

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY
RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2014

CODE OF PRACTICE ON THE SELECTION OF STAFF

(July 2012, Appendices C and F updated Jan 2014)

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the new system for assessing the quality of research in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UK, and replaces the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) which was last conducted in 2008. It is managed by the REF team based at the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies, and is overseen by the REF Steering Group.
- 1.2 The primary purpose of REF 2014 is to produce assessment outcomes for each submission made by Institutions. These will be used by the higher education funding bodies to (a) inform the selective allocation of their grant for research to the institutions they fund, with effect from 2015-16, (b) provide accountability for public investments in research and produce evidence of the benefits of this investment, and (c) provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks for use within the higher education sector and for public information.
- 1.3 The REF is a process of expert review, conducted by panels of experts who are active or who have recently been active in high quality research, or its wider use. It is a single framework for assessment across all disciplines with a common set of data required in all submissions. The discipline-based expert panels assess submissions made by HEIs in 36 units of assessment (UOAs). The conduct of the REF is governed by the principles of (a) equity, (b) equality, and (c) transparency.
- 1.4 The assessment of submissions made by a sub-panel responsible for a given UOA is based on three distinct elements: (a) Outputs (carrying a weighting of 65%), (b) Impact (carrying a weighting of 20%), and (c) Environment (carrying a weighting of 15%). For each submission the sub-panels will develop a sub-profile for each of these three elements which will show the proportion of activity judged to meet each of four starred levels (or else be judged unclassified). The three sub-profiles will be combined into an overall quality profile. These will be published in December 2014 and will be used both in a reputational context and to determine funding in conjunction with a volume measure based on the FTE number of staff returned.
- 1.5 For the purposes of REF 2014, outputs are associated with individual members of staff who are submitted by HEIs as part of their returns, and four outputs per individual is the expected norm. Published criteria determine who is eligible for inclusion but, beyond that, HEIs are free to choose who they wish to select for inclusion, thus allowing optimisation of the overall quality profile and volume according to institutional strategy. HEIs are encouraged to return the work of all their excellent researchers, and are obliged to comply with equality and diversity legislation. Individuals whose circumstances have significantly constrained their ability to work productively throughout the assessment period may be returned with fewer than four outputs, without any penalty in the assessment.
- 1.6 To ensure the fair and transparent selection of staff in respect of REF 2014 submissions all HEIs must develop, document and apply a Code of Practice. This document is the Code of Practice developed by the University of Surrey.

2. Legislative Context

- 2.1 In developing its Code of Practice the University understands and embraces its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 which covers the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Act prohibits direct discrimination on grounds of these protected characteristics and also prohibits indirect discrimination, such as would arise if a local policy, even if applied equally to everyone, is harder for someone with a protected characteristic to comply with. Indirect discrimination is not a breach of the Act if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- 2.2 The University also understands and embraces its obligations under the Part-time Workers Regulations 2000 and the Fixed-term Employees Regulations 2002 to ensure that fixed-term employees and part-time workers are not treated any less favourably than employees on open contracts or full-time workers.
- 2.3 In response to any future changes in legislation the University will amend its procedures and processes accordingly. This will include taking note of any changes to guidance on submissions that may be provided by the REF team (section 1.1).

3. University Perspective and General Principles

- 3.1 The University of Surrey aims to be an internationally-leading University and has set itself the strategic objective of being ranked in the top 10 in the UK and the top 100 in the World by 2017. A crucial factor in achieving this is the quality and impact of the research undertaken by staff of the University, of which the outcome of REF 2014 is a very important measure.
- 3.2 Recognising this, the University will seek to optimise its overall quality profile (and by implication the volume of staff submitted) based on analysis of the reputation and research income that will result from REF 2014. To this end, different submission strategies across different UOAs may be adopted.
- 3.3 All eligible staff must meet or exceed the minimum stated quality threshold (research standard) in relation to a given UOA to be included in the REF, making due allowance for Individual Staff Circumstances (section 5.3). Otherwise they will not be included. These quality thresholds will be based on the quality of the outputs only and will be set so as to determine the most advantageous overall profile in a given UOA in the context of overarching institutional strategy. They may vary from UOA to UOA and will be made explicit to all staff. Thus, eligible individuals will be selected for inclusion on the basis of the assessed quality of their research outputs in the specified REF Publication Period (1 January 2008 to 31 December 2013).
- 3.4 The expectation is that all staff whose research outputs are judged to be of the required standard will be included in the REF. However, staff may also be excluded if their research does not fit coherently in the context of the criteria set for a given UOA, or if it is felt necessary to modify the staff profile on strategic grounds to improve the overall academic reputation of the University or the resulting research income. Where

this applies it does not reflect negatively on either the individuals concerned or the quality of their outputs.

- 3.5 There is no detriment, by itself, in not being included in the REF; likewise there is no advantage, by itself, in being selected. The University wholeheartedly recognises the importance of the many and varied contributions individuals make to its academic activities through teaching, administration, enterprise and leadership, and it does not measure the value of its staff simply on the basis of whether they are included in its REF return. The inclusion or otherwise of an individual and their work in the REF submission will not, by itself, influence career progression, nor will it directly influence day-to-day duties.
- 3.6 In making its decisions the University will conduct the process in an open and transparent manner in accordance with its values and existing policies. Over the years the University has evolved robust and positive Equality and Diversity policies which emphasise that: “The University is committed to a comprehensive policy of equal opportunities in education and employment, in which individuals are selected, trained, appraised, promoted, guided and assessed, and otherwise treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities, and are given equality of opportunity. The University values diversity and recognises that a diverse staff and student group contributes to its continued achievement in teaching and research.” (*Equality Scheme 2012-15*) The University will extend all of the principles embodied in its Equality Scheme and Action Plan to its processes and procedures for the selection of staff for the REF, and is committed to fostering a positive environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and is supported in the development of their careers and studies. The quality of the research contribution of staff is valued by the University and all eligible staff will be considered for submission according to the same processes.
- 3.7 For eligible staff, having a fixed-term or part-time contract, by itself, does not in any way influence being included in or excluded from the REF submission. The University has well-developed policies and mechanisms to support fixed-term and part-time staff, and also to support contract research staff, for whom advice in relation to developing a future career in academia is readily available. All staff have appraisals by their line manager irrespective of whether they are fixed-term or permanent, part-time or full-time.
- 3.8 The University’s Code of Practice was developed by the REF Equality and Diversity Sub-Group (Appendix A) and sets out the positive steps taken by the University to ensure equity, equality and transparency in the selection of staff. It is based on public guidance from the REF team and the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU). It outlines the governance structures that are in place to support the submission, the procedures and processes for selecting staff, the roles of those involved in the selection process and their training, the rights to and mechanisms for appeal, and the necessary Equality Impact Assessments to ensure compliance. It applies to everyone involved in the REF process, and it applies equally to all UOAs. It does not replace any existing policies, nor does it negate any existing rights.
- 3.9 Once approved, the Code of Practice will be published on the University’s external website as well as the Staff Intranet, and it is recommended that all staff read it. An electronic copy will be distributed to eligible staff via their primary University email

address, and printed copies will be available on request from Departmental Administrators. Printed copies will also be sent to the registered postal address of all eligible staff who are recorded as being absent at the point of publication through whatever circumstances. Sessions dedicated to the Code of Practice will be incorporated into REF presentations which are open to all staff.

4. Governance and Timeline

- 4.1 Overall responsibility for the REF submission rests with the Vice-Chancellor, subject to the endorsement of the Executive Board of the University. This responsibility is discharged through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation (who is an Executive Board member) and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF). The Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF) reports to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation and was appointed internally for a fixed-term (January 2012 until December 2013). Faculty Deans are involved in the key aspects of the REF submission process, but on a day-to-day basis delegate their authority in REF-related matters to the Faculty Associate Deans Research (ADRs).
- 4.2 The processes associated with the REF submission are delivered through a REF committee structure which is distinct from but complements existing University committee structures. Membership and the terms of reference of the REF committees are given in Appendix A, and the roles of key staff within the process who are specifically involved in the selection of staff (and the rationale for their involvement) are given in Appendix B. Appointments are based primarily on managerial responsibility and experience, discipline knowledge and expertise relating to data acquisition and verification. Where appropriate, however, effort has been made to ensure that membership of these committees is representative of the overall equality profile of the appropriate pool of staff within the University.
- 4.3 The REF Executive Committee is the most senior committee associated with the REF process and is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor. It is the body which has overall responsibility for defining the University's REF strategy, confirming the UOAs the University will submit to, ratifying the final selection of staff to be submitted, endorsing the textual elements of the submission, and authorising the final submission. It discharges these functions primarily through the REF Advisory Group.
- 4.4 The REF Advisory Group is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF). It has responsibility for overseeing the day-to-day planning and preparation of the University's REF submission. This involves ensuring the timely and effective collection and assessment of research outputs, impact case studies and the textual elements of the submission, together with the supporting data needed for the final submission. It will provide the REF Executive Committee with the necessary evidence and planning scenarios to inform the final choice of UOAs and the selection of staff to be submitted to those UOAs. To ensure that staff are kept fully aware of REF developments and have access to key REF information it is also responsible for developing and implementing a REF communications strategy.
- 4.5 For every UOA to which the University is contemplating making a submission there is an appointed UOA Lead. The UOA Leads are senior academics from a discipline

relevant to the UOA who were nominated on the basis of their discipline knowledge, expertise and experience following a process of consultation between the Faculty Deans, the ADRs, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF). The nominations were subsequently discussed and endorsed by the REF Executive Committee. The role of the UOA Lead is to work with the ADR, Head of Department or Division (HOD) and other senior staff as appropriate to prepare the elements of the REF submission for their UOA. Where a UOA submission crosses a natural Departmental or Faculty boundary this involves working with the relevant staff on either side of the boundary.

- 4.6 The REF UOA Committees (1 and 2) are chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF). Each consists of a sub-set of members of the REF Advisory Group together with the UOA Leads for those activities falling within the remit of either Main Panels A and B or Main Panels C and D, with responsibility for the preparation of the University's REF submission in relation to outputs, impact case studies and the textual elements of the submission. This involves liaising with members of academic staff to assist them in presenting their research activities for assessment, and helping to arrange for external assessment where appropriate. A key task is to oversee the process of making internal judgements as to the quality of outputs, which will be used to inform staff selection in due course.
- 4.7 The REF Working Group is chaired by the Senior Project Officer (REF) and is responsible for the acquisition and verification of data (including HESA data) which is required for (and will be returned in) the University's REF submission. This includes data relating to staff, outputs, research income and research students, and draws upon the activities of the relevant University Support Services, to which requests are to be made in a timely manner. Principal amongst these are Human Resources, Research and Enterprise, Planning, Finance, Registry and the Library. The group is also responsible for the mechanics of uploading the data and making the final electronic submission using the supplied REF interface software.
- 4.8 The REF Equality and Diversity Sub-Group is responsible for ensuring that all relevant considerations relating to Equality and Diversity are fully embedded into the University's internal REF processes. This involves arranging for bespoke, externally led, Equality and Diversity training appropriate to the REF process for all staff who are involved with the selection of staff, even if this involvement is indirect (section 5.2). It also involves writing the Code of Practice and disseminating it to all members of academic staff and all external assessors, and ensuring the Code of Practice is correctly implemented. This, in turn, will involve carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) at identified key stages (section 5.5).
- 4.9 The REF Staff Circumstances Committee considers and evaluates all statements made and evidence supplied by individual staff members who wish to make a case for a reduction in outputs on the basis of clearly defined or complex individual circumstances (section 5.3). In the case of clearly defined circumstances this also provides a mechanism to corroborate existing University records. The members of the committee are entirely separate from any aspect of the REF submission process associated with making judgements on outputs or staff selection so as to ensure impartiality and to maximise confidentiality. The outcome of each case, where it is felt a reduction in outputs is warranted, will be communicated to the REF Advisory

Group as a recommendation, together with a supporting statement to explain the nature of the impact on an individual's research capability.

- 4.10 The REF Appeals Committee will consider formal appeals from individual staff members who have been informed in writing that they will not be included in the University's final REF submission (section 5.4). The appeal must be on (one or more of) the grounds of (i) procedural irregularity, (ii) incorrect evaluation of, or new evidence relating to, individual staff circumstances (that would justify submission with fewer than four outputs), or (iii) equality. There is no right of appeal on grounds of academic judgement. The members of the Committee are entirely separate from any aspect of the REF submission process associated with staff selection so as to ensure impartiality. The outcome of each case where it is decided that the appellant should have been included in REF 2014 will be communicated to the REF Advisory Group as an instruction.
- 4.11 The REF Timeline is made available to all staff through the REF webpages on the Staff Intranet. It may be subject to minor changes in response to changes in the external environment or at the discretion of the REF Executive Committee in response to a re-evaluation of local priorities. Those elements of the timeline which concern processes directly related to the selection of staff for inclusion in REF 2014 are presented in Appendix C.

5. Selecting Staff

5.1 Methodology

- 5.1.1 The processes concerned with the selection of staff and their outputs for inclusion in REF 2014 will be transparent and equitable. The approach taken is evidence-based and informed by both internal and external assessment.
- 5.1.2 Staff who are eligible for inclusion in REF 2014 fall into one of two categories. Category A staff are defined as academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater and on the payroll of the submitting HEI on the census date (31 October 2013), whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'teaching and research'. Category C staff are defined as individuals employed by an organisation other than an HEI, whose contract or job role (as documented by their employer) includes the undertaking of research, and whose research is primarily focused in the submitting unit on the census date (31 October 2013). Submitted outputs by Category C staff will inform the quality profiles awarded to submissions, but these staff will not contribute to the volume measure for funding purposes.
- 5.1.3 Early Career Researchers (ECRs) are defined as members of staff who meet the criteria to be selected as Category A or Category C staff on the census date and who started their career as independent researchers on or after 1 August 2009. ECRs may be submitted with fewer than four outputs without penalty in the assessment (section 5.3). In exceptional circumstances, Research Assistants may be eligible to be returned in the REF if they are demonstrably carrying out independent research on the census date, as evidenced as being named as principal investigator on a research grant for example, and provided they satisfy the definition for Category A staff.

- 5.1.4 Based on information held within Human Resources, all staff who are eligible for inclusion in REF 2014 will be identified, and a central record will be kept. This record will be updated on a regular basis as, for example, staff leave or join the University. It will also provide the basis for further analysis in relation to carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (section 5.4). Lists of eligible staff will be made available to UOA Leads and HODs for verification and, in cases of uncertainty, to initiate discussions with the individuals concerned. All contract research staff will be made aware of the REF and, where appropriate, will be considered for inclusion.
- 5.1.5 Commencing June 2012, all eligible staff will be invited to identify their best four outputs relating to the REF Publication Period (1 January 2008 to 31 December 2013) in terms of their quality. This may include pending outputs provided there is demonstrable proof that these will be published, either in paper or electronic form, before 31 December 2013, or if the output is not of printed form, that it will be otherwise accessible by 31 December 2013. The invitation will come from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF) and will be co-ordinated through the relevant UOA Lead. Where staff have four or fewer outputs they will be asked to identify them all, irrespective at this stage of whether they may be entitled to reduced outputs due to Individual Staff Circumstances. This aspect of the process will be handled separately (section 5.3). Staff members are encouraged to discuss their choices with the UOA Lead, the appropriate ADR and other senior colleagues and come to a consensus as to which outputs are of the highest quality and are best suited to be included in a submission. Discussions are also encouraged where outputs are co-authored between two or more eligible individuals from the same UOA so as to avoid duplication.
- 5.1.6 As part of the process of evaluating the quality of identified research outputs the University will appoint External Assessors (normally academics from other HEIs). These Assessors will be selected on the basis of their experience and knowledge of the relevant disciplines, and will be identified based on the advice of the UOA Leads in consultation with other senior colleagues. All invitations to External Assessors will be sent jointly on behalf of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF) who, in doing so, will give their formal approval to those who have been nominated.
- 5.1.7 Commencing in October 2012, the identified outputs associated with all eligible staff will be assessed as to their originality, rigour and significance and assigned a quality rating, based on the criteria and definitions to be used by the REF sub-panels. These ratings will relate to being world leading (4*), internationally excellent (3*), internationally recognised (2*), nationally recognised (1*), or below the standard of nationally recognised work (U). This process of assigning a quality rating to each output will be informed by internal assessment, external assessment and, where appropriate and relevant, bibliometric data. Regarding internal assessment, under the auspices of the REF UOA Committees (1&2) the UOA Lead together with the appropriate ADR and HOD will form a consensus opinion as to the quality of the outputs without prior knowledge of the outcome of the external assessment (which will be held centrally). If the UOA Lead and the HOD are the same individual, a nominated and appropriately trained senior academic colleague (proposed by the Dean and endorsed by Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation and the Pro

Vice-Chancellor (REF)) will be co-opted. Together with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF), and under the auspices of the REF Advisory Group, these individuals will then consider all the aforementioned sources of information to assign a quality rating to each output. These will be recorded centrally. No selection of staff for inclusion or exclusion occurs at this stage of the process, provisional or otherwise.

- 5.1.8 Commencing in November 2012, members of the REF Advisory Group will prepare a table for each UOA which gives the volume of staff that would be submitted for each possible quality threshold for that UOA, taking into account adjustments made for Individual Staff Circumstances. These thresholds will relate to research outputs only. The data contained in these tables will be used by the REF Executive Committee, along with data relating to Impact Case Studies and Environment, to determine provisional output quality thresholds for each UOA, based on overall institutional strategic considerations. The data entered in each table will be completely anonymous, and individual members of staff will not be identified by name or by any other means at any stage during this process. The REF Executive Committee will also use this information to discuss and endorse the selection of UOAs to which the University intends to make a submission.
- 5.1.9 In January 2013, the REF Advisory Group will determine which staff meet the criteria for provisional inclusion in the REF. This will be based on the quality of their research outputs defined in relation to the provisional quality threshold of the relevant UOA (with appropriate adjustment for Individual Staff Circumstances). A preliminary classification of all eligible staff will be made according to whether they meet or exceed the provisional quality threshold or, if not, the extent to which they have fallen short. In the latter case, particularly if an individual's research activity has a strong multi-disciplinary or inter-disciplinary flavour such that it does not fall naturally within the remit of a given UOA, consideration will be given to finding an alternative UOA where the content and quality of the research are acceptable.
- 5.1.10 In February 2013, the provisional UOA quality thresholds will be communicated widely to all staff, together with a statement relating to how these criteria support institutional strategy. At the same time, staff will be informed individually of the University's provisional decision to include them in or exclude them from REF 2014. The decision will be communicated in a letter from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF), copied to the HOD and Faculty Dean. Staff who are excluded will be informed of the extent to which their outputs have fallen short of the quality threshold and will be given support and guidance from their UOA Lead, ADR and HOD to help identify substitute outputs which may allow them to meet or exceed the threshold. All excluded staff may present evidence of additional outputs with a view to inclusion. These outputs will be internally assessed as outlined above, and where it is judged that they would result in an individual's outputs meeting or exceeding the quality threshold they will be sent to external assessors for evaluation. If this corroborates the internal view the individual concerned will be informed that they are provisionally included in REF 2014.
- 5.1.11 In parallel, the Equality and Diversity Sub-Group will conduct an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to assess on a UOA by UOA basis whether the provisional lists of staff selected and staff excluded are representative of eligible staff (section 5.5). In

April 2013, the results of the EIA will be presented to the REF Executive Committee for consideration as to whether there are equality related concerns and whether corrective action is necessary. Only when this stage of the process is complete will the REF Executive Committee confirm the final quality thresholds for each UOA, and also confirm the final selection of UOAs against which the University wishes to make a submission. In addition, taking account of the published criteria and working methods of the relevant UOA and the University's overall REF submission strategy, the REF Executive Committee will decide whether there are supplementary reasons to restrict the volume of staff returned in a given UOA above and beyond that determined by the quality threshold for that UOA. This might relate to the number and perceived strength of the available Impact Case Studies for example. The REF Advisory Group will then make recommendations on the staff who are selected to the REF Executive Committee for endorsement.

- 5.1.12 In May 2013, the final UOA quality thresholds will be communicated widely to all staff, together with a statement relating to how these criteria support institutional strategy and the requirements of equality and diversity. Staff will then be informed on an individual basis of the University's decision to include them in or exclude them from REF 2014. The decision will be communicated in a letter from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF), copied to the HOD and Faculty Dean. There may be circumstances where the University decides not to include an individual in its submission because their research activity does not fit coherently in the context of the criteria set for a given UOA, or it is felt necessary to modify the staff profile on strategic grounds to improve the overall academic reputation of the University or the resulting research income. On these occasions, the individual concerned will be so informed in writing as to the reason for their exclusion. All staff who are excluded have the right of appeal on specific grounds (section 5.4).
- 5.1.13 Over the duration of the process outlined above there will be provision for on-going changes. For example, staff may join or leave the University, new outputs may be forthcoming, rethinking may take place in relation to situations where UOA boundaries overlap and, possibly, there may be changes to Individual Staff Circumstances. All such matters will be kept under constant review, co-ordinated through the REF UOA Committees (1 and 2) and subject to the same process of evaluation. Records will be updated as necessary up to the last practical moment prior to the submission date, and staff kept fully informed. If time does not permit external assessment to be meaningfully sought in a specific case then a judgment based solely on internal considerations will be made. All decisions will be subject to the endorsement of the REF Executive Committee.
- 5.1.14 It is not envisaged that the University will make any joint submissions. However, if this proves not to be the case the decision will be taken by the REF Executive Committee as part of its overall deliberations on the UOAs that submissions will be made against. In such circumstances, the University will seek an exchange of the Codes of Practice in order to ensure that equity and equality in the treatment of staff is not compromised in any way.

5.2 Equality and Diversity Training

- 5.2.1 Appropriate equality and diversity training is required for all University staff who are involved in the process of selecting staff for inclusion in the REF, even if this involvement is only indirect. This training is compulsory and cannot be substituted by having attended or participated in previous training programmes. The primary mode of delivery will be through a bespoke, externally led programme, developed in accordance with the guidance offered by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) and supported by on-line materials. This will provide a REF specific introduction to the equality and diversity agenda, an in-depth overview of the relevant legislation, and worked cases some of which will be set as a test of understanding. Training will be completed before October 2012 and a list of those who complete the training will be formally recorded.
- 5.2.2 For all those involved with assessing Individual Staff Circumstances (section 5.3), and with carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (section 5.5), specialist training which goes beyond that offered by the training programme outlined above will be provided, and a list of those who complete this training will also be formally recorded.
- 5.2.3 All eligible staff will be provided with the Code of Practice and encouraged to familiarise themselves with its key principles. Any discussions that take place within Faculties that are outside of the formal REF process but nevertheless might have a potential bearing on the issue of inclusion or exclusion of staff should be undertaken with these principles in mind.

5.3 Individual Staff Circumstances

- 5.3.1 To qualify for submission staff must satisfy the REF requirement of producing research outputs during the assessment period which meet the quality threshold for that UOA. The expectation is that this will be based on four outputs per individual. However, individuals may be returned with fewer than four outputs, without penalty in the assessment, where their individual circumstances have significantly impacted their ability to produce the requisite number of outputs or to undertake research productively throughout the assessment period.
- 5.3.2 As set out in *REF 01.2012: Panel Criteria and Working Methods* there are two relevant categories of individual staff circumstances, referred to as clearly defined circumstances and complex circumstances.

Clearly defined circumstances lead to a formulaic reduction in outputs and include:

- (a) Qualifying as an Early Career Researcher.
- (b) Absence from work due to working part-time, secondments or career breaks.
- (c) Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave.
- (d) Other circumstances relating to clinical, health or veterinary professionals as returned in UOAs 1-6.

Complex circumstances require Institutions to make a judgement on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs submitted and provide a rationale for this judgement. Examples include:

- (a) Disability.
- (b) Ill health or injury.
- (c) Mental health conditions.
- (d) Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of the allowances made for clearly defined circumstances.
- (e) Other caring responsibilities.
- (f) Gender reassignment.
- (g) Other circumstances relating to protected characteristics or activities protected by employment legislation.

5.3.3 All members of staff eligible for inclusion in REF 2014 will be invited to disclose, by the end of September 2012, any clearly defined or complex circumstances which may, in their view, have had an impact on their research activity. In the absence of any such circumstances a null return is required. Detailed guidance as to the types of circumstance that may be considered will be provided on the Staff Intranet REF webpages (and also in printed form for those who request it); staff are also encouraged to discuss, in confidence, with their HOD any circumstances which they feel may apply to them as individuals. Staff members may also discuss matters in confidence with staff from Human Resources or Occupational Health.

5.3.4 For the purpose of this disclosure a Staff Circumstances Reporting Form (Appendix D) will be made available which reflects the advice given by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU). The reporting form covers the information required for the final submission REF1b form, such as the nature, timing and duration of the circumstances and, in the case of complex circumstances, a description of the effect of the circumstances. Once completed, the reporting form should be returned either electronically to a bespoke email address or in paper form to the Deputy Director of Human Resources (Services) as part of an overall process designed to ensure confidentiality as far as is practicable.

5.3.5 Every completed reporting form will be assessed by the REF Staff Circumstances Committee, whose members are entirely separate from other aspects of the REF submission process associated with staff selection so as to ensure impartiality and to maximise confidentiality. In doing so, the Committee will take full recognition of the examples of complex circumstances provided by the ECU. Where personal and sensitive medical information is involved an Occupational Health Adviser will assess each case individually, including the offer of a face-to-face assessment. Occupational Health staff are bound by their own ethical codes of medical confidentiality and as such will seek to ensure that medical details are kept from the Committee as far as is practicable. Members of the Staff Circumstances Committee will be required to sign a medical confidentiality agreement. In addition, the University is required to adhere to its responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998 to obtain, record, process, store, use (including the restriction of access to) and dispose of personal data. Further information is available on the Staff Intranet web pages.

5.3.6 For all cases where the Committee decides that a reduction in outputs is appropriate a recommendation to that effect will be made to the REF Advisory Group. In addition, the Committee will produce a supporting statement suitable for inclusion in the REF1b form to explain clearly the nature of the impact on an individual's research

capability. Where the Committee decides that no reduction of outputs is appropriate there will be no need to communicate with the REF Advisory Group, who will assume unless told otherwise that four outputs are required. All staff seeking a reduction in outputs will be informed through the Deputy Director of Human Resources (Services) of the outcome in writing and, in the case of a recommendation for a reduction of outputs due to complex circumstances, will have the right to see the supporting statement.

5.3.7 After an Institution has made its final REF submission, each UOA will be reviewed by the appropriate REF sub-panel. In the case of clearly defined circumstances these panels will apply set tariffs for reductions based on the information supplied in the REF1b form. All submitted complex circumstances, which must also be explained in the REF1b form, will be considered by the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP). This is an external and totally independent panel which will make recommendations about the appropriate number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty. These will be referred to and decided upon by the Main Panel Chair, who will instruct the relevant sub-panel Chair. It is the University's responsibility to ensure that the relevant circumstances exist or have existed and that the impact is as described.

5.3.8 At all stages of the REF process, information about individual staff circumstances, whether clearly defined or complex, will be kept confidential and shared only amongst those who need to know. It is the University's responsibility to ensure that the information is submitted and treated in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and all other legal obligations, including legislation and medical ethics relating to confidentiality. This will require individuals to give explicit consent to their personal data being included in the University's submission (this must be given at the time of disclosure). After submission, all information relating to an individual's complex circumstances will be kept confidential to the REF team, the EDAP and the Main Panel Chairs, who are subject to confidentiality undertakings in respect of all information contained in submissions. Personal information will be used only for the purposes of assessing the REF submission in which it is contained, will not be published at any time and will be destroyed on completion of the REF. Panels will not take account of circumstances that may be known to them, but which are not referenced in submissions.

5.4 Appeals Process

5.4.1 Staff who are eligible for inclusion in the REF but who are not selected have the right to appeal that decision. The basis of the appeal must be on (one or more of) the grounds of (i) procedural irregularity, (ii) incorrect evaluation of, or new evidence relating to, individual staff circumstances (that would justify submission with fewer than four outputs), or (iii) equality. There is no right of appeal on grounds of academic judgement. Detailed guidance will be provided on the Staff Intranet REF webpages (and also in printed form for those who request it). Appeals must be made in writing to the Deputy Director Human Resources (Services) within 10 working days from being informed of the decision in May 2013. An appeal must include details of the grounds of appeal and any supporting evidence.

- 5.4.2 In the first instance, staff who are considering making an appeal may discuss their grounds informally with their HOD or their Faculty Human Resources Manager. These discussions will remain confidential and will not be used to inform any future action by the University. The intention is to enable the individual to best decide whether the grounds are appropriate before any formal appeal is made.
- 5.4.3 The REF Appeals Committee has overall responsibility for the appeals process, which is set out schematically in Appendix E. The members of the Committee are entirely separate from other aspects of the REF submission process associated with staff selection so as to ensure impartiality. The Committee will meet to consider the written appeal within 15 working days from receipt of the appeal. The Chair of the Committee may seek further clarification of the case if this is thought to be necessary through co-opting a senior academic from the Faculty to which the appellant belongs who is not otherwise connected with the REF process, and the University has the right to make written representation to the Committee. Where the grounds for appeal relate to complex circumstances and involve sensitive personal information the Director of Occupational Health will offer advice, ensuring whilst doing so that details are kept from the Committee as far as is practicable.
- 5.4.4 Exceptionally, the Chair of the Committee may request a meeting with the appellant. At such a meeting the opportunity will be given to explain the case further and to explore in more detail the reasons why the individual was not selected. This may also involve the Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF) or other relevant individual being asked to attend the meeting to clarify the basis on which the original decision to exclude was reached. The individual may be accompanied by a fellow employee of the University of Surrey who may or may not be a trade union representative.
- 5.4.5 The Committee's decision on every appeal will be either to uphold, to partially uphold or to not uphold. If the appeal is upheld, the REF Advisory Group will be informed and the appellant will be submitted into the REF. If the appeal is partially upheld this may or may not result in a decision to submit the appellant into the REF. Where it does, the REF Advisory Group will be informed; where it does not, or in the case where the appeal is not upheld, the REF Advisory Group is not informed since their position is that all decisions to exclude a member of staff from the REF stand unless informed otherwise by the REF Appeals Committee.
- 5.4.6 A written response to every appeal will be provided by the Chair of the Committee within 30 working days from receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Appeals Committee will be final. The appeals process does not negate any existing rights as set out in the University's policies and procedures.

5.5 Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.5.1 All HEIs are required to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) on their policy and procedures for selecting staff for REF 2014, in order to show due regard to the equality duty of the Equality Act 2010. This means being able to demonstrate relevance and proportionality in respect of (i) the relevance of the policy to protected groups, (ii) the relevance of the policy to the public sector equality duty, (iii) treatment of concerns previously flagged about a policy or practice, and (iv) any information indicating an adverse impact on a protected group. An EIA must be based

on the evidence and data available and genuinely reflect on the possible ways to mitigate negative impacts the policy or practice may have on equality.

- 5.5.2 Under the auspices of the REF Equality and Diversity Committee, an EIA has been carried out as part of the process of developing this Code of Practice, and is an on-going commitment. This has involved consideration of whether the selection policies pose a barrier to eligible staff from a particular group and, in respect of there being quality thresholds for selection, whether this will have a negative impact on certain groups (a summary is provided in Appendix F). It has also involved consideration of the most effective ways in which to communicate the selection policies to all eligible staff, including those who are currently absent from the University.
- 5.5.3 The EIA associated with preparation of the Code of Practice has been undertaken by a sub-set of the REF Equality and Diversity Sub-Group, under the guidance of the Head of Equality and Diversity, who were not actively involved in writing the Code of Practice itself. Subsequent actions are the responsibility of the REF Equality and Diversity Sub-Group as a whole. Bespoke training necessary to discharging these duties effectively has been and will be provided on an on-going basis.
- 5.5.4 Starting in February 2013, at the point where the first identification of staff likely to be selected for inclusion in REF 2014 is made, an EIA will be carried out to see if these staff and the staff who are excluded are representative of eligible staff within the Institution in respect of protected groups. This will be done on a UOA by UOA basis. The REF Executive Committee will be informed of the outcome and will consider, in particular, if there are equality related reasons for staff not being selected in a particular UOA. If corrective action is necessary it will be taken at this juncture and issued as an instruction to the REF Advisory Group. A qualitative survey shall also be undertaken to understand the experiences of eligible staff (in relation to their protected characteristics), and any recommendations shall be incorporated into the on-going processes.
- 5.5.5 In May 2013, at the point where final decisions are taken in respect of staff to be selected for inclusion in REF 2014, a further EIA will be carried out. The results will be referred to the REF Executive Committee to confirm that no further corrective action is necessary, or to initiate such action where appropriate. If the Appeals Process highlights any issues that have had a negative impact on a protected group, these will also be referred to the REF Executive Committee through the REF Equality and Diversity Committee for consideration and possible action.
- 5.5.6 The EIAs rely on various sources of data and evidence. These include analysis of the submission to RAE 2008 and the findings of evaluations that followed that exercise, analysis of HESA staff data for staff who are eligible to be submitted to the REF, analysis of University HR records (including confidential data on gender, ethnicity, age, disability) and feedback from staff from protected groups. It is recognised that HEIs do not necessarily have comprehensive data in relation to all the protected characteristics covered by the equality duty of the Equality Act 2010; where appropriate, qualitative data will also be considered.

- 5.5.7 After the submission has been made an EIA statement will be published on the University's external website, including the outcomes of any actions taken to prevent discrimination and advance equality.

6. Data Collection, Storage and Confidentiality

- 6.1 The REF process requires the University to gather and analyse personal information on staff to ensure equality and inclusivity. As outlined elsewhere in this Code of Practice, this information necessarily includes details of individual staff circumstances and equality monitoring across protected characteristics. Such data will only be used for the purposes of the REF. Personal data will be protected and managed in line with the University's data protection policy which applies the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998. Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality at all stages of the process.
- 6.2 Details of the submission will remain confidential to those who need to know. Any individual circumstances which may be included in form REF1b will remain confidential to the REF Staff Circumstances Committee and, within that, to members of Occupational Health as far as is practicable. All others involved in the REF process, in particular the UOA Leads, will only be told of the existence of individual circumstances and the number of outputs required of a given individual. Information relating to the quality of outputs will remain confidential to members of the REF UOA Committees, the REF Advisory Group and the REF Executive Committee, together with the Deans and HODs. All external assessors will be reminded of the requirement for complete confidentiality with regard to their judgement on quality of outputs.

7. Further Information

- 7.1 Further information relating to the REF in general, including supporting materials relating to the Code of Practice, will be added periodically to the REF web pages on the Staff Intranet website www.surrey.ac.uk/surreynet/keyinfo/. Advice relating to this Code of Practice can also be obtained by contacting the Head of Equality and Diversity. The published documents *REF 01.2012: Panel Criteria and Working Methods* and *REF 02.2011: Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions* are freely available for download from www.ref.ac.uk. Supporting information, including details of the relevant legislation and examples of good practice, can also be found on the Equality Challenge Unit's website www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF.

Professor Michael Kearney
Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF)

Professor Steve Williamson
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research
and Innovation

Appendix A: Committee Structures, Membership and Terms of Reference

1. REF Executive Committee

This is a strategic committee, which has the overall responsibility for the REF submission. It is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor.

Membership:

Vice-Chancellor – (Chair)
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation
Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF)
Faculty Dean (FAHS)
Faculty Dean (FBEL)
Faculty Dean (FEPS)
Faculty Dean (FHMS)
Senior Project Officer (REF) – (Secretary)

Staff from Support Services will be invited to attend as required.

Frequency of Meetings: Quarterly (or as required).

Terms of Reference:

1. To define the overall University strategy for the REF submission.
2. To make the final decisions on which UOAs the University will make submissions to, the quality thresholds for inclusion, and the selection of staff being included, based on recommendations from the REF Advisory Group.
3. To authorise the submission of the final documentation.
4. To ensure that the University has robust REF processes which, in the case of staff selection, are fully respectful of the equality and diversity agenda.

2. REF Advisory Group

This is an operational group responsible for overseeing the day to day planning and preparation of the University's REF submission. It is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF). Items for approval, progress reports, scenario plans and unresolved issues of concern are escalated to the REF Executive Committee, to which the Group reports.

Membership:

Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF) – (Chair)
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation
Associate Dean for Research (FAHS)
Associate Dean for Research (FBEL)
Associate Dean for Research (FEPS)

Associate Dean for Research (FHMS)
Director of Planning
Deputy Director Research and Innovation Support (RES)
Academic Registrar
Senior Project Officer (REF) – (Secretary)

REF UOA Leads, HODs and staff from Support Services other than those represented will be invited to attend as required.

Frequency of Meetings: Every two months (or as required).

Terms of Reference:

1. To oversee the day to day planning and preparation of the REF submission, including defining the timeline, based on the University strategy for the REF.
2. To ensure that individuals are given the opportunity to participate fully in the process of presenting their research activities for assessment, on an equitable and transparent basis, and that due consideration is given to Faculty research plans and strategies.
3. To provide the necessary evidence and planning scenarios required by the REF Executive Committee to inform its decisions as to the final choice of UOAs and the selection of staff to be submitted to those UOAs, including the defining of UOA specific quality thresholds.
4. To ensure the timely and effective collection and assessment of research outputs, impact case studies and the textual elements of the submission, together with the supporting data needed for the final submission.
5. To develop and implement a communications strategy so that staff are kept fully aware of REF developments and have access to key REF information.

3. REF UOA Committee 1

This is an operational Committee consisting of a sub-set of members of the REF Advisory Group together with the UOA Leads for those activities falling within the remit of Main Panels A and B. It is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF) and is responsible for the preparation of the University's REF submission with regard to outputs, impact case studies and the textual elements of the submission.

Membership:

Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF) – (Chair)
Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation – (*Ex officio*)
Associate Dean for Research (FEPS)
Associate Dean for Research (FHMS)
UOA Leads from Main Panels A and B
Senior Project Officer (REF) – (Secretary)

Frequency of Meetings: Every two months (or as required).

Terms of Reference:

1. To oversee the day to day planning and preparation of the REF submission, with regard to outputs, impact case studies and the textual elements of the submission.
2. To liaise with members of academic staff within the Faculty through the UOA Leads to assist them in the process of presenting their research activities for assessment, and to ensure that all research is considered on its merits.
3. To arrange, where appropriate, for external assessment of materials being considered for inclusion in the REF submission.
4. To define and oversee the process of making internal judgements as to the quality of outputs, which will be used eventually to inform staff selection.

4. REF UOA Committee 2

This is an operational Committee consisting of a sub-set of members of the REF Advisory Group together with the UOA Leads for those activities falling within the remit of Main Panels C and D. It is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF) and is responsible for the preparation of the University's REF submission with regard to outputs, impact case studies and the textual elements of the submission.

Membership:

Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF) – (Chair)
Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation – (*Ex officio*)
Associate Dean for Research (FAHS)
Associate Dean for Research (FBEL)
UOA Leads from Main Panels C and D
Senior Project Officer (REF) – (Secretary)

Frequency of Meetings: Every two months (or as required).

Terms of Reference:

1. To oversee the day to day planning and preparation of the REF submission, with regard to outputs, impact case studies and the textual elements of the submission.
2. To liaise with members of academic staff within the Faculty through the UOA Leads to assist them in the process of presenting their research activities for assessment, and to ensure that all research is considered on its merits.
3. To arrange, where appropriate, for external assessment of materials being considered for inclusion in the REF submission.

4. To define and oversee the process of making internal judgements as to the quality of outputs, which will be used eventually to inform staff selection.

5. REF Working Group

This Group is responsible for the acquisition and verification of data which is required for the University's REF submission. It is chaired by the Senior Project Officer (REF) and works in accordance with the overall REF agenda and timeline defined by the REF Advisory Group, to which it provides regular reports.

Membership:

Senior Project Officer (REF) – (Chair)
Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF) – (*Ex officio*)
Deputy Director Research and Innovation Support (RES)
Research and Innovation Officer (RES)
Senior Research Support Officer and Pre-Award Team Leader (RAS)
Head of E-Strategy and Resources (Library)
Digital Collections Liaison and Support Officer (Library)
Digital Collections Liaison & Support Officer (Library)
Assistant Planning Officer (Planning)
Human Resources Assistant (Systems Advisor)
Senior Assistant Registrar (Student Data)
Assistant Registrar (Postgraduate Research)
Head of Equality and Diversity
Faculty Representative (FAHS)
Faculty Representative (FBEL)
Faculty Representative (FEPS)
Faculty Representative (FHMS)
Administrator – (Secretary)

Frequency of Meetings: Every two months (or as required).

Terms of reference:

1. To oversee the day to day planning of activities relating to data acquisition and verification (including HESA data) which is required for (and will be returned in) the University's REF submission.
2. To provide a forum where issues and concerns within Administrative Departments can be openly discussed and local knowledge shared.
3. To assess the risks regarding the sources of data (e.g. robustness, veracity) and escalate concerns to the REF Advisory Group as appropriate.
4. To be responsible for the mechanics of uploading data using the supplied REF interface software and making the final electronic REF submission once instructed to do so by the REF Executive Committee.

6. REF Equality and Diversity Sub-Group

This Sub-Group is responsible, on behalf of the REF Advisory Group, for ensuring that the internal REF processes are fully aligned with and respectful of the Equality and Diversity agenda. This includes writing the Code of Practice and carrying out appropriate Equality Impact Assessments. It is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF).

Membership:

Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF) – (Chair)
Head of Equality and Diversity
Deputy Director of Human Resources (Services)
Head of Staff Development
University Secretary and Legal Counsel
Academic Representative
Academic Representative
Academic Representative
Director of Library and Learning Support Services
Senior Project Officer (REF) – (Secretary)

Frequency of Meetings: Every two months (or as required).

Terms of Reference:

1. To ensure that Equality and Diversity considerations are fully integrated into the internal REF processes. This will involve working closely with the University Equality and Diversity Team.
2. To arrange for the provision of Equality and Diversity training appropriate to the REF process for all staff who are involved, even if indirectly, with staff selection.
3. To write the Code of Practice and ensure that it is properly communicated to all members of academic staff, and all those engaged for the purposes of external assessment.
4. To carry out and review at key stages an Equality Impact Assessment of the Code of Practice, making recommendations as appropriate to the REF Advisory Group.

7. REF Staff Circumstances Committee

This Committee considers and evaluates all declarations made by individuals who make a case for a reduction in outputs on the basis of clearly defined or complex individual circumstances. It is chaired by a Senior Academic not otherwise connected with the internal REF process and reports to the REF Advisory Group.

Membership:

Senior Academic – (Chair)
+ Reserve in case of conflict of interest
Academic member of Senate
+ Reserve in case of conflict of interest
Deputy Director of Human Resources (Services)
Senior Project Officer (REF) – (Secretary)

The following are not formal members of the Committee but will investigate individual cases on behalf of the Committee:

Faculty Human Resources Manager (FAHS)
Faculty Human Resources Manager (FBEL)
Faculty Human Resources Manager (FEPS)
Faculty Human Resources Manager (FHMS)
Occupational Health Specialist
Occupational Health Specialist
Occupational Health Specialist

Frequency of Meetings: As required.

Terms of Reference:

1. To receive all declarations made by eligible staff in respect of both clearly defined and complex circumstances.
2. To evaluate each case, drawing on the relevant expertise of the aforementioned staff in Human Resources and Occupational Health, ensuring at all times that every effort is made to protect confidentiality.
3. To decide on a case by case basis whether a reduction in outputs is warranted and, if so, by how many.
4. To inform the individuals concerned of the outcome in writing, and where it is felt a reduction in outputs is appropriate, to make a recommendation to the REF Advisory Group to that effect, together with a supporting statement.

8. REF Appeals Committee

This Committee considers and evaluates formal appeals made by individuals against the decision to exclude them from the University's REF submission. It is chaired by a Senior Academic not otherwise connected with the internal REF process and reports to the REF Advisory Group.

Membership:

Senior Academic – (Chair)
+ Reserve in case of conflict of interest

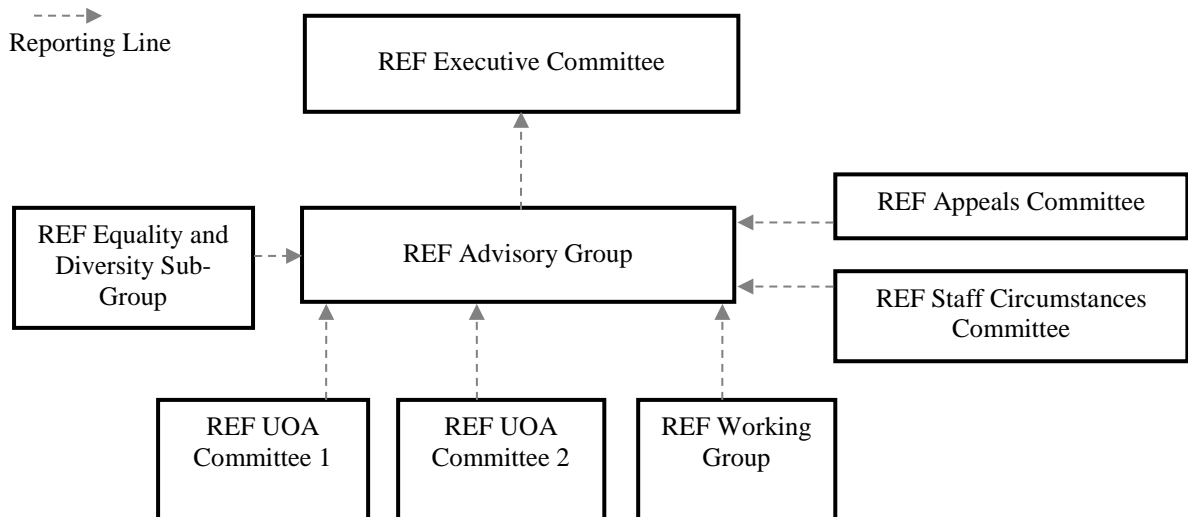
Lay member of Council
 Academic member of Senate
 + Reserve in case of conflict of interest
 Deputy Director of Human Resources (Services) – (Secretary)
 Director of Occupational Health – (Advisory)

Frequency of Meetings: As required.

Terms of Reference:

1. To receive all appeals made by eligible staff in respect of the decision to exclude them from the University’s REF submission.
2. To evaluate each case, drawing where necessary on the relevant expertise of others, ensuring at all times that every effort is made to protect confidentiality.
3. To decide on a case by case basis whether the appeal is upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.
4. To inform the individuals concerned of the outcome in writing, and where it is decided that an individual should not have been excluded from the REF, to instruct the REF Advisory Group to that effect.

Schematic of Reporting Lines



Appendix B: Key Roles and Responsibilities

The following Table summarises the roles of key staff who are involved in the REF staff selection processes, together with the rationale for their involvement. This Table should be read in conjunction with Appendix A, which also refers to other staff involved in preparing elements of the REF submission outside of staff selection.

Role	Function within the University's management framework	Rationale for involvement and role within the REF process
Vice-Chancellor	Chief Executive Officer and Chair of the University's Executive Board, and line manager to the Deans.	Chair of the REF Executive Committee. To ensure the REF submission aligns with overall institutional strategy, and to oversee the choice of UOAs against which submissions will be made.
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation	Chair of the University Research and Enterprise Committee and Executive Board member, responsible for overall institutional research strategy.	To define the overarching framework for the University's REF submission, including the staff selection methodology and the mechanisms for its implementation.
Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF)	University appointment from senior academic staff with appropriate experience, reporting to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation.	Chair of the REF Advisory Group. To lead the REF submission on a day-to-day basis, to oversee the development of all key REF processes, and to ensure their effective implementation.
Faculty Dean(s)	Executive Board member, responsible for Faculty leadership and overall management.	To ensure that the setting of UOA quality thresholds is informed by the Faculty's strategy and to endorse the choice of UOAs.
Associate Dean(s) Research	University Research and Enterprise Committee member, responsible for co-ordinating the overall Faculty research agenda.	To assist in the assessment of outputs, and the preparation of evidence used to set UOA specific quality thresholds and finalise the choice of UOAs.
Head(s) of Department or Division	Responsible for local academic leadership and line management of academic staff.	To assist in the assessment of outputs, and to provide support and guidance to staff who are not selected for submission.
Senior Academic(s) – REF UOA Lead(s)	University appointment from senior academic staff with appropriate experience.	To co-ordinate the preparation of all the elements of the REF submission for a given UOA, including the collation and assessment of outputs.
Senior Academic(s) – REF Committee Chair(s)	Senior academic staff members with appropriate experience and not otherwise involved in the REF process.	Chair of the REF Staff Circumstances Committee and Chair of the REF Appeals Committee. To ensure independence of process.
Deputy Director Human Resources	Responsible for overseeing the development of policies and practices relating to Human Resources within the University.	To ensure that University policies are respected, and to offer advice on staffing issues related to eligibility, individual circumstances and appeals.
Head of Equality and Diversity	Responsible for overseeing the development of policies and practices relating to Equality and Diversity within the University.	To advise on the structure and content of the Code of Practice, and to oversee various Equality Impact Assessments.
Director of Occupational Health	Responsible for overseeing the development of policies and practices relating to Occupational Health within the University.	To oversee the assessment of individual circumstances, and to act as advisor to the REF Appeals Committee.
Head of Staff Development	Responsible for overseeing the development of policies and practices relating to staff development within the University.	To oversee the development and delivery of bespoke equality and diversity training programmes for those involved in staff selection.
Senior Project Officer (REF)	University appointment reporting to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF).	Chair of the REF Working Group. Responsible for overall administration of the submission.

Appendix C: Timeline associated with the Staff Selection Processes – Updated January 2014

		Activity	Completion Deadline (where applicable)	
2012	JAN	The Equality and Diversity Sub-Group is established, chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (REF).		
	FEB	REF Executive Committee meeting 8 February		
	FEB	The Equality and Diversity Sub-Group starts to develop the Code of Practice.	31st Jul 2012	
	MAR		Briefing meetings for UOA Leads	
			UOA Leads begin production of Draft 2 of their Impact Case Studies	
			REF SharePoint developed as a source of information for Committee members.	
			REF Webpage developed as a source of information for the University.	
			Discussions begin related to the Staff Selection Methodology.	
	APR		The Equality and Diversity Sub-Group begins to review example complex circumstances and other guidance offered by Equality Challenge Unit.	
			Draft 2 of the Impact Case Studies completed	
			Impact case studies review workshops	
	MAY	The Equality and Diversity Sub-Group starts to develop the REF specific Equality and Diversity training programme.	31 st Aug 2012	
	JUN		Staff are invited to select their best outputs for external assessment.	6 th Jul 2012
			An Equality Impact Assessment (1) is carried out on the draft Code of Practice.	13 th Jul 2012
	JUL		The Code of Practice is submitted through the HEFCE Extranet for review by the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP).	20 th Jul 2012
			All eligible staff are asked to disclose their Individual Staff Circumstances (both 'clearly defined' and 'complex') using the staff disclosure form. All forms are to be returned including null returns.	28 th Sep 2012
			REF Executive Committee meeting 13 July	
			Nominated outputs to be sent to external assessors before the end of July.	31st Jul 2012
			Draft 3 of the Impact Case Studies to be produced	31st Jul 2012
	AUG		The Equality and Diversity E-learning module is to be completed by all staff involved in staff selection.	7 th Sep 2012
			Internal review of Draft 3 of Impact Case Studies	
			Impact Case Studies to be sent for review by external assessors	31st Aug 2012
	SEP		REF specific equality and diversity training sessions are held for all staff involved in staff selection (7 th and 17 th of September)	
			REF specific equality and diversity training, covering individual staff circumstances is provided for staff tasked with receiving and reviewing such disclosures	17 th Sep 2012
			REF Executive Committee meeting 5 September	
	OCT		REF Staff Circumstances Committee review disclosed 'clearly defined' and 'complex' circumstances and calculate any reduction in outputs allowed.	30 th Nov 2012
			External assessment of Outputs completed and comments/ratings received	1st October 2012

		Internal assessment of outputs completed and comments/ratings received		
		REF Advisory Group, in conjunction with UOA leads and HODs, agrees and records a quality rating for each assessed output. (Output Review Meetings)		
		External assessment of Impact Case Studies completed and comments received	31st Oct 2012	
		The REF Staff Circumstances Committee reviews disclosures relating to 'clearly defined' and 'complex' circumstances and calculates a reduction in outputs where applicable.	30th Nov 2013	
		Draft 1 of Environment narrative to be produced		
	NOV	Development of submission, including review of UOA submission intentions and development of UOA specific quality thresholds	25 th Jan 2013	
		The REF Advisory Group and the REF Executive Committee review the UOA submission intentions and develop the provisional output quality thresholds for each UOA. (REF Forecast Meetings)		
		Draft 4 of Impact Case Studies to be produced		
		The REF Staff Circumstances Committee makes recommendations in respect of reduction of outputs to the REF Advisory Group.		
		REF Executive Committee meeting 14 November		
		REF Executive Committee meeting 16 November		
	DEC	REF Staff Circumstances Committee communicates its findings in writing on an individual basis to the staff member concerned	14 th Dec 2012	
		The survey of provisional submission intentions is completed and submitted to HEFCE.		
	2013	JAN	The REF Advisory Group completes a preliminary classification of all eligible staff based on the provisional UOA quality thresholds.	1st Feb 2013
			The REF Equality and Diversity Sub-Group prepares to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment (2).	
Development of Environment narrative				
Impact Templates drafted				
REF Executive Committee meeting 21st January				
FEB		The provisional UOA quality thresholds are communicated to all staff.	4th Feb 2013	
		Staff are informed in writing on an individual basis if they are provisionally included or excluded from the REF.	8th Feb 2013	
		Staff who are provisionally excluded from the REF are able to propose substitute outputs with a view to having them assessed to see if these may take them above the quality threshold.	1st Mar 2013	
		Development of the submission under the direction of the REF Advisory Group, including staff selection recommendations.	29 th Mar 2013	
MAR		The REF Equality and Diversity Sub-Group concludes an Equality Impact Assessment (2).	29th Mar 2013	
		Internal review of Environment narrative and Impact Template		
		External assessment of outputs completed and comments/ratings received	1st Apr 2013	
		Internal assessment of outputs completed and comments/ratings received		
APR		REF Advisory Group, in conjunction with UOA leads and HODs, agrees and records a quality rating for each assessed output. (Output Review Meetings 15th, 16th, 19th and 22nd April)	25th Apr 2013	
		The REF Executive Committee, informed by the Equality Impact Assessment (2), reviews and confirms the choice of UOAs and the UOA quality thresholds, and in conjunction with the REF Advisory Group updates the staff selections.	26th Apr 2013	
		REF Executive Committee meeting 24th April		
MAY		The final UOA quality thresholds and supporting materials are communicated to all	3rd May 2013	

	eligible staff.	
	Staff are informed in writing on an individual basis of the University's decision to include or exclude them from the REF submission.	10th May 2013
	Excluded staff can appeal on specific grounds within 10 working days from being informed of the decision, and the REF Appeals Committee will meet to consider appeals within 15 working days from receipt of the appeal in question.	
	All staff invited to provide new outputs that may strengthen their output profile.	21st Jun 2013
	The REF Equality and Diversity Sub-Group prepares to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment (3).	28th Jun 2013
JUN	The REF Appeals Committee informs the REF Advisory Group on a case by case basis if the appeal is upheld to the extent that inclusion in the REF is warranted.	
	The Chair of the REF Appeals Committee provides a written response to the appellant within 30 working days from receipt of the appeal.	
	REF Executive Committee meeting 26th June	
JUL	Preparations for submission.	
	External assessment of outputs completed and comments/ratings received	19th Jul 2013
	Internal assessment of outputs completed and comments/ratings received	19th Jul 2013
	REF Advisory Group, in conjunction with UOA leads and HODs, agrees and records a quality rating for each assessed output. (Output Review Meetings 25th, 29th July)	30th Jul 2013
AUG	Staff are informed in writing on an individual basis of the University's decision to include or exclude them from the REF submission.	13th Aug 2013
	Excluded staff can appeal on specific grounds within 10 working days from being informed of the decision, and the REF Appeals Committee will meet to consider appeals within 15 working days from receipt of the appeal in question.	
	The REF Equality and Diversity Sub-Group prepares to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment (4).	
SEP	REF Executive Committee meeting 25th September	
OCT	Internal assessment of new outputs/staff not previously captured is completed	21st Oct 2013
	REF Advisory Group, in conjunction with UOA leads and HODs, agrees and records a quality rating for each assessed output. (Output Review Meetings 25th, 29th July)	21st Oct 2013
	Staff who submitted outputs are informed in writing on an individual basis of the University's decision to include or exclude them from the REF submission.	11th Nov 2013
	Excluded staff can appeal on specific grounds within 10 working days from being informed of the decision, and the REF Appeals Committee will meet to consider appeals within 15 working days from receipt of the appeal in question.	
	REF Executive Committee meeting 15th October (alternative)	
NOV	REF Executive Committee meeting 5th November (alternative)	
	Deadline for University's final REF 2014 submission.	29th Nov 2013
DEC	The REF Equality and Diversity Sub-Group publish a final Equality Impact Assessment (5).	

Appendix D: Individual Staff Circumstances Reporting Form

Introduction

The Research Excellence Framework 2014 (REF) has been designed to support equality and diversity in research careers. To this end, individuals may be returned with fewer than four outputs, without penalty in the assessment, where their individual circumstances have significantly impacted their ability to produce the requisite number of research outputs, or to undertake research productively throughout the assessment period.

The following table provides a list of applicable circumstances. The Code of Practice and the accompanying guidance notes detail how the information provided in this form will be used, along with the associated procedures and criteria for evaluation, the role of Occupational Health, and how confidentiality of the information provided will be respected.

Clearly defined circumstances:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Career Researcher (ECR) • Absence from work due to working part-time, secondments or career breaks • Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave • Junior clinical academic staff who have not gained Certificate of Completion of Training by 31 October 2013
Complex circumstances:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability • Ill health or injury • Mental health conditions • Constraints related to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside the allowances otherwise made • Other caring responsibilities • Gender reassignment • Other circumstances relating to protected characteristics or activities protected by employment legislation

Every member of staff eligible for inclusion in the REF is asked to complete this form even if they have no circumstances they wish to be taken into consideration.

Name	
Department/Unit	
Faculty	
Email	<input type="checkbox"/> Please tick if preferred method of communication
Telephone	<input type="checkbox"/> Please tick if preferred method of communication

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 REF. (Please complete section three)

- I have individual circumstances that I wish to make known but I am not seeking a reduction in outputs at this time. (Please complete sections two and three)
- In completing this form I am seeking a reduction in outputs. (Please complete sections two and three)

Section two:

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

Please provide information and supporting documentation as applicable on relevant circumstances and continue onto a separate sheet of paper if necessary. ¹

Clearly Defined Circumstances

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 researcher
Supporting Information	
Part time employee	FTE and duration in months
Supporting Information	
Career break or secondment outside of the higher education sector	Dates and duration in months
Supporting 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
Supporting Information	
Junior clinical academic staff who have not	Please place a tick in this box if the

¹ If you believe the supporting information is held on a University of Surrey file (e.g. CV, formal maternity leave letter, sickness absence records etc.) please note this on the form and this can then be verified. You do not need to re-attach this information. If the individual circumstances occurred during a period of employment prior to your employment at the University of Surrey please ensure this is clear in your response and attach any supporting documentation. In either circumstance we may still contact you for further clarification or, in the case of health conditions, to get the most up-to-date information.

gained Certificate of Completion of Training by 31 October 2013 [applies to specific units of assessment within Panel A]	circumstance applies: <input type="checkbox"/>
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Complex circumstances

(Tick as many boxes as applicable)

- Disability
- Mental health condition
- Ill health or injury
- Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare in addition to the period of maternity, adoption or additional paternity leave taken
- Other caring responsibilities (including caring for an elderly or disabled relative)
- Gender reassignment
- Other exceptional and relevant reasons, not including teaching or administrative duties

Please provide details of:

The nature and timing of the circumstances (Please specify dates and duration in months)
The effects on your contracted working hours or the ability to fulfil your contractual hours/ undertake research
Explain any other effects on your ability to work productively

Section three: Declaration

Please read the following statements carefully and sign to indicate your acceptance of them below. *You should delete any statements where your permission is not provided, although please note the University will then be limited in the actions it can take to progress the case.*

1. I confirm that the information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances.
2. I agree that the information provided will be used for REF purposes only and will be seen by the University of Surrey REF Staff Circumstances Committee.

3. I give my permission to disclosure of information to the UK funding bodies' REF team, who may make the information available to REF panel chairs, members and secretaries and/or the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel.²
4. I give my explicit written consent that the University may use this personal data to process my personal circumstances relating to my inclusion in the REF. My consent is conditional on the University of Surrey complying with its obligations and duties under the Data Protection Act 1998, specifically its duty to obtain, record, hold, process and destroy the information.
5. I agree to be contacted by Human Resources or a representative of the REF Staff Circumstances Committee to provide further clarification or to attend an Occupational Health assessment where necessary.

Signature: Date:
 (Staff member)

Please note that the data you supply in this document is confidential to the REF Staff Circumstances process and will not be transferred to your personnel record. If you wish to be contacted by a member of human resources staff to further discuss your circumstances and requirements and/or the support provided by the University please tick this box.

Please return the completed form electronically to staffcircREF@surrey.ac.uk or as a paper copy to the Deputy Director Human Resources (Services).

For official use only

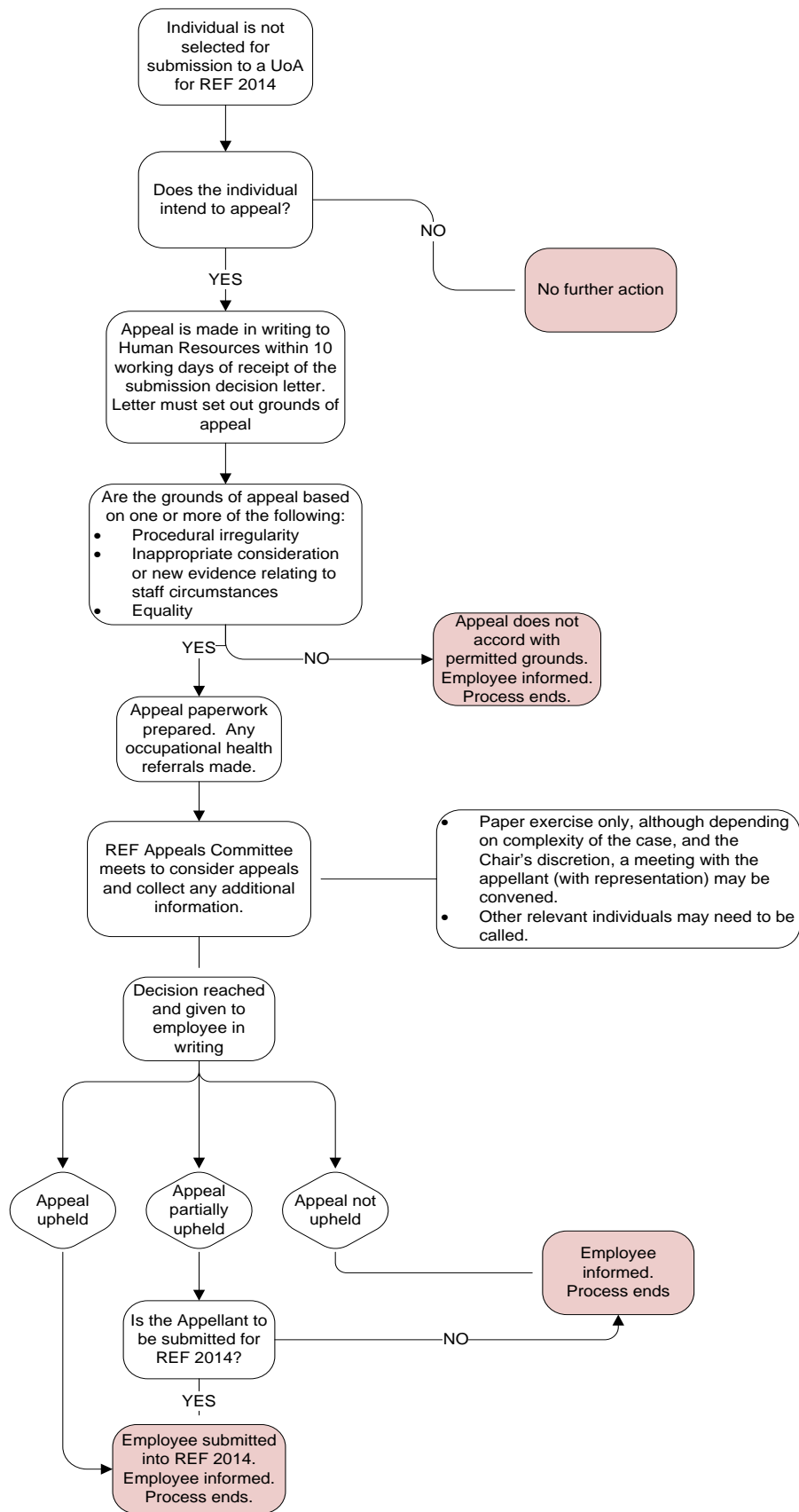
Following consideration of the personal circumstances described above, the REF Staff Circumstances Committee:

- Recommends the staff member should be included in the REF submission with [insert number] research outputs subject to specified institutional criteria. Rationale for the proposed number of outputs:
- Does not feel that the staff member meets the criteria outlined in *REF 01.2012: Panel Criteria and Working Methods* for submitting fewer than four research outputs. The reason(s) for this decision are:

Signature: Date:

² The final decision on the reduction of outputs will be made on behalf of the Research Councils by the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel. Where permission is not provided the University will be limited in the action it can take to support a given individual case.

Appendix E: The REF Appeals Process



Appendix F: Equality Impact Assessment Summary – Updated January 2014

	Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010	Advance Equality of opportunity between people 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
	Does the University of Surrey's Code of Practice have a positive, negative or no impact on the protected characteristics covered by the Act?	Does the University of Surrey's Code of Practice have a positive, negative or no impact?	Does the University of Surrey's Code of Practice have a positive, negative or no impact?
Age	Positive - The code of practice (CoP) applies the REF 2014 policies on individual staff circumstances. (see section 5.3)	Positive - Early Career Researchers can return fewer than four outputs without penalty. (see section 5.3 and Appendix D)	Positive – the Code of Practice will be made available to all members of staff via the staff intranet and external website or by post. Ensuring all staff have access to the same information regarding staff selection. (see section 3.9)
Disability	Positive – In drafting the CoP several working groups have been consulted representing the protected characteristics including; the REF Equality and Diversity Group, REF Working group, REF Advisory group and the Trade Unions.	Positive - Eligible staff can seek a reduction in outputs without penalty due to disability or mental health. (see section 5.3 and Appendix D)	Positive – The Head of Equality and Diversity is named in the Code of Practice and available to advise eligible staff (see section 7)
Gender Reassignment	Positive - Eligible staff can seek a reduction in outputs due to gender reassignment. (see section 5.3 and Appendix D)	Positive - Eligible staff can seek a reduction in outputs due to gender reassignment. (see section 5.3 and Appendix D)	Positive – a qualitative survey shall be undertaken to understand the experiences of eligible staff (both with and without protected characteristics) as part of the Equality Impact Assessment conducted at the point of provisional staff selection. Any recommendations shall be incorporated into the Code of Practice. (see section 5.5)
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Positive – feedback from University of Surrey staff on the RAE submission revealed that the process did not allow sufficient time to appeal and provide substitute outputs, this has been considered and rectified in the REF 2014 process. (see section 5.4 and Appendix C) <i>Two further output review exercises were introduced in the second half of 2013, to offer staff every opportunity to provide substitute outputs without delaying the appeals process.</i>	No impact - Eligible staff may be returned with up to 4 outputs	<i>The process of staff selection was extended to allow staff further opportunities for output review and continue to work towards inclusion in REF 2014 consequently it was not possible to conduct such a survey. At each stage staff were informed individually in writing and offered the opportunity to discuss their position. At no point did any UOA lead or the Central REF team receive any appeal or feedback based on a protected characteristic. The Appeals process was well communicated through individual letters, UOA leads and the University's website.</i>
Pregnancy and Maternity	Positive - Eligible staff can seek a reduction in outputs without penalty due to pregnancy/ maternity/ adoption/ childcare. (see section 5.3 and Appendix D)	Positive - Eligible staff can seek a reduction in outputs without penalty due to pregnancy/ maternity/ adoption/ childcare. (see section 5.3 and Appendix D)	
Race	Positive - "The University recognises that staff may have concerns related to discrimination on the grounds of their protected characteristic that are outside of the REF2014 process. These can be declared in accordance with the University of Surrey policies (including the Grievance Policy and Harassment & Bullying Policy) <i>None declared.</i>	30% of the staff submitted to REF 2014 were returned with fewer than 4 outputs. The Staff Circumstances Committee reviewed 269 clearly defined or complex cases.	
Religion or Belief		No impact - Eligible staff may be returned with up to 4 outputs.	
Sex			
Sexual Orientation			
	Positive - All staff involved in the process of selecting staff for inclusion in the REF2014 will complete equality and diversity training. They will also undertake an equality and diversity online training module before hand to familiarise themselves with the legislation. (see section 5.2) <i>Completed, all staff involved in selecting staff attended training sessions on the 7th and 17th September 2012 run by Dr S Manfredi and Professor L Vickers, Oxford Brookes University)</i>		
	Positive - Staff involved in assessing complex circumstances will complete further bespoke training. (see section 5.2.2) <i>Completed on the 17th of September 2012.</i>		
	Positive – Staff who have responsibility for conducting Equality Impact Assessments on the Code of Practice have undertaken specific Equality Impact Assessment training. (see section 5.5) <i>Completed on the 21st May 2012.</i>		