

Research Excellence Framework 2014: Code of Practice

Equality issues have been taken into account during the development of this Code of Practice and all protected characteristics have been considered as part of the Equality Analysis undertaken

Richard Gorton, REF 2014 Officer

April 2012

2

Contents

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Principles Underpinning the Code of Practice
3.0	The University's Legal Responsibilities
4.0	Eligibility for Inclusion in the REF 2014
5.0	Individual Staff Circumstances
6.0	Process for Dealing with Individual Staff Circumstances
7.0	Early Careers Researchers
8.0	Fixed-term and Part-time Employees
9.0	Staff Joining the University after June 2013
10.0	Management of the REF 2014 Preparatory Process
11.0	External Advisers
12.0	Data Protection and Confidentiality
13.0	Equality training
14.0	Equality Analysis
15.0	Feedback and Appeals
16.0	Compliance
17.0	Communication
18.0	Monitoring the Code of Practice
19.0	Approval of the Code of Practice
Annexe 1	Criteria Governing Eligibility
Annexe 2	REF 2014 University Timetable
Annexe 3	Individual Staff Circumstances Disclosure Form
Annexe 4	University REF Advisory Group: Membership and Remit
Annexe 5	UoA Co-ordinators as at May 2012
Annexe 6	Individual Staff Circumstances Committee: Membership and Remit
Annexe 7	Communications Plan

Introduction

1. Universities that wish to take part in REF 2014 are required by HEFCE to “develop, document and apply a code of practice on selecting staff to include in their REF submissions”. REF 02.2011 issued by HEFCE in July 2011 reminds HEIs that as both employers and public bodies, they need “to ensure that their 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 University’s Code of Practice seeks to apply the principles and definitions set out in REF 02.2011 and explain how these principles and definitions have been applied to select staff for REF 2014. The Code of Practice, reflects the belief that the selection of staff for REF 2014 must be on the basis of research excellence as defined in the University’s REF eligibility criteria approved by Executive in December 2011 (Annex 1). It takes into account the University’s strategy for REF and the broader aims of the University Plan.
2. The Code of Practice applies to members of the University involved in preparations for REF 2014 and to any external REF advisers appointed by the University.

Principles Underpinning the Code of Practice

3. In developing its Code of Practice, the University has sought to apply the following principles as defined in REF 01.2011:
 - Transparency – all processes for the selection of staff for REF inclusion should be transparent,
 - Consistency – the policy for staff selection should be consistent across the University and the Code of Practice should be implemented uniformly,
 - Accountability – responsibilities for REF 2014 decision-making should be clearly defined with individuals and bodies involved in the selection of staff for REF being identified by name or role,
 - Inclusivity – the Code should promote an inclusive environment, enabling institutions to identify all eligible staff who have produced excellent research for submission to the REF 2014.
4. The University’s Code of Practice reflects the principles set out above : it is transparent, accessible to staff across the University, consistent, describes the principles that will be followed at the different stages of the REF preparatory process, promotes accountability by identifying members of the University involved in the selection process, and is

inclusive in that it applies to all members of staff who meet the University's REF eligibility criteria.

The University's Legal Responsibilities

5. As an employer, the University has legal responsibilities under equality law. The University must ensure that its policies do not directly or indirectly discriminate against its employees on the grounds of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation or if they are pregnant or have recently given birth. These obligations apply to the process adopted by the University to select staff for REF 2014.
6. Under the Equality Act 2010, the University has a duty when carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act,
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it,
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
7. The University will carry out a thorough Equality Analysis to assess if its selection and planning processes have any adverse impact on particular groups.
8. The University also appreciates that under the fixed-term employee and part-time workers regulations, fixed-term and part-time employees have the right not to be treated by an employer any less favourably than the employer treats comparable employees on open contracts or full-time workers.

Eligibility for Inclusion in REF 2014

9. The University criteria governing eligibility for inclusion in REF 2014 makes it clear that participation in the exercise will not drive the pace or direction of our applied research activity (Annexe 1). Staff will continue to be encouraged and supported to develop applied research that strengthens the curriculum, knowledge transfer and other advanced scholarship work, irrespective of whether these outputs are eligible for inclusion in REF 2014. In terms of their career progression and staff development, members of staff not included in REF 2014 will not be disadvantaged by the University.

10. When considering staff for inclusion in REF 2014, Staffordshire University normally expects evidence of the completion since 1st January 2008 of four items of output of at least 2* or 3* level as defined in REF 02.2011. In line with the REF guidance on submissions and the criteria and working methods documents issued by HEFCE in July 2011, individual staff circumstances will be taken into consideration by the University when identifying staff for REF 2014 inclusion. Normally a researcher with 1 or more outputs below 2* level will not be submitted as part of a selected research group. However, the University may in exceptional circumstances use its discretion to include a small number of 1* level outputs from within the University research community, where this is deemed to be beneficial to a Unit of Assessment submission.
11. A member of staff seeking inclusion in REF 2014 will be expected to provide evidence of all of the following (in no particular priority):
- If submitted in the previous Research Assessment Exercise, show evidence of growth and development as a researcher since RAE 2008
 - That the quality and impact of the research is at a national or international level
 - Have directly engaged with the recruitment and supervision of postgraduate students, including the supervision to completion of postgraduate research students
 - The level of external research income that can be attributed to a researcher, together with the contribution cited by an individual researcher to the overall research environment associated with a particular unit of assessment.
12. Research groups seeking inclusion in REF 2014 will be expected to provide evidence of all the following (in no particular priority order):
- Sufficient critical mass, normally defined by the University as six or more researchers
 - If the research group was submitted in the previous RAE, show evidence of growth and development since RAE 2008
 - Evidence that the quality and impact of the research associated with the group is at national or international level
 - Evidence that the research group has the capacity for growth and development beyond 2014
 - Evidence that the research group seeking REF 2014 inclusion has directly engaged in the recruitment and supervision of postgraduate students, including the supervision to completion of postgraduate research students
 - The level of external research income that can be attributed to a particular research group and the overall quality of the research environment provided by the group

- Evidence of a credible research strategy guiding the activities of a group seeking inclusion in REF 2014
- The preparation of impact case studies that reflect the analysis requirements of REF 2014.

13. Annexe 1 contains the full text of the criteria governing the eligibility of units of assessment and staff for REF 2014.

14. Members of staff can nominate their work for inclusion in REF 2014 if they believe that they meet the University's eligibility criteria. Individual requests for inclusion will be given full and proper consideration by UoA (Unit of Assessment) Co-ordinators (identified in Annexe 5), the REF Advisory Group (identified in Annexe 4) and members of the Executive chaired by the Executive Pro Vice-Chancellor. Decisions on the inclusion of staff in REF 2014 will be guided by the University's eligibility criteria. The University also expects staff involved at all levels of REF 2014 decision-making to observe institutional policies on equality and diversity and to refer to the main REF 2014 guidelines, REF 02.2011, published by HEFCE in July 2011 and to the criteria and working methods issued by REF assessment panels.

Individual Staff Circumstances

15. Guidance has been published on how individual staff circumstances will be taken into account when REF 2014 returns are evaluated by assessment panels. HEFCE's Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions (REF 02.2011 paragraphs 88 -100) and the Generic Panel Criteria and Working Methods define the circumstances that may have impeded a staff member's capacity to publish four items of output during the REF census period. The guidance issued to HEIs has divided staff circumstances into the following categories:

- Clearly defined circumstances, which are:
 - i. Early career researchers as defined in paragraph 85, REF 02.2011
 - ii. Part-time working
 - iii. Maternity, paternity or adoption leave. The Code of Practice recognises that maternity leave may involve related constraints on an individual's ability to conduct research in addition to the period of maternity leave itself. These cases may be recorded as 'complex', 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 HE, during which the staff member 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, have been defined in REF 02.2011 (paragraph 92 b) as:
 - i. 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
 - v. Childcare or other caring responsibilities
 - vi. Gender reassignment
 - vii. Other circumstances relating to protected equalities characteristics.

Process for Dealing with Individual Staff Circumstances

- 16 Members of staff seeking inclusion in REF 2014, or identified by the University for inclusion, will be asked to register any clearly defined and complex circumstances that may have impeded the completion and publication of four items of output. The form used by staff to register defined and complex circumstances will record the nature, timing and duration of the circumstances (see Annexe 3). For circumstances that meet the complex circumstances definition, a description of the effect of the circumstances should also be provided. The University will not ask members of staff to provide precise details of a particular illness. Details given on the registration form will record the information required for the REF 2014 return. Information provided on the registration form will be classified as confidential and stored in a secure database.
- 17 Members of staff can submit a form recording clearly defined and complex circumstances until June 2013, when work on the penultimate version of the University's REF return is scheduled for completion. This form will be returned to the REF Administrative Officer who will then provide an anonymised version of the form to the Individual Staff Circumstances Committee. The REF Administrative Officer will also notify Personnel if any individual has indicated that they require further support.
18. Decisions over the number of outputs to be assigned to staff that meet the clearly defined circumstances criteria will be made by the Individual Staff Circumstances Committee (see Annexe 6 for the Committee's Membership and Remit). The Committee will receive and consider clearly defined and complex staff circumstances and complex

staff circumstances cases and recommend, where appropriate, tariff reductions. Decisions on the reduction of outputs will draw on REF 02.2011, Generic Panel Criteria and Working Methods and guidance issued by the Equality Challenge Unit. Acting on the Committee's decisions, the REF Administrative Officer will inform UoA co-ordinators and the University REF Advisory Group of the number of outputs agreed by the Committee without disclosing the staff circumstances that triggered the decision.

19. Members of staff aggrieved by the decisions reached by the Individual Staff Circumstances Committee can submit an appeal to the University's Director of Human Resources or Head of Personnel Any appeal should be in writing and must be with the Director of Human Resources or Head of Personnel within ten working days of the decision of the Individual Staff Circumstances Committee. The Director of Human Resources/Head of Personnel and the Equality and Diversity Manager will reassess the decision reached by the Individual Staff Circumstances to establish whether or not the correct processes have been followed. There is no right of appeal against the conclusion reached by the Director of Human Resources/Head of Personnel and the Equality and Diversity Manager.

Early Career Researchers

20. The University is required by paragraph 87, REF 02.2011, to identify all staff included in a UoA submission who meet the early career researcher definition even if the staff concerned can claim four outputs. Early career researchers who have published at a 2* or 3* standard and in exceptional circumstances at 1* will be eligible for REF submission and remission will be given on the number of outputs they need to cite.

Fixed-Term and Part-Time Employees

21. The University's eligibility criteria for REF 2014 submission will apply to every member of staff, irrespective of whether they hold a fixed-term or part-time contract with the Institution. When determining inclusion in REF 2014, the University will ensure that staff on fixed-term and part-time contracts are considered fairly and equally.

Staff Joining the University After May 2013

22. Staff who join the University between the preparation of the final version of the REF 2014 return (May/ June 2013), and the staff census date of 31st October 2013 can still ask to be nominated for inclusion in REF. Requests should be referred to the University's REF Advisory Group, who will consult the appropriate UoA co-ordinator before a final decision is made. Staff joining the University after 1st May 2013 who are aggrieved over their exclusion from REF can trigger the REF appeals process providing their appeal is submitted by no later than 30th September 2013.

Management of the REF 2014 Preparatory Process

23. Responsibility for overseeing the University's preparations for the REF 2014 rests with the REF Advisory Group supported by the Executive Pro -Vice Chancellor and the Dean of Academic Policy and Development. Central administrative support for REF 2014 planning and preparation will be provided by the Enterprise and Commercial Development Department.
24. Each UoA identified for REF inclusion will be led by a UoA Co-ordinator. The appointment of co-ordinators will be confirmed by School and Faculty senior management team. Having conducted audits of researchers and research output aligned with their particular units of assessment, co-ordinators will initially determine the REF status of staff put forward for submission. The results of the audit will be reported to the REF Advisory Group. Co-ordinators will also identify suitable impact case studies and draft the narrative that will feature in the environment section of the REF return. Reports from co-ordinators will be taken at meetings of the REF Advisory Group.
25. Day-to-day supervision of the University's preparation for REF 2014 will be undertaken by the University's REF Advisory Group on which every School and Faculty with an interest in REF 2014 has a representative.
26. The REF 2014 Advisory Group's remit is as follows:
- To make recommendations to Executive and the Research, Enterprise and Advanced Scholarship Committee on the content of the University's REF 2014 response
 - To advise members of staff on matters relating to REF 2014
 - To ensure that members of staff are aware of the REF 2014 planning process and are informed of decisions taken as part of the University's preparation for REF 2014

- To oversee the preparation of the University's REF 2014 Code of Practice and alert members of the University to the Code's publication
- To put in place a timetable to underpin the preparation of the University's REF 2014 return
- To make recommendations to the Executive Pro-Vice Chancellor on the appointment and payment of external REF 2014 advisers
- To guide and support staff with the preparation of research impact case studies
- To liaise with REF UoA co-ordinators on REF 2014 planning issues
- To evaluate and publish the results of internal REF 2014 audits conducted by REF UoA co-ordinators
- To report on a regular basis to Executive and the Research, Enterprise and Advanced Scholarship Committee, the progress of the University's REF 2014 return.

27. The REF Advisory Group is accountable to the University's Research, Enterprise and Advanced Scholarship Committee and the University Executive. A report of the progress of the University's REF 2014 will be given by the Chair of the REF Advisory Group at every meeting of the Research, Enterprise and Advanced Scholarship Committee. Members of the Committee not previously involved in the selection of staff for REF 2014 may be called on to join an appeals panel convened to investigate and resolve complaints by members of staff aggrieved by their REF 2014 status. The Equality Analysis will be overseen by the Research, Enterprise and Advanced Scholarship Committee which has the authority to require the REF Advisory Group to review the content of the University's draft REF return, if members conclude that the REF selection process has disadvantaged particular protected groups. Before the University's REF return is submitted to HEFCE, the document will be made available to members of the Executive for final approval.

28. Members of the REF 2014 Advisory Group are listed in Annex 4

External Advisers

29. The University's REF Advisory Group may secure the views of suitably qualified and experienced external advisers on the progress and development of UoA submissions. External advisers may also be appointed to guide UoA co-ordinators on the preparation of impact case studies. The appointment of REF external advisers must be referred to the University's REF Advisory Group and the Group will advise the Executive Pro - Vice Chancellor on the payment of external advisers. Written reports from external advisers

will be circulated to members of the University REF Advisory Group and made available to the Executive Pro-Vice Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor.

Data protection and confidentiality

30. The Data Protection Act 1998 requires HEIs to comply with a number of important principles regarding privacy and disclosure when handling personal data. These principles include ensuring such data are processed and used for limited purposes, and that the data are accurate and up-to-date. The Data Protection Act categorises certain types of data, including some of the data that HEIs will need to collect for REF purposes on individual staff circumstances, as sensitive personal data. Sensitive personal data are subject to stricter forms of processing and HEIs may want to consult their human resources division or data manager on requirements for storing and handling such data. Further information can also be found on the website of the Information Commissioner's Office www.ico.gov.uk/
31. Most importantly, if a member of staff informs someone of their personal circumstances their permission must be sought before the information is passed on or stored. Where staff do not provide permission for information to be passed on or stored, HEIs may be limited in the actions they can take. Staff cannot be compelled to provide information about their circumstances or to give permission for it to be stored or passed on.

Equality Training

32. Members of the University involved in the selection of staff for REF 2014 (REF Advisory Group, UoA Co-ordinators, Executive Pro-Vice Chancellor and Vice Chancellor, members of the Research, Enterprise and Advanced Scholarship Committee, the Director of Human Resources, Deans of Faculty, External Advisors) will receive training on the equality and diversity aspects of REF 2014 by no later than 30th June 2012. The training will cover the legislation referred to in the REF 2014 Code of Practice and will be supervised by the University's Equality and Diversity Manager.

Equality Analysis

33. The University will undertake, before September 2012, an Equality Analysis of the policy and procedures adopted by the Institution to select staff for REF 2014 submission. The purpose of the assessment will be to establish whether the REF 2014 selection policy and procedures may have had a differential impact on particular protected groups.
34. The Equality Analysis will be led by the University's Equality and Diversity Manager supported by members of the University's Research, Enterprise and Advanced Scholarship Committee who had not been previously involved in the selection of staff for REF 2014. This group will analyse the profiles of all staff eligible for REF 2014 submission, irrespective of whether they have been identified for inclusion in REF. Any under representation of protected groups within a particular unit of assessment will be reported to UoA co-ordinators and the University REF Advisory Group who will be obliged to review the staff profiles associated with the subject area to be returned.
35. The outcome of the Equality Analysis will inform the remaining stages of University's preparations for REF and the implementation of the REF Code of Practice. A second formal Equality Analysis will be conducted during June 2013 when the penultimate version of the University's REF return will be completed. Results will be checked against the earlier assessment. Members of staff will be able to access the results of REF Equality Analysis through the University's REF 2014 web page.

Feedback and Appeals

36. Staff who have expressed an interest in taking part in REF 2014 will receive feedback on their REF status from July 2012. Written feedback will be given by members of the University REF Advisory Group. Staff aggrieved at their exclusion from the University's REF return may appeal against their exclusion from July 2012. The University expects complaints over exclusion from REF 2014 to have been discussed initially with REF UoA co-ordinators and, if possible, resolved at this stage. Co-ordinators should alert the REF Advisory Group to complaints and act on the advice given by the Group.
37. If it is not possible to resolve a complaint as detailed in paragraph 36, staff aggrieved over decisions taken on their REF status should submit a formal appeal to the Vice Chancellor. The appeal should be by letter, detailing the reasons for the appeal and the outcome of the informal stage described in paragraph 36. Appeals will be heard by a panel chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, who will confirm the precise composition of the REF Appeals Panel. Panel members will be supported by the University's Equality and

Diversity Manager. Staff initiating an appeal may invite a trade union representative or employee colleague to attend the appeal hearing. For staff in post before 1st June 2013, a formal appeal must be submitted by no later than 30th April 2013. Staff joining the University after May 2013 who may be aggrieved by their exclusion from the University's REF return must submit a formal appeal by no later than 30th September 2013. The University will give an undertaking that any appeal submitted by staff joining the Institution after 1st May 2013 will be heard by no later than mid-October 2013. Should an appeal be upheld by the University's REF Appeals Panel, the final version of the REF 2014 submission will be amended.

Compliance

38. UoA co-ordinators and the REF Advisory Group will be responsible for ensuring that the Code of Practice informs decisions on the selection of staff for REF 2014. The results of the Equality Analysis conducted as part of the University's preparations for REF 2014 will be made available to the Research, Enterprise and Advanced Scholarship Committee and Committee members can require the REF Advisory Group to review the content of the University's draft REF return if they believe that the selection of staff disadvantaged or penalised particular protected groups.

Communication

39. The University will alert members of staff to the Code of Practice and will ensure that the Code is readily accessible in a variety of formats. Reports on the progress of the REF 2014 return will be posted on the University's REF 2014 web page. Notes of the meetings of the REF Advisory Group will also be made available to members of the University through the REF 2014 web page. Briefings on the progress of the University's REF 2014 return will be given by members of the REF Advisory Group to the Research, Enterprise and Advanced Scholarship Committee and the University Executive. UoA co-ordinators will be responsible for informing members of staff associated with a particular unit of assessment, of the progress of the REF subject return.
40. The Communication Plan set out in Annexe 7 shows the routes by which the Code will be communicated to staff including staff members absent from the University.

Monitoring the Code of Practice

41. The implementation of the REF 2014 Code of Practice will be monitored by the University REF 2014 Advisory Group on a quarterly basis to establish that the principles and processes set out in the Code are being followed.

Approval of the Code of Practice

42. The REF 2014 Code of Practice was approved by the University Executive on 23rd April 2012 and reported to Academic Board on 25th April 2012. Following feedback from HEFCE , amendments to the Code of Practice were approved by the University Executive in early August 2012.

Annexe 1

Criteria Governing the Eligibility of Units of Assessment and Staff for REF 2014

Introduction

Staffordshire University believes that participation in the 2014 REF assessment exercise provides the University with the opportunity to demonstrate the excellence of parts of our applied research, strengthen our research reputation and improve our position in Higher Education league tables. Participation in REF 2014, however, will not drive the pace or direction of the University's applied research strategy. The University is committed to supporting scholarship and research that underpins curriculum development and delivery and a wide range of learning and teaching methods that place our programmes at the forefront of developments in specific subject disciplines. Individual academic staff achievements from a wide range of scholarship and research activities that contribute to this institutional priority are highly valued. The inclusion of specific academic staff in REF 2014 is a small, but valuable part of the overall portfolio of staff research and scholarship activities. In terms of their career development and progression, members of staff not included in REF 2014 will not be disadvantaged by the University.

The University's REF 2014 return will reflect the commitments and targets for the development of applied research set out in the University Plan.

In preparing its REF selection criteria, the University has taken full note of the guidance on REF submissions issued by HEFCE, the draft criteria and working methods documents released in July 2011 by the assessment panels and current UK equality legislation.

Principles underpinning the University's REF Selection Criteria

Researchers

When considering staff for inclusion in REF 2014, Staffordshire University will normally expect researchers to evidence the completion since 1st January 2008 of four items of output of 2* or 3* level. In-line with the REF Guidance on Submissions and the criteria and working methods documents issued by the Funding Council in July 2011, individual staff circumstances (e.g. maternity leave, illness etc) will be taken into consideration by the University when identifying staff for REF 2014 inclusion.

In addition, to the above, researchers with 1* outputs may be included where this will benefit the research area's REF return or the University's research or teaching activities and/or reputation

Research areas

Research areas seeking inclusion in REF 2014 will be expected to provide evidence of all of the following (in no particular priority order):

- A credible research strategy guiding the activities of a research groups seeking REF submission
- Sufficient critical mass, normally defined by the University as six or more researchers
- If submitted in REA 2008, evidence of growth and development since RAE 2008
- Evidence that the quality and impact of the research is at a national or international level
- Evidence that the research area has the capacity for growth and development beyond 2014
- Evidence that through its membership, the research group seeking REF inclusion can show direct engagement with the recruitment and supervision of postgraduate students, including the supervision to completion of postgraduate research students
- The level of external research income that can be attributed to a particular research group, together with the contributions cited by individual researchers to the overall research environment associated with a particular unit of assessment
- The preparation of impact case studies that meet the requirements of the REF 2014 assessment regime as defined in the Guidance on Submissions issued by HEFCE in July 2011 and the criteria and working methods published by the assessment panels.

In view of the importance placed by the REF assessment regime on the measurement of research impact, research areas seeking REF submission will be expected to provide the University's REF Advisory Group by 1st March 2012 with the outlines of at least two impact case studies.

As part of the University's preparation for REF 2014, areas of research strength nominated for REF assessment will be reviewed against comparable research groups maintained by peer institutions.

In advance of a decision by the University Executive on the units of assessment or the members of staff to be cited in the University's REF 2014 return, the REF Advisory Group

may seek guidance and advice from external advisors who enjoy sufficient peer esteem to comment on the content of the University's REF submission.

Early career researchers and researchers whose individual circumstances may have constrained their opportunity to complete four items of work during the assessment period, will be considered for inclusion in the context of the criteria published by the REF assessment panels. The inclusion of early career researchers, fixed-term and contract staff, staff whose research output has been constrained by personal and other circumstances and staff who have joined the University in the last six months or so of the census period will be described in greater detail in the Institutional Code of Practice that will govern the University's preparations for REF 2014.

A timetable showing key dates and stages in the REF 2014 preparation process is set out in Annexe 2.

Applying the REF 2014 Eligibility Criteria

Members of staff can put their work forward for inclusion in REF 2014, if they believe that they meet the University's eligibility criteria. Individual requests for inclusion will be given full and proper consideration by unit of assessment co-ordinators, the University REF Advisory Group, who will be expected to apply the University's REF 2014 eligibility criteria. The REF Advisory Group will be responsible for overseeing the University's preparations for REF and will report to the University Executive for final sign off, through the Executive Pro-Vice Chancellor and thereafter to the Research, Enterprise and Advanced Scholarship Committee.

The criteria governing eligibility for REF inclusion will be set out in full in a Code of Practice that covers the University's preparation for and engagement in REF 2014. It will demonstrate that selection process for REF entry adopted by the University was fair and transparent and explain how any appeal against exclusion from the University's REF return will be investigated. The Code of Practice will be made available to members of staff from April 2012 through the University's REF web page.

Members of staff seeking more information on the University's preparations for REF 2014 are advised to approach the appropriate key REF contact(s) shown below:

- Executive: Rosy Crehan & Steve Wyn Williams
- Arts and Creative Technologies: Catherine Fehily, Douglas Burnham
- Business, Education and Law: James O'Kane, Geoff Pugh & Tehmina Basit
- Computing, Engineering and Sciences: Adrian Low, Pete Ogrodnik, Claude Chibelushi

- Health Sciences: Nigel Thomas, Nachi Chockalingam, Paul Kingston, Marc Jones, Sarah Grogan, Peter Kevern
- REF 2014 administrative support: Richard Gorton

Annexe 2

Research Excellence Framework 2014 – University Timetable

December 2011	Draft REF Criteria paper and REF resources paper considered by Executive
January 2012	HEFCE confirms REF assessment panel criteria and working methods. University REF Group meets to a) receive response by Executive to criteria paper and resources paper, b) discuss the outcome of the REF pilot study relating to UoA 3 (Allied Health Professions), c) review the progress of units of assessment provisionally identified for submission, d) consider an early draft of the REF Code of Practice, e) Approve REF report to Governors.
February 2012	University REF Code of Practice completed and available for consideration by REASC.
March 2012	University REF Code of Practice referred to Executive for approval. University REF Code of Practice ready for submission to HEFCE. REF Group meets to review progress of units of assessment provisionally identified for REF 2014 submission.
April 2012	University starts to appoint external REF advisers and advisers on impact case studies
May 2012	REF Group meets to review progress of units of assessment provisionally identified for REF 2014 submission and agree any development activity for REF during 2012- 2013. REF Group progress report presented to University Executive for approval
June 2012	Equality and Diversity Training for Staff Involved in the REF Selection Process: 1 st Equality Analyses begins
July 2012	REF units of assessment submissions sufficiently advanced to be available for external review by REF advisers. Results of 1 st Equality Impact analysed and reported to REF Group.

September 2012	<p>REF Group meets to consider draft REF returns produced by units of assessment identified for REF submission and reports from external REF advisers.</p> <p>REF Group prepares a formal plan outlining arrangements for the completion of the remaining stages of the REF exercise.</p> <p>Consideration at REASC and Executive Approval</p>
October 2012	<p>HEFCE issues submission intention survey</p> <p>Pilot REF submission system made available by HEFCE.</p>
November 2012	<p>Pilot REF submission system tested by the University and results feedback to HEFCE</p> <p>REF Group meets to agree content of REF submission survey. Survey approved by REASC and Executive and returned to HEFCE.</p>
January 2013	<p>Final version of the REF submission system released by HEFCE.</p> <p>University REF submission ready for data inputting</p>
February 2013	<p>REF data inputting starts.</p>
March 2013	<p>REF Group progress review meeting</p>
30 th April 2013	<p>Appeals Closing Date for Staff in post before 1st May 2013</p>
June 2013	<p>REF data inputting completed.</p> <p>REF submission checked by REF Group</p> <p>REF Group report to REASC and Executive</p> <p>Final Equality Analysis: results analysed.</p>
July 2013	<p>End of assessment period for research impacts, research environment, data on research grants and PGR students</p> <p>Final version of REF submission ready.</p>
September 2013	<p>University REF submission scrutinised by REF Group</p> <p>University REF submission ready for consideration by REASC and Executive</p>
30 th September 2013	<p>Appeals Closing Date for staff joining the University after 1st May 2013</p>

October 2013	University REF submission checked against staff census date (31 st October 2013) Final version of University REF submission ready for Vice Chancellor to sign.
November 2013	REF submission passed to HEFCE (closing date 29 th November 2013)

Annexe 3

Individual Staff Circumstances Disclosure Form

Introduction

Staffordshire University is committed to ensuring that decisions about selecting staff for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) are made in a fair, transparent and consistent manner. Information on how eligible staff will be selected for submission to the REF can be found in Staffordshire University's Code of Practice which can be found at www.staffs.ac.uk/research/ref/

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

In determining whether eligible staff may be submitted to the REF with fewer than four research outputs, Staffordshire University will take the following circumstances into consideration:

- Early career researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2009)
- Part time employment
- Career break or secondment outside of the higher education sector in which the individual did not undertake academic research
- Maternity leave, statutory adoption leave, and additional paternity leave (taken by partners of new mothers or co-adopters)
- Disability (including conditions such as cancer and chronic fatigue)
- Ill health or injury
- Mental health conditions
- Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding, adoption, paternity or childcare in addition to periods of maternity, statutory adoption or additional paternity leave taken. This could include for example, pregnancy related illness and health and safety restrictions in laboratory and field work.
- Other caring responsibilities (including caring for an elderly or disabled relative)
- Gender reassignment

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

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

What action do I need to take?

If you are eligible for REF submission you are encouraged to complete the attached form (Individual Staff Circumstances Disclosure Form, posted on www.staffs.ac.uk/research/ref/).

The purpose of declaring your individual circumstances is to ensure that each nomination is given full consideration with all circumstances being taken into account. In addition, this is an opportunity for us to make sure that we are aware of your particular circumstances in carrying out your role. If you would like to be contacted by a member of Personnel Services in confidence to discuss your personal situation, please provide contact details for this purpose.

If further information is required about any circumstances disclosed, you will be contacted by the REF 2014 Administration Team.

Who will see the information that I provide?

Within the University, the information that you provide will be seen by the REF Administrative Officer. An anonymised version of the Individual Staff Circumstances Disclosure Form will be made available to the Individual Staff Circumstances Committee.

Members of the University handling individual staff circumstances will observe confidentiality and information will be stored securely.

Information provided on the form may be shared externally for the purposes of evidencing any reduction in the number of research outputs. However, this will only be seen in full by the Panel Secretariat to the REF Equality and Diversity Panel. An anonymised version will then be provided to members of the Equality and Diversity Panel.

All REF panel members, chairs and secretaries are bound by confidentiality requirements, and acceptance of the confidentiality requirements is a condition of their appointment to the role. No information relating to identifiable individuals' circumstances will be published

by the funding bodies REF Team. All data collected, stored and processed by the UK funding bodies REF Team will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The REF Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions, www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02_11/, requires all higher education institutions participating in the REF to ensure appropriate confidentiality in handling individual staff circumstances. Where joint submissions are made it may be necessary to share the information provided with another institution.]

What if my circumstances change?

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

Do I have a right of appeal?

Yes. Staff dissatisfied with the outcome of their request to have their circumstances taken into account when identifying the number of research outputs that they can put forward for REF assessment have the right to appeal to the University's Director of Human Resources or the Head of Personnel who reassess the case. The decision of the Director of Human Resources/Head of Personnel will be final. In reaching a decision, the Director of Human Resources/Head of Personnel may invite the appellant to present his or her case. Appeals must be submitted in writing not later than ten working days from the date on which the member of staff was notified of the decision of the Staff Circumstances Committee. The University Equality and Diversity Officer will be invited to take part in the reassessment of the decision that triggered the appeal.

REF 2014: Individual staff circumstances disclosure form

Name	
Faculty/School	
Unit of Assessment	

Section one:

Please select one of the following:

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

Section two:

Please select as appropriate:

- I would like to be contacted by a member of Personnel Services to discuss my circumstances and requirements and/or the support provided by Staffordshire University. My contact details for this purpose are:

Email	
Telephone	
Preferred method of communication	

- I do not wish to be contacted by a member of Personnel Services

Section three

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

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

Circumstance	Information required
Early career researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2009)	Date on which you became an early career research
Information:	
Part time employee	FTE and duration in months
Information:	
Career break or secondment outside of the higher education sector	Dates and duration in months
Information:	
Maternity leave, statutory adoption leave or additional paternity leave (taken by partners of new mothers or co-adopters)	For each period of leave state which type of leave was taken and the dates and duration in months
Information	
Disability (including conditions such as cancer and chronic fatigue)	Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months
Information	

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

Please select as appropriate:

I confirm that the information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances.

I recognise that the information provided will be used for REF purposes and will be seen by the REF Administration Officer and I understand that members of the Individual Staff Circumstances Committee will see an anonymised version of this form.

I realise that it may be necessary to share this information with the Secretariat to the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel for the purpose of evidencing any reduction in the number of research outputs. I understand that the REF Equality and Diversity Panel will see an anonymised version of this information.

I recognise that if a joint submission is made, information may be shared with another institution.

Where permission is not provided Staffordshire University will be limited in the action it can take.

Signature:

Date:

Please return form to:

Richard Gorton

REF 2014 Administration Team

B184 Brindley Building

Leek Road

Stoke-on-Trent

ST4 2DF

Tel 01782 294117

Email r.l.gorton@staffs.ac.uk

For official use only

Following consideration of the personal circumstances described above, the Individual Staff Circumstances Committee:

Will progress the staff member's inclusion in the REF submission with [insert number] of research outputs. [Subject to specified institutional criteria]. Rationale for the proposed number of outputs:

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

Requires further information of the circumstances described as follows:

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

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

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

If [insert name of staff member] wishes to appeal against the decision of the Individual Staff Circumstances Committee, they will need to do so by [insert date] and details of the appeals process can be found at [insert web address].

Signature:

Date:

Executive Pro Vice-Chancellor

Signature: Date: ..

(REF Officer)

Annexe 4

Membership of University REF Advisory Group September 2012:

Paul Kingston (Chair)	Health Sciences
Rosy Crehan	Executive
Steve Wyn Williams	Academic Development Unit
Douglas Burnham	Arts and Creative Technologies
Catherine Fehily	Arts and Creative Technologies
Graham Coulter-Smith	Arts and Creative Technologies
James O’Kane	Business, Education & Law
Tehmina Basit	Business, Education & Law
Geoff Pugh	Business, Education & Law
Adrian Low	Computing, Engineering & Sciences
Pete Ogradnik	Computing, Engineering & Sciences
Claude Chibelushi	Computing, Engineering & Sciences
Nigel Thomas	Health Sciences
Peter Kevern	Health Sciences
Nachi Chockalingam	Health Sciences
Marc Jones	Health Sciences
Sarah Grogan	Health Sciences
Richard Gorton (REF 2014 Officer)	Enterprise and Commercial Development

Remit of University REF Advisory Group

- To offer help and guidance on REF to the wider University
- To co-ordinate the University's preparation for REF
- To advise Executive on the structure and content of the University's REF return
- To report to the Research, Enterprise and Advanced Scholarship Committee and Executive on the progress of the University's REF return

Annexe 5

UoA Co-ordinators as at September 2012

UoA Number	UoA Name	UoA Co-ordinator
A3	Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing & Pharmacy	Professor Paul Kingston Dr Peter Kevern
A4	Psychology, Psychiatry & Neuroscience	Professor Sarah Grogan
B11	Computer Science & Informatics	Dr Claude Chibelushi
B15	General Engineering	Professor Peter Ogrodnik
C19	Business & Management Studies	Professor Geoff Pugh
C25	Education	Professor Tehmina Basit
C26	Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure & Tourism	Professor Nachi Chockalingam Dr Marc Jones
D34	Art & Design: History, Practice & Theory	Dr Graham Coulter-Smith
D36	Communication, Cultural & Media Studies, Library & Information Management	Professor Douglas Burnham

Annexe 6

Individual Staff Circumstances Committee: Membership and Remit

Membership

Members of the Individual Staff Circumstances Committee are:

- Executive Pro –Vice Chancellor (Chair)
- Dean of Academic Policy and Development
- Equality and Diversity Officer
- REF 2014 Administration Officer (Secretary)

Remit

- Consider clearly defined staff circumstances for REF 2014 inclusion and having regard to the REF assessment criteria and working methods, propose tariff reductions,
- Consider complex staff circumstances for REF 2014 inclusion and having regard to the REF assessment criteria and working methods, propose tariff reductions,
- Ensure that clearly defined and complex staff circumstances are considered in line with the University's REF 2014 Code of Practice, the HEFCE REF assessment criteria and working methods and Equality, Diversity and Data Protection Legislation

The Committee will meet during 2012 and 2013 to consider cases and decide on a tariff reduction for members of staff with clearly defined and complex circumstances. Decisions reached by the Committee will be reported to members of staff within five working days of a Committee meeting.

Annexe 7

REF 2014 Code of Practice: Communications Plan

<i>Activity</i>	<i>By When</i>	<i>By Whom</i>
Approval of the Draft REF COP	<i>March 2012</i>	REF Advisory Group
Submission of Draft REF COP to University Executive and Academic Board	<i>April 2012</i>	REF 2014 Admin Officer
Submission of University REF COP to HEFCE	<i>April 2012</i>	REF 2014 Admin Officer
REF COP posted on University website. Publication of Code announced to staff using University's RSS feeds system	<i>End of April/beginning May 2012</i>	REF 2014 Admin Officer
REF COP featured in REF Equality and Diversity Training Workshop and progress meetings with UoA Co-ordinators	<i>June 2012</i>	Equality & Diversity Manager, REF Advisory Group
REF COP reviewed and revised to take account of feedback from HEFCE. Changes authorised by Executive.	<i>July 2012</i>	REF Admin Officer & Executive
Any changes to the REF COP submitted to HEFCE for approval	<i>August 2012</i>	<i>REF Admin Officer</i>
Amended version of REF COP posted on University website	September 2012	REF Admin Officer
Staff reminded by email/RSS feeds system that the revised Code of Practice has been posted on the University website and the link to the Individual Staff Circumstances Disclosure Form given.	September 2012	REF Admin Officer
Personnel identify teaching and research staff absent from the University and alert them to the Code's publication	September 2012	Personnel
Staff provisionally identified for REF 2014 will have received formal notification from the Executive Pro-Vice Chancellor. Notification will include a copy of the Individual Staff Disclosure Form and a link to the University web page containing the REF COP	September/October 2012	Executive

