

**Code of Practice for the Selection and Submission of Staff to the Research  
Excellence Framework 2014**

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## **1 Purpose of the Code**

- 1.1 The primary purposes of this Code are:
- .1 To establish transparent, consistent, accountable and inclusive procedures, to govern the University's Research Excellence Framework2014 (REF2014) preparations;
  - .2 To define responsibilities and criteria for REF2014 preparation and decisions;
  - .3 To ensure that the University's REF strategy and criteria for selection are widely disseminated within the University;
  - .4 To ensure that decisions on the inclusion of individual staff and Units of Assessment (UoAs) are clearly and appropriately communicated;
  - .5 To ensure that REF2014 preparations and decision have due regard for equality and diversity duties;
  - .6 To provide an appeal procedure for the review of REF submission decisions;
  - .7 To demonstrate the alignment of University policy and procedure with best practice and legal requirements as set out in REF2014 and by the Equalities Challenge Unit.

## **2 Overview of University REF2014 Strategy**

- 2.1 REF2014 supersedes the RAE as the U.K's national research assessment exercise. The impact of REF judgments about research quality and its influence on funding levels affect institutions over a long period and therefore institutional strategy for the REF2014 is of great significance.
- 2.2 The REF2014 guidance encourages HEIs 'to submit the work of all their excellent researchers' (para 18b)<sup>1</sup>and also specifies that 'Each HEI must decide which individuals to select for submission, in accordance with its internal code of practice'<sup>2</sup>.
- 2.3 The University recognises and appreciates the invaluable contribution made by staff across the institution through their research, scholarship, knowledge exchange and consultancy, and has established as a strategic aim the consolidation and development of activity across this broad spectrum in all major subject areas. Within this wider strategy, the University seeks to optimise its reputation and funding for research through its REF2014 submission. To meet the exacting quality standards established through the REF, and to maximise its profile and funding, the University will adopt a selective approach to the submission. This will require establishing threshold criteria for entry of researchers in the REF and for entry in units of assessment. These criteria will represent minimum quality profiles which eligible staff must meet if they are to be selected.

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<sup>1</sup> Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions (REF02.2011, July 2011), paragraph 18.b

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, paragraph 77

- 2.4 The University will include in its submission the maximum number of staff with research output of excellent quality as is consistent with the REF2014 Guidance on Submissions, the Main and UOA Panel Criteria, this Code of Practice, the University's REF strategy and the University's established selection criteria.
- 2.5 The University values the contributions of all staff, regardless of the terms of their contracts. University policy ensures equal treatment for all staff including those on part-time and fixed-term contracts. These staff are fully integrated within Westminster's establishment of full-time and permanent staff, have identical contracts and the same rights to teaching remission, resources, support, development and promotion opportunities. With regard to the REF submission, all eligible academic staff including those on part-time and fixed-term contracts will be equally considered for inclusion in accordance with the process and criteria set out in this Code. Fixed-term and part-time staff will be included in the dissemination<sup>3</sup> protocols for all REF-related material. Where contractual terms, such as part-time status, have inhibited the ability of an individual to be productive throughout the assessment process, the University will apply the relevant Individual Staff Circumstances provisions for consideration of a reduced volume of output (see Section 6). The impact of the University's REF process and criteria on these groups will be monitored through an analysis of their selection rates in the reviews of the Equality Impact Assessment (see Section 7).
- 2.6 In support of the longer term agenda for equality of opportunity, growth and sustainability, wherever possible the University will use the REF preparations, including the findings of the Equality Impact Analysis, to inform the development of existing policies and activities in support of developing research staff within an inclusive environment, working towards exercises beyond REF 2014.

### **3 General Principles of the Code**

- 3.1 The Code:
- .1 Accords with the relevant guidance from HEFCE, the Equality Challenge Unit and with regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and relevant employment law;
  - .2 Establishes transparent, consistent and accountable University-wide processes for the selection of staff which, with associated documentation, will ensure compliance with the UK legal framework for equality and diversity, at the same time reinforcing and informing the development of the University's existing equality and diversity policies in support of the growth and sustainability of research;
  - .3 Defines the roles, responsibilities and terms of reference for committees, groups, other deliberative and decision-making bodies and post-holders in relation to the selection and submission of staff for REF2014;
  - .4 Ensures that the selection processes at UoA, School and University level have due regard for equality and diversity;

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<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, paragraph 18.b

- .5 Ensures that the University will include in its submission the maximum number of eligible staff (including part-time and fixed-term staff) with research output of excellent quality as is consistent with the REF2014 Guidance on Submissions, the Main and UoA Panel Criteria, this Code of Practice, the University's REF strategy and the University's established selection criteria. This includes staff whose volume of research output has been limited for reasons covered by equalities legislation in circumstances recognised under the REF rules;
  - .6 Will be disseminated electronically to all eligible staff, will be available on the University website and will be sent to staff who are currently absent from the University. Additionally, it will be made available in an accessible format;
  - .7 Requires that eligible staff will be kept informed of their REF2014 submission status, using standard communication templates which will be available on the University's REF intranet site;
  - .8 Should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies, guidance, legislation and associated documentation. References and links are provided in Sections 12 and 13 of this document;
- 3.2 The application of the Code in preparing and approving the University's REF2014 submission will be overseen by the University REF2014 Committee (URC) , which will have the authority to approve or not approve the inclusion of Units of Assessments and of individuals within the University's submission.

#### **4. Principles governing selection**

- 4.1 Eligible staff are defined as 'academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater and on the payroll of the submitting HEI on the census date (31 October 2013), and whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'teaching and research'<sup>4</sup> and include eligible staff on fixed-term and/or part-time contracts.
- 4.2 The University will establish and publish a single threshold quality profile (articulated as a star-rated quality profile), entitling an eligible member of staff to be considered for entry in REF 2014 and may in addition approve threshold quality profiles at the level of the individual UoA.
- 4.3 The University will consider the research profiles of all eligible staff including part-time and fixed term staff, those whose output volume may have been constrained by Individual Staff Circumstances (see Section 6) and staff who are absent from the university at relevant points in the process.
- 4.4 The University's REF2014 submission will be determined through consideration by the University REF2014 Committee of Submission Plans which shall be prepared by Schools in accordance with the process and criteria set out in this Code and will propose the inclusion of specific Units of Assessment and eligible staff in the University's REF2014 submission.

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<sup>4</sup> These are staff returned to the HESA Staff Collection with an activity code of 'Academic Professional' and an academic employment function of either 'Research only' or 'Teaching and research'

- 4.5 All eligible staff<sup>5</sup> will be invited to nominate themselves for selection. This includes fractional and fixed-term staff, those currently absent from the University, and those with fewer than four outputs of the required quality.
- 4.6 Schools may in addition nominate within their submission plans eligible staff who have not nominated themselves for selection.
- 4.7 Schools may in addition nominate individuals for consideration as Category C staff, 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)'.
- 4.8 School Submission Plans will include in respect of each proposed Unit of Assessment submission:
- a) Research quality profile information on eligible staff who have self-nominated or have been nominated by their Schools;
  - b) In respect of eligible staff whose ability to produce four outputs has been constrained by circumstances provided for in the REF, information on their research quality profile, volume and the impact of the circumstances;
  - c) Where relevant, proposals and rationale for a UoA specific minimum threshold quality profile
- 4.9 The University will consider School Submission Plans in the light of the relevant threshold quality profile, applying the selection criteria set out in paragraph 5.4 below and in accordance with this Code.
- 4.10 The University has established processes whereby staff may seek further information regarding initial decisions and may appeal final decisions regarding their REF2014 submission status, using the appeal procedure set out in Section 10 below.
- 4.11 The University will ensure, through the timetable for selection decisions and the appeal process, that staff have adequate opportunity to complete the appeal process before the University's REF2014 submission deadline.
- 4.12 Consideration of individual cases may be informed by the advice of external subject experts, but final decisions on the selection of staff are reserved to the University REF2014 Committee and/or the University REF Appeal Panel.
- 4.13 In reaching academic judgments on the quality of outputs, impact and contributions to the research environment, the University will be guided by the quality level descriptors set out in the REF 2014 Framework for Assessment and Guidance on Submissions, Annex A Assessment criteria and level definitions.

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<sup>5</sup> These are staff returned to the HESA Staff Collection with an activity code of 'Academic Professional' and an academic employment function of either 'Research only' or 'Teaching and research'

## 5 Selection of Units of Assessment and eligible staff for inclusion

- 5.1 Prior to the call for First Draft Submission Plans, the University will establish and publish a single threshold quality profile (articulated as a star-rated quality profile). All eligible staff whose outputs profile meets this threshold shall be entitled to be considered for entry in REF2014. This includes eligible staff whose volume of output may have been constrained by circumstances.
- 5.2 The University will reach decisions on REF submissions in accordance with this Code and through iterative consideration by the REF Committee of Submission Plans for individual Units of Assessment, proposed by Schools. Submission Plans will:
- .1 Include the minimum threshold for entry in that Unit of Assessment, which may be higher than the University quality profile threshold.
  - .2 Identify all eligible staff wishing to be considered for entry to the REF, those that meet the University's minimum threshold quality profile for entry and where relevant, those that meet any higher threshold for entry specified for the Unit of Assessment, and those whose volume of output may have been constrained by individual circumstances
- 5.3 A School may present within its Submission Plan a case for approval of a higher threshold of entry for individual staff members in the UoA (articulated as a star rated quality profile) in one or more specific Unit/s of Assessment, based on a substantial reason, for example:
- the high overall quality profile of staff eligible for submission;
  - the opportunity to maximise QR income from the REF;
  - the opportunity to optimise grade point average; or,
  - previous levels of performance in the REF
- 5.4 In considering staff eligible for inclusion, the University will apply the following primary and secondary criteria in the context of the relevant entry threshold:
- .1 Primary criteria for selection: Selection for entry will depend primarily on the submission criteria below:
    - a) the quality profile of the outputs of an individual;
    - b) the availability of the required number of outputs for entry taking into account the circumstances of the individual; and
    - c) the availability for entry in REF2014 of a Unit of Assessment with a viable corpus of work for submission in which an individual could be submitted

- .2 Secondary criteria for selection: In cases where primary submission criteria are not met, consideration will be given to the probability that the individual's submission will enhance the submission in the Unit of Assessment as evidenced by:
- a) research standing and esteem factors such as awards, public and keynote lectures and consultancy;
  - b) value of research grants achieved during the period since RAE 2008;
  - c) the significance of research grants to the outcome in the relevant unit of assessment;
  - d) demonstrable impact as defined by the relevant Unit of Assessment for REF2014 achieved by an individual since RAE 2008 and, in particular, prospective inclusion in an impact case study for REF 2014;
  - e) significant contribution to the research environment of the unit of assessment since RAE 2008.
- 5.5 If in individual cases the criteria for entry in the Unit of Assessment are met, the individual will be submitted irrespective of any other considerations. If an individual marginally fails to meet the relevant threshold quality profile set by the University, the Unit/s of Assessment will consider whether there is a case for submission with regard to secondary criteria.
- 5.6 Staff who meet the University's minimum criteria for entry in the REF but who do not meet the criteria for entry in a particular UoA where a higher threshold for entry has been set, will be considered for entry in all other Units of Assessment.
- 5.7 The thresholds and criteria that will be applied in considering the inclusion of Units of Assessment and individual staff, including any Unit of Assessment specific thresholds, will be clearly communicated to individual staff, Deans, School Research Directors and UoA Leads.

## **6 Equality, Diversity and REF2014**

- 6.1 All staff engaged in the selection of staff for entry in the REF will undertake the relevant REF2014 equalities training and will be provided with the REF and ECU guidance on equality and diversity and with copies of this Code.
- 6.2 On-going consideration of the possible equality and diversity impacts of emerging REF policy has informed the development of this Code and an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been conducted which is available on the University's REF intranet pages. As REF policy is implemented, the on-going impact will be monitored through review of the EIA and relevant corrective action taken. Further information may be found in Section 7 about the REF Equality Impact Assessment, and in Section 12 about the University's general approach and policies on Equality and Diversity.
- 6.3 The University recognises that individual circumstances may have constrained the volume of research output of individual members of staff and that this should not of itself preclude the inclusion of an individual within the submission. At all stages in the decision making process, at School and University level, due consideration will be given to ensuring that no member of staff is

disadvantaged in terms of the REF2014 status, by virtue of circumstances covered by equality and diversity legislation including fixed-term or part-time contractual status through the procedures set out elsewhere in this code.

- 6.4 The University will take due account of the individual circumstances as set out below in reaching selection decisions with regard to the REF, in accordance with the procedures set out in this code which are aligned with the relevant REF guidance<sup>6</sup>:
- 6.5 In cases where there are circumstances justifying a reduction in outputs on the basis of Clearly Defined Circumstances listed at 6.5 a – d below, eligible staff will be entered in the REF provided they have sufficient outputs to meet the minimum requirement according to their circumstances and provided that the outputs meet the University or Unit of Assessment minimum quality standards.

Clearly Defined Circumstances:

- a) Qualifying as an early career researcher on the basis set out in paragraph 6.8 below (see also paragraph 72, REF Panel Criteria)
- b) Absence from work due to working part-time, secondments or career breaks on the basis set out in Table 2 below (see paragraphs 73-74, REF Panel Criteria).
- c) Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave (see paragraphs 75-81, REF Panel Criteria)
- d) Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6 (see paragraphs 86-87, REF Panel Criteria)

Complex Staff Circumstances:

- 6.6 In cases where complex staff circumstances have constrained the output volume of an eligible member of staff who cannot therefore provide four qualifying outputs, Schools will include in their Submission Plans the rationale for their recommendation to submit or not submit an individual with reduced outputs, with reference to the guidance on complex circumstances as set out in the REF Panel Criteria and Working Methods (REF 01.2012), please see publications section at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk). Schools will include details of:
- a) the circumstances claimed
  - b) the impact claimed on the production of outputs of the individual
  - c) independent evidence of the circumstances of the individual
  - d) the notes of any meeting with the individual
  - e) the reasons for the inclusion or exclusion of the individual from the submission of the Unit of Assessment
  - f) The number of outputs of the requisite quality threshold

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<sup>6</sup> As set out in the Panel Criteria and Working Methods (REF 01.2012), January 2012

g) Information in relation to the secondary criteria for selection (see paragraph 5.4.2 above)

6.7 Complex circumstances include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following situations:

- a) Disability. This is defined in 'guidance on submissions' Part 4, Table 2 under 'Disability'
- b) Ill health or injury
- c) Mental health conditions
- d) 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 in paragraph 6.10 below
- e) Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member)
- f) Gender reassignment
- g) Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed at paragraph 190 of the REF Guidance on Submissions or relating to activities protected by employment legislation
- h) Periods of additional paternity or adoption leave of less than four months, in combination with other clearly defined or complex circumstances.

*Calculating reductions for Clearly Defined Circumstances:*

6.8 *Early Career Researchers*

Early career researchers are defined in paragraphs 85-86 of the REF 2014 'Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions'. The inclusion of Early Career Researchers (ECR) in the University's submission will be subject to evidence of ECR status and the requisite number of outputs of the required quality. The permitted reduction in outputs for ECRs is set out in Table 1 below.

<b>Table 1 Early career researchers: permitted reduction in outputs</b>	
<b>Date at which the individual first met the REF definition of an early career researcher:</b>	<b>Number of Outputs may be reduced by up to:</b>
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

6.9 *Absence from work due to part-time working, secondments or career breaks*

Where part-time working, secondment or career breaks outside the HE sector and in which the individual did not undertake academic research have impacted an individual's ability to work

productively throughout the assessment period, the number of outputs required for inclusion in the submission may be reduced, provided the outputs to be submitted meet the University's quality criteria. The permitted reduction in output is set out in Table 2 below:

<b>Table 2 Part-time working, secondments or career breaks: permitted reduction in outputs</b>	
<b>Total months absent between 1 January 2008 and 31 October 2013 due to working part-time, secondment or career break:</b>	<b>Number of outputs may be reduced by up to:</b>
0-11.99	0
12-27.99	1
28-45.99	2
46 or more	3

#### 6.10 *Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave*

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

- .1 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.
- .2 Additional paternity or adoption leave<sup>7</sup> lasting for four months or more, taken substantially during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2013.

#### 6.11 *Combining Clearly Defined Circumstances*

- .1 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. The total reduction will be calculated as the sum of the relevant reduction for each circumstance, up to a maximum of three<sup>8</sup>.
2. In circumstances where Table 1 is combined with Table 2, the period of time between 1 January 2008 and the date when the individual met the definition of an Early Career Researcher will be calculated in months, and Table 2 will be applied.
- .3 In considering cases where a combination of circumstances affected the volume of research output, only one circumstance will be taken into account for any period of time during which they took place simultaneously.

<sup>7</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 this leave is referred to as 'additional paternity or adoption leave'.

<sup>8</sup> Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions (REF02.2011, July 2011), paragraphs 82-87

## 6.12 *Combining Clearly Defined and Complex Circumstances*

- .1 Where an individual having a combination of clearly defined and complex circumstances is submitted, the circumstances will be submitted collectively under the 'complex circumstances' provision, and incorporating the appropriate reduction for the clearly defined element in accordance with paragraphs 6.5 and 6.8 -6.11 above.
- .2 In cases where individuals have one or more complex circumstances, including in combination with any circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs, the University will make a judgement on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs submitted and will provide a rationale for inclusion in REF1b for this judgment. This will include an estimate, articulated in terms of the equivalent number of months absent from work of the impact of the complex circumstances on the individual's ability to work productively throughout the assessment period, and state any further constraints on the individual's research work in addition to the equivalent months absent. The reduction in required outputs will be made according to Table 2 (relating to estimated months absent), with further constraints taken into account as appropriate. The REF2014 Committee will consider the worked examples provided by the Equality Challenge Units (ECU) ([www.ecu.ac.uk/our-project/REF](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/our-project/REF)) in dealing with such combinations of circumstances.
- .3 In reaching decisions to allow a reduced number of outputs and subject to the available outputs meeting the University's quality criteria, the University will follow the REF 2014 guidance on combining clearly defined circumstances and calculating complex circumstances as set out in paragraphs 82-85 and 88-89 of the REF Panel Criteria, REF 01.2012.

6.13 The University will adopt robust, proactive procedures, to enable and encourage staff to disclose their circumstances in confidence. An invitation to disclose will be included in the all-staff circular inviting staff to present their work for consideration. Confidential routes for disclosure and for processing and considering disclosed information will be provided.

## **7 Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 Consideration of the possible equality and diversity impacts of emerging REF policy has informed the development of this Code. To assess whether its REF2014 submission policies may have any discriminatory effect, the University has undertaken an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). Conducted in accordance with the University's standard EIA procedure, by staff with expertise in REF2014, Human Resources and Equality and Diversity issues, the assessment addresses the potential impact of the University's REF policies and procedures including this Code under a range of headings. Consideration of the initial EIA, and future reviews thereof, is supported by a baseline dataset of the population of eligible academic staff analysed by protected characteristics and contractual status (age, ethnicity, gender, disability, full or part-time status, contract type and grade). The EIA review will also incorporate consideration of possible impacts on groups where disclosure rates within the University's standard data capture processes are less robust, for example, sexual orientation and marital/civil partnership status. The initial EIA is available on the University's REF2014 intranet pages.

- 7.2 The initial Equality Impact Assessment will be reviewed iteratively as the University develops and refines its submission, at First Draft Submission stage (in Autumn 2012) and subsequently at Final Draft Submission stage (in Spring 2013) to determine whether the REF policies and procedures are in fact exerting any discriminatory effect. These reviews will be informed by:
- A statistical comparison of draft selection rates in the various categories with the baseline dataset;
  - General feedback and operational experience of issues arising during implementation;
  - Information regarding other barriers to inclusion that staff may have experienced which either are not covered by the provisions for Individual Staff Circumstances or on which robust data is not available due to low staff disclosure rates, for example, sexual orientation and religion and belief;
  - Information regarding appeals against selection decisions.
- 7.3 The Equality Impact Assessment and its iterative reviews will be considered by the University REF2014 Committee, the Research, Enterprise and Knowledge Transfer Committee and other relevant University committees and departments.
- 7.4 Consideration of the Equality Impact Assessment may inform the revision of institutional policies and procedures including this Code, as well as any necessary corrective action with regard to the REF2014 submission itself. The University will ensure that any such corrective action will be undertaken in sufficient time to allow revision of draft submissions before despatch to REF2014 by the closing date.
- 7.5 The Equality Impact Assessment will be published in updated form following each review and will include recommendations and reports as relevant about corrective action. Where review has resulted in revision to policies or procedures, the changes will be disseminated to all relevant staff. In accordance with the expectations of the UK funding bodies, the University will publish the Equality Impact Assessment after the REF2014 submission has been made.

## **8 Process**

- 8.1 The invitation to participate in REF2014 will be via a standard communication template. This will be disseminated to all eligible academic staff, (as defined in paragraph 4.1) above including those currently absent from the University, and will include guidance on equality and diversity and, confidential proformas inviting disclosure of individual staff circumstances (ISCs). The invitation will also include the provisional list of Units of Assessment in which the University is proposing to submit and information regarding the University's threshold criteria for quality.
- 8.2 Self-nominations from staff will be addressed to the School Research Director in the first instance, but alternative confidential routes for the disclosure of ISCs will also be provided.
- 8.3 Schools will make proposals within their Submission Plans regarding UoAs and staff to be selected including those with fewer than four outputs, for consideration by the University.

- 8.4 The University will reach initial decisions on the selection of staff through a First Draft Submission process, which will be informed by external review and will take place in Autumn 2012.
- 8.5 The initial decisions will be taken by the University REF2014 Committee, on the basis of the Submission Plans submitted by School which will elucidate the application of any UoA or School specific criteria or considerations which the School recommends the Committee should take into account in reaching initial decisions.
- 8.6 University decisions will be reached in the light of the relevant threshold profiles, of the primary and secondary criteria set out in paragraph 5.4 and of the provisions for considering Individual Staff Circumstances. Decisions will be categorised as follows:
- a) Meets all applicable criteria for submission in chosen UoA – ‘submit’
  - b) Does not meet applicable criteria for submission in chosen UoA but meets University criteria for submission – ‘provisional submit’
  - c) May meet applicable criteria by March 2013 – ‘possible submit’
  - d) Does not meet applicable criteria and will not be capable of doing so by March 2013 – ‘not submit’
- 8.7 Initial decisions will be communicated by the University REF2014 Committee to the Dean of School, Unit of Assessment Lead and School Research Director in Schools in which the Units of Assessment are primarily located. The Dean will be responsible for communicating the decisions to the staff involved, using standard communications templates. School Research Directors will notify the University REF2014 Committee when staff have been informed of initial decisions.
- 8.8 An eligible member of staff may seek further information regarding an initial decision not to submit them at First Draft Submission stage with reference to the application of the primary or secondary criteria and/ or any substantial and material issue.
- 8.9 The process described above will be repeated at Final Draft Submission Stage in Spring 2013 when final decisions on the REF status of individual staff and of specific Units of Assessment will be confirmed.
- 8.10 Appeals from the decisions of the University REF2014 Committee may be submitted in response to final but not to initial decisions of the Committee (see Section 10 for further information about the appeals procedure).

## **9 Responsibilities and Terms of Reference**

- 9.1 *Research, Enterprise and Knowledge Transfer Committee*
- .1 The University Research, Enterprise and Knowledge Transfer Committee has responsibility for developing and implementing research strategy, policies and procedures in the University. This Committee has oversight of REF2014 matters and has established a REF2014 Committee to lead and manage the preparations, to consider Submission Plans from Schools, and to make decisions on the inclusion of UoAs and eligible staff, in

accordance with this Code, with the REF2014 Guidance on Submissions and Assessment Framework and Panel Criteria and other guidance and with the University's duties under equality legislation.

- .2 Units of Assessment will be the responsibility of a designated School. The Unit Lead, School Research Director and the Dean of the designated School will sign off each submission plan confirming that the requirements of this Code have been complied with.

## 9.2 *The University REF2014 Committee*

9.2.1 The Committee will be composed of senior academic and professional support staff. The membership of the REF2014 Committee will be published on the University's REF web site. The Secretary to the REF 2014 Committee shall be appointed from the staff of the Research Office. The specific responsibilities of the REF2014 Committee are:

- .1 To ensure that all eligible staff are aware of the REF2014 Strategy, Code of Practice and of the opportunity and process for their work to be considered for inclusion
- .2 To establish and publish institutional criteria to govern decisions regarding the selection of individual staff
- .3 To consider School Submission Plans in respect of all proposed UoA submissions, including the rationale for requiring a higher quality threshold for the Unit of Assessment than the University quality threshold for entry of individual staff
- .4 To consider proposals from Schools in the form of Submission Plans for the inclusion of eligible staff within UoAs at First Draft Submission and Final Draft Submission stage
- .5 To consider proposals from Schools to include staff who do not meet the primary criteria by applying the secondary criteria.
- .6 To seek external opinion to inform submission decisions where appropriate
- .7 To consider proposals for the submission of staff with fewer than four outputs in the light of the provisions for individual staff circumstances (ISCs), ensuring these are consistent with the provisions of the REF and of this Code of Practice
- .8 To approve proposals from Schools for amendments to previous decisions
- .9 To provide comment, guidance and advice to Schools regarding the alignment of their Submission Plans with University strategy, the REF Code of Practice, criteria established at the institutional and Unit of Assessment level, the REF2014 framework and the University's REF2014 strategy as set out in Section 2 above
- .10 To identify actions for individual Schools and the UoAs within them relating to the formulation of UoA submissions and to communicate these accordingly
- .11 To provide reports on REF2014 progress to Research Committee, UEB and Academic Council

- .12 To oversee the application of the Code of Practice to all REF2014 preparation processes including the Equality Impact Assessment
- .13 To require Schools to re-consider or to take corrective action following successful appeal by eligible academic staff
- .14 To ensure that appropriate equalities training has been undertaken by staff having key REF roles as designated in this Code

### 9.3 *Vice Chancellor*

#### 9.3.1. The role of the Vice Chancellor will be:

- .1 To have overall responsibility for the preparation and content of the University's submission to REF 2014
- .2 To ensure that the REF processes are conducted and documented fairly and transparently in accordance with this Code
- .3 To confirm that the University has adhered to this Code in preparing and submitting to REF2014
- .4 To Chair the REF2014 Appeal Panel
- .5 To undertake the relevant Equalities training

### 9.4 *Academic Lead for REF2014*

#### 9.4.1. The role of the REF Academic Lead will be:

- .1 To chair the University REF2014 Committee
- .2 To take chair's action where necessary and appropriate in matters falling with the Terms of Reference of the REF2014 Committee.
- .3 To confirm that the Committee has adhered to this Code in preparing and submitting to REF2014
- .4 To undertake the relevant equalities training

### 9.5 *Deans of School and School Researcher Directors*

9.5.1 Deans have overall responsibility for academic delivery in their schools. Operational responsibility for the management of research is delegated in each school to a School Research Director who undertakes a leading role in School REF2014 preparation. It is assumed in respect of the responsibilities listed below that these may be delegated by the Dean to the School Research Director and/or UoA Leads:

- .1 Undertaking the relevant equalities training
- .2 Appointing UoA Leads and ensuring these undertake the requisite Equalities training

- .3 Ensuring that the process for considering and selecting work at UoA level is undertaken by the UoA Leads in full accordance with the Code of Practice
- .4 Ensuring that all eligible academic staff have the opportunity to present their work for REF2014 consideration
- .5 Ensuring effective general communication with staff
- .6 Communicating University decisions on the REF2014 status of individuals and UoAs using the University's established methods and formats
- .7 Providing feedback to individuals regarding their research profiles and the outcomes of preliminary and subsequent selections at first and Final Draft Submission stage  
Formulating and documenting proposals in the form of Submission Plans for consideration by the University REF2014 Committee for the inclusion of Units of Assessment and the selection of individual staff
- .8 Formulating and documenting proposals and rationales within the School's Submission Plans to vary the Unit of Assessment minimum threshold criteria to take into account local circumstances and strategy
- .9 Ensuring institutionally minimum threshold profiles are clearly communicated within the School and that any variation is clear between these and any UoA specific thresholds that have been approved
- .10 Formulating and documenting proposals for allowing reduced output volume in the case of individual staff circumstances covered by equalities legislation, in accordance with this Code and the REF requirements

#### 9.6 *Unit of Assessment Leads*

9.6.1. UoA Leads are appointed by Deans of School. They should be of appropriate academic standing and be able to demonstrate an aptitude for open and inclusive working with fellow academic staff. The UoA Lead is responsible for:

- .1 Undertaking the relevant equalities training
- .2 Leading the planning, preparation and documenting of the UoA submission
- .3 Participating in selecting members of the UoA Planning Group
- .4 Compiling data on eligible staff and their research profile
- .5 Facilitating the assessment of the quality of research output for all eligible academic staff who may be considered for inclusion within that Unit of Assessment
- .6 Cross-School liaison with regard to the inclusion of staff located in other Schools
- .7 Identifying and referring issues for resolution at School or University level, providing advice on these issues and acting upon the outcomes as appropriate.

## 9.7 *Critical Readers*

- 9.7.1. Critical Readers will be assigned by the University to each School, to advise and provide guidance on the formulation of submissions for specific UoAs. Critical Readers are senior members of staff who are research active and have senior roles in the University's management of research activity. They are responsible for advising the REF2014 Committee on any issues requiring discussion, decision or action as the submissions are developed.

## 9.8 *REF2014 Appeals Panel: Constitution and Powers*

- .1 The REF2014 Appeals Panel will be chaired by the Vice-Chancellor or nominee and shall include, in respect of each appellant, two Professors who have no prior involvement or interest in the case.
- .2 The Appeal Panel is responsible for considering appeals from members of staff wishing to contest selection decisions.
- .3 The Appeals Panel will have the ultimate power to reinstate the individual into the REF2014 Submission.
- .4 All decisions taken by the Panel will be final and binding and there will be no further right of appeal under this procedure.
- .5 The Secretary to the Appeals Panel will be appointed from the staff of the University Research Office.

The appeal procedure is outlined below. The conduct of individual appeals will be governed by detailed guidance which will be published on the University REF intranet pages and provided to all appellants.

## **10 Appeal Procedure**

- 10.1 Members of the University's academic staff shall have the right to appeal to the REF 2014 Appeals Panel against:
- a) a decision of the University REF2014 Committee at Final Draft Submission stage (in March 2013) not to submit the member of staff in REF2014
  - b) a decision of the University REF2014 Committee at Final Draft Submission stage (in March 2013) to submit the member of staff to a particular Unit of Assessment
- 10.2 Staff will be specifically notified of their rights under the appeals procedure when they are informed of the University's Final Draft Submission decisions in March 2013 and will be provided with a copy of this procedure, or a link to it.
- 10.3 An appeal against the decision not to include an eligible member of academic staff in the REF2014 may be made on one or more of the grounds listed below:
- a) The University failed to consider the member of staff's circumstances
  - b) The University failed to attach sufficient weight to the individual's complex circumstances

- c) There was a demonstrable and material irregularity in the consideration of the staff member according to this Code of Practice
- 10.4 An appeal must be submitted by an individual member of staff on their own behalf and must be addressed to the Head of the Research Office.
- 10.5 An appeal may be submitted following notification to staff of a Final Draft Submission decision by the University REF2014 Committee decision and must be submitted not later than 30 April 2013.
- 10.6 The University shall not consider an appeal other than in the circumstances defined in paragraphs 10.1 – 10.5 above.
- 10.7 The REF 2014 Appeals Panel shall receive the UoA submission plan, Final Draft Submission and the REF 2014 Committee's reasons for decision, together with the appellant's written reasons for the appeal.
- 10.8 The appellant may be accompanied by a colleague who is an employee and academic member of the University of Westminster.
- 10.9 The Panel may reach a decision based on the evidence available in cases where an appellant is persistently unable or unwilling to attend the hearing.
- 10.10 The Panel may obtain advice from external subject specialists and from the University's Human Resources department as necessary.
- 10.11 Where the Appeal Panel finds the appellant has grounds under 10.3.a – c above and has a research profile of the requisite quality and volume to meet the University's REF selection criteria, or the selection criteria for the relevant Unit of Assessment, the applicant shall be included in the University's submission in the Unit of Assessment or any other Unit of Assessment in which their work is submittable.
- 10.12 The outcome of the appeal will be notified formally to the individual staff member concerned and to the REF2014 Committee.
- 10.13 The decision of the REF2014 Appeals Panel shall be final and there shall be no right of any individual to a subsequent submission for re-consideration of the outcome of an appeal.
- 10.14 Formal written appeals will normally be considered within three weeks (15 working days) of their receipt, but this timescale is a guideline only, subject to timely provision of external or specialist advice within that period and its consideration by the Panel.
- 10.15 All appeals and the documentation relating to them will be designated as Confidential. Subject to the requirements of confidentiality, the University reserves the right to make appropriate use of appeal records in taking action as a result of the appeal.
- 10.16 Subject to the terms of this procedure, the Chair of the hearing or appeal has full discretion to give or make any directions, arrangements or decisions as s/he deems necessary for the prompt dealing with the appeal.

## **11 Standard Templates for Communication of Processes and Decisions**

- 11.1 The University will publish and use standard templates and process for communicating with staff regarding REF selection decisions and these will be available on the REF intranet site.

## **12 University Policies Supporting Equality and Diversity**

- 12.1 This Code of Practice and the Equality Impact Assessment have been developed by senior managers with the involvement of REF managers, equality and diversity advisers and other relevant senior practitioners and recognises the longstanding and active commitment of the University to equality of opportunity and diversity. The University is committed to creating a stimulating and supportive environment for learning, teaching and research to assist staff and students to reach their full potential, regardless of race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, marital status, disability, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation or any other similarly irrelevant factor. Further information and copies of the University's key equality and diversity policies may be found on the on the University's website at <http://www.westminster.ac.uk/about-us/our-university/information-compliance/publication-scheme/our-policies-and-procedures>

## **13 Further Information**

University of Westminster REF2014 website <http://www.wmin.ac.uk/page-20904>

The REF 2014 Website [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk) (external)

Equality Challenge Unit [www.ecu.ac.uk](http://www.ecu.ac.uk) (external)

REF2014 Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions (REF 02.2011)

July 2011) and Addendum (January 2012) at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk)

REF2014 Panel Assessment Criteria and Working Methods (REF 01.2012) at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk)

## 14 Contacts

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