



SCOTLAND'S RURAL COLLEGE (SRUC): RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK (REF) CODE OF PRACTICE ON SELECTION OF STAFF

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Part 1: Overview, purpose and guiding principles

Overview

1. The Research Excellence Framework 2014, (hereafter referred to as REF2014), is the new system for assessing the quality of research in higher education institutions in the UK, and replaces the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), last conducted in 2008. The purpose of the exercise is to assess the quality of UK research and inform the selective allocation of research grants to institutions by the four UK higher education funding bodies with effect from 2015-16.

A culture of inclusivity

2. REF2014 is governed by three overarching principles: equity, equality and transparency. Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) embraces these principles (see the link to SRUC Equality and Diversity Policies in Appendix A, which amongst other things, describes how SRUC supports its fixed-term and part-time staff, including contract research staff, in relation to equality and diversity) and in doing so we strive to build a culture which supports inclusion, celebrates difference, challenges prejudice and promotes equity. This process is monitored by the SRUC Equality and Diversity Team (EDT), which was actively involved in reviewing the REF Code of Practice, and will advise on and monitor adherence to it. It is recognised that individuals contribute to the goals of the College in different ways and not all staff potentially eligible for REF2014 submission (hereafter referred to as eligible staff) will be expected to be included in the REF2014 submission. There will be individuals performing roles which support fully the objectives of their Research Group or the Research Division (see Part 2 for a description of SRUC's structure), whose primary focus will not be directly research-oriented, and their non-inclusion in the REF2014 submission will not affect their career opportunities within the College. We aim to create a College community where all individuals are able to develop to their full potential so that they can contribute to the success of SRUC as a world-leading centre of academic excellence.

The purpose of the Code of Practice

3. The REF2014 Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions (Guidance on Submissions) (REF02.2011) (http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02_11/), the Addendum (additional information published in January 2012), Panel Criteria and Working Methods (REF01.2012) (http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2012/01_12/), in combination with guidance from the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), provide the basis for the detailed advice contained in this Code. The purpose of the Code of Practice is to ensure the equitable and transparent selection of staff for inclusion in the REF2014 submission based on the excellence of their research. This Code will provide staff with clear guidance about the process through which individuals will be selected for inclusion in the College's REF2014 submission and provide those staff involved in the decision-making processes with clear guidance and advice about how to apply the selection criteria in terms of equality and diversity. This information will be supplemented by tailored development and briefing sessions for all staff involved in the selection process. To this end, it is the purpose of this Code to **promote the principles of equality and diversity, and to comply with all relevant employment legislation**. The Code of Practice will specifically consider staff whose circumstances may have affected the volume of their research or their ability to work productively during the assessment period and consequently have a negative impact on their eligibility for inclusion.

4. SRUC will ensure therefore that the criteria, policies and procedures that support the REF2014 process will be subject to scrutiny to test their equitability. The outcome of the College's final Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be made openly available, along with the actions taken to address any issues that arise, by publishing it on the SRUC website after the REF2014 submission has been made.
5. The Code has been developed in light of the published REF2014 Guidance on Submissions (http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02_11/) with our Joint Submission partner, the University of Edinburgh, to ensure that it is consistent with their approach. It has been approved by the EDT, SRUC's Research Divisional Management Team (Research DMT), and the Executive Management Team (EMT) which is chaired by the Principal and Chief Executive. It has also been approved by the SRUC Board. The composition of these committees and their role in managing SRUC's REF submission is explained in Part 2.
6. SRUC will publish the Code of Practice on the SRUC website, after the conclusion of REF2014. SRUC's REF submission will be a Joint Submission with the University of Edinburgh to UoA 6.

Guiding principles

7. This code is underpinned by four guiding principles:
 - (a) **Transparency:** All information governing the processes that will determine the selection of staff for inclusion in the REF2014 submission will be available in an easily accessible format and publicised to all academic and other relevant staff across the institution. This information will be available on the SRUC SharePoint site and drawn to the attention of those staff who are absent from work in writing. The processes setting out how staff will be selected for submission are set out in Part 3. The Code is supported by a clear programme of communication to explain the selection process, which is attached at Appendix B.
 - (b) **Consistency:** SRUC is committed to ensuring that its staff selection policy is consistent across the institution and that the Code of Practice is implemented uniformly. The Code therefore sets out the principles (Appendix C) and criteria (Appendix D) that will be applied at all stages of the process where decisions will be made.
 - (c) **Accountability:** Individuals and bodies appointed to make decisions with respect to the selection of staff for the REF2014 submission will have clearly defined terms of reference and responsibilities. They will receive appropriate training on our Equality and Diversity policies, the legislation on which these are based, and this Code of Practice. The programme of development that all designated staff will undertake can be found at Appendix E.

Staff inclusion decisions, including any equality considerations, will be clearly recorded. These will not be published in the interests of confidentiality, but will be available to the individual staff members to whom the decision applies.
 - (d) **Inclusivity:** SRUC is firmly committed to fostering and promoting an inclusive environment enabling the College to identify all eligible staff that have produced excellent research for submission to the REF2014.
 - (e) **Application:** The processes defined in this Code of Practice and the outcomes of selection decisions are only to be applied in the context of the REF2014. Being

excluded from the REF2014 submission will not in itself impact on status, pay or condition of service. SRUC stresses that submission to REF2014 is only one indication of the contribution made by that individual to the College.

Part 2: Management and decision-making structures

Management of the SRUC REF2014 Submission: Designated Staff and Committees

8. As a small, specialist institution making a joint submission in a single Unit of Assessment, SRUC has elected to manage its REF2014 submission largely through its existing research management structure, with additional REF-related groups created, or additional REF-related responsibilities assigned, where necessary.

SRUC is a private company limited by guarantee and with charitable status. The College is governed by a Board of Directors, which currently consists of fourteen Non-Executive and five Executive Directors. The five Executive Directors are: Principal and Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Company Secretary, Director of Consulting, Vice Principal Research, and the Vice Principal Education. The Executive Directors comprise the EMT. A new Finance Director will join the Executive team shortly, and ultimately join the Board. The College's activities are delivered through three functional Divisions: SRUC Education, SRUC Research and SAC Consulting. These Divisions are supported by Professional Services and Finance Divisions. The Divisions are headed by the relevant EMT member. Within each of these Divisions, staff are managed in a small number of groups, each led by a Group Manager with line management responsibility for staff. Within most groups there are several teams, with Team Leaders reporting to the Group Manager. Heads of Division have responsibility for strategic planning and management of the relevant functional activity. Thus, the Vice Principal Research leads on research matters, heads the Research Division, and has overall responsibility for the SRUC REF submission. The Vice Principal Research reports to the Principal and Chief Executive, and is supported by the Research DMT, which he chairs. Other members of the Research DMT are the Group Managers of SRUC's four Research Groups, the Head of Contracts Office and the Research Division Business Manager. The Research DMT usually meets monthly.

The Research DMT plays a key role in formulating SRUC's REF2014 submission strategy and policy in consultation with the University of Edinburgh, our Joint Submission partner. The Research DMT will be the main forum for REF planning in SRUC, including the evaluation of research outputs of eligible staff and reviewing of draft impact case studies. The Vice Principal Research, in conjunction with the chairperson of the EDT (or their nominated representative), will make the final decisions regarding the inclusion or exclusion of staff, having taken account of the appropriate processes agreed to determine the selection of staff for inclusion in the REF2014 submission. The Research DMT, chaired by the Vice Principal Research, will oversee the administrative arrangements for REF2014. It will ensure that there is the operational support required. The chairperson of the EDT (or their nominated representative) will attend all discussions relating to the Code of Practice or selection of staff for submission to the REF. The individuals comprising the Research DMT have many years of research publication expertise between them, and in combination with an in-depth knowledge of their own Groups, and the scientific fields in which they operate, are seen as being ideally placed to judge the scientific quality of the outputs.

9. The EDT has reviewed this Code of Practice, will monitor its implementation, and ensure that the Code of Practice and best practice in respect of equality and diversity are adhered to throughout the REF2014 process. The EDT has conducted an initial

EIA on the Code of Practice, and will conduct interim and final EIAs later in the REF2014 process (see later for details).

10. SRUC has a named REF Administrative Coordinator, who is responsible for the management and administration of the collation and processing of the overall REF2014 submission, and for providing REF equality and diversity training to relevant staff. The REF Administrative Coordinator will be present for all REF-related discussions at Research DMT meetings.

SRUC Equality and Diversity Team

11. The EDT aims to be representative of SRUC's community including staff and students, to ensure that its duties and responsibilities are met in respect of equality and diversity, and that proactive best practice measures are taken into account to ensure an equal and diverse workforce and student body.

The key remit of the EDT is to;

- Promote best practice in Equality and Diversity across SRUC;
- Ensure that SRUC fulfils all its statutory obligations;
- Advise the EMT/Board on any Equality and Diversity related issues;
- Guide and support any Equality and Diversity related working groups, forums, networks etc;
- Develop and oversee a strategic approach to embedding equality and diversity at SRUC;
- Provide regular updates on Equality and Diversity initiatives to the EMT;
- Publish an Equality and Diversity annual report; and
- Manage the Equality and Diversity annual budget.

The team is chaired by the Vice Principal Education supported by the Head of Human Resources (HR) and administrative support. Membership of the EDT consists of one representative from each of the Research, Consulting, Education and Finance & Corporate Affairs Divisions, and separate members of the SRUC recognised Trade Union, Prospect, and the Student Association. As such, it is seen to be highly representative of the organisation in the areas of work the participating staff are engaged in, the different levels of seniority of the staff involved, and in the positions in which the staff operate.

The EDT will monitor adherence to this Code of Practice at appropriate stages in the REF2014 submission preparation process.

The EDT is currently carrying out EIAs on all SRUC policies to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, and has already done an initial EIA of this Code of Practice. Interim and final EIAs will be informed by an analysis of data on all eligible staff in respect of all protected characteristics on which data are available. The interim EIA will be performed in July 2013. The result of the final EIA will be published on the SRUC website after the REF submission. The EDT will give particular advice on the application of the Code of Practice and highlight any new and relevant employment legislation that must inform decisions regarding staff inclusion in SRUC's REF2014 submission.

SRUC REF Equality and Diversity Review Group

12. The SRUC REF Equality and Diversity Review Group (REF EDRG) is a small group, reporting to the main SRUC EDT, with particular responsibility for equality and diversity matters in the REF planning and submission process. The group consists of the Vice Principal Research, the chair of EDT, HR and Union representatives from the EDT. The EDRG will be fully informed of any equality and diversity matters that may impact on the REF planning and submission process.

Part 3: The selection of staff for submission

Section 1: Decision-making levels

13. Decisions are made at the following levels (see also the Process Flow Diagram in Part 5):
 - (i) DMT: quality decisions will be the responsibility of the Vice Principal Research advised by the Research DMT;
 - (ii) Equality and Diversity Review Group: equality decisions will be made by this group, who will report to, and be overseen by the EDT.
 - (iii) Principal and Chief Executive: Final decision maker for any appeals made for non inclusion on the grounds of inequality.
14. The guiding principle that will inform decisions regarding which staff will be submitted is that of the quality of their research. In making these assessments, the Vice Principal Research and the Research DMT will take due consideration of the REF2014 Guidance on Submissions (REF02.2011) (and subsequent amendments), and relevant Panel Criteria and Working Methods (REF01.2012).
15. The criteria that will be applied in the decision-making process will be as follows:
 - (i) the quality of an individual's research output;
 - (ii) the quantity of their research output;
 - (iii) any individual staff circumstances that may have affected the volume of a person's research or their ability to work productively during the assessment period.
16. At each level or stage of decision-making, the Research DMT will inform their decisions, in conjunction with a representative of the EDT, by specific reference to the Guidance on Submissions; the relevant Panel Criteria and Working Methods; and this Code of Practice, with particular regard to the individual staff circumstances that will be taken into account under paragraph 15 (iii) above. A full list of individual staff circumstances and the tariffs to be applied can be found in Appendix F.
17. Recording decisions at each level or selection stage: in the interests of consistency and in order to monitor the process effectively for identifying individuals whose circumstances might require special consideration, the REF Administrative Coordinator will maintain a record of those circumstances to evidence decisions and actions. Each request for confidentiality by staff with regard to complex circumstances and appropriate reduction in outputs will be fully respected in this process. The HR member of the REF EDRG to whom the staff disclosure forms will be returned will ensure that only the necessary information (i.e. that complex circumstances apply to

an individual, and the resulting tariff reduction), is passed on to the REF Administrative Co-ordinator.

Section 2: The process by which submission quality thresholds will be set

18. The Vice Principal Research, advised by the Research DMT, will make initial decisions about threshold quality standards for the relevant Unit of Assessment (UoA). These will be discussed with, and approved by, representatives from the University of Edinburgh as part of the Joint Submission process. Staff will be advised of the thresholds set via the REF Administrative Co-ordinator.

Section 3: The process by which staff will be selected for submission

19. The Vice Principal Research, advised by the Research DMT, will make decisions with respect to the inclusion of individual staff based on the quality of their research. An individual's research must meet the quality threshold set by the Vice Principal Research.
20. All meetings will keep formal records to show the purpose of the meeting, the decisions taken and the reasons for those decisions. When individual performance is discussed and the individual is absent, committees should be made aware of all the facts relating to the individual. HR will ensure that relevant information regarding the selection process reaches staff on long term absence to ensure they are kept fully apprised of progress to date, and any developments.
21. SRUC operates a twice yearly staff appraisal process which applies to all staff, is conducted by the relevant Line Manager, and signed off by a relevant Countersigning Manager. This is a formal discussion in which each individual has the opportunity to discuss their performance, which is assessed against agreed objectives, as well as their development needs. The process supports an individual's career plans and, for academic staff, links their work to the overall strategic goals of SRUC.
22. An individual's research performance and consideration of the quality of their research output will be discussed within the appraisal meetings. These discussions may be complemented and informed by other related people management processes, such as probation for early career staff or promotion procedures. By adopting this holistic approach, it is considered that as much relevant information about an individual's research record as possible can be taken into account. The decision to include information in the appraisal meeting from other people management processes may be proposed by either the Line Manager or the individual member of staff.
23. It is recognised that there is a need to achieve a balance between an individual's right to confidentiality and to ensure that those staff in formal decision-making roles are aware of circumstances requiring special consideration. All eligible staff will be sent a disclosure form (based on the template example available on the REF website) which will clarify if there are any circumstances which should be taken into account that may affect the number of outputs they will have to submit. Staff will return these forms directly to the HR member of the REF EDRG. They will be responsible for reviewing the forms initially, to determine if there are any personal circumstances that require review in regards to output reduction, and whether confidentiality has been requested. If this is the case, only that member of HR will be aware of the circumstances, and will not pass the details on any further. Once the HR representative has established the facts with the member of staff, they will communicate to the Research DMT the

reduction in outputs that is appropriate to the circumstance, as defined in the Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions document. Staff confidentiality will be fully respected throughout the process. This process will be monitored by the EDT.

Feedback and Review on the Quality of Outputs

24. Feedback on internal quality scoring of outputs will be provided to staff by their Group Manager or Team Leader as soon as the results are available from reviews that will be conducted by the Research DMT on an approximately 4 monthly basis. The scores will be provided to allow staff to gauge their outputs in relation to the level of quality expected for submission, although a decision as to whether to include or exclude individuals from the REF2014 submission will not be made until June 2013.

Following consultation with the Vice Principal Research, Group Managers will inform eligible staff who are not intended to be selected for inclusion in REF2014, based on the quality of their outputs, in confidential face-to-face meetings. These meetings will include a review of any staff development issues arising as a result of these intentions.

25. Individuals who wish to make a case for inclusion in the REF2014 submission, on the grounds of equality, should submit a written statement to the HR member of the REF EDRG who will then progress the matter with the REF EDRG. Guidance on the format, content and method of submitting a written statement will be given by HR to individuals who wish to make a case for inclusion in the REF2014 submission.

Section 4: Individual staff circumstances

26. The Guidance on Submissions requires that up to four research outputs must be listed against each member of staff included in the institution's REF2014 submission.
27. However, as a key measure to support equality and diversity in research careers, the Guidance permits individuals to be returned with fewer than four outputs without penalty in the assessment, where their circumstances have significantly constrained their ability to produce four outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period. This measure is intended to encourage institutions to submit all their eligible staff who have produced excellent research and applies as follows:

- a) Circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs:
 - i. Qualifying as an early career researcher (on the basis set out in paragraph 72 of Part 1 of the Panel Criteria and Working Methods).
 - ii. Absence from work due to working part-time, secondments or career breaks (on the basis set out in paragraphs 73-74 of Part 1 of the Panel Criteria and Working Methods).
 - iii. Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave (on the basis set out in paragraphs 75-81 of Part 1 of the Panel Criteria and Working Methods).
 - iv. A combination of clearly defined circumstance (on the basis set out in paragraphs 82-85 of Part 1 of the Panel Criteria and Working Methods).
 - v. Other circumstances that apply in UoAs 1-6, as defined at paragraph 86 of Part 1 of the Panel Criteria and Working Methods.

- (b) 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 of the Guidance on Submissions, Table 2 under 'Disability' (http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02_11/).
 - (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 characteristics listed at paragraph 190 of the Guidance on Submissions (http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02_11/).
28. For clearly defined circumstances, SRUC will refer to and be guided by REF2014 Panel Criteria and other REF2014 guidance documents which will provide tariffs to determine the number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty in the assessment, depending on the duration of the circumstance (or combination thereof). The indicative tariffs to be applied are provided in Appendix F.
29. For more complex circumstances, the HR representative on the EDT and/or REF EDRG will make a judgement on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs submitted, referring to and guided by REF2014 Panel Criteria and other REF2014 guidance documents (including those in Appendix F). As far as is practicable, the impact of these circumstances on an individual's ability to work productively throughout the assessment period will be equated to the impact of clearly defined absences, and the number of outputs reduced in line with Table 2 of Appendix F. SRUC will also draw upon advice from the ECU who will provide worked examples of complex circumstances (template training material is available on the REF website which will be provided in formal sessions to members of the Research DMT and the EDT), indicating the appropriate reduction in outputs for a range of particular circumstances.
30. Where the College decides to include a combination of clearly defined and more complex circumstances relating to an individual, it will return these as 'complex' so that a single judgement can be made about the appropriate reduction in outputs, taking into account all the circumstances. Confidentiality will be respected throughout the process in that the HR member of the REF EDRG that will receive the staff disclosure forms will ensure that any request for special circumstances to be taken into account for output reduction is verified as appropriate, and only the permitted information passed onwards.
31. SRUC has developed this Code and its guidance on dealing with complex individual staff circumstances in accordance with REF2014 guidance published by the REF2014 Team and ECU.

Section 5: Confidentiality

32. Staff disclosure forms will be sent to all potentially eligible staff and returned to the nominated HR member of the REF EDRG. These forms will allow an individual to specify if they wish any circumstances that would justify a reduction in outputs to be kept confidential. If that is the case, the information provided would be verified as much as possible, before the relevant allowed reduction in outputs (if any) is communicated to the Research DMT. The Research DMT require explicit information about any reduction in output, but do not require details of the circumstances leading to that decision.
33. Information submitted in form REF1b will be kept confidential to the HEFCE REF Team and the Panel members (for clearly defined circumstances) and the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) and main panel chairs (for complex circumstances), who are all subject to confidentiality undertakings in respect of all information contained in submission. REF sub-panels will know that there are complex circumstances and will receive a decision about the appropriate number of outputs to reduce without penalty, but will not have access to further information about the circumstances. These arrangements will enable individuals to disclose the information in a confidential manner, and enable consistent treatment of complex circumstances across the exercise. SRUC will make use of the ECU REF1b templates in preparing these statements.
34. Individuals will be informed that information submitted in REF1b will be used only for the purposes of assessing the REF submission in which it is contained, will not be published at any time, and will be destroyed on completion of the REF.

Section 6: Appeals

35. SRUC has developed an appeals process to support the REF exercise in order to allow equality-related appeals to be dealt with expeditiously within the timeframe for the final REF2014 submission, the details of which can be seen in the Process Flow Diagram in Part 5.

Grounds for appeal

36. Any person who is dissatisfied, on the grounds of equality, with a decision that s/he is not to be submitted may lodge an appeal firstly to the nominated HR member of the REF EDRG, and then if the issue has not been resolved to the member of staff's satisfaction, it can be escalated to the Principal and Chief Executive, setting out the grounds for appeal. The appeal must be evidence-based and refer to Section 5 below. All appeals must be lodged by mid July 2013 (date to be confirmed and notified to staff by end of 2012). The chairperson or HR member of the EDT will review the process to ensure all equality related procedures are fully adhered to throughout the appeal.
37. An appeal brought under this Code can only be on grounds of equality. Appeals regarding the quality of an individual's research will be considered under SRUC's normal Grievance Policy which may be found at <http://intranet.sruc.ac.uk/Documents/SRUC - Grievance Policy.docx> and not under the terms of this Code.
38. The appellant and his/her Group Manager will be notified of the outcome of his/her appeal in writing by mid August 2013 (date to be confirmed and notified to staff by end of 2012).

39. The decision of the SRUC Principal and Chief Executive is final.

Part 4: Monitoring arrangements

Equality Impact Assessment

40. The REF EDRG will review the equality process adopted during the REF2014 submission preparation period to ensure that SRUC's decision-making processes are fair, transparent and equitable, specifically:
- (i) when the Research DMT meet to consider output quality decisions;
 - (ii) when the Principal and Chief Executive and considers appeals;
 - (ii) when preparing the final submission.

The REF EDRG will report its findings to the EDT.

41. The EDT will take appropriate action to address areas of potential discrimination and will also promote good practice more widely across other areas of REF2014 work, where these have demonstrated a positive impact on equality.

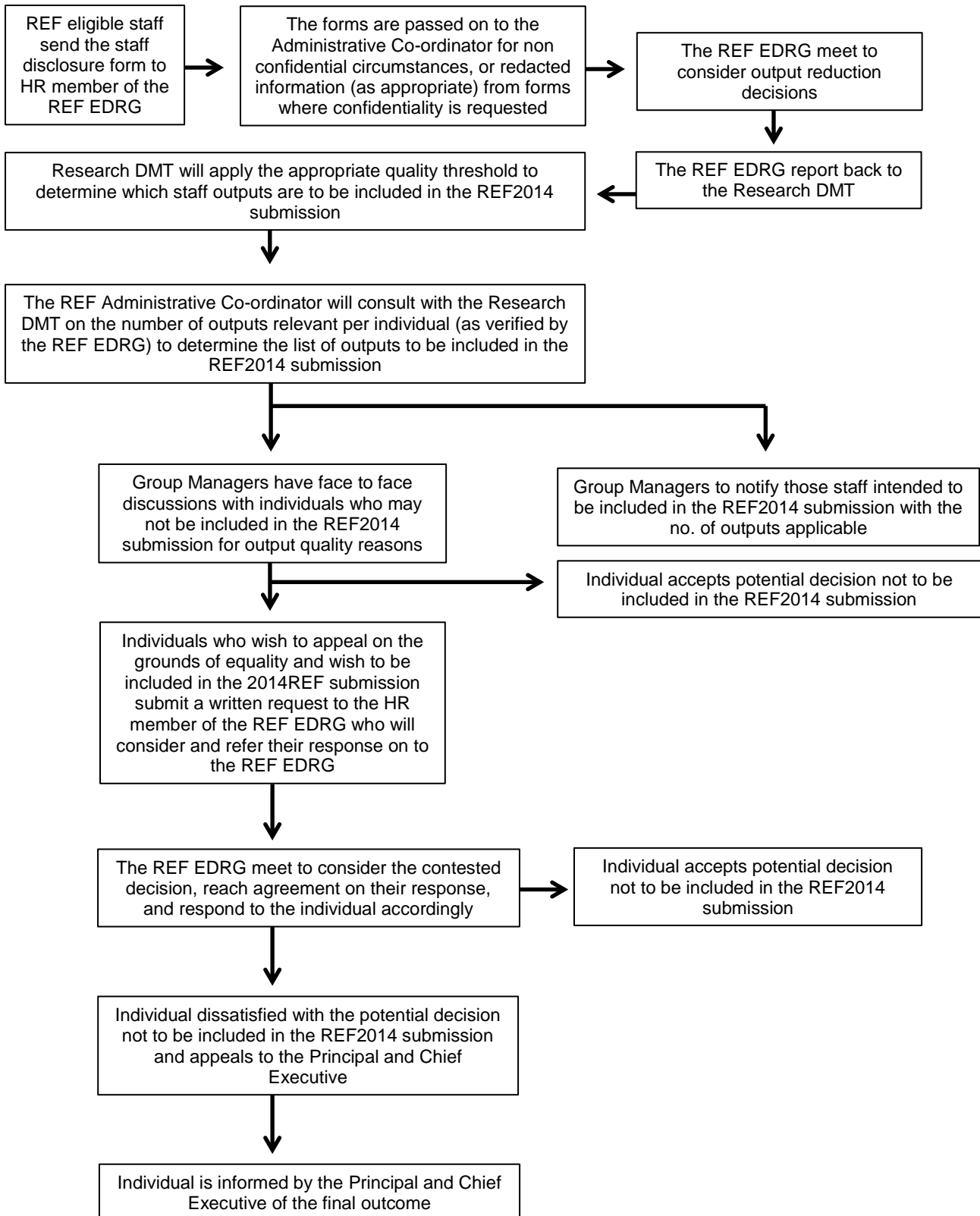
Monitoring

42. The Research DMT and the EDT will monitor the processes described in this Code for identifying individuals whose circumstances might need special consideration. In accordance with the four principles of this Code, SRUC will ensure that its decisions are evidence-based and that its reasons and actions are recorded formally.
43. Staff will be informed that data which can be used to show how SRUC will advance equality of opportunity between REF2014 and the subsequent REF will be kept as evidence on their staff record (redacted as appropriate).
44. A final report including any changes made to policies and processes will be prepared in November 2013 and will be made available on SRUC's SharePoint and website and to the HEFCE REF team.

Part 5: Timetable and Process Flow Diagram

Item	Date
Seminars and briefing sessions to explain how the Code of Practice will work and the process for the selection of staff for submission. To cover methods to facilitate the confidential disclosure of relevant equality-related personal circumstances	From March 2012; ongoing
Training of Research DMT / EDT staff on REF related E&D issues (based on the training course template provided on the REF website)	Up to end August 2012
Communication to staff on the content of the Code of Practice	Up to end August 2012
Staff disclosure forms sent directly to HR member of the REF EDRG	On-going up to February 2013
The REF EDRG makes its recommendation to the Research DMT in terms of no. of outputs required per eligible individual after review of staff disclosure forms and appropriate confirmation of evidence	At the Research DMT in March 2013
Individual twice yearly staff appraisal meetings held with Line Managers / Team Leaders / Group Managers (as appropriate), with applicable individual circumstances discussed	On-going up to June 2013
Following decisions in the Research DMT, Group Managers hold face-to-face discussions with any individual members of staff who SRUC do not intend to return based on the assessment of the quality of outputs as part of its submission to the REF2014	Up to end June 2013
The REF Administrative Co-ordinator will produce a report to describe all intended non-submission decisions.	Late June 2013
Preparation of the interim EIA report by the EDT	Up to end of July 2013
Any individual dissatisfied with a non-submission decision may appeal to the HR member of the REF EDRG in the first instance (and ultimately to the Principal and Chief Executive)	Mid July 2013 (precise date to be confirmed and notified to staff by end of 2012)
Outcome of appeals reported back to individual members of staff and to their Group Manager	Mid August 2013 (precise date to be confirmed and notified to staff by end of 2012)
REF2014 Submission	29 November 2013
Preparation of the final EIA report by the EDT	December 2013
Publish the EIA on the SRUC website and any actions taken to avoid discrimination and promote good practice	February 2014

REF Process Flow Diagram



Appendix A

SRUC Equality and Diversity Policies

<http://www.sruc.ac.uk/equalityanddiversity>

Appendix B

Programme of communication

The purpose of the communication plan is to disseminate the Code of Practice and explain the processes related to the selection of staff for submission.

All eligible staff will be sent an email (acknowledgement of receipt will be requested) giving the Sharepoint link to the Code of Practice, with the expectation that the Code will be discussed at staff meetings as part of normal REF2014 preparations.

Any notices about the Code and any developments in the REF2014 selection process will be placed on the SRUC SharePoint site.

Regular meetings will be arranged for all eligible staff to attend to disseminate information on REF2014 preparation progress, and to answer any queries staff may have. It will be made very clear at those meetings that queries can be directed toward the REF Administrative Co-ordinator at any time.

HR will ensure that all relevant communication including examples of staff circumstances that may have affected the volume of a person's research or their ability to work productively during the assessment period, will be communicated by post to eligible staff who are absent from work long term, in case their access to normal communication routes (such as by email) is limited.

SRUC will hold an annual meeting on REF2014 to which all staff will be invited, and this meeting will be used to raise awareness of the Code and its principles and policies.

REF Overarching principles

Principles

The principles that will be applied at each level of decision-making will be as follows:

- a. Equity - All types of research and all forms of research output across all disciplines will be assessed on an equitable basis across the spectrum of applied, practice-based, basic and strategic research, wherever that research is conducted. SRUC will identify excellence in different forms of research endeavour including interdisciplinary and collaborative research, while attaching no greater weight to one form over another.
- b. Equality – The College is committed to submitting the work of all our excellent researchers. To enable this, we will apply this Code of Practice on an equitable and transparent selection of staff for inclusion in REF2014 submissions.
- c. Transparency - SRUC will publish in full all principles, criteria and procedures that will be applied in the assessment. All decision-making processes will be explained openly and outcomes will be published in full. (N.B. No personal information will be published.)

Criteria for the selection of staff

The criteria that will be applied at each level of decision-making will be:

- (a) to consider the quality of an individual's research output as the primary consideration;
- (b) then to consider the quantity of their research output;
- (c) then to take into account any individual staff circumstances that may have affected the volume of a person's research output or their ability to work productively during the assessment period.

Development and training

Staff involved in REF2014 will be offered a range of REF-focused development and training interventions designed to meet their needs with regard to equality and diversity and which enable them to understand their responsibilities in the process.

Expert input and advice will be accessed also via the ECU web-site at: www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF.

Although already knowledgeable in generic equality issues, and having undergone significant training and practice on issues and relevant legislation to date, the EDT will receive REF2014 specific equality and diversity training based on the training course template on the REF2014 website. The same training will be given to the Research DMT. The Research DMT will make publication output quality-related decisions, and not staff equality-related decisions. However, it is felt that providing familiarity and understanding of the process the EDT / REF EDRG will use will help to strengthen the overall exercise. A slightly shorter version of this course will be provided to all Team Leaders and Group Managers, who, although not directly involved with the decision on individual inclusion, will benefit from being made familiar with the rationale for the process that will be adopted.

Mandatory staff equality issues-related training will be rolled out across SRUC in August 2012. This training is designed and updated, according to equality legislation changes, by Marshalls ACM, and will be incorporated into staff induction presentations in the future. SRUC is an accredited member of the Two Ticks Disability Symbol; this was awarded by the Jobcentre Plus in recognition of our commitment to meet five criteria regarding the employment, retention, training and career development of employees who have additional needs.

Indicative tariffs to be applied

For clearly defined circumstances, as defined in paragraphs 69(a) (Amendment to ‘guidance on submissions’), Tables 1-3 set out the indicative number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty in the assessment, depending on the duration of the circumstance (or combination thereof).

As far as is practicable, complex circumstances, as defined in paragraphs 69(b) (Amendment to ‘guidance on submissions’), should be converted into an estimate – in terms of the equivalent number of months absent from work – of the impact of the circumstances on the individual’s ability to work productively throughout the assessment period. A reduction should be made according to Table 2.

Table 1: Early Career Researchers (ECRs) : Permitted reduction in outputs

Date at which the individual first met the REF definition of an ECR	Number of outputs may be <i>reduced</i> without penalty by up to:
On or before 31 July 2009	0
Between 1 August 2009 and 31 July 2010 inclusive	1
Between 1 August 2010 and 31 July 2011 inclusive	2
After 1 August 2011	3

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

Total months absent between 1 January 2008 and 31 October 2013 due to working part-time, secondment or career break	Number of outputs may be <i>reduced</i> without penalty by up to:
0 – 11.99	0
12 – 27.99	1
28 – 45.99	2
46 or more	3

Table 3: Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave

Individuals may reduce the number of outputs by ONE, for each discrete period of:
a) Statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave taken substantially during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2013, regardless of the length of the leave.

b) Additional paternity¹ or adoption leave lasting for four months or more, taken substantially during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2013.

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