

Royal Academy of Music

Research Excellence Framework 2014

INSTITUTIONAL CODE OF PRACTICE

JULY 2012, REVISED NOVEMBER 2012

Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this Code of Practice is to set out the institutional framework for the fair and transparent selection of staff for inclusion in the Royal Academy of Music's submission to REF2014. The Code aims to promote equality and diversity in the Academy's preparation of its submission by explaining our statutory obligations under the 2010 Equality Act and other equality-related legislation, setting out the values that will underpin our approach to staff selection, describing the mechanisms and processes we will adopt, and outlining the accountabilities and safeguards that we will put in place to ensure the fair operation of the system.
- 1.2 This Code has been developed by the Research Management Team and the Head of Human Resources in consultation with a broad range of full-time and part-time staff, and with reference to the Academy's Code of Practice for RAE2008, the Academy's current Equality Scheme and other related policies, guidance published by HEFCE, and unpublished guidance drawn from HEFCE consultation events held in the autumn of 2011. The staff selection policies and processes it describes have been subject to an initial Equality Impact Assessment in June 2012, adopted at the Academy's Research Committee, and formally approved by Academic Board.
- 1.3 The Code may be subject to further revisions following Equality Assessment Impacts conducted by the Academy's Equality Impact Assessment Sub-Committee after the following key points in the development of the Academy's REF submission:
- the receipt of responses to the letter inviting all staff to submit details of their research activity and confidential disclosure of relevant personal circumstances (January 2013)
 - the receipt of responses to the final letter inviting staff to submit details of their research activity and confidential disclosure of relevant personal circumstances (June 2013)
 - the end of the period in which appeals against the Selection Committee's decisions may be considered (mid October 2013).

Section 2: Institutional Responsibilities

- 2.1 The Academy has statutory responsibilities under the terms of the 2010 Equality Act. These underpin all the Academy's policies and processes. The Academy's Equality Scheme and related policies were revised in the Spring Term of 2012 with a view to making the Academy fully compliant with the terms of the Act. This Code of Practice is designed to be congruent with the institution's equality policies.

- 2.2 In its support of research-active staff and in its selection processes for REF2014, the Academy will make every effort to: advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; ensure that protection from discrimination extends to people who are perceived to have or are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic; eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the 2010 Act.
- 2.3 The Academy will ensure that its REF2014 selection policies and procedures do not discriminate unlawfully against individuals because of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation or because they are pregnant or have recently given birth. Equality of opportunity will be given to eligible full-time and part-time staff and those on fixed-term contracts.
- 2.4 The Academy will conduct further periodic Impact Assessment Exercises on its REF2014 policies with the aim of enhancing this Code of Practice, the Academy's relevant policies, the selection processes, and their operation.
- 2.5 The Academy will ensure that information, advice and guidance on its REF2014 policies and selection processes will be made available to all eligible staff.

Section 3: Principles

- 3.1 The Academy's REF2014 Selection Processes will be governed by four fundamental principles: transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusiveness.
- 3.2 We will ensure transparency by: publishing a set of clear guidelines about REF2014 selection and submission for all eligible staff; describing the criteria for selection; setting out a timescale for the selection process; ensuring that all eligible staff receive this information; holding a series of staff training events dedicated to REF2014 in the lead up to the selection process; providing feedback on all proposed individual submissions.
- 3.3 We will ensure consistency by: ensuring that all eligible staff are informed of their rights in relation to REF2014; establishing an REF2014 Selection Committee with clear, published terms of reference (including selection criteria and a description of the selection procedures); establishing an Appeals Committee to deal with any appeals arising from decisions of the REF2014 Selection Committee; establishing a mechanism whereby the Academy proactively encourages all eligible staff to make confidential disclosure of any personal circumstances which might pertain to the 2010 Equality Act.
- 3.4 We will ensure accountability by assigning specific roles in the selection process to various officers of the Academy (appointed to these tasks by Academic Board), and by Academic Board overseeing the fair, transparent and accountable operation of the published procedures.
- 3.5 We will ensure inclusiveness by developing policies which – in addition to meeting the terms of the 2010 Equality Act – will be underpinned by sensitivity to and understanding of cultural nuance. We will continue to support the research of all staff, including those who are ineligible for submission in to REF2014, and including research which falls outside of the

subject-focus of the institution. We will not discriminate against eligible part-time staff or those on fixed-term contracts.

Section 4: Communication

- 4.1 The Academy recognises that the four principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusiveness must be served a robust strategy for communicating to all staff details of its REF selection criteria and processes alongside accessible information, advice and guidance on issues relating to the REF exercise.
- 4.2 This Code will be placed on the Academy's publically-accessible web pages and – alongside detailed supplementary information, advice and guidance about REF2014 – on its intranet site.
- 4.3 A series of staff development events held between September 2012 and February 2013 will include presentation and discussion of the Academy's selection criteria, processes and rationale. These events will be held at departmental level to reach as many staff as possible. Staff who are absent from work or are unable to attend any of these events will be invited by email to contact the Deputy Principal (Programmes and Research) or the Head of Human Resources to discuss the selection criteria, processes and rationale.
- 4.4 All members of staff will be emailed the Code of Practice alongside the initial letter inviting them to submit details of their research activities and output and inviting them to declare confidentially any personal circumstances that should be taken into account by the Selection Committee. Part-time members of staff without email accounts and staff who are absent from work will be sent these documents in hard copy. The letters will include contact details for the Deputy Principal (Programmes and Research) and the Head of Human Resources who will be available to discuss any queries or concerns individual members of staff may have about the Code of Practice and the selection criteria and processes.
- 4.5 A second round of staff meetings will be held before we issue the final letter inviting staff to submit for consideration by the Selection Committee. These meetings will enable staff to ask further questions or seek further clarification about the selection criteria and processes, and to enable members of the Selection Committee to discuss any revisions to the Code of Practice or the selection criteria and procedures.
- 4.6 All staff will be notified of any subsequent revisions to the Code of Practice, the selection criteria, or the selection process by email or hard-copy letter and by a 'news item' posted prominently on the front page of the Academy's intranet site.

Section 5: Formulation and Implementation of Selection Policies and Processes

- 5.1 The Academy's selection policies for REF2014 will be set by the Research Committee and ratified by Academic Board.
- 5.2 Academic Board will establish an REF2014 Selection Committee whose terms of reference, membership and accountabilities are described in section 6 below. The role of this committee is to solicit the submission of information from all eligible staff about their

research activities and output for the period covered by REF (including the extended period pertaining to impact), to invite disclosure from all eligible staff regarding personal circumstances which might pertain to the 2010 Equality Act and the protected categories covered therein, to scrutinise all the information gathered, to provide confidential feedback to all staff who have made submissions to the committee, and to select against the published criteria all staff to be included in the Academy's REF2014 submission.

5.3 The REF2014 Selection Committee will be accountable to Academic Board, to whom its decisions will be formally reported. The Committee will seek advice on the Academy's submission and research policies from the Research Committee. It will seek advice on equality issues from the Equality and Diversity Committee.

5.4 Academic Board will establish an REF Appeals Committee whose terms of reference, membership and accountabilities are described in section 7 below. The role of this committee is to hear and judge any appeals from eligible staff that may be forthcoming following decisions by the REF2014 Selection Committee. The REF Appeals Committee will be accountable to Academic Board, to whom its decisions will be formally reported.

5.5 The Equality Impact Assessment Sub-Committee will conduct Equality Impact Assessments on the Academy's REF2014 Policies and Procedures. This body is accountable to the Equality and Diversity Committee, thence to Academic Board.

5.6 All members of the REF2014 Selection Committee and the REF Appeals Committee will undergo bespoke training in Equality Issues relating to REF. This training will be managed by the Academy's Senior HR and Equality Advisor. The training will take place in two rounds:

5.6.1 An initial series of training sessions for both the Selection Committee and the Appeals Committee dealing with how the selection criteria, appeals criteria and terms of reference for these committees can be applied consistently and fairly in relation to the 2010 Equality Act and related employment legislation;

5.6.2 A second round of training sessions in which the committees will give detailed consideration to case studies (drawn from www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF and internally-developed, subject-specific hypothetical cases) which raise issues about dealing with the personal circumstances of staff in the selection and appeals processes.

5.7 The purpose of these training sessions is to ensure that all committee members understand their responsibilities and have the necessary experience and knowledge to discharge them effectively.

5.8 Appendix 1 presents in diagrammatic form the relationship between the relevant committees established to operate and oversee the selection and appeals procedures.

Section 6: REF2014 Selection Committee

6.1 Membership

The Principal: Professor Jonathan Freeman-Attwood (Chair)

Rationale: The Principal is the CEO of the institution and the Chair of its Academic Board.

The Deputy Principal (Programmes and Research): Dr Timothy Jones (Deputy Chair)

Rationale: The Deputy Principal (Programmes and Research) has senior management responsibilities for the Academy's research culture and programmes and is Chair of its Research Committee.

The Associate Head of Research: Dr David Gorton

Rationale: The Associate Head of Research holds key operational responsibilities for the REF2014 process within the Academy.

The Head of Postgraduate Programmes: Dr Neil Heyde

Rationale: The Head of Postgraduate Programmes has operational responsibilities for the research programmes and is a senior programme manager on the Academy's Research Committee.

The Head of the Keyboard Department: Joanna MacGregor

Rationale: The Head of Piano manages a large Principal Study Department. She is a member of Research Committee, an active researcher and, as a recently-appointed member of staff, brings an extra dimension of externality to the committee.

The Head of Human Resources: Paul Riddell

Rationale: The Head of Human Resources is the Chair of the Academy's Equality and Diversity Committee and is responsible for advising the REF2014 Selection Committee on all aspects of HR.

Governor: John Willan

Rationale: Independent member of the Academy's Governing Body, nominated for membership of the committee by the Governing Body to give an external perspective on the committee's decisions.

6.2 Selection Criteria

Submissions will be selected against the following equally-weighted criteria:

- 6.2.1 The number of eligible outputs (up to a maximum of four) in relation to the FTE eligibility of the researcher.
- 6.2.2 The extent of allowable reductions in output, in relation to disclosure of individual circumstances.
- 6.2.3 The relevance of the outputs to the published research strategy of the Academy and the relevant Unit(s) of Assessment.
- 6.2.4 The likely quality of the outputs (as defined by the published REF guidelines).

6.3 Terms of Reference

- 6.3.1 The purpose of the committee is to solicit relevant information from all staff eligible for inclusion in the Academy's REF2014 submission, to consider all submitted information, and to decide which eligible staff should be included in section 2 the Academy's submission (against the criteria set out in 5.2 above), and to provide timely, concise, confidential written feedback to each member of eligible staff.
- 6.3.2 In selecting which eligible staff to include in section 2 of the Academy's REF2014 submission, each member of the committee will have an equal vote. In the event of a tied vote, the Chairman shall have the casting vote.
- 6.3.3 The committee will be accountable to Academic Board, to whom it will report its decisions.
- 6.3.4 The number of meetings of the committee will not be capped at a predetermined figure but shall be determined by the time taken to fulfil its functions.

Section 7: REF Appeals Committee

7.1 Membership

The Deputy Principal: Mark Racz (Chair)

Rationale: The Deputy Principal is the most senior officer of the Academy who will not sit on the Selection Committee.

The Head of Undergraduate Programmes: Dr Anthony Gritten (Deputy Chair)

Rationale: The Head of Undergraduate Studies is a member of the Research Committee and the senior programme manager who will not sit on the Selection Committee.

The Head of a Principal Study department (to be nominated by Academic Board)

Rationale: The nominated Head will represent the perspective of Principal Study staff on the committee.

The Senior HR and Equality Advisor: Louisa Thomas

Rationale; The Senior HR and Equality Advisor will be responsible for advising the REF2014 Selection Committee and REF Appeals Committee on all aspects of HR and Equality.

7.2 Terms of Reference

- 7.2.1 The Committee shall be responsible for hearing and deciding on any appeals received from eligible staff against a decision of the REF2014 Selection Committee.
- 7.2.2 Appeals against a decision of the REF2014 Selection Committee must be made in writing to the Deputy Principal within 14 days of receipt of the Selection Committee's decision and feedback. The letter of appeal must set out the grounds for appeal.
- 7.2.3 Appeals will be admissible for consideration by the committee based only on one or both of the following grounds: (a) The Selection Committee was not in full possession of relevant facts about the member of staff's research work and/or any personal

circumstances related to protected categories under the 2010 Equality Act; (b) There is demonstrable bias on the part of the Selection Committee.

- 7.2.4 Appeals against the academic judgement of the Selection Committee regarding the quality of research output will not be deemed admissible for consideration by the Appeals Committee.
- 7.2.5 If the Deputy Principal considers an appeal to be admissible for consideration by the committee, he will convene a meeting of the committee within 14 days of receipt of the appeal.
- 7.2.6 The committee may request further evidence from the appellant and from the Chairman of the Selection Committee in considering the appeal.
- 7.2.7 Having considered all relevant evidence the committee may make one of three judgements:
- 7.2.7.1 to reject the appeal
 - 7.2.7.2 to uphold the appeal and require the Selection Committee to reassess the eligible member of staff's claim for inclusion in section 2 of the Academy's REF2014 submission in the light of new evidence
 - 7.2.7.3 to overturn the decision of the Selection Committee
- 7.2.8 A written notification of the judgement, including reasons for the decision, should be sent to the eligible member of staff and the Chairman of the Selection Committee within 7 days of the hearing. All decisions by the Appeals Committee will be reported to the next meeting of the Academic Board (under Reserved Business).
- 7.2.9 Decisions of the Appeals Committee shall be final.

Section 8: Disclosure

- 8.1 The REF 2014 makes a distinction between staff with clearly-defined circumstances and staff with complex circumstances. The REF 2014 publications *Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions* and Panel Criteria and Working Methods list and describe the circumstances which can be used as evidence for submitting fewer than four outputs for any member of staff whose circumstances constrained their ability to produce four outputs or work productively throughout the assessment period.
- 8.2 Clearly-defined circumstances include:
- Part-time working
 - Secondments or career breaks outside the higher-education sector in which the member of staff did not undertake research
 - Qualifying as an Early-Career Researcher
 - Maternity, paternity or adoption leave. (If, in addition to the defined period of leave in itself, maternity leave has involved related constraints on an individual's ability to conduct research, then the case may be returned as 'complex' so that a full range of circumstances can be taken into account.)

- 8.3 Complex circumstances include, but are not limited to:
- Disability
 - Ill health or injury
 - Mental health conditions
 - Constraints related to pregnancy or maternity in addition to a clearly defined period of maternity leave
 - Childcare or other caring responsibilities
 - Gender reassignment
 - Other circumstances relating to protected characteristics
- 8.4 The Academy's Senior HR and Equality Advisor will be available to any staff requiring support, information, advice or guidance in relation to their personal circumstances.
- 8.5 The Academy shall afford all eligible staff the opportunity to disclose individual circumstances in relation to protected characteristics to the Head of Human Resources as part of the research submission procedure. In addition to the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010, eligible staff may also detail person specific circumstances to the Selection Committee for special consideration. All eligible staff will be provided with a confidential disclosure form for this purpose. Where a disclosure has been made, the Head of Human Resources may discuss the details of the information initially with the member of staff and, if appropriate, the Chair of the REF2014 Selection Committee. Where necessary, additional staff such as the Disability Advisor shall be consulted for advice, and subsequent reasonable adjustments will be fully considered by the REF2014 Selection Committee.
- 8.6 The Academy gathers statistical information relating to protected characteristics of all staff, which shall help the Academy to determine areas of underrepresentation within its research environment, for future dialogue, the active engagement and elimination of discrimination and will be used to return statistical information to HESA.
- 8.7 Information relating to specific personal circumstances shall be considered with the individual's consent. Information relating to personal circumstances will not be shared outside the REF2014 Selection Committee.
- 8.8 The Academy adheres to strict guidelines in relation to the gathering, use and storage of sensitive, personal information, particularly in relation to the monitoring of staff characteristics. Confidentiality of data will be strictly maintained within existing Academy policy, in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Section 9: Equality Impact Assessments

- 9.1 The Academy has a responsibility to conduct Equality Impact Assessments when reviewing a proposed or existing organisational policy, procedure or function, in order to identify any impact on staff, students or visitors in respect of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age or religion or belief.
- 9.2 EIAs enable the Academy to consider whether a policy, procedure or function needs to be revised in order to maximise a positive impact or minimise/remove a negative impact, and is a practical tool to help eliminate discrimination, improve our services and positively promote equality of opportunity across the institution.

- 9.3 Three stages of EIAs are: an initial screening; a full impact assessment; and ongoing monitoring and evaluation, during which evidence is collected and collated.
- 9.4 It is the responsibility of the Chair of the REF2014 Selection Committee to ensure an appropriate EIA is conducted at all relevant junctures. Findings from EIAs will be collated and discussed by the EIA Sub Committee of the Equality & Diversity Committee, which will recommend a course of action for research activity in general.
- 9.5 Following the initial EIA in June 2012, further periodic EIAs of the Academy's staff selection policies and procedures for REF2014 will inform the development of this Code of Practice. Significant amendments to both policy and practice shall trigger additional EIAs to ensure that the principles outlined in section 3 above are not mitigated.
- 9.6 Recommendations from an EIA shall be presented to the Chair of the REF2014 Selection Committee for consideration. Any negative impact, whether direct or indirect, on groups or individuals with a protected characteristic shall be addressed as a matter of priority.
- 9.7 A record of all stages of the EIA shall be kept, in accordance with Academy policy, with the Management Information Co-ordinator.

Section 10: Timescale

The following timescale will be adopted for the implementation of these policies and procedures.

February 2012

Academic Board nominates membership of REF 2014 Selection Committee membership and terms of reference; REF 2014 Appeals Committee membership and terms of reference. Draft text of REF 2014 Royal Academy of Music Institutional Code of Practice is agreed.

June 2012

Initial Equality Impact Assessment of staff selection procedures as described in REF 2014 Royal Academy of Music Institutional Code of Practice. Academic Board considers recommendations arising from the EIA.

July 2012

Final text of Code of Practice agreed by Academic Board and submitted to HEFCE.

Autumn 2012

Pilot exercise of the REF submissions system.

September 2012 to February 2013

First round of staff development events: REF 2014

October 2012

Invitation to HEIs to make submissions; invitation to request multiple submissions; and start of survey of submissions intentions.

December 2012

Survey of submissions intentions complete and deadline for requests for multiple submissions.

January 2013

Launch of submissions systems; beginning input of data for submission.

Second letter to all staff, informing them of the REF 2014 Institutional Code of Practice, inviting them to submit details of research activity for inclusion in the submission, and inviting confidential disclosure of relevant personal circumstances that might pertain to the 2010 Act.

March 2013

Round of training sessions for REF 2014 Selection Committee and REF 2014 Appeals Committee

April-June 2013

Second round of staff development events: REF 2014

May-June 2013

Research Committee and Academic Board: drafts of impact and environment statements

June 2013

Final letter to all staff with invitation to submit.

31 July 2013

End of assessment period (impacts; environment; income; research degrees).

30 September 2013

Publication of list of included staff; start of appeals period.

October 2013

Confirmation of employment status and FTE of all included staff by HR.

14 October 2013

End of appeals period

31 October 2013

Census date.

November 2013

Sign-off completed submission by Principal.

29 November 2013

Closing date for submissions.

31 December 2013

End of publication period.

APPENDIX 1

Royal Academy of Music: REF2014 Selection Process: Committee Structure

