

Code of Practice on the Selection of Staff for REF 2014

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1. Who should read this Code?

- 1.1. This Code provides important information for all academic staff who are research active. It provides information on how the University of Wolverhampton ('the University') will select staff for inclusion in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2012 and may include information on equality and diversity arrangements that are unfamiliar to staff.
- 1.2. The Code is also aimed at all other staff with decision-making involvement in the REF, such as the Offices of the Vice-Chancellor, Deans, and Unit of Assessment (UOA) Co-ordinators.
- 1.3. Other University staff interested in the REF such as Trade Union representatives are encouraged to read the Code to gain assurance that the University's processes in relation to the REF are inclusive and comply with equality legislation.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. The University is committed to Equality and Diversity in all aspects of its work. In compliance with the HEFCE Assessment Framework and Guidance on submissions for the REF it has produced this Code of Practice for the selection of staff for submission to REF 2014. The purpose of the Code of Practice is to ensure that university procedures comply with equality legislation and to ensure that all eligible staff who are producing excellent research are considered for submission, without prejudice.
- 2.2. From the perspective of the University of Wolverhampton, the Code of Practice sits within our equal opportunities framework and is consonant with university values of transparency, fairness and openness.
- 2.3. The Code has been drafted by members of the REF Equality Panel convened to ensure compliance with equality and diversity requirements of the REF. The group comprises the Dean of Research, Deputy Director of Human Resources, Equality and Diversity Manager and REF Administrator.
- 2.4. A wide range of academic staff have been invited to comment on the draft code to inform this final version. Specific groups consulted include the University's Women in Research Network, other Staff Equality Networks and Trade Union representatives.
- 2.5. The code has been endorsed by the Vice Chancellor of the University, who has ultimate responsibility for the University's REF submission and for the conduct of the committees and individuals involved in staff selection.

3. Equality impact of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2008

- 3.1. Following RAE2008, the University of Wolverhampton undertook detailed analysis of the make-up of staff entered into the submission. The analysis identified that women were underrepresented significantly at University level. As a result, the

University commissioned a review of “Women in Research” which explored the apparent under-representation of women academics in research.

3.2. The report¹ has led to a number of recommendations that the University is currently implementing. These include identifying mentors, clarifying and promoting the research career path via readerships and professorships, establishing an active network of women researchers, and raising the profile of applied and practitioner focussed research. The University is also in the process of preparing an application for a Bronze Award from the Athena Swan Charter as a commitment to redressing gender imbalances in Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) subjects.

3.3. The recommendations of the report have been taken into account in drawing up this Code.

4. Legislative changes since the RAE

4.1. The various pieces of equality legislation in force at the time of the RAE have been broadly incorporated into the Equality Act 2010, details of which can be found via the Equality and Diversity Unit webpages at www.wlv.ac.uk/edu.

4.2. This Code supports the University's compliance with this legislation and details arrangements made by the Funding Councils and the University to advance equality of opportunity for people with one or more of the protected characteristics covered by the Act. These are;

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion and belief;
- sex, and
- sexual orientation

4.3. Mandatory training will be provided to ensure that all decision-makers involved in the REF understand their duties under equality legislation and how to eliminate discrimination and advance equality in practice.

4.4. An equality check has been undertaken of each draft of this code. Equality check is the University's new name for processes previously known as equality impact assessments or equality analysis. For more details see Appendix 5.

5. Staff Selection

5.1 Principles

5.1.1 The University will seek to ensure that staff are selected for inclusion into any REF submission on the basis of their research contribution over the

¹ Women in research at the University of Wolverhampton: an institutional case study by Dr Virginia Fisher March 2010

census period, wherever this fits with the University research strategy². In considering research profiles, due attention will be paid to the HEFCE panels' published criteria and to other published guidance as made available by the funding councils. Staff will be expected to have published the required volume of outputs corresponding to the definitions of excellence provided by the funding councils in order to be considered for inclusion.

- 5.1.2 Staff who have individual circumstances that have impacted on their ability to produce the required volume will be considered on an individual basis and a judgement made on any reduction in outputs. The following principles will apply to all stages of selection.

5.2 Transparency and consistency

- 5.2.1 The Code of Practice will be published on the University web pages and all academic staff will have access to this document, which includes the process for submitting individual circumstances and the timelines in operation [www.wlv.ac.uk/REF-equality-code].

- 5.2.2 In addition, all academic staff who are potentially eligible for inclusion in the REF will be sent, via their UOA Coordinator, details of the individual circumstances that may be considered and how to apply for consideration.

- 5.2.3 The CoP will be sent out to all REF Reading Panel members, Deans of School, Directors of Research Institutes and UOA Co-ordinators and published on the University Web pages. All staff within the above groups will be required to undertake training relating to staff selection for the REF(see Appendix 3). UOA Coordinators, as part of their remit, are required to cascade information relating to staff selection to all academic staff who fall within the reach of that UOA. This will include communicating with staff who are absent from the University but who have potential to be included in the REF.

- 5.2.4 The Reading Panel will determine the quality threshold for outputs to be included in the submission to ensure consistency within and between UOAs. All staff will need to meet HEFCE's criteria on quantity of outputs and those outputs will need to meet the agreed quality threshold. Staff will not be eligible for submission if their outputs fall below the threshold in either of these two areas. Where there are individual circumstances, the quality threshold set by the Reading Panel will be enforced but a reduction in the quantity of outputs may be requested.

- 5.2.5 The Dean of Research will meet with UOA Coordinators and Deans of School and feedback decisions and comments of the Reading Panel. This will inform workload allocations and identify staff for whom additional support is required. UOA Coordinators will feedback to staff within their subject area.

² The REF Reading Panel will determine the strategy for the REF and the University's Research Strategy Working Group is currently meeting to determine overall strategy.

5.2.6 The decisions of the REF Reading Panel will be fed back to the University Research Committee (URC) and Professoriate for discussion at their regular meetings. Membership of the REF Reading Panel, URC and Professoriate are given in Appendix 2.

5.2.7 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise, as Chair of the REF Reading Panel, will advise and inform the Offices of the Vice-Chancellor of all decisions and recommendations. The final decision on the REF submission will rest with the Vice-Chancellor.

5.3 Equality of opportunity:

5.3.1 The University is committed to treating all members of staff equally. In consequence, decisions on selection and submission of staff will be made solely on the basis of their research contribution, and will not be influenced by considerations of race, gender, disability, age, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or other irrelevant factors. Senior staff with responsibility for preparing submissions to Units of Assessment will ensure that selection is made according to this standard. All such staff will receive training and guidance in relation to Equality and Diversity and the Code of Practice. The University REF Reading Panel will be responsible for ensuring that all submissions comply with the principle of equality of opportunity.

5.4 Individual staff circumstances:

5.4.1 The University will consider staff for selection if the volume of quality research outputs falls below the number expected by the panel, where this reduced volume is due to limitations incurred by the following individual staff circumstances, as laid down in HEFCE guidance on submissions³

- Absence due to maternity leave, adoption leave or paternity leave and subsequent impact on return to work following any such period of leave
- Constraints relating to health and safety placed on pregnant and breastfeeding women that have prevented them from undertaking some types of research
- Staff with a disability as defined within the Equality Act 2010;
- Staff with caring responsibilities (for children or elderly/disabled adults)
- Staff engaged in part-time working
- Researchers of all ages in the early stages of their career, defined by the REF as having entered higher education since 1st August 2009.
- Absence due to ill health or injury
- Absence due to mental health conditions
- Gender reassignment
- Other circumstances relating to protected characteristics not listed above, i.e. age, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Any other circumstances stated as valid in the HEFCE or Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) guidance.

³ The “Assessment framework and guidance on submissions” (REF2011.02) is available at www.ref.ac.uk under ‘publications’

5.5 Other types of absence:

5.5.1 The University recognises that the volume of quality outputs may also be limited by other types of absence (e.g., secondments, career breaks, commitment to long-term projects, etc.). Where HEFCE panels' criteria allow such absences to be taken into account, the University will actively consider all such staff for selection. The University also recognises that some staff will have changed focus from teaching to research over the census period, and that this might have limited their output. Where panels' criteria permit, such staff will actively be considered for inclusion.

5.6 Fixed term and part time staff:

5.6.1 The University is committed to supporting staff on fixed-term and part-time contracts (including contract research staff). In this context, such staff will be considered for selection for the REF in the same way as full-time, 'permanent' staff, complying with the principles of equal opportunity and allowing for individual circumstances as outlined above. A reduction in the number of outputs will be calculated as appropriate for the individual circumstances.

6 Process of selection

6.1 individual level

6.1.1 Whilst the majority of staff submitted to the REF will be selected on the basis of having 4 high quality outputs, individuals who have fewer than 4 outputs may be eligible for submission. The University wishes to encourage all such staff to put themselves forward for consideration in accordance with the HEFCE guidelines on individual circumstances.

6.1.2 As part of the selection process, the University will ask all academic staff who have published outputs (as determined from the initial data collection phase) to complete a declaration. The form has been provided by the ECU and is contained within Appendix 4 of this document. This gives all staff an opportunity to declare if individual circumstances have had an adverse effect on their ability to produce 4 outputs. Individuals will submit their proforma in confidence to the REF Equality Panel (see Appendix 2) who will consider individual cases and advise the REF Reading Panel and UOA Co-ordinators on the number of outputs deemed appropriate. Neither the Reading Panel nor the UOA Coordinator will receive details of the circumstances themselves.

6.1.3 Staff who choose not to declare individual circumstances and who do not meet the threshold of 4 high quality published outputs will be ineligible for inclusion in the submission. Exclusion under these circumstances is not grounds for appeal.

6.1.4 If circumstances change subsequent to submitting the declaration, staff should complete a further declaration.

6.2 Departmental level

6.2.1 Initial decisions about selection of staff will be made by designated senior staff for each UOA (UOA Coordinator). These decisions will build upon

ongoing discussions with staff throughout the assessment period (for example, through the annual appraisal process), and will be conducted in a spirit of respect, openness and transparency. Senior staff will communicate decisions and the rationale behind them to individuals concerned, in a process that will be iterative and developmental throughout the REF cycle.

6.2.2 In reaching these initial decisions, the UOA Coordinator will engage staff in an assessment of the quality of outputs with the potential to be cited, and in the determination of which outputs should be included. These discussions will pay due regard to the individual's preferences, but the UOA Coordinator retains the right to make final recommendations based on strategic factors. The UOA Coordinators will be expected to comply with the principles outlined within the University's Code of Practice. Where UOA Coordinators involve others in decision-making, the identity and roles of these staff must be made known to staff involved and due attention should be paid to the need to communicate sensitively and for those staff to receive appropriate training. UOA Coordinators will be expected to keep a record of the reasons for their decision to include or exclude staff.

6.2.3 Recommendations made by UOA Coordinators will be endorsed by Deans of School with responsibility for the subject area. The research contribution of all staff selected will be scrutinised at University level prior to final selections being made.

6.3 University level

6.3.1 In addition to any interim assessment exercises conducted at departmental level, the University will conduct three mock REFs. The initial exercise in 2011 will focus on outputs and will be followed by two full mock REFs, one in Spring 2012 and one in early 2013. The primary purpose of these exercises is to make strategic decisions regarding the overall profile of the University's submission and to ensure consistency of quality standards. The basis of these decisions will be the requirement to maximise the University's performance overall, and they will be taken in compliance with the equal opportunities principles outlined above. Moreover, the University will endeavour to ensure that such decisions do not have unintended and perverse consequences for any group of staff with a protected characteristic. Where decisions have an impact on an individual member of staff (either through a reconfiguration of UOAs or through a decision regarding selection of an individual), these will be communicated openly, transparently and in a timely manner to the staff concerned.

6.3.2 The mock REFs will be assessed by an internal panel of readers, chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise. Details of the REF Reading Panel are given in Appendix 2.

6.3.3 The Reading Panel will make reference to the University's Code of Practice and will seek both to comply with the principles contained within it and to test the CoP's robustness.

- 6.3.4 The Reading Panel will make recommendations to the Vice Chancellor's Advisory Group regarding strategic options in the overall submission. The Reading Panel will also provide feedback to UOA Coordinators on the strengths/weaknesses of the submission and on any further action recommended by the Panel. Following the second Full Mock Ref, UOA Coordinators will ensure that members of staff are informed of the Reading Panel's feedback no later than end of May 2013.
- 6.3.5 The Reading Panel's recommendations will be communicated in summary form to the University Research Committee and other fora within the University, as appropriate.
- 6.3.6 Final decisions on the University's overall submission rest with the Vice-Chancellor and remain at his discretion.

6.4 **External advice**

- 6.4.1 UOA Coordinators may seek advice informally from external colleagues on the overall shape of the submission and on general questions of research strategy. These discussions should not refer to individuals by name and should not seek to assess the potential contribution of individuals.
- 6.4.2 The University will, as part of the deliberations of the Reading Panel, seek external advice on submissions. All external advisors will be directed to a copy of the University's CoP and will be expected to abide by it. Externals' recommendations to the Reading Panel will be made available to UOA Coordinators where this can be done in an anonymised way and where there is no prejudice to individual researchers. Externals' detailed assessment of the quality of individual researchers will remain confidential to the panel.

6.5 **Completion of HEFCE REF software**

- 6.5.1 Data will be input directly into the HEFCE REF database via UOA administrators and/or UOA Coordinators. Access to forms will be controlled centrally. Access to form REF1b, relating to Individual circumstances, will be strictly limited to the Dean of Research and Central REF Administrator who will be required to treat any data in strict confidence in accordance with this Code of Practice.

7 Request for a review of a selection decision

- 7.1 An individual whose research has been excluded at any stage in the University's preparation of its REF submission may, at their sole discretion, request that the decision be reviewed.
- 7.2 Grounds for requesting a review are: (i) that the research contribution has been unfairly assessed by the UOA Coordinator and/or the Reading Panel and (ii) that the selection did not pay due regard to the principles outlined in (5) of this Code of Practice.

- 7.3 The individual requesting a review should submit this request in writing to the Appeals Panel, clearly specifying the grounds for requesting the review. The request should specify clearly in what way(s) the research contribution (taking into account any relevant individual circumstances) is consistent with the standards expected by the relevant Panel and Sub-panel. Appeals should be lodged with the Appeals Panel by no later than the 14th June 2013.
- 7.4 The Appeals Panel will review the decision in light of the information put forward. The results of the review will be communicated to the individual concerned, and to the Reading Panel. Feedback will be completed by the end of July 2013.
- 7.5 No member of the REF Appeals Panel will have been involved in the earlier decisions around selection of staff and members will receive appropriate training.
- 7.6 Should the member of staff be dissatisfied with the decision following a review, s/he has recourse to the University's Policy on Unfair Discrimination, Harrassment and Bullying, and to the University's Grievance Procedure.

8 Equality impact assessment

- 8.1 The University's equality check process will be completed following each full mock REF and subsequent to the final submission in November 2013. Appendix 5 gives details of the current process.
- 8.2 The process will include monitoring the equality profile of the expected/actual University submission in terms of the protected characteristics for which we hold data, i.e. by age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, sex and sexual orientation. It will also set this data against the profile of the University's academic staff as a whole.
- 8.3 If prima facie evidence of imbalance relative to the total pool is found, the Reading Panel will
- request a breakdown to UOA/departmental level;
 - assure itself that the University's CoP was adhered to in the selection process;
 - keep under review the Code of Practice and make recommendations for further refinements;
 - within its terms of reference make any wider recommendations regarding the University's research policies to Academic Board.

Appendix 1

Timescales:

| | Action | Timescale |
|-----|---|---|
| 1. | Initial data collection – published outputs | March 2011 Feedback April/May 2011 |
| 2. | Initial data collection – students/funding/impact | November 2011 Feedback January 2012 |
| 3. | Initial decision for inclusion in REF | 1 st December 2011 |
| 4. | Communication to UOA Coordinators and Deans of initial decisions | January 2012 |
| 5. | First Full mock REF | February/March 2012 |
| 6. | Reading Panel review mock submission and make strategic decisions on UOA configuration | April 2012 |
| 7. | UOA Coordinators and Deans receive feedback from Reading Panel | May 2012 |
| 8. | Undertake Equality Impact Assessment | Summer 2012 |
| 9. | Annual review of individual performance and action planning | As part of performance review/appraisal. Normally completed by end July 2012. |
| 10. | Training for UOA coordinators re final selection of staff for REF | Autumn 2012 |
| 11. | Collection of data regarding staff with individual circumstances | By end December 2012 |
| 12. | Second Full Mock REF | Early 2013 using HEFCE software. Exact timetable to be agreed. |
| 13. | Undertake Equality Impact Assessment | Following mock |
| 14. | UOA Coordinators and Deans receive feedback from Reading Panel and penultimate decisions regarding selection of staff | May 2013 |
| 15. | Discussions with staff regarding penultimate decisions | By end May 2013 |
| 16. | Appeals received by Appeals Panel | By mid June 2013 |
| 17. | Appeals Panel feedback decisions | By end July 2013 |
| 18. | Annual review of individual performance and confirmation of any individual circumstances affecting the REF | Completed by end July 2013 |
| 19. | Undertake final Equality Impact assessment | August 2013 |
| 20. | Final confirmation of staff and outputs | September/October 2013 |

Appendix 2

The University Committees and Groups within this CoP with responsibility for Research

REF Reading Panel

The REF Reading Panel was established in Autumn 2011 for the purpose of taking strategic management of the REF submission. This includes ensuring consistency across the submission in terms of maintaining a quality threshold for outputs, monitoring strategic fit of staff to UOAs and determining the final make-up of the University's submission. As part of this, the Reading Panel is responsible for ensuring appropriate and timely feedback to UOA coordinators and for encouraging inclusivity and equality of opportunity with regard to staff selection. The REF Reading Panel reports directly to the Vice-Chancellor.

Membership: PVC Research and Enterprise (Chair), Dean of Research, and at least four members of the professoriate. The selection of members of the professoriate will be based primarily on (i) a consideration of the contribution they can make to the process through their own research record; (ii) knowledge of and involvement in the REF process; (iii) the need for the Reading Panel as a whole to have a balance of subject expertise. Within these constraints, the University will actively seek to promote equality of opportunities in appointing members of the Reading Panel. Appointments to the Reading Panel will be made by the Vice-Chancellor, in conjunction with the PVC Research and Enterprise and the Dean of Research.

REF Equality Panel

This is a small group established to advise the REF Reading Panel on equality and diversity matters and administer the process for determining reductions in outputs due to individual staff circumstances.

Membership: Dean of Research, Deputy Director of Human Resources, Equality and Diversity Manager and REF Administrator.

REF Appeals Panel

The REF Appeals Panel has been established for the purpose of hearing all appeals received in connection with staff selection. The exact constitution may vary to ensure complete impartiality and appropriate subject knowledge. No members of the REF Appeals Panel will have been involved in the earlier decisions around the selection of staff.

Membership: The Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) plus two appropriate members of the Professoriate.

University Research Committee

The URC is a committee of the University's Academic Board and reports directly to it. The URC's prime responsibilities are to formulate and advise on research strategy and policy and to stimulate research effort throughout the University. URC members normally also sit on School Research Boards and are responsible for the dissemination of information from the URC. The URC collectively will take no part in the selection of staff for submission but will be kept informed of progress and will action agreed requirements resulting from the Reading Panel.

Membership: PVC Research and Enterprise (Chair), Dean of Research, Directors of Research institutes, nominated members from each of the University's Schools and two elected members from the postgraduate community.

Professoriate

The Professoriate comprises all members of academic staff who have had the title of Professor conferred upon them. The Chair of the Professoriate is also a member on the URC and REF Reading Panel. The Professoriate collectively will take no part in the selection of staff for submission, but will be kept informed of progress with the REF submission and will advise on strategic issues as necessary, reporting back via the URC. Members of the Professoriate who are not already members of the REF Reading Panel and who have no involvement with staff selection for a specific UOA, may be called upon to act as independent members of the REF Appeals Panel.

UOA Coordinators

Each UOA has a designated academic Coordinator appointed by the Dean of School. The UOA Coordinator is a senior academic in the School within which the UOA sits, and who has extensive research experience and subject knowledge. Most UOA Coordinators are also Professors and members of the Professoriate. The UOA Coordinator has responsibility for gathering data for their UOA and compiling their submission. This includes selecting staff with the highest quality outputs and best strategic fit. UOA Coordinators are involved in face to face feedback with the Dean of Research following Reading Panel meetings and for dissemination of that feedback to staff within their UOA. They are also actively involved in discussions with staff to encourage and support staff research and to provide advice on strategic direction. The inclusion of the UOA Coordinator as part of the REF submission is determined by the Dean of School and REF Reading Panel based purely on the quality/quantity of their outputs in the same way as all other staff considered for inclusion.

Appendix 3

Equality and Diversity Training

Equality and Diversity Training, specifically relating to staff selection within the REF, will be mandatory for the following academic staff:

All UOA Coordinators

All Members of the REF Reading Panel

Deans of School who have responsibility for UOAs

Associate Deans who have responsibility for Research

Any other staff identified by the Reading Panel, Dean or UOA Coordinator who will be involved in compilation of submissions

Training will be given prior to submission of the second mock REF, in Autumn 2012

Training will be based upon materials provided for this purpose by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), an organisation that works to further and provide support for equality and diversity for staff and students within higher education and has been contracted by HEFCE to compile REF training materials.

Materials will cover not only legislative obligations but also specific issues relevant to the REF, including case studies to illustrate complex personal circumstances.

The Equality and Diversity Manager will ensure the materials reflect University issues and information and will deliver the training in conjunction with a member of academic staff with experience of the REF and E&D issues.

Appendix 4

Individual Staff Circumstances Disclosure

The Process

Details of all staff who had published outputs were gathered as part of the initial data collection process in March 2011. It is proposed that:

All staff identified as part of the process above (plus any additional staff proposed by the UOA Coordinator) are requested to complete a declaration form as provided by ECU and attached to this document.

Section one of the form will indicate if there are any circumstances that may impact on the number of outputs available. This is not confidential and should be returned to the central REF administrator who will log all returns against a central list.

Any staff who do not return the form will be deemed to have no individual circumstances that would affect their ability to produce 4 outputs and will be assessed on that basis.

Staff with individual circumstances should also complete **section two** and **section three** of the form. The REF Equality Panel will review all forms and make the necessary judgements on the reduction in the number of outputs required, as appropriate. All staff completing part three are effectively giving permission for their details to be disclosed to a limited and specified group of people, for the purpose of assessing the number of outputs required for submission to the REF and on the understanding that, if selected for submission, the data will also be shared with HEFCE who undertake to maintain confidentiality as outlined in the HEFCE guidance on submissions.

The REF Equality Panel will advise the REF Reading Panel and UOA Coordinators of any staff who should be included in the submission with fewer than 4 outputs (but not the details of the circumstances underpinning the reduction) and the number of outputs proposed. The UOA Coordinator and REF Reading Panel will make a judgement on inclusion based solely on the quality of the reduced number of outputs.

If the Reading Panel and UOA Coordinator determine that the quality of outputs is of an appropriate standard, the member of staff will be included in the submission with the reduced number of outputs, provided other University criteria are met.

Feedback to staff not selected for inclusion will be undertaken by the UOA Coordinator as part of on-going discussions.

Once staff and outputs have been selected, the UOA Coordinator/UOA administrator will be responsible for inputting data to the HEFCE REF database with the exception of form REF1b detailing individual circumstances, which will be undertaken by the central REF Administrator for all Units of Assessment.

Permission to access form REF1b for all UOAs will be restricted to the Dean of Research and the central REF Administrator.

Template covering note

To: All members of staff eligible for return in REF 2014

From: Equality Panel

Subject: REF 2014, consideration of individual staff circumstances

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

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

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

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

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

In determining the number of outputs staff are required to submit, the institution will observe the definitions of individual staff circumstances provided in the published

REF 'Panel criteria and working methods' (January 2012) available at www.ref.ac.uk under 'Publications'.

What action do I need to take?

If you are eligible for REF submission you are encouraged to complete the attached form. If further information is required about any circumstances disclosed, you will be contacted by a member of the Equality Panel.

Who will see the information that I provide?

Within the University, the information that you provide will be seen only by members of the REF Equality Panel. The panel comprises the Dean of Research, Deputy Director of Human Resources, Equality and Diversity Manager and central REF Administrator. All members of the panel will observe confidentiality and information will be stored securely. Information provided on the form may be shared externally for the purposes of evidencing any reduction in the number of research outputs as detailed below:

- = For **circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs**, information will be seen by the relevant REF sub-panel, the REF panel secretariat and the UK funding bodies' REF team. This will be information about early career researcher status, part-time working, career breaks or secondments, and periods of maternity, additional paternity or adoption leave taken.
- = For **more complex circumstances**, information will be seen only by the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, the REF Main Panel Chairs and the UK funding bodies' REF team. This will be information to explain the impact on your research of circumstances such as disability, ill health, injury, mental health conditions, gender reassignment, caring responsibilities or constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding, adoption and paternity (in addition to the period of leave taken). This information will **not** be seen by the REF sub-panel.

All REF panel members, chairs and secretaries are bound by confidentiality requirements, and acceptance of the confidentiality requirements is a condition of their appointment to the role. No information relating to identifiable individuals' circumstances will be published by the funding bodies REF Team. All data collected, stored and processed by the UK funding bodies REF Team will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The REF Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions

www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02_11/, requires all higher education institutions participating in the REF to ensure appropriate confidentiality in handling individual staff circumstances

What if my circumstances change?

The University recognises that staff circumstances may change between 1 January 2008 and 31 October 2013. If your circumstances change you can download a copy of the attached form at www.wlv.ac.uk/REF-equality-code

Individual staff circumstances disclosure form

All staff: Once completed, please submit this form to the central REF Administrator (either by e-mail to H.Robinson@wlv.ac.uk or by post to Heather Robinson, Harrison Learning Centre) by **Wednesday 9th January 2013**

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Name | |
| Department | |
| Unit of Assessment | |

Section one:

Please select one of the following (delete as appropriate):

1. I have no individual circumstances that I wish to be taken into consideration for the purposes of the Research Excellence Framework (REF). (No further sections to complete - Please return this form as confirmation that you have been contacted about this process).
2. I have individual circumstances that I wish to make known. I am not seeking a reduction in outputs at this stage, but do wish my circumstances to be brought to the attention of the internal REF Equality Panel and Reading Panel and, if appropriate, the HEFCE REF Assessment Panel. (Please complete sections two and three)
3. In completing this form I am seeking a reduction in research outputs. (Please complete sections two, three and four)

Section two (if applicable):

I would like to be contacted by a member of human resources staff to discuss my circumstances and requirements and/or the support provided by the University of Wolverhampton. My contact details for this purpose are:

| | |
|--|--|
| Email | |
| Telephone | |
| Preferred method of communication | |

Or:

2. I do **not** wish to be contacted by a member of human resources staff at this time.

Section three:

I wish to make the University aware of the following circumstances which have had an impact on my ability to produce four outputs or work productively between 1 January 2008 to date (final date = 31 October 2013. if circumstances change after completing this form, please resubmit).

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

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

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>period of maternity, adoption or additional paternity leave taken.</i> | |
| <u>Provide Information here:</u> | |
| <i>Other caring responsibilities (including caring for an elderly or disabled relative)</i> | <i>Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months</i> |
| <u>Provide Information here:</u> | |
| <i>Gender reassignment</i> | <i>Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months</i> |
| <u>Provide Information here:</u> | |
| <i>Other exceptional and relevant reasons, not including teaching or administrative work</i> | <i>Impact on ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on ability to undertake research. Duration in months</i> |
| <u>Provide Information here:</u> | |

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

I recognise that the information provided will be used for REF purposes and will be seen by members of the REF Equality Panel.

I realise that it may be necessary to share information with 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.

Signature: Date:
(Staff member)

All staff: Once completed, please submit this form to the central REF Administrator (either by e-mail to H.Robinson@wlv.ac.uk or by post to Heather Robinson, Harrison Learning Centre) by **Wednesday 9th January 2013**

Response from REF Equality Panel

For official use only

Following consideration of the personal circumstances described above, the REF Equality Panel

- Will progress the staff member's inclusion in the REF submission with [insert number] of research outputs. [Subject to specified institutional criteria]. Rationale for the proposed number of outputs:
e.g. this decision is based on the tariffs outlined in the panel criteria.
- Requires further information of the circumstances described as follows:
e.g. please provide information from your occupational health assessment on the effectiveness of reasonable adjustments provided.
- Does not feel that the staff member meets the criteria outlined within the REF 'Panel criteria and working methods' for submitting fewer than four research outputs. The reason(s) for this decision are:
e.g. circumstances detailed are not recognised within the assessment framework and guidance on submissions.

If [insert name of staff member] wishes to appeal against the decision of the REF Equality Panel they will need to do so by [insert date] and details of the appeals process can be found at www.wlv.ac.uk/REF-equality-code

Signature: Date:
Chair of REF Equality Panel

Appendix 5

Proposed Changes to Equality Impact Assessment Processes and Documentation

Consultation

Introduction

1. This paper outlines the current legislative position in relation to equality impact assessment (also more recently known as equality analysis), provides an initial evaluation of our current processes and invites feedback on proposals for change.

Summary of Previous and Current Legislative Requirements

2. The duty to carry out equality impact assessments (EQIAs) was originally introduced by the Race Relations Amendment Act 2001, following the MacPherson enquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence. Similar duties in respect of disability and gender were introduced in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Gender Equality Duty 2006 respectively.

3. In 2010 the above Acts and a variety of other equality regulations and pieces of legislation were repealed and replaced by the Equality Act, which referred to equality analysis in place of EQIAs.

4. The exact requirements in respect of equality analysis have only recently been confirmed due to government changes to the associated regulations.

5. Although there is no longer a legal requirement to undertake equality analysis, public sector organisations, including universities, are required to have due regard in carrying out their functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and person who do not share it.

6. In this context protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

7. In drawing up the latest regulations the government highlighted that it wished organisations to develop their own mechanisms for meeting the above duties, whether this be via continuation of their existing equality analysis processes or the development of new mechanisms appropriate to each institution.

8. The focus within the current regulations is on the achievement of improvements rather than the adherence to systems that may result in comprehensive documentation without necessarily leading to real change. This provides us with the opportunity to review our current processes to ensure they satisfy legislative requirements within a framework most suited to our needs.

Current Institutional Processes for Equality Impact Assessment

9. A major mandatory programme of face-to-face sessions was initiated in 2007 to ensure that individuals nominated by schools and services were able to carry out EQIAs on policies and procedures for which they were responsible. This was supplemented from 2008 by one-to-one sessions with the Equality and Diversity Administrator to enable schools and services to input their assessments into an EQIA toolkit software package purchased from Marshalls ACM.

10. The requirement for reporting on EQIAs has been incorporated into school and service E&D plans for several years, with individualised explicit feedback and guidance being provided in 2009 and 2010.

Evaluation of our current position

11. The internal high-level audit of equality and diversity arrangements conducted in August 2011 did not identify any significant risks in this area.

12. Nevertheless, this audit only tested the institutional framework and did not seek to audit specific policies or procedures.

13. At present I am not confident that the current system is working effectively.

- There is currently only one full assessment recorded on the Toolkit software package, although there have been a number of major changes within the University over recent years.
- Feedback from a number of Toolkit users suggests that the package may be promoting bureaucracy and process rather than supporting users to make tangible improvements.
- Feedback from colleagues with policy development and/or decision-making responsibilities suggests that they do not feel competent in conducting EQIAs despite the training, guidance and briefings provided to date.
- Analysis of those staff nominated to work with the Toolkit suggests that the task of EQIA has often been allocated inappropriately to colleagues with little or no involvement in policy development or decision-making. In most cases the nominated individuals are not being instructed by appropriate decision makers, possibly because they themselves lack confidence as indicated above.
- In the one or two schools and services that have undertaken effective EQIAs the Toolkit is often leading to duplication of effort because they often use their own more effective internal recording mechanisms.

Proposals

14. Feedback in principle is sought on the following outline proposals.
- Establish an entirely new process called 'equality check' to enable us to remove all the negative connotations of the previous process.
 - Discontinue using the current toolkit software. Replace it with the pro forma at Annex A.
 - Integrate equality checks into the University's policy management framework by requiring, for example, all proposals for policies, strategies or procedures to include the pro forma at Appendix A within the documentation.
 - Include a question on equality checks on all committee cover sheets (see Appendix B).
 - Establish new procedures to ensure that equality checks are carried out by staff who formulate/review strategies, policies, practices or procedures and verified by decision-making committees, staff or groups.
 - Request that each committee/management group nominate an individual to take on specific responsibility for verifying equality checks and raising issues where appropriate. The need for this role should diminish in the long term once all members become competent in this area.
 - EDU to arrange briefings for staff responsible for carrying out equality checks, committee secretaries and staff nominated to verify them.
 - A briefing for the Board of Governors should also be considered.
 - Assessments previously undertaken using the current toolkit need not be revisited until the policy review date, at which time they should be incorporated into the new system.

Groups to be considered as part of equality checks

15. We have an opportunity to consider whether to include in our new system consideration of particular groups of students/staff who are not necessarily protected by equality legislation but still merit inclusion to ensure unintended negative consequences can be avoided. This may include for example international students/staff, part time students/staff, students on collaborative courses and any other student cohorts particularly identified as requiring consideration.

16. Including additional groups may assist in mainstreaming the process, although this could detract from areas that must be considered for legislative compliance.

Next Steps – Feedback invited

17. Colleagues are invited to provide feedback on the following;
- Do you agree with the initial evaluation of the current process, or do you have other positive or negative points to report?
 - What do you think of the proposed new process and proforma at Appendix A?
 - What do you think about including issues beyond legislative compliance, such as impacts on international students?

18. Individuals may respond to Cindy Williams-Findlay, Equality and Diversity Manager, via e-mail to Cindy@wlv.ac.uk, phone on extension 1182 or post to the Equality and Diversity Unit (EDU), Room ML048, City Campus North.

19. University committees and management groups will be invited to include an agenda item on this issue at their next available meeting. The Equality and Diversity Manager could attend for the relevant item upon request, or the outcome should be reported back to EDU as outlined in paragraph 18.

Annex A - Equality Check Appendix

This document must be included as an appendix to all strategies, policies, plans or procedures that are submitted for formal approval (referred to hereafter as proposals).

Name of proposal: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Who owns the proposal? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Who will implement it? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Who does the proposal impact on? (Check all category boxes that apply)

Staff Students Visitors Contractors

Other (please specify) [Click here to enter text.](#)

Is the proposal relevant to any of the following elements of the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010 (the Act)?

| | |
|---|--|
| Eliminate unlawful discrimination or other conduct unlawful under the Act? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Advance equality between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |

Issues identified and already addressed within the proposal

Is the proposal likely to have an unintended detrimental impact on any of the groups listed? If you tick yes in any column please give details on Page 2 of how the issue has been addressed.

| Group | Students | | Staff | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Age | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gender | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pregnancy / Maternity | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Race, Ethnicity or Nationality | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Religion or belief | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sexual Orientation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Trans (gender) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Part Time status | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| International status | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Study on collaborative courses | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A | N/A |
| Postgraduate Research Students | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A | N/A |
| Sessional staff | N/A | N/A | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

How did you reach the conclusions above? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Details of impact and action taken

Please provide details of the potential detrimental impact identified on Page 1.

| Group(s) Affected | Outline of issue | What has been done to address the issue |
|---|---|---|
| Click here to enter text. | Click here to enter text. | Click here to enter text. |
| Click here to enter text. | Click here to enter text. | Click here to enter text. |
| Click here to enter text. | Click here to enter text. | Click here to enter text. |

Outstanding Issues

Are there any issues of potential or actual detrimental impact that are not addressed by the current proposal and require further action?

Yes No If Yes please give details below

| Outstanding Issue | Action to be taken | By Whom | By When | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------|--|--|
| Click here to enter text. | Click here to enter text. | Click here to enter text. | | | |
| Click here to enter text. | Click here to enter text. | Click here to enter text. | | | |

Are there any identified detrimental impacts that cannot be overcome?

Yes No If Yes please give details and justification below

Details and justification: Click here to enter text.

Signed by Chair of Committee / Group responsible for approving the proposal:

Name: Click here to enter text.

Date: Click here to enter text.

A copy of the completed form should be sent via e-mail to Cindy Williams-Findlay, Equality and Diversity Manager to Cindy@wlv.ac.uk.