

# REF2014 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY CODE OF PRACTICE

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## 1. Introduction

The four national Funding Councils are inviting all Higher Education Institutions to make submissions to the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF). The REF is the new system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions (HEIs) and builds upon and extends the scope of the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE).

The 2014 REF will be managed by the UK REF team based at HEFCE and overseen by the REF Steering Group, consisting of representatives of the four funding bodies: the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and the Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland (DEL).

The purpose of the REF is:

- The funding bodies intend to use the assessment outcomes to inform the selective allocation of their research funding to HEIs for up to 5 years, with effect from 2015-16.
- The assessment provides accountability for public investment in research and produces evidence of the benefits of this investment.
- The assessment outcomes provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks.

Whilst income secured from the SFC research grant is a very important resource for the University, which needs to be secured and grown, the REF has a range of other consequences that are equally important. Good success in the REF is important from the perspective of institutional reputation, both within the UK in comparative terms with other Higher Education Institutions, and also internationally. Increasingly, the highest quality research active staff will be attracted to the institutions in which their academic discipline is rated very highly, as measured by the REF.

The University is required to make its submission to the 2014 REF by 29 November 2013.

## 2. Pre-requisite for submission to REF2014

Each Institution making a submission to REF is required to develop, document and apply a Code of Practice on selecting staff to include in their submission.

This Code will ensure that the University's REF procedures do not discriminate unlawfully against staff due to their protected characteristics (as detailed in The Equality Act 2010) including: age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Furthermore, the procedures outlined in the Code will ensure that fixed-term and part-time workers will not be treated any less favourably than comparable employees on open contracts or full-time workers as detailed in the Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 and Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000.

This Code has been developed through collaboration and consultation, including consideration and discussion by relevant Senior University Officers, Faculty Representatives, University Executive Team, Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee and discussion with campus Trade Unions.

The Code received formal and final approval from the University Senate on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2012, albeit its principles, and the above noted legislation, have been guiding all prior activities associated with the University's preparations up to that point.

For REF2014 all institutional Codes will be examined, on behalf of the funding councils, by the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP). Following confirmation of acceptance from EDAP, the University REF Team will make this Code easily accessible to all academic staff. It will be published on the University's website and the R&KE Portal REF2014 site (see section 9 Further Information) and staff will be informed when this is available. Furthermore, all staff eligible for selection will be sent an electronic copy of this Code and staff who are absent from work will be contacted by their relevant Department/School to draw attention to this Code and provide hard-copy of the Code where this is necessary.

Continuing the series of REF2014 Code of Practice information events, the University REF Team will run specific 'Process for REF Selection' information sessions for all eligible staff in October 2012. Staff are reminded that the REF Team and UoA Leaders will be available throughout the remainder of the assessment period to respond directly to any queries regarding the Code and the process of REF selection.

### **3. Guiding principles**

The University is committed to operating a transparent, consistent, accountable and inclusive approach to its preparations for REF2014. The University will ensure that all eligible academic staff (defined in REF Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions – see Section 9 Further Information) will be considered for inclusion in the REF2014 submission. The main guiding criterion for staff inclusion will be based on the quality of the research undertaken by an individual during the assessment period, taking into account specific guidance in the Panel Criteria and Working Methods statement (see Section 9 Further Information). The normal expectation is that 4 outputs (of appropriate quality) will be required from each member of staff other than where individual staff circumstances (see section 6) have significantly constrained the ability to produce the expected number of quality outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period.

In preparing for any exercise as complex and important as the REF, good and effective communications are essential. This is both to ensure that all those involved in the process know what their role is and the expectations that will be placed on them, and also to provide clear advice on the timing of various events throughout the preparation process.

The University's preparations for the REF will be guided in part by a timeline of actions and activities that have been endorsed by the University Executive Team. Any subsequent amendments to the timeline will likewise be reported through the appropriate committee structure for discussion and approval as necessary. This information, together with a range of other data and information relevant to the preparation processes and procedures are available to members of the University community via the R&KE Portal REF2014 site (see Section 9 – Further Information), which is regularly updated by the University's REF Team.

REF2014 also includes an assessment of an institution's non-academic impact as part of the overall assessment of quality of research. The impact case studies can relate to an individual's or a group's research and subsequent activities. There is no expectation that each submitted

individual needs to submit or be referenced in a case study. Institutions may submit impact case studies based on the work of researchers who are no longer employed at the University, or who have not been selected for submission to REF2014. All impact case studies that are based on excellent research and meet the criteria set out in the Panel Criteria and Working Methods will be considered for inclusion.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **4.1. The Principal and Executive Team**

The University's preparations for, and final submission to, the REF are ultimately the responsibility of the University Executive Team, acting on the advice of Senate and the University Court. The Principal is responsible on behalf of Court for all matters to do with the effective and efficient operation and management of the University. However, specific areas of responsibility are devolved to various Senior Officers of the University. One of these is the Associate Deputy Principal for Research, who has the responsibility for coordinating University-wide preparations for the REF.

### **4.2. ADPR and University REF Team**

The Associate Deputy Principal for Research (ADPR) has responsibility for the preparation and content of the University's submission and is supported by the University REF Team. The REF Team is led by the Research Policy Manager who works directly with the ADPR, both in an advisory capacity and also with devolved responsibility for managing the University's preparation activities. The Research Policy Manager is supported by a Research Information Officer, Research Information Assistant and Systems Administrator, together forming the core administrative REF Team.

### **4.3. Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee**

The role of the Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee (EDSC) is to shape, inform, develop and implement strategic planning and policy on equality and diversity matters for the University and locally for Faculties, Schools, Departments and Professional Services (for further information please visit <http://www.strath.ac.uk/staff/equalitydiversity/structure> ). EDSC will monitor and review the Equality Impact Assessment of the REF selection process outlined in this Code. It is the responsibility of EDSC to ensure that any necessary changes to prevent discrimination or promote equality are addressed prior to the REF submission deadline (see Section 8 – Equality Impact Assessment of REF Selection Process).

### **4.4. UoA Leaders**

As with the 2008 RAE, the University has established a network of academic Unit of Assessment (UoA) Leaders. The UoA Leaders perform the key supporting role for the academic development of submissions to individual Units of Assessment. Each Unit of Assessment Leader was proposed by the management team of the relevant Faculty.

### **4.5. UoA Planning Group**

The UoA Planning Group is responsible for the initial selection of staff for submission. The Group will be responsible for carrying out an assessment of the quality of research outputs for all academic staff that may be considered for inclusion within that UoA. They will produce specific criteria for the assessment of the quality of research outputs of individuals considered

for inclusion. The Group membership will normally include the relevant Executive Dean, Vice-Dean (Research), Department/School Head(s) or other members of the Faculty management team, and the UoA Leader.

#### **4.6. Main Panel Coordinators**

A key change in REF2014 from RAE2008 is the efforts that have been made to ensure the exercise is consistent across all of the Main Panels. To ensure that the University's strategic decision making mirrors this consistent approach, Main Panel Coordinators have been identified for each of the four Main Panels (A-D). Each Main Panel Coordinator (MPC) was proposed directly by the Vice-Dean (Research) of the relevant Faculty, following endorsement of the nominee by internal Faculty and Departmental approval processes. Due to the size and discipline coverage of Panels B and C, two MPCs have been selected for each of these Panels.

#### **4.7. Decision Review Team**

The Decision Review Team's main responsibility is to make output reduction decisions for a member of staff where individual circumstances have significantly constrained the ability to produce the minimum number of outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period. The Team will also be convened if any selection issues arise under the scope of this Code of Practice. The Review Team will include the ADPR, Head of Department/ School, Research Policy Manager, Equality & Diversity Manager and relevant HR Manager.

#### **4.8. Appeals Panel**

The Appeals Panel is responsible for making a final decision in the event that a member of staff disputes the decision of the Decision Review Team. The Appeals Panel will include the Vice-Principal, relevant Vice-Dean (Research), Director of HR and a member from the University REF Team.

#### **4.9. Members of Staff**

Members of staff are integral to both the content and management of the REF submission. It is the responsibility of each staff member, if requested, to provide any relevant research information within timescales that will be approved and widely distributed. Members of staff are also required to indicate whether or not they have any individual circumstances that may have significantly constrained their ability to produce four outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period (see Section 6 Individual Staff Circumstances and Section 9 Further Information). Members of staff have the right not to disclose individual circumstances but are encouraged to do so thus providing the University with the opportunity to resolve and/or accommodate these circumstances.

## **5. Decision making processes**

### **5.1. The selection of UoAs**

The University Executive Team will make the final decision on the Units of Assessment to which the University will make a submission, acting on the advice and recommendation of the ADPR and the REF Team, who will have discussed the selection in detail with the Faculty and department managers.

## 5.2. Setting the quality threshold of a UoA

The main guiding principle for inclusion in the REF will be that of quality. The UoA Planning Groups, in consultation with the ADPR, will establish a minimum research output quality threshold for each UoA to which the University intends to make a submission. The output quality threshold will take into account a number of factors, including: the general level of research excellence achieved across the subject area in the 2008 RAE; the relative position and strength of submissions across Scotland; and whether the area is new, emerging, or well established in terms of its history of research activity. In each case, however, the University will wish to adhere to its strategic aim of increasing research excellence across the institution. By implication, this means that appropriately high quality standards are likely to be set.

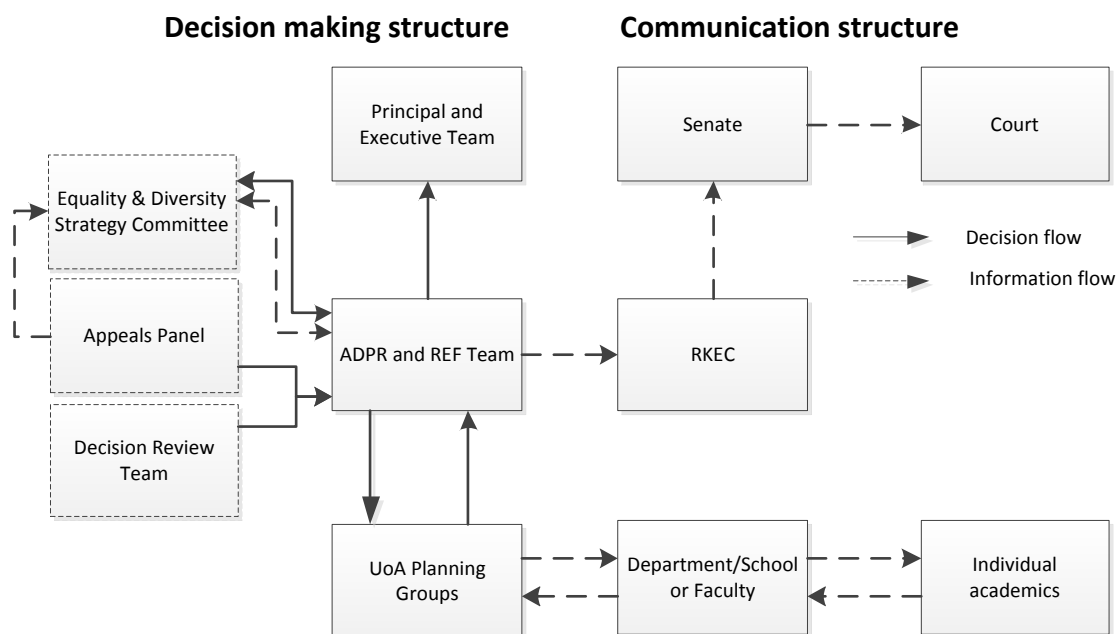


FIGURE 1: THE UNIVERSITY DECISION AND COMMUNICATION STRUCTURE FOR REF2014

## 5.3. Selection of staff and communication of decisions

Figure 1 outlines the University decision making process, including the groups and individuals involved, and how decisions will be communicated across the institution.

The University has undertaken a number of preparatory activities in advance of the REF, including annual institutional research audits involving all academic staff across the University, which has involved the specific review and assessment of output quality. In addition, external advisors have been appointed by the University, via nominations from Faculties (in turn following discussion and agreement with Heads of Schools/Departments), to assist with the assessment of output quality and to confirm internal processes and approaches to quality assessment. The nature and outcomes of these exercises have been communicated to staff via the mechanisms of the University and Faculty Research Committees, and also through other internal reporting mechanisms and Committee structures.

The UoA Planning Group, with input and advice from ADPR and the University REF Team, will agree the placement of individual staff within approved Units of Assessment, based on the appropriate 'fit' of their research outputs in terms of the subject areas covered by Unit of Assessment Sub-Panels. Thereafter, estimated output quality profiles will be prepared in Unit of Assessment aggregations and, based primarily on the decisions taken with respect to minimum output quality standards, provisional decisions on the inclusion status of individual staff will be taken.

It is the intention of the University that all staff will have been notified of their submission status following the Institutional Audit in April 2013. At this stage staff will be advised by the Head of Department/School on their inclusion status, based on the number of outputs they have/will have available in the public domain within the assessment timescale. The three possible statuses are:

- Included
- Not included
- Pending

A 'pending' decision relates to the circumstance where a significant but achievable improvement in the quality of proposed outputs is required prior to being included in the submission. Where possible, all 'pending' members of staff will be given final notice of inclusion status prior to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

For staff appointed on or after 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013, a decision on submission status will be given at the earliest opportunity or prior to 4th November 2013 to provide sufficient time for any appeals process (see Section 7 Grounds for Appeal against Decisions).

#### **5.4. Selecting Impact Case Studies**

Impact narratives may be based on the work of one person, or a larger group. Impact cases are also eligible even if based on the research of a person or persons who are not submitted to REF.

Draft impact case studies will be subject to regular review by the UoA Planning Group and the REF Team as part of the overall institutional research audits and some may be externally reviewed as part of this process. Due to the nature of the development of the case studies, they should not be regarded as individual projects, but the culmination of contributions from a wider group. Amendments by the UoA Planning Groups should be incorporated into the narrative whenever requested.

#### **5.5. Training**

All relevant staff, including the Principal, the Associate Deputy Principal, Executive Deans, Vice Deans (Research), Heads of Departments, Decision Review Team members, Appeals Panel members, UoA Leaders and administrative staff with involvement in REF planning, will be given training in Equal Opportunities matters. The training will include case studies that are used to explore issues such as the implications of dealing with personal circumstances in the process of selecting staff for inclusion in the submission.



## 5.6. Joint Submissions

The University will share this Code of Practice with institutions with whom we may make any joint submissions and will ensure that joint decision making across institutions does not compromise adherence to the terms of this Code and its guiding principles.

## 6. Individual Staff Circumstances

As a key measure to support equality and diversity in research careers, individuals may 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. The Panel Criteria and Working Methods includes a set of clearly defined circumstances and an explanation of what is meant by complex circumstances and the corresponding output reduction (up to a maximum of 3 outputs) based on the total monthly or FTE period that an individual was constrained (see Tables 1 & 2 in Appendix 1).

The University encourages all eligible staff to come forward with any Individual Circumstances and the REF Team have developed an online declaration form (see Appendix 2) to assist the disclosure process detailed below:

1. All eligible staff will be contacted via email providing a link to Individual Circumstance page on the R&KE Portal:

<https://moss.strath.ac.uk/research/resportal/ref/circumstances/default.aspx>

This site will explain the purpose of the disclosure of individual staff circumstances, who will view the information provided, links to further information and the online declaration form.

Departments/Schools will contact staff who are absent from work to draw their attention to the declaration form and provide hard copies of the form if necessary.

2. All eligible staff will be given the opportunity to complete the declaration form (see Appendix 2, pg 14). The opening page of the form will ask 'Do you have any individual circumstances you wish to declare?' with the option of 'none', 'clearly defined circumstances' and 'complex circumstances'.
3. Staff who select 'none' and then click 'save and continue' will be informed by email that they have completed their form but can amend the form at any stage up until the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013. **This deadline applies to all declarations and is necessary to ensure sufficient time for any appeals process to be completed prior to the submission deadline of 29<sup>th</sup> November 2013. Staff should notify the REF Team immediately if individual staff circumstances have prevented the completion of the form prior to 30<sup>th</sup> June. In these cases, staff will be given a maximum of 10 working days (depending on the proximity to the submission deadline) to complete the form.**
4. Staff who select 'clearly defined circumstances' and then click 'save and continue' will be directed to a second page (see Appendix 2, pg 15) that will ask them to provide details of the clear circumstances. Information will be provided on this page for staff unsure of certain aspects. After entering the details and saving the form the staff member will be informed by email that they can amend the form at any stage up until the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013. It will also provide information relating to who will review the information and the next

steps (this information is also provided on the Individual Circumstances landing page so members of staff are fully aware of these details prior to completing their declaration).

The REF Team will inform the staff and the relevant UoA Leader of any output reduction that may be permissible based on the information provided and Tables 1&2 in Appendix 1.

5. Staff who select 'complex circumstances' and then click 'save and continue' will be directed to a second page (see Appendix 2, pg16) that will ask them to provide details of the nature and timing of the circumstances. They will also be asked to describe the effects on their research.

At this stage the member of staff has a number of disclosure options: 'do not disclose at this stage', 'disclose to Head of Department/School' or 'disclose to HR Manager'. If 'do not disclose at this stage' is selected and the form saved the staff member will be informed by email that they can amend the form at any stage up until the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013. If either of the 'disclose' options are selected the member of staff will receive the same email as above and, depending on the option they have selected, they will be contacted by either their Head of Department/School or HR Manager. The purpose of this meeting is to verify the circumstances prior to providing anonymised details to the Decision Review Team for judgment on any output reduction permissible (this information is also provided on the Individual Circumstances landing page so members of staff are fully aware of these details prior to completing their declaration).

The Decision Review Team will be guided by the case studies provided by the Equalities Challenge Unit <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/documents/ref-materials/complex-circumstances-examples> and the training receive using the University's 'REF and E&D' online training toolkit <https://moss.strath.ac.uk/research/resportal/ref/circumstances/default.aspx>.

The decision will be communicated to the member of staff by their Head of Department/School or HR Manager depending on the preference of the member of staff. If a member of staff disputes the output reduction decision of the Decision Review Team they will have the opportunity to appeal (see Section 7 – Grounds for appeal against decisions).

6. Staff appointed on or after 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 will be requested to complete the declaration form preferably within 10 working days from commencement of their employment. This is necessary to ensure sufficient time for any appeals process to be completed prior to the submission deadline 29<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

## 7. Grounds for Appeal against Decisions

The desire of the University is to minimise appeals by continually informing staff of their progress via research audits and the ADR process. This will ensure that when a final selection decision is given, staff are fully aware of factors that were taken into consideration when reaching the decision.

An appeal can be made if an Academic believes that there are individual circumstances that have not been taken into consideration when reaching a selection decision. Following notification of non-inclusion, members of staff will have a further opportunity to detail their circumstances which will be considered by the Decision Review Team. If a member of staff disputes the output reduction decision of the Decision Review Team they will have the

opportunity to have the decision reviewed by the Appeals Panel. The decision reached by this Appeals Panel will be final and will be communicated to the staff member confidentially.

Decisions on inclusion are expected to be made following the institutional audit in April 2013. For staff who have been informed of this decision, all appeals must be lodged by 5th July 2013 at the latest. For staff appointed on or after 1st July 2013 or staff who receive inclusion decisions after the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013, the appeal must be lodged within 5 working days of being informed of the decision on their selection status for REF2014.

## **8. Equality Impact Assessment of REF Selection Process**

The University Court and Executive Team are committed to promoting and implementing best practice on equality and diversity as prescribed by legislation and our own equality policies and schemes. As part of this remit the University is committed to fair and transparent practices. In discharging this responsibly we have developed Equality Impact Assessment guidelines and a framework. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a systematic and evidence based process which verifies that the University's policies and practices are not discriminatory. An EIA is required when reviewing or developing new policies or where a change to practice may potentially discriminate people from a protected characteristic background. Guidance on how an EIA is conducted at Strathclyde can be found on the pages of the Equalities and Diversity website <http://www.strath.ac.uk/staff/equalitydiversity/eia/>

The University has conducted an EIA on the policies and processes for the selection of staff for REF2014 outlined in this Code. The EIA is informed by analysis of data on staff who are eligible for selection using information currently held in the Human Resource Information System, HRIS (accessed via Pegasus <https://soolin.mis.strath.ac.uk/login>), which ultimately aims to hold data on all the protected characteristics of all staff employed by the University. Staff are encouraged to update their information using HRIS and to understand more about protected characteristics and the Equalities Act 2010, all staff are expected to undertake the Diversity in the Workplace Module <http://marshallacm.upsidelms.com/marshall/login/strath.jsp>

The Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee (EDSC) will continually review the EIA at key stages during the remainder of the assessment period to ensure that any necessary changes to prevent discrimination or promote equality are addressed prior to the REF submission deadline.

EDSC will have the REF2014 Code EIA as a standing item on their committee agenda but the key stages currently identified for a review of the EIA are as follows:

- following the institutional audit in April 2013
- when considering appeals
- when preparing the final submission

Where potential discrimination is identified by the EDSC, the ADPR and REF Team will be asked to justify the policy or practice as per the requirement of the law and/or modify the policy or practice accordingly. Any policy or practice that is found to have a positive impact on equality will be replicated across all UoA selection processes. All Faculty and Department/School committees will be kept informed of these developments.

Following submission to REF2014, the EIA will be published on the University website; all staff and relevant committees will be informed when this is available.

## **9. Further Information**

The following is a list of electronic resources that provide information on the REF2014 procedures and guidance referenced in this code as well as internal resources to improve awareness amongst staff at all levels:

- Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions  
[http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02\\_11/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02_11/)
- Panel Criteria and Working Methods  
[http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2012/01\\_12/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2012/01_12/)
- R&KE Portal - Internal resources to improve staff awareness of internal process and further guidance <https://moss.strath.ac.uk/research/resportal/ref/default.aspx>
- Terms of reference for the University Executive Team  
<http://www.strath.ac.uk/committees/executiveteam/>

## APPENDIX 1

### Individual Staff Circumstances and Research Output Reduction Tables

As a key measure to support equality and diversity in research careers, in all UoAs members of staff may be returned with fewer than four outputs without penalty in REF2014, where their individual circumstances have significantly constrained their ability to produce four outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period. The University can list the maximum of four outputs against any researcher, irrespective of their circumstances or the length of time they have had to conduct research. A minimum of one output must be listed against each individual submitted to the REF.

For REF2014 there are two categories of circumstance: **clearly defined** and **complex**.

### Output reductions for Clearly Defined Circumstances

Circumstances with a **clearly defined** reduction in outputs are:

- Qualifying as an early career researcher
- Absence from work due to working part-time, secondments or career breaks
- Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave

Early career researchers are defined in paragraphs 85-86 of 'guidance on submissions'. Table 1 sets out the permitted reduction in outputs without penalty in the assessment for early career researchers who meet this definition.

TABLE 1: EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS: PERMITTED REDUCTION IN OUTPUTS

Date at which the individual first met the REF definition of an early career researcher:	Number of outputs may be reduced 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
On or after 1 August 2011	3

Table 2 sets out the permitted reduction in outputs without penalty in the assessment for absence from work due to part-time working, secondments or career breaks outside of the higher education sector, and in which the individual did not undertake academic research.

The allowances in Table 2 are based on the length of the individual's absence or time away from working in higher education. They are defined in terms of total months absent from work. For part-time working, the equivalent 'total months absent' should be calculated by multiplying the number of months worked part-time by the full-time equivalent (FTE) **not** worked during

those months. For example, an individual worked part-time for 30 months at 0.6 FTE. The number of equivalent months absent =  $30 \times 0.4 = 12$ .

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 reduced by up to:
0-11.99	0
12-27.99	1
28-45.99	2
46 or more	3

Individuals may reduce the number of outputs by one, for each discrete period of:

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.

Additional paternity or adoption leave<sup>1</sup> lasting for four months or more, taken substantially during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2013.

### Combining clearly defined circumstances

Where individuals have had a combination of circumstances with clearly defined reductions in outputs, these may be accumulated up to a maximum reduction of three outputs. For each circumstance, the relevant reduction should be applied and added together to calculate the total maximum reduction.

Where Table 1 is combined with Table 2, the period of time since 1 January 2008 up until the individual met the definition of an early career researcher should be calculated in months, and Table 2 should be applied.

When combining circumstances, only one circumstance should be taken into account for any period of time during which they took place simultaneously. (For example, an individual worked part-time throughout the assessment period and first met the definition of an early career researcher on 1 September 2009. In this case the number of months 'absent' due to part-time working should be calculated from 1 September 2009 onwards, and combined with the reduction due to qualifying as an early career researcher)

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<sup>1</sup> '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. For the purposes of the REF we refer to this leave as 'additional paternity or adoption leave'.

Where an individual has a combination of circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs **and** complex circumstances, the institution should submit these collectively as 'complex' so that a single judgement can be made about the appropriate reduction in outputs, taking into account all the circumstances.

### **Output reduction decision with Complex circumstances**

Where staff have had one or more complex circumstances – including in combination with any circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs – the University will need to make a judgement on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs submitted, and provide a rationale for this judgement in the REF submission. **Complex circumstances** that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs are:

- Disability. This is defined in 'guidance on submissions' Part 4, Table 2 under 'Disability'.
- Ill health or injury.
- Mental health conditions.
- Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of – or justify the reduction of further outputs in addition to – the allowances made in paragraph 75 below.
- Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member).
- Gender reassignment.
- Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed at paragraph 190 of 'guidance of submissions' or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

The information provided by the University should provide an estimate – in terms of the equivalent number of months absent from work – of the impact of the complex circumstances on the member of staff's ability to work productively throughout the assessment period, and state any further constraints on the member of staff's research work in addition to the equivalent months absent. A reduction should be made according to Table 2 in relation to estimated months absent from work, with further constraints taken into account as appropriate.

All submitted complex circumstances will be considered by the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP), on a consistent basis across all UoAs. The EDAP will make recommendations about the appropriate number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty to the relevant main panel chairs, who will make the decisions. The relevant sub-panels will then be informed of the decisions and will assess the remaining outputs without any penalty.

## APPENDIX 2

### Individual staff circumstances declaration form

#### REF Individual Circumstances Declaration

In REF2014, individuals may 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.

REF2014 classifies the circumstances which may have significantly affected research as 'clearly defined' or 'complex'. If you think you have been affected by circumstances which have significantly affected your ability to work then we would encourage you to make a declaration.

Further information can be found on the REF pages of the [R&KE Portal](#). Should you have any queries please contact [refteam@strath.ac.uk](mailto:refteam@strath.ac.uk).



#### Personal Details

[More Information](#)

Name:	[REDACTED]	Department:	[REDACTED]
Job Title	[REDACTED]	Email	[REDACTED]@strath.ac.uk
Phone	0141548 [REDACTED]		

#### Individual Circumstances

More information on specific circumstances and how these affect the number of outputs required will be given as you progress through the declaration but put simply:

REF2014 defines 'clearly defined circumstances' as one or a combination of:

- You are an early career researcher
- Part time working
- Maternity, paternity or adoption leave.
- Secondments or career breaks outside of HEI and academic research.

REF2014 defines 'complex circumstances' as:

- disability
- ill health or injury (including mental health conditions),
- additional constraints related to pregnancy or maternity,
- childcare or other caring responsibilities
- gender reassignment
- other circumstances relating to protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.

If you have a combination of both Clearly Defined and Complex circumstances please select the "Complex Circumstances" option.

Do you have individual circumstances that you wish to declare?

None <input type="radio"/>	Clearly Defined Circumstances <input type="radio"/>	Complex Circumstances <input type="radio"/>
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Close

Save and Continue

Select an option to continue



## REF Individual Circumstances: Clearly Defined

Clearly defined circumstances are when the time away from research in the REF period (1st Jan 2008 – 31st October 2013) is defined by start of contract, contracted hours, or discrete periods of leave/secondment. Further information can be found in the [Individual Circumstances section of the R&KE Portal](#) which should be read prior to completion of this form. Should you have any queries, please contact [refteam@strath.ac.uk](mailto:refteam@strath.ac.uk)



### Early Career Researcher

[More Information](#)

Do you meet the REF definition of an Early Career Researcher?

### Part Time Working

[More Information](#)

State your part time hours as proportion of full time equivalent (FTE) e.g. 0.5 FTE for half time, 0.2 FTE for one day per week. Please add another period of part time working for each time your contracted hours have changed.

Part time hours as proportion of full time	Period (dd/mm/yyyy)
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> to <input type="text"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Add period of part time working	

### Career Break/Secondment

[More Information](#)

'Career break' or 'secondment' covers time away from work in the academic sector, where no research was undertaken - not a move to similar role within or to another University or research establishment.

Please add a new Career Break/Secondment Period for each new period of time away from work in the academic sector.

Description	Period (dd/mm/yyyy)
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> to <input type="text"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Add Career Break/Secondment Period	

### Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave

[More Information](#)

Please supply the type and start date for each period of leave you have taken.

Type	Start of leave (dd/mm/yyyy)
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">           Select...           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select...</li> <li>Statutory maternity leave</li> <li>Statutory adoption leave</li> <li>Additional paternity leave of 4 months or more</li> <li>Additional adoption leave of 4 months or more</li> </ul> </div>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="button" value="Save and Close"/>	

## REF Individual Circumstances: Complex

When factors impact on an individual's ability to perform research over time but do not easily fall into a clearly defined category with a defined period away from work, complex circumstances attempt to enable a judgement to be made about a total time away from research caused by a set of circumstances. For REF purposes the complex circumstances must occur during the REF period (1st Jan 2008 – 31st October 2013) and will require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs. Individuals can have a combination of both clear and complex circumstances. If you have already provided information under the Clearly Defined option this will still be available to the Decision Review Team.



Further information can be found in the [Individual Circumstances section of the R&KE Portal](#) which should be read prior to completion of this form. Should you have any queries, please contact [refteam@strath.ac.uk](mailto:refteam@strath.ac.uk).

### Nature and Timing of Circumstances

[More information](#)

### Effect on Research

### Disclosure

Please select from three options. The information can remain undisclosed at present, (e.g. if it is incomplete), passed to your Head of School/Department, or passed to REF contact in Human Resources (if you do not wish your Head of School/Department to be informed at this point).

If you are included in the institution's REF submission, brief details of your circumstances (no more than 300 words) will be available to your Head of Department, the University's REF team, the REF Panel Chairs and HEFCE's Equality and Diversity panel to inform an output reduction.

Disclosure option

Do not disclose at this stage

Date option selected

Do not disclose at this stage

Disclose to Head of Department/School

Disclose to HR Manager

Back

Save and Close