research Degrees Officer (Academic Affairs) Cost Accountant (Finance)
REPORTING TO:	Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	<p>As part of the university's <i>Equality and Diversity Policy</i> all individuals are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ be aware of, and comply with, the university's <i>Equality and Diversity Policy</i>; ▪ complete mandatory training in equality and diversity; ▪ treat everyone with respect; ▪ eliminate discrimination; ▪ advance equality and promote good relations across all protected characteristics; ▪ actively promote equality and diversity; and ▪ co-operate with the university in complying with any requirements or duty imposed under any relevant legislation. <p>All members of the <i>REF 2014 MWG</i> will receive specific equality and diversity training in relation to <i>REF 2014</i>.</p>
REMIT:	<p>The <i>REF 2014 MWG</i>² will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ conduct and manage the <i>REF 2014</i> submission process and ensure the university's adherence to the <i>Code of Practice for Equality and Diversity in the Submission Process: Staff Selection</i>, under the responsibility of the <i>REF</i> Manager; ▪ produce, prior to final submission to the REF in late 2013, an equality and diversity profile for all staff who are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – eligible for submission; and – submitted; ▪ annually monitor and analyse data for any imbalances and assess the need for further equality impact assessment, providing this analysis to the university's Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG), and informing EDAG of outcomes of equality impact assessments undertaken, prior to the <i>REF 2014 MWG</i> informing the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee; ▪ reporting to, and take advice from, the university's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee when considering draft submissions for UoAs for final approval; ▪ ensure all papers and minutes of the <i>REF 2014 MWG</i> are made available to staff on the university's <i>REF 2014</i> webpages.
FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS:	The <i>REF 2014 MWG</i> will meet on a quarterly basis until late 2013 (last date for submissions) and, thereafter, annually to monitor, evaluate and review the selection procedures and processes, including feedback on appeals processes.

² Annex A REF 2014 Management Working Group in terms of the *Code of Practice for Equality and Diversity in the Submission Process: Staff Selection*. A fuller remit of this group will be available on the university's *REF2014* webpages.

ANNEX B: INDIVIDUAL/COMPLEX CIRCUMSTANCES FORM



To: All members of staff eligible for return in REF 2014

From: Professor Peter Robertson – Vice Principal and Pro Vice Chancellor, Research and Commercialisation

Subject: **REF 2014 consideration of individual staff circumstances**

The Robert Gordon University is committed to ensuring that decisions about selecting staff for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) are made in a fair, transparent and consistent manner. Information on how eligible staff will be selected for submission to the REF can be found in the university's *Code of Practice for Equality and Diversity in the Submission Process: Staff Selection* which can be found at www.rgu.ac.uk/research.

To ensure that REF processes are fair, RGU is collecting data on individual/complex circumstances from all staff eligible for submission. The data will be used to identify which staff are eligible for submission with fewer than four outputs. Summary level data collected may also inform the university's monitoring of staff selection procedures at the institutional level.

In determining whether eligible staff may be submitted to the REF with fewer than four research outputs, the university and the *REF 2014 Management Working Group* will take the following circumstances into consideration:

- early career researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2009);
- junior clinical academic staff who have not gained a Certificate of Completion of Training by 31 October 2013;
- part-time employment;
- career break or secondment outside of the higher education sector in which the individual did not undertake academic research;
- maternity leave, statutory adoption leave, and additional paternity leave (taken by partners of new mothers or co-adopters);
- disability (including conditions such as cancer and chronic fatigue);
- ill health or injury;
- mental health conditions;
- constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding, adoption, paternity or childcare that are in addition to periods of maternity, statutory adoption or additional paternity leave taken. This could include, for example, pregnancy-related illness and health and safety restrictions in laboratory and field work;
- other caring responsibilities (including caring for an elderly or disabled relative);
- gender reassignment;
- other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics described in the Equality Act 2010, and as listed at paragraph 190 in *Assessment framework and guidance on submissions [REF 02.2011, July 2011]*, or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

If your research output has been affected by other circumstances, not including teaching and administration that are not listed above, please detail them on this form as they may be considered.

In determining the number of outputs staff are required to submit, the institution will observe the definitions of individual staff circumstances provided in the published REF 'Panel criteria and working methods' (January 2012) available at www.ref.ac.uk under 'Publications'.

What action do I need to take?

If you are eligible for REF submission you are encouraged to complete the attached form.

If further information is required about any circumstances disclosed, you will be contacted by the Research Support Manager, Research and Enterprise Services.

Who will see the information that I provide?

Within Robert Gordon University the information that you provide will initially be seen by the Research Support Manager, Research and Enterprise Services (RES) who will advise the *REF2014 Management Working Group* on the reduced research outputs that are appropriate. However, where an individual's circumstances are deemed to be 'complex', this will be immediately referred to the *Individual Circumstances Selection Panel (ICSP)*.

All members of the *REF2014 Management Working Group* and the *Individual Circumstances Selection Panel* will observe confidentiality requirements and ensure information will be stored securely.

Information provided on the form may be shared externally for the purposes of evidencing any reduction in the number of research outputs:

- For **circumstances with a clearly-defined reduction in outputs**, information will be seen by the relevant REF Sub-Panel, the REF Panel secretariat and the UK funding bodies' REF Team. This will be information about early-career researcher status, part-time working, career breaks or secondments, and periods of maternity, additional paternity or adoption leave taken.
- For **more complex circumstances**, information will be seen only by the national REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, the REF Main Panel Chairs and the UK funding bodies' REF team. This will be information to explain the impact on your research of circumstances such as disability, ill health, injury, mental health conditions, gender reassignment, caring responsibilities or constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding, adoption and paternity (in addition to the period of leave taken). This information will not be seen by the REF Sub-Panel.

All REF Panel members, chairs and secretaries are bound by confidentiality requirements, and acceptance of the confidentiality requirements is a condition of their appointment to the role. No information relating to identifiable individuals' circumstances will be published by the funding bodies' REF Team. All data collected, stored and processed by the UK funding bodies' REF Team will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The *Assessment framework and guidance on submissions [REF 02.2011, July 2011]* requires all higher education institutions participating in the REF to ensure appropriate confidentiality in handling individual staff circumstances. Where joint submissions are made it may be necessary to share the information provided with another institution.

What if my circumstances change?

The university recognises that staff circumstances may change between 1 January 2008 and 31 October 2013. If your circumstances change you can download a copy of the *Individual Staff Circumstances Disclosure Form* at www.rgu.ac.uk/research.

**INDIVIDUAL STAFF CIRCUMSTANCES
DISCLOSURE FORM**



IN CONFIDENCE

Name	
Department	
Unit of Assessment	

Section One:

Please select one of the following:

- I have no individual circumstances that I wish to be taken into consideration for the purposes of the Research Excellence Framework (REF).
- I have individual circumstances that I wish to make known but I am not seeking a reduction in outputs. (Please complete sections two and three)
- In completing this form I am seeking a reduction in research outputs. (Please complete sections two and three)

Section Two:

Please select as appropriate:

- I would like to be contacted by a member of human resources staff to discuss my circumstances and requirements and/or the support provided by RGU. My contact details for this purpose are:

Email	
Telephone	
Preferred method of communication	

- I do **not** wish to be contacted by a member of Human Resources staff

Section Three:

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

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

Circumstance	Information required
Early career researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2009)	Date on which you became an early career research
Information	
Junior clinical academic staff who have not gained Certificate of Completion of Training by 31 October 2013 <i>[Delete as appropriate: applies to specific units of assessment within Panel A]</i>	Please place a tick in this box if the circumstance applies:
Part-time employee	FTE and duration in months
Information	
Career break or secondment outside of the higher education sector	Dates and duration in months
Information	
Maternity leave, statutory adoption leave, or additional paternity leave (taken by partners of new mothers or co-adopters)	For each period of leave state which type of leave was taken and the dates and duration in months
Information	
Disability (including conditions such as cancer and chronic fatigue)	Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months
Information	
Mental health condition	Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months
Information	
Ill health or injury	Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months
Information	

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

Please select as appropriate:

- I confirm that the information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances.
- I recognise that the information provided will be used for REF purposes and will be seen by the Research Support Manager, Research and Enterprise Services and, should an individual's circumstances be deemed 'complex', by the *Individual Circumstances Selection Panel*.
- I realise that it may be necessary to share information with the UK funding bodies' REF team, who may make the information available to REF panel chairs, members and secretaries and/or the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel. [Delete if not applicable: I recognise that if a joint submission is made, information may be shared with another institution.] Where permission is not provided RGU will be limited in the action it can take.

Signature: Date:
 (Staff member)

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Following consideration of the personal circumstances described above, the Research Support Manager (RES)/ICSP has determined:

- Will progress the staff member's inclusion in the REF submission with [insert number] of research outputs. [Subject to specific university criteria set out in the Code of Practice]. Rationale for the proposed number of outputs:

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

- Requires further information of the circumstances described as follows:

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

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

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

If [insert name of staff member] wishes to appeal against the decision of the [insert name of the committee or individuals] they will need to do so by 19th July 2013 and details of the appeals process can be found at www.rgu.ac.uk/research.

Signature: Date:
([insert name of person/Convenor ICSP responsible for decision])

Signature: Date:
(REF Manager)