

CODE OF PRACTICE ON THE FAIR AND TRANSPARENT SELECTION OF STAFF FOR INCLUSION IN REF 2014

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

In agreeing and publishing this code of conduct for the REF, Central affirms its belief in, and commitment to, equality of opportunity; fairness and consistency; transparency; confidentiality; good institutional communication; appreciation of staff; and avoidance of divisive practices. RCSSD is committed to providing full and open explanations to academic staff concerning the management of the REF submission process.

In accordance with the REF guidance this code of practice and the procedures herein have been developed with the following principles at its core in order to ensure fairness to staff:

Transparency: All processes for the selection of REF submissions will be transparent and based on research outputs. This code of practice will be placed on the intranet and School website. The code of practice will also be e-mailed to ALL academic staff whether on leave, sabbatical or absent in any way from the School

Consistency: Policy in respect of REF selection is consistent across the institution and the code of practice will be implemented uniformly. This code of practice sets out the principles to be applied to all aspects/stages of the process at all levels within the School where decisions will be made.

Accountability: Responsibilities will be clearly defined, and individuals and bodies involved in selecting REF submissions will be identified by name or role. The specialist training of those involved in selecting REF outputs will be noted in the Code. Operating criteria and terms of reference for individuals, committees, advisory groups and any other bodies concerned with REF selection will be made readily available to all individuals and groups concerned.

Inclusivity: This Code of Practice particularly addresses matters specific to the preparation of the REF submission including the selection of outputs and staff for inclusion in the School's submission to REF2014. It applies to all members of the School involved in REF processes and to any external staff engaged by the School.

By means of its Code the School will promote an inclusive environment, enabling the identification of all staff eligible for submission to the REF who have produced research at a level of excellence to be determined and announced in advance of formal selection.

The School will conduct its preparation for REF 2014 in a transparent and consistent manner and in accordance with its values, existing policies and codes of practice. It will undertake an Equality Impact Assessment at key stages of the selection process in accordance with its established mechanism to ensure inclusivity.

It does not replace any of the School's existing policies or codes of practice.

(NB This code may be revised following further information published, prior to final submission by 31 July 2012 as required by the HEFCE REF team).

1.2 Approval of the Code

The Code will be approved by the Executive Management Group (EMG) having been received at the Research and Ethics Committee, Academic Management Committee and the Equality and Diversity Committee.

1.3 Publication of the Code

This code will be published on the School's intranet and website once approved by EMG and all institutions' Codes of Practice will be published by HEFCE with the rest of the submissions at the end of the assessment process.

1.4 Legislative Context

As both an employer and public body, the School will ensure that its REF 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.

The School recognises that under the fixed-term employee and part-time workers regulations, fixed-term employees and part-time workers have the right not to be treated by an employer any less favourably than the employer treats comparable employees on open contracts (permanent) or full-time workers. The relevant regulations are:

- a. Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- b. Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002

All fixed term and part-time staff are treated as favourably as those on permanent or full-time contracts, for example in relation to pay, staff benefits, training, promotion and career development opportunities.

In order to show compliance with the requirements of the public sector equality duty of the Equality Act 2010, the School, as a public sector organisation, will consider and understand the effect of its REF policies on equality.

Under the Equality Act 2010 the School has a duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not. There is also a need to ensure that the REF selection processes are assessed for their impact on different protected characteristics by gathering data on staff submissions in relation to protected characteristics. The School will be mindful of the duty to foster good relations when evaluating the research environment.

2.0 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR REF SELECTION

2.1 Names and Roles of REF selection

NB Names and roles are correct at the time of publication but may be updated in subsequent versions of this code.

- Professor Robin Nelson, Director of Research, *lead academic staff member on the development of institutional research profile, advice on the development of staff outputs and impact studies.*
- Professor Simon Shepherd, Deputy Principal (Academic), *institution's senior academic and member of the Executive Management Group, main author of the institution narrative for the submission, advice on the development of staff outputs and impact studies.*

- Dr Andrew Redford, Deputy Academic Registrar, *co-ordination of administrative support for submission across offices and departments.*
- Becky Gooby, Research Office Manager, *line manager of the Research Office, data handling and repository*
- Gail Hunt, Administrative Officer within Research Office, *data handling and repository*
- Dr Josh Edelman, Fellow in Research and Enterprise, *coordination of impact case studies*
- Heather Francis, Head of Human Resources, *advice on HR matters and provision of HR data*
- Dr. Catherine McNamara, Chair of the Equality and Diversity Committee and Deputy Dean of Studies, *advice on diversity issues.*

There are two primary working groups developing the School's REF submission. These are the REF Steering Group and the REF Peer Review Group.

The staff that have been selected to form the Steering Group are those whose positions involve research strategy, management or operation.

2.2 REF Steering Group.

The REF Steering Group will determine the School's submission strategy, timetable and actions for the REF2014. The Steering Group will formally report to the Research and Ethics Committee and the Academic Management Committee via the Director of Research. Chaired by the Deputy Academic Registrar (Quality), its membership is as follows:

- Deputy Academic Registrar (Quality)
- Deputy Principal (Academic)
- Director of Research
- Research Office Manager,
- Research Fellow in Research and Enterprise
- Deputy Dean of Studies
- Head of HR

The Deputy Academic Registrar will be responsible for the overall administration of the REF submission.

The Deputy Principal (Academic) as the senior member of academic staff will take overall responsibility for the submission.

The Director of Research will be responsible for coordinating the development process of academic staff outputs and impact case studies.

The Research Office Manager will support development of Outcomes for submission and oversee the database.

The Research Fellow in Research and Enterprise will develop Impact Case Studies and the Impact narrative.

The institutional narrative will be developed by a combination of the above and other staff as appropriate; however the main author of the institutional narrative will be the Deputy Principal (Academic) supported by the Director of Research (who will take a supporting, rather than leading, role in the process in view of his membership of REF sub-panel 35).

2.3 REF Peer Review Group.

Chaired by Deputy Principal (Academic), a School Peer Review group will scrutinise research outputs for possible submission. The Group will comprise:

- Deputy Principal (Academic)
- Director of Research
- Research Office Manager
- Deputy Dean of Studies/ Chair EDC

In line with the strategy announced in 2012 within the School, the Peer Review Group will determine a shortlist of potential staff to be submitted from the overall list of eligible staff (announced in 2012 but open to addition). The Review Group will periodically re-examine the short list of staff potentially eligible to be submitted and the Research Office will at six monthly intervals confirm any changes with the HR and Dean of Studies offices.

The Peer Review Group will also be responsible for determining the final list of staff for submission for approval in respect of Code compliance by the Steering Group. Members of the Peer Review Group will also provide guidance, feedback and advice on the development of staff submissions, outputs and impact case studies.

The Review and Steering Groups will consult with the Chair of the Equality and Diversity Committee as appropriate and will be advised on HR matters by the Head of Human Resources.

The Research and Ethics Committee and the Academic Management Committee will, on behalf of the Academic Board, advise the REF Steering Group on strategy and policy as the submission is developed. The terms of reference for the Research and Ethics Committee and the Academic Management Committee are provided in appendix A of this document.

The REF submission determined by the REF Steering Group will ultimately be approved by the Principal as Chair of the Academic Board and Chief Operating Officer of the School.

2.4 Training

All members of the REF Steering Group and the Peer Review Group will receive a briefing on the Equality and Diversity implications of selection for submission to the REF. The briefing will cover relevant legislation and this Code of Practice and will augment previous training members of staff have received in relation to other roles. The training will be completed by the submission date for this Code. Part of this training will include advice and guidance from the Equality Challenge Unit.

2.5 Confidentiality

Details of the submission will be confidential to the School.

Line managers will be informed by the Research Office of any staff potentially to be involved in the REF submission and will be informed if submission is confirmed by the Steering Group. The Dean of Studies will be provided with a list of all provisionally short-listed and final short-listed staff by the Research Office for the submission.

All staff involved in assessing and developing the submission will need to have access to all relevant data concerning the submission, including assessment of individual outputs.

Details of any complex personal circumstances which may be cited in the submission will remain confidential to the Group highlighted in section 3.9 only. .

2.6 Objective External Advising

At an early stage of the process, the School benefited from the summative and formative advice on Outcome profiles of an external consultant with national audit experience. The Director of Research may seek additional advice on self-assessment forms, designated research outputs, drafts of the institutional narrative or other confidential material (including appeals) relating to institutional and individual REF submission.

Any visitor or consultant will be asked by the Head of HR to sign a statement that:

- he/she: has read and understood CSSD's equal opportunities policy;
- has read and understood this code of conduct;
- and will observe a duty of care and confidentiality toward CSSD participants in the REF submission process.

3.0 TRANSPARENT SELECTION OF REF SUBMISSION

3.1 Timeline of Decision making

Final decisions on the work to be included will be taken by the REF Steering Group on the recommendations of the Peer Review Group.

The following itemises the process and timeline for the selection of the School's REF submission:

- All staff are requested to complete a proforma indicating published and expected outputs within the REF time-frame.
- Forms are reviewed by the Director of Research and/or members of the Peer Review Group.
- Discussions and feedback are undertaken between staff and members of the Peer Review Group on published and expected outputs within the REF time-frame.
- All staff eligible for submission complete individual staff disclosure form.
- Peer Review Group creates short list of staff for the REF.
- Peer Review Group works with staff to develop outputs.
- Peer Review Group makes recommendation on final list of staff to be submitted to steering group by 31 July 2013.
- Review Steering Group approves list of staff to be submitted, by 30 September 2013.

3.2 Criteria used by the Peer Review Group

The criteria on which the Peer Review Group will make their recommendations for the shortlist and the final list of staff to be submitted will be sent to all members of academic staff and provided on the intranet and website. The criteria for submission will be:

- staff eligible for inclusion according to the published REF criteria;
- staff in the judgement of the Peer Review Panel that have achieved a profile at the level of excellence determined and announced in advance within the School.

The REF2014 Assessment framework and guidance on submissions

http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02_11/ defines eligible staff as follows:

- Category A staff are defined as academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater and on the payroll of the submitting HEI on the census date (31 October 2013), and whose primary employment function is to undertake either

'research only' or 'teaching and research'¹.

- Category C staff are defined as individuals employed by an organisation other than an HEI, whose contract or job role (as documented by their employer) includes the undertaking of research, and whose research is primarily focused in the submitting unit on the census date (31 October 2013).

The School expects that full-time members of staff will normally² have four outputs to be eligible for submission to the REF, the average quality level of which should meet or exceed a School-wide threshold.

Members of staff with mitigating circumstances that have adversely affected the quantity of their research in the assessment period will be eligible for submission with fewer than four outputs but these would be subject to the same quality criterion. Further information is given below in the section on Individual Staff Circumstances.

The final decision on the individuals to be included will be taken by the REF Steering Group. In making these decisions the REF Steering Group will aim to maximise the benefit of the REF to the School.

The inclusion or otherwise of an individual and their work in the REF return does not of itself influence career progression. It will not directly influence their work load portfolio, promotion or career progression. Some data and analysis of outputs generated in the research reviews are used as inputs to REF preparation.

The Peer Review Group's role is to assess submissions as they develop, provide feedback to staff and to advise the Steering Group on the final list of staff for submission and their outputs.

They will base their assessments on the published REF criteria.

3.3 Communication and Feedback

Details of the REF process and guidance will be placed on the School's intranet research office pages.

Formal decisions on selection will be communicated to the relevant member of staff and their line manager in writing by the Research Office.

On-going feedback on the development of an individual's submission will be between the relevant members of academic staff either verbally or in writing as appropriate.

3.4 Data

Staff will be asked by the Research Office to ensure that data relating to them and their research is accurate. In particular staff should ensure that records of outputs have been fully and correctly recorded in the School's research repository.

All staff eligible to be included in the REF submission will be asked by HR to confirm that they give permission to the HR department to provide the relevant personnel data as needed to the Research Office in order to progress their submission.

² See section on Individual Staff Circumstance

Data provided to the Research Office will be used by the Research Office only and no other office of the School.

3.5 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and equality monitoring

The code of practice will have an Equality Impact Assessment completed when drafting the code and then revisited at key points in the selection of staff for the submission. This will include the creation of an equality profile which will comprise all staff eligible for submission and whether they are to be submitted or not and then categorised in terms of age, disability, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation. The first Equality Impact Assessment will be presented to the Equality and Diversity Committee and subsequent re-examination of the assessment and equality profiles will be considered by the chair of that committee.

3.6 Appeals

Any member of eligible staff whose research outputs were not selected for submission will have a right of appeal. Efforts will be made to resolve any appeals as quickly and as informally as possible. Any member of staff who wishes to complain of potential discrimination or who feels that they have not been dealt with in accordance with this Code of Practice should raise the matter informally in the first instance with their line manager who will investigate and attempt to resolve the matter in accordance with Central's grievance procedure.

Where the matter remains unresolved the appeal will be considered by the Academic Registrar who may take advice from other appropriate staff (Peer Review Group members and/or the external consultant) in investigating the complaint.

No appeals will be considered after 31 August 2013. While appeals may be raised at any time before this deadline, interim deadlines for appeals may also be set to ensure appeals are dealt with in a timely and efficient manner.

3.7 Individual staff circumstances

(NB This section of the Code may be updated when the final panel criteria and working methods and other guidance is published in early 2012).

REF Panels have identified a common set of individual staff circumstances which they will take into account in assessing submissions. These circumstances are described in the Guidance on Submissions Part 3, paragraphs 88 – 100 but are provided in summary below:

Clearly defined circumstances, which are:

- i. Qualifying as an Early Career Researcher (as defined at paragraphs 85-86 of the Guidance on Submissions).
- ii. Part-time working.
- iii. Maternity, paternity or adoption leave. (Note that maternity leave may involve related constraints on an individual's ability to conduct research in addition to the defined period of maternity leave itself. These cases can be returned as 'complex' as described at subparagraph b below, so that the full range of circumstances can be taken into account in making a judgement about the appropriate number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty).
- iv. Secondments or career breaks outside of the higher education sector, and in which the individual did not undertake academic research.

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 Part 4, Table 2 of the Guidance on Submissions, under 'Disability'.
- ii. Ill health or injury.
- iii. Mental health conditions.
- iv. Constraints related to pregnancy or maternity, in addition to a clearly defined period of maternity leave. (These may include but are not limited to: medical issues associated with pregnancy or maternity; health and safety restrictions in laboratory or field work during pregnancy or breastfeeding; constraints on the ability to travel to undertake fieldwork due to pregnancy or breast-feeding.)
- v. Childcare or other caring responsibilities.
- vi. Gender reassignment.
- vii. Other circumstances relating to the protected equalities characteristics listed at paragraph 5.

3.8 Process for dealing with personal circumstances

Guidance on the types of circumstances that would be eligible for remission and the acceptable reduction in number of outputs will be detailed once guidance is released in March 2012 from the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU).

All members of staff eligible for inclusion in REF2014 will be invited to register any appropriate circumstances. The form has been created with advice from the School's Human Resources Department.

This invitation will be issued by the end of February 2012 for completion by the end of March 2012. Thereafter staff may up-date their record as appropriate.

In order to be taken into account circumstances must be notified no later than the end of May 2013.

The School is required to identify all eligible Early Career Researchers, irrespective of whether they are included in the exercise and irrespective of whether any reduction in the number of outputs submitted is sought.

The reduction in the number of outputs for clearly defined circumstances will be confirmed by the Human Resources Office following consideration of the submitted disclosure form and use of the published reduction tariffs (paras 63-87, part 1 of REF Panel Criteria and Working Methods) in conjunction with the Deputy Academic Registrar and Chair of the Equality and Diversity Committee.

3.9 Complex cases Panel

For complex circumstances the circumstances will be assessed by a panel comprising a representative of HR and the Chair of EDC. The panel will make a judgement on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs to be submitted.

Information on staff circumstances will remain confidential to the panel described above.

Members of the REF Peer Review Panel may be informed of the existence of the circumstances and the requisite number of outputs. The person(s) responsible for entering REF data will also have access to this information.

The personal circumstances identified must be taken into account when assessing the number of outcomes that an individual will have included in the submission.

If the person is returned in REF2014 then this information may be included in the confidential part of the submission (REF1b).

The information may be updated at any time by the member of staff concerned using the form provided by the Research Office on the intranet.

3.10 Joint submission

The School will not make any joint submissions with other institutions.

Appendix A

ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (AMC)

Purpose:

To develop and monitor the strategic direction of the academic activity and identity of the School and to maintain an operational overview of its academic functions in terms of learning, teaching, research and quality assurance.

Membership in 2012/2013:

Ex Officio	Deputy Principal (Academic) (Chair)	Professor Simon Shepherd
	Dean of Studies	Professor Ross Brown
	Academic Registrar	James Prince
Departmental Members	Director of Research	Professor Robin Nelson
	Deputy Dean of Studies	Dr Catherine McNamara
	Deputy Dean of Studies	Dr Sally Mackey
	Head of Academic Facilities	Adam Parker
	Head of Central Connects	Dr ML White
	Head of TSD	Peter Bingham
	Deputy Academic Registrar	Dr Andrew Redford
Elected Members	Member of PG academic staff	Martin Wylde
	Member of UG academic staff	Sheila Preston
Student Representatives	UG Student representative	
	PG Student representative	

Secretary: Abigail Fitch, Secretariat Manager

Quorum: five

Frequency of Meetings: Twice termly

Reports to: Academic Board, with minutes sent to EMG

Delegated Authority:

Working Approach:

The Committee will invite as and when needed members of staff from other areas of the School to advise as appropriate.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- i. To develop the Academic Plan on behalf of and for approval by the Academic Board.
- ii. To monitor the implementation of the Academic Plan on behalf of Academic Board, receiving regular reports on activity.
- iii. To act as a forum for senior academic and academic-related managers to discuss issues in relation to the overall delivery of the School's academic mission and to facilitate enhancement of processes.
- iv. To discuss and monitor the School's academic identity as perceived in contexts beyond the college.
- v. To co-ordinate the School's teaching and research provision in order to maximise both teaching and research outputs.

- vi. Maintain an oversight of non-credit bearing academic strategy, business planning and delivery.
- vii. Develop strategy for and maintain oversight of the delivery of learner resources and student support services.
- viii. To discuss, and subsequently advise Academic Board on, academic policy initiatives, good practice, academic regulations and standards.
- ix. To approve on behalf of Academic Board the periodic review schedule for the following academic session.
- x. To review the relations between academic delivery and support departments.
- xi. To consider such other matters as fall within the general competence of the Committee and are referred to it by the Principal or the Academic Board from time to time.
- xii. To liaise with other committees and fora as appropriate.

Research and Ethics Committee

Purpose:

To advise Academic Board on the systems, policies and strategy relating to the research activities of the institution. To undertake development and evaluative work on behalf of Academic Board in relation to institutional academic initiatives, regulations and procedures to secure and advance the research output of the institution. To maintain a dialogue between other relevant committees of Academic Board and EMG.

Membership:

Ex Officio	Director of Research (Chair)	Professor Robin Nelson
	Deputy Principal (Academic)	Professor Simon Shepherd
	Deputy Dean	Professor Sally Mackey
	Deputy Academic Registrar	Dr. Andrew Redford
	PhD Programme Convenor	Dr. Tony Fisher
	The Research Office	Becky Gooby
	Head of Library Service	Antony Loveland
	Fellow in Research and Enterprise	Joshua Edelman
	Research Funding and Development Officer	Andrew Parsons
Nominated by the Dean of Studies	Four research-active members of staff	Amanda Stuart Fisher
		Dr Gareth White
		Selina Busby
		Richard Hougham
Nominated by the Dean of Studies	One Research Student Representative	Deirdre McLoughlin

Secretary: Abigail Fitch

Quorum: Four

Frequency of Meetings: Termly

Reports to: Academic Board

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Research

- i. To develop, and oversee the implementation of, a strategy for the growth of high quality research at the School;
- ii. To identify areas of potential research growth and to establish policies to stimulate appropriate research activity in such areas;
- iii. To advise on priorities in the allocation of available funds to specific research projects;
- iv. To make recommendations to the Dean of Studies on priority areas for support during the consideration of applications for leave of absence for research or research informed teaching;

- v. To monitor and evaluate research activity across the School, and to agree an annual research report to the Academic Board;
- vi. To advise the Academic Management Committee on the relationship between knowledge exchange, research and ethics.
- vii. To oversee and receive reports on bids for research funding in relation to the research profile.

Ethics

- viii. To consider the general ethical issues relating to research activities at the School (including research assignments within taught courses) which involve human participants or use of ethically sensitive material.
- ix. To ensure that appropriate ethical codes of practice are made available to staff and students involved in research projects, at all academic levels, and to keep the suitability and use of those codes under periodic review.
- x. To review the ethical implications of individual project proposals, as referred to the Committee, and to authorise or reject proposals, or require additional measures to be taken as a condition of authorisation, or - at the discretion of the Committee - to refer proposals for an external expert opinion.

Note: Ethical matters pertaining to individual students will be conducted as closed items to student representatives.