

**REF 02.2011**

July 2011

This document is for information.

This document sets out the general framework for assessment in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) and provides guidance to UK higher education institutions about making submissions to the 2014 REF. It includes guidance on procedures, the data that will be required, and the criteria and definitions that will apply. The deadline for submissions is 29 November 2013.

# Assessment framework and guidance on submissions

**(updated to include addendum published in  
January 2012)**

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In January 2012 updated information was provided for the two sections in ***bold italic*** below.

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# REF 2014: Assessment framework and guidance on submissions

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## To

Heads of publicly funded higher education institutions in the UK

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## Of interest to those responsible for

Research

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## Reference

REF 02.2011

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## Publication date

July 2011

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## Enquiries from staff at UK higher education institutions

E-mail your institutional REF contact. (These are listed at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk) under Contact.)

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## Other enquiries

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## Executive summary

### Purpose

1. This document:
  - sets out the framework and generic criteria for assessment in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF)
  - specifies the content, data requirements and related definitions for submissions to the 2014 REF
  - guides higher education institutions on policy and practical matters in preparing submissions.

### Key points

2. The REF will be a process of expert review. Expert sub-panels for each of 36 units of assessment (UOAs) will carry out the assessment, working under the leadership and guidance of four main panels.
3. In October 2012 the four UK higher education funding bodies will invite UK higher education institutions to make submissions to the 2014 REF. Each submission in each UOA will contain a common set of data comprising:
  - a. Information on staff in post on the census date, 31 October 2013, selected by the institution to be included in the submission.
  - b. Details of publications and other forms of assessable output that selected staff have produced during the publication period (1 January 2008 to 31 December 2013).
  - c. A completed template describing the submitted unit's approach during the assessment period (1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013) to enabling impact from its research, and case studies describing specific examples of impacts achieved during the assessment period, underpinned by excellent research in the period 1 January 1993 to 31 December 2013.

- d. Data about research doctoral degrees awarded and research income related to the period 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2013.
  - e. A completed template describing the research environment, related to the period 1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013.
4. The deadline for submissions is 29 November 2013. Submissions will be assessed by the REF panels during the course of 2014. Results will be published in December 2014, and will be used by the higher education funding bodies to inform research funding from academic year 2015-16.

### **Action required**

5. This document is for information and to guide institutions in preparing and collecting data for inclusion in REF 2014 submissions. No action is required by higher education institutions at this stage.

### **Further information**

6. Further information about the REF is available at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk).
7. Enquiries from members of staff at UK higher education institutions should be directed in the first instance to their institutional REF contact. These contacts for each institution are listed at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk) under Contact.
8. Other enquiries should be addressed to [info@ref.ac.uk](mailto:info@ref.ac.uk).

## Introduction

9. This document sets out the framework for assessment and administrative arrangements for the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF). It specifies the data requirements, definitions and criteria that will apply, for submissions by higher education institutions (HEIs). It should be read in conjunction with the documents setting out the panel criteria and working methods of the four main panels (hereafter, the 'panel criteria'), which we will publish in draft form for consultation in July 2011 and in final form early in 2012.
10. This document and the panel criteria will together describe comprehensively the data required in submissions, and how panels will use the data in their assessments. We may issue supplements to this guidance at later dates to clarify points of detail regarding submissions, but such supplements will not request any new items of data.
11. In October 2012 we will formally invite eligible HEIs to make submissions to the 2014 REF. We will launch the submission system and provide accompanying technical guidance in January 2013. The deadline for submissions is 29 November 2013.

# Part 1

## Overview of the assessment framework

### Purpose

12. The Research Excellence Framework is the new system for assessing the quality of research in higher education institutions in the UK, and replaces the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), last conducted in 2008.

13. The REF is conducted jointly by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and the Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland (DEL). The REF is managed by the REF team, based at HEFCE, on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies, and is overseen by the REF Steering Group, consisting of representatives of the four funding bodies. In this document, 'we' refers to the REF team.

14. The primary purpose of REF 2014 is to produce assessment outcomes for each submission made by institutions:

- a. The four higher education funding bodies intend to use the assessment outcomes to inform the selective allocation of their grant for research to the institutions which they fund, with effect from 2015-16.
- b. The assessment provides accountability for public investment in research and produces evidence of the benefits of this investment.
- c. The assessment outcomes provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks, for use within the higher education (HE) sector and for public information.

### General principles

15. The REF is a process of expert review. Recent consultations about reforms to the assessment framework confirmed widespread confidence in discipline-based expert review founded upon expert judgement. To maintain confidence in the assessment process and in the credibility of the outcomes to those being assessed, we have appointed panels of experts who are currently or have recently been active in high quality research, or its wider use. While these experts will draw on appropriate quantitative indicators to support their professional judgement, expert review remains paramount.

16. The REF is a single framework for assessment across all disciplines, with a common set of data required in all submissions, standard definitions and procedures, and assessment by expert panels against broad generic criteria. Expert panels will apply standards of assessment consistently, working under the guidance of four main panels. Within this single framework, differences in the nature of research across the disciplinary spectrum may justify differences in the detailed approach to assessment. There is flexibility for panels to develop specific aspects of the assessment criteria and to adopt working methods to ensure the assessment is sensitive to these disciplinary differences. Panels will consult with their communities and with institutions in doing so.

17. The REF has developed through an evolutionary process, building on previous RAEs. With every successive assessment exercise a balance has to be struck between continuity and development. Changes new to REF 2014 follow from extensive review and consultation, and have been adopted where it is judged they can bring demonstrable improvements which outweigh the cost of implementing them.

18. The following principles govern the conduct of the REF. They set the framework in which the REF team co-ordinates the exercise and in which the four main panels and 36 sub-panels will deploy their collective professional judgement to draft criteria for assessment and to assess submissions.

- a. **Equity:** All types of research and all forms of research output across all disciplines shall be assessed on a fair and equal basis. Panels have been instructed to define criteria and adopt assessment processes that enable them to recognise and treat on an equal footing excellence in research across the spectrum of applied, practice-based, basic and strategic research, wherever that research is conducted; and for identifying excellence in different forms of research endeavour including interdisciplinary and collaborative research, while attaching no greater weight to one form over another. The REF aims to assess all types of research without distorting the activity that it measures or encouraging or discouraging any particular type of research activity, other than providing

a general stimulus to enhancing the overall achievements of the UK research base.

- b. **Equality:** HEIs are strongly encouraged to submit the work of all their excellent researchers. To enable this, institutions may reduce the number of research outputs submitted for individuals whose circumstances constrained their ability to work productively throughout the assessment period. Panels will assess their work on an equal basis without any penalty for reducing the number of submitted outputs. To help HEIs submit the work of all their excellent researchers and comply with equality legislation, we will require them to develop, document and apply an internal code of practice on the fair and transparent selection of staff for inclusion in REF submissions. The measures to support equality and diversity within the REF are set out in paragraphs 39-43.
- c. **Transparency:** The credibility of the REF is reinforced by transparency in the process through which decisions are made. The criteria and procedures that will be applied in the assessment will be published in full, well in advance of institutions making their submissions. The outcomes will be published in full and decision-making processes will be explained openly. We aim to make all written documents and statements about the REF clear and consistent.
19. The cost and burden of the REF should be the minimum possible to deliver a robust and defensible process. Previous RAEs have been highly cost-effective given the value of public funds distributed through their outcomes (including the estimated cost to HEIs). For example, we estimated the costs of the 2008 RAE in England to be some 0.5 per cent of the value of public research funding that was subsequently allocated with reference to its results. We will continue to weigh the burden on institutions against the need to ensure accountability in disbursing public funds.

## Framework for assessment

### Units of assessment

20. The REF will be a process of expert review, with discipline-based expert panels assessing submissions

made by HEIs in 36 units of assessment (UOAs). The UOAs are listed in Annex D. Detailed descriptors of each UOA will be published in the panel criteria statements.

### Submissions

21. Institutions will make submissions by 29 November 2013, in each UOA they elect to submit in. Each submission will contain, in summary:
- REF1a/b/c:** Information on staff in post on the census date, 31 October 2013, selected by the institution to be included in the submission.
  - REF2:** Details of publications and other forms of assessable output which they have produced during the publication period (1 January 2008 to 31 December 2013). Up to four outputs must be listed against each member of staff included in the submission.
  - REF3a/b:** A completed template describing the submitted unit's approach during the assessment period (1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013) to enabling impact from its research, and case studies describing specific examples of impacts achieved during the assessment period, underpinned by excellent research in the period 1 January 1993 to 31 December 2013.
  - REF4a/b/c:** Data about research doctoral degrees awarded and research income related to the period 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2013.
  - REF5:** A completed template describing the research environment, related to the period 1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013.

### Expert panels

22. An expert sub-panel for each of the 36 UOAs will conduct a detailed assessment of submissions in its UOA. The sub-panels will work under the leadership and guidance of four main panels. The four main panels will be responsible for developing the panel criteria and working methods, for ensuring adherence to the published procedures, for the consistent application of the overall assessment standards, and for signing off the outcomes of the assessment.
23. The expert panels were appointed by the four UK funding bodies through an open process of nominations, as described in 'Units of assessment and recruitment of expert panels' (REF 01.2010).

As we indicated in REF 01.2010, we have sought to ensure that the membership of the main and sub-panels comprises individuals who have experience in conducting, managing and assessing high quality research, as well as experts who are well-equipped to participate in the assessment of research impact from a private, public and third sector perspective. In appointing the panels, due regard was given to the desirability of ensuring that the overall body of members reflects the diversity of the research community.

24. The membership of each panel is at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk) under Expert panels. During 2013, additional assessors will be appointed to extend the breadth and depth of expertise on the panels, and their details will also be published.

#### **Assessment criteria**

25. As with previous RAEs, the assessment process is based on expert review. Each sub-panel will examine the submissions made in its UOA, taking into account all the evidence presented. They will use their professional judgement to form an overall view about each submission. In doing so, the sub-panels will assess three distinct elements of each submission, against the following generic criteria:

- a. **Outputs:** The sub-panels will assess the quality of submitted research outputs in terms of their 'originality, significance and rigour', with reference to international research quality standards. This element will carry a weighting of **65 per cent** in the overall outcome awarded to each submission.
- b. **Impact:** The sub-panels will assess the 'reach and significance' of impacts on the economy, society and/or culture that were underpinned by excellent research conducted in the submitted unit, as well as the submitted unit's approach to enabling impact from its research. This element will carry a weighting of **20 per cent**.
- c. **Environment:** The sub-panels will assess the research environment in terms of its 'vitality and sustainability', including its contribution to the vitality and sustainability of the wider discipline or research base. This element will carry a weighting of **15 per cent**.

#### **Panel criteria and working methods**

26. All sub-panels will apply the generic assessment criteria as set out in Annex A, and will operate under a common assessment framework. They will assess submissions made according to the standard definitions and common format set out in this document, and will follow a common set of procedures in undertaking aspects of their work (for example in managing conflicts of interest).

27. We will publish – initially for consultation in July 2011 and then in final form in early 2012 – details of the criteria and working methods that the panels will apply when assessing submissions. This will include details of the common procedures to be followed by all panels, and a statement of the criteria and working methods of each main panel. These will explain in more detail how each group of sub-panels within a main panel will apply the generic assessment criteria, and set out the working methods of the main and sub-panels in undertaking their roles.

28. Each main panel will develop a common set of criteria and working methods for its group of sub-panels, with distinct criteria or approaches for particular sub-panels only where this is justified by differences in the nature of research in the disciplines concerned. Guidance to the panels on developing their criteria and working methods is published at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk) under Publications.

29. The panel criteria and working methods documents will include further guidance to institutions about some particular forms of evidence that would be appropriate to include in the textual parts of submissions. They should therefore be read alongside this 'Guidance on submissions' publication: together the documents will set out comprehensively what information will be required in submissions, and how the panels will assess the submissions.

#### **Assessment outcomes**

30. For each submission the sub-panels will develop a 'sub-profile' for each of the three elements of the assessment (outputs, impact and environment). The sub-profiles will show the proportions of activity judged to meet each of four starred levels. The starred levels are defined at Annex A.

31. The three sub-profiles will be combined into an overall quality profile. An example overall quality



profile and the method for combining the sub-profiles is at Annex B. The overall quality profile awarded to each submission will be the primary outcome of the REF, to be published in December 2014.

32. By presenting the outcomes in the form of quality profiles, we will ensure that pockets of excellence are identified within the assessment outcomes.

### Publication of results and of submissions

33. The primary outcome of the REF will be an overall quality profile for each submission, and these will be published in December 2014. The quality profile will show the proportions of research activity judged to meet each of four starred quality levels, in steps of 1 per cent. Annex B describes how we will formulate and present quality profiles, including the rounding methodology.

34. Alongside the quality profile, the funding bodies will publish the full-time equivalent (FTE) number of staff included in each submission (submitted staff).

35. Further reports and feedback from the exercise will be available early in 2015. We expect the feedback to comprise:

- a. A published report by each main panel confirming its working methods and providing an overview of its observations about the state of research (strengths, weaknesses, vitality of activity, and scope of impacts achieved) in the areas falling within its remit. These reports will include a section provided by each sub-panel.
- b. Concise feedback on each submission summarising the reason for the quality profile awarded, with reference to the published criteria of the sub-panel that assessed it. We expect to send this feedback only to the head of the institution concerned. In the case of joint submissions, we will provide this feedback confidentially to the heads of all of the institutions involved.
- c. The output, impact and environment sub-profiles for each submission that were combined to produce the overall quality profiles will be provided to the heads of institutions, and then published.
- d. Minutes of the sub-panel and main panel meetings for the assessment phase of the REF

will be published to provide a public record of how the panels conducted their business.

- e. A report by the REF manager, detailing how the process was managed in operational terms.
- f. A report by the REF Equalities and Diversity Panel, detailing its working methods and observations about implementing the equality measures in the REF.

36. We will also publish submissions on the internet, in spring 2015. We will include the names of selected staff and the listings of research outputs, but remove personal and contractual details. We will present the submitted data on research doctoral degrees awarded and research income. We will include submitted textual information about impact and the research environment. The submission software will include a facility for HEIs to redact the names of any staff, listed outputs, impact case studies or textual parts of submissions that should be omitted from the published data for specific reasons, such as commercial sensitivity or security. Further detailed guidance on this will be provided in advance of the release of the submissions system.

37. In reaching their judgements, panels will not take account of any information about staff that are not selected for submission; also the published outcomes of the REF will not include any information about non-submitted staff. Separately to the REF outcomes, we expect that the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) will during 2015 publish data based on HESA staff returns about the proportion of eligible staff submitted by each HEI. The funding bodies will also publish an analysis of the selection of staff in terms of their equality and diversity characteristics, at the level of the UK higher education sector as a whole. This analysis will not identify individual institutions.

38. The results of the REF are not subject to appeal. The funding bodies have considered carefully the question of appeals, and concluded that the absence of an appeals process does not make the assessment process any less robust.

### Equality and diversity

39. The UK higher education funding bodies are committed to supporting and promoting equality and diversity in research careers, and strongly encourage institutions to submit the work of all their excellent

researchers. Compliance with equality legislation is an obligation for HEIs, and the four UK higher education funding bodies have a statutory obligation as public bodies to advance equality.

40. The REF team is assisting the funding bodies in promoting equality and diversity in research careers and in meeting their statutory obligations in a number of ways:

- a. We are ensuring that all panels are briefed on all equality and relevant employment legislation that will affect REF 2014. We have instructed panel members to take account of equality issues that may have a bearing on the volume of research undertaken and published by submitted researchers in the 2014 REF.
- b. We are strongly encouraging HEIs to submit the excellent research of all their eligible staff. Individuals whose circumstances have significantly constrained their ability to work productively throughout the assessment period may be returned with fewer outputs, without any penalty in the assessment. This is set out in paragraphs 90-100, and further details will be provided in the panel criteria and working methods.
- c. Each institution making a submission is required to develop, document and apply a code of practice on the fair and transparent selection of staff for their REF submissions (see Part 4). Guidance in drawing up a code of practice frames institutions' decision-making processes in the context of the principles of equality and all relevant legislation, supporting HEIs in meeting their own obligations.
- d. Within each submission, as part of the description of the research environment, evidence will be required about how the submitted unit promotes equality and diversity.
- e. The selection of staff for the REF will be monitored and analysed at sector level, and the results of our analysis published.
- f. The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) will provide good practice and training materials to support institutions in taking account of equality and diversity when preparing submissions. These will be available from September 2011 at [www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF).

41. These measures to promote equality and diversity through the REF have been informed by a review of the equality measures taken in the 2008 RAE, and by the work of the REF Equalities and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG) which was established specifically to advise us on the development of these measures for the REF.

42. We will continue to take expert advice on the implementation of these measures throughout the REF by establishing a REF Equalities and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP). This panel will be constituted during 2012, and include membership drawn from the four main panels and specialist equality expertise. The terms of reference of the EDAP are available at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk) under Equality and diversity.

43. We will also extract and pass to HESA the following data to enable verification: for each individual submitted as research active in Category A, their UOA, HESA staff identifier code, and date of birth. Hence, HEIs should ensure that decisions documented in line with their code of practice are consistent with relevant parts of their annual individualised staff return to HESA. The 2013-14 HESA individualised staff return will require HEIs to return the REF UOA for all eligible academic staff, including those not selected for inclusion in REF 2014, to facilitate the funding bodies' analysis of staff selection.

## Timetable

44. The timetable for the 2014 REF is as follows, and is repeated at Annex E:

March 2010	Publication of 'Initial decisions' by the funding bodies on the conduct of the REF (HEFCE Circular letter 04/2010)
July 2010	Publication of 'Units of assessment and recruitment of expert panels' (REF 01.2010)
November 2010	Publication of reports on the REF impact pilot exercise
February 2011	Panel membership announced
March 2011	Publication of 'Decisions on assessing research impact' (REF 01.2011)
July 2011	Publication of 'Assessment framework and guidance on submissions' (REF 02.2011)
End July 2011	Publication of draft panel criteria and working methods for consultation
5 October 2011	Close of consultation on draft panel criteria and working methods
January 2012	Publication of panel criteria and working methods
31 July 2012	Institutions intending to make submissions to the REF submit their codes of practice on the selection of staff
Autumn 2012	Pilot of the REF submissions system
October 2012	Invitation to HEIs to make submissions; invitation to request multiple submissions; and start of survey of submissions intentions
December 2012	Survey of submissions intentions complete and deadline for requests for multiple submissions
January 2013	Launch of submissions systems and accompanying technical guidance
31 July 2013	End of assessment period (for research impacts, the research environment, and data about research income and research doctoral degrees awarded)
Mid 2013	Appointment of additional assessors to panels
31 October 2013	Census date for staff eligible for selection
29 November 2013	Closing data for submissions
31 December 2013	End of publication period (cut-off point for publication of research outputs, and for outputs underpinning impact case studies)
Throughout 2014	Panels assess submissions
December 2014	Publication of outcomes
Spring 2015	Publication of submissions, panel overview reports and sub-profiles

### Key changes since RAE 2008

45. There are differences between the 2014 REF and the 2008 RAE concerning both the overall assessment framework and the detailed data requirements and definitions. Therefore HEIs should not rely on their knowledge of the guidance and data requirements in previous research assessment exercises, and should refer to the guidance as set out in this document.

46. We draw particular attention to the following changes:

- a. The UOAs and sub-panels have been reduced from 67 to 36, and the main panels from 15 to 4.
- b. There is greater consistency in the assessment process across all UOAs, including standard weightings between the three elements of assessment (outputs, impact and environment) and standardisation of a number of criteria, data requirements and procedures. Panel criteria and working methods have been developed at main panel level, with input from sub-panels (rather than at sub-panel level with oversight by main panels).
- c. The definitions of eligible Category A and Category C staff have been revised. Category B and Category D staff can no longer be submitted.
- d. Some sub-panels will make use of citation information, provided by the REF team on a consistent basis, as additional information about the academic significance of research outputs.
- e. The REF includes an explicit element to assess the non-academic impact of research. This is described in Part 3 Section 3.
- f. 'Esteem' is no longer included as a distinct element in the assessment.
- g. The approach to assessing the research environment has been revised. It will be based on a structured template for textual information, and a significantly reduced set of standard data requirements. These are described in Part 3, Sections 4 and 5.
- h. The measures to promote equality and diversity in research careers have been strengthened and will be applied consistently across UOAs, as outlined at paragraphs 39-43, paragraphs 90-100 and Part 4.
- i. Additional assessors will be appointed to extend the breadth and depth of expertise on sub-panels during the assessment phase. The assessors' role is different from that of specialist advisers in the 2008 RAE, and they will participate fully in developing the sub-profiles. Outputs will not be referred to specialist advisers, with the exception of outputs submitted in languages that the sub-panel is unable to assess.
- j. The outcomes of the assessment – the overall quality profiles – will be published in steps of 1 per cent rather than 5 per cent.

# Part 2

## Submissions

### Scope of submissions

47. Each HEI may submit in any of the 36 UOAs listed at Annex D. An HEI will normally make one submission in each UOA it submits in, and only exceptionally will this be waived. Such exceptions are set out in paragraph 50.

48. A submission comprises a complete set of data about staff, outputs, impact and the research environment, returned by an HEI in any of the 36 UOAs (as described in Part 3). A submission provides evidence to the sub-panel about the activity and achievements of a 'submitted unit'. A submitted unit means the group or groups of staff included in a submission, and by extension:

- their research (produced during the REF publication period)
- the structures and environment that supported their research and its application or impact (during the assessment period)
- research related to that UOA and undertaken within the institution (since 1 January 1993), which underpins submitted impact case studies.

49. A submitted unit may, but need not, comprise staff who work within a single department or other organisational unit in the HEI. A submitted unit may comprise staff who work in multiple organisational units in the HEI. The research of a submitted unit must relate primarily to the areas of research set out in the descriptor of the UOA in which it is submitted. The UOA descriptors will be published in the panel criteria statements.

### Multiple submissions

50. Institutions will normally make one submission in each UOA they submit in. They may exceptionally, and only with prior permission from the REF manager, make more than one submission (multiple submissions) in the same UOA. These exceptions are:

- a. Where an institution involved in a joint submission wishes to make an additional individual submission in the same UOA.
- b. Multiple submissions to Sub-panel 28 (Modern Languages and Linguistics) will be permitted where one submission is in Celtic Studies and the other in Modern Languages and Linguistics.

This has been agreed in recognition of the special cultural significance of Celtic Studies in parts of the UK, and the particular legal status of the Welsh language in Wales.

- c. Where HEIs merge after 1 July 2011 they may seek permission to make two separate submissions in **all** of the UOAs in which they wish to submit, if for example they anticipate difficulty in achieving academic cohesion between the merger date and the submission date. Permission is unlikely to be granted to such HEIs to make separate submissions only in some of the UOAs in which they wish to submit. In the event that HEIs merged prior to 1 July 2011, the merged HEI should normally make **one** submission only to each UOA.
- d. Where a sub-panel considers there is a case for multiple submissions in its UOA, given the nature of the disciplines covered, the institution may request a multiple submission. The following procedures apply:
  - i. The institution will need to make a convincing case that:
    - the bodies of research to be listed in each proposed submission fall within the scope of the UOA but are clearly academically distinct from each other, **and**
    - the research environments of each proposed submitted unit are clearly separate and distinct, without significant overlap in their research or staffing strategies, infrastructure, facilities or other aspects to be described in the textual parts of submissions.
  - ii. The REF panels will indicate in their criteria statements whether they expect to receive such requests for multiple submissions, given the nature of the disciplines covered, and they may set additional criteria that will need to be satisfied.
  - iii. The REF manager will decide on all such requests in consultation with chairs of the relevant main and sub-panels. In considering these requests, administrative convenience of the submitting institution, or its preference for separate assessment outcomes, will **not** be factors.

51. Any HEI that wishes to make multiple submissions in relation to any of the exceptions set out above will need to request prior permission from the REF manager. In October 2012 we will invite requests to make multiple submissions and responses will be required by December 2012. Aside from the exception mentioned in paragraph 50c, a separate application will be required for each UOA in which the HEI wishes to make multiple submissions. All applications will be judged by the REF manager, in consultation with the relevant main and sub-panel chairs.

52. Each submission will be awarded a single overall quality profile. Where a single submission includes distinct organisational units or areas of research and where the REF sub-panel considers it appropriate, the sub-panel will provide feedback to the head of institution relating to the distinct units or areas of research.

#### **Joint submissions**

53. We encourage joint submissions in a UOA by two or more UK institutions, where this is the most appropriate way of describing research they have developed or undertaken collaboratively. The method for joint submissions is described in paragraphs 54-58 and is driven by two considerations:

- a. Panels should receive joint submissions in the form of a unified entity, enabling them to assess a joint submission in the same way as submissions from single institutions.
- b. The REF team must be able to verify data in a joint submission through the HEIs to which the data relates.

54. Purely for administrative purposes, one HEI needs to be identified as the lead in terms of management and data security of a joint submission. Two elements of the REF data (REF3a/b: Impact template and case studies; and REF5: Environment template) will be submitted by the lead HEI on behalf of all the other HEIs in the joint submission. Each HEI involved in the joint submission will submit separate REF data in the following forms: REF1a/b/c (Staff details), REF2 (Research outputs) and REF4a/b/c (Environment data).

55. In line with these submission arrangements, the submission system will include the facility for HEIs

involved in joint submissions to give 'View' and 'Edit' permissions to the other HEIs involved in the relevant UOA. In order for panels to be able to judge the joint submission like a single submission, the REF team will aggregate the data for each HEI so that panels can receive and assess it as a coherent whole.

56. The following rules apply:

- a. Panels will assess the joint submission as they would a single submission, and the outcome will be a single quality profile. The quality profile for a joint submission will list the HEIs involved in alphabetical order, irrespective of which HEI took the administrative lead in making the submission.
- b. Panels will provide confidential feedback on joint submissions to the heads of all the HEIs concerned; but the panels and the REF team will not comment specifically on the contribution by an individual HEI to the overall quality profile.
- c. In line with a general REF rule that no individual may be submitted as Category A research active in more than one submission unless they hold a fractional employment contract with more than one HEI (see paragraph 78f), no individual can be submitted in a joint submission **and** in a submission from one HEI unless they hold two separate employment contracts with two different HEIs.
- d. Institutions involved in a joint submission that wish to make an additional individual submission in the same UOA would normally be permitted to do so.

57. Following the conclusion of the REF, each of the UK funding bodies will distribute research funding in line with its individual funding formula. Assuming that, as in former years, the FTE of staff submitted will be an element in those formulae, the funding bodies envisage using the actual FTE of staff submitted by each HEI involved in a joint submission, unless the HEIs involved propose a different, agreed percentage split of funding at the time of submission.

58. Further guidance on the technical procedure for making joint submissions will accompany the technical guidance on how to use the submissions system.

## Content of submissions

59. Each submission will contain the core data outlined in sub-paragraphs a to e following. Further details are set out in Part 3. (The REF numbering refers to the name of the forms in which the data will be collected.)

- a. **Staff details (REF1a/b/c):** Information on individuals in post on the census date (31 October 2013) and selected by the institution for inclusion in the submission (REF1a); individual staff circumstances for those submitting fewer than four outputs (REF1b); and details of Category C staff (REF1c).
- b. **Research outputs (REF2):** Details of up to four research outputs produced by each member of submitted staff during the publication period (1 January 2008 to 31 December 2013).
- c. **Impact template and case studies (REF3a/b):** A completed template describing the submitted unit's approach during the assessment period (1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013) to enabling impact from its research (REF3a); and case studies describing specific examples of impacts achieved during the assessment period, underpinned by excellent research in the period 1 January 1993 to 31 December 2013 (REF3b).
- d. **Environment data (REF4a/b/c):** Data on research doctoral degrees awarded each year in the period 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2013 (REF4a); the amounts and sources of external research income for each year in the period 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2013 (REF4b); and the amount of research income-in-kind for each year in the period 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2013 (REF4c).
- e. **Environment template (REF5):** Information about the research environment related to the period 1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013.

60. We have sought to align the data requirements as far as possible with data reported to other agencies, or used for other purposes:

- a. The data requirements relating to research outputs will be compatible with the Common European Research Information Format (CERIF). Institutions will be able to import data into the REF submission system in various file formats, enabling them to use existing internal data for preparing REF submissions.

- b. The definitions of data on research doctoral degrees awarded and on research income have been aligned as far as possible with definitions used in HESA data returns. We will provide institutions with HESA data that can be used in preparing submissions. Institutions will be able to allocate the HESA data to REF UOAs; or they may prepare their REF data from internal systems. In either case, we will use the HESA data for validation purposes.

- c. We will arrange for the Research Councils and the health research funding agencies listed in paragraph 172 to provide institutions with relevant data about research income-in-kind for use in preparing submissions, and we will use these data for validation purposes.

61. In their criteria statements, REF panels may require additional specific data where this is necessary for the assessment and the burden on institutions is justified, to be included in the textual parts of the submission (REF3a and REF5). The published criteria statements will also provide general guidance about what kinds of information to provide in the textual parts of submissions.

## The submission process

### Method of submission

62. For the 2014 REF, we are developing software to collect submissions from HEIs, on behalf of the four funding bodies. This submission system will build on the system used in the 2008 RAE. It will be a web-based application using a database hosted at HEFCE, and will be the only way HEIs can make a submission to the REF. A pilot version of the system will be made available to HEIs in autumn 2012. The final version will be available in January 2013.

63. Data entry will not be limited to direct entry on screen and will also allow HEIs to import data in various file formats, including XML files (the XML schemas will be available at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk) under Submissions guidance). All communications between the web server and client machines in institutions will be encrypted. Access to the database before the submission date will not be permitted to anyone other than authorised personnel within each HEI and to HEFCE's system administrators.

### **Access to research outputs**

64. All outputs that are listed in submissions will be made available to the relevant sub-panel, as follows:

- a. For journal articles and conference proceedings, the submission must include a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) wherever available, to enable the REF team to source these outputs from the publishers. Where we cannot source particular outputs from the publishers the HEI must provide an electronic copy.
- b. For all other types of output, the HEI must provide an electronic copy wherever this is available; or where it is not, a physical output or appropriate evidence of the output.

### **Survey of submission intentions**

65. In October 2012 we will undertake a survey of HEIs about their submission intentions, to assist with planning of the assessment phase and with identifying areas where the appointment of additional assessors would be desirable. Through the survey we will ask HEIs to identify which UOAs they intend to make submissions in, and for each submission to indicate:

- the likely volume of staff
- the main areas of research and impact to be included in the submission and the likely volume of work in each area (this will need to be in sufficient detail for panels to understand the breadth and depth of expertise required for the assessment, and in particular to inform the recruitment of additional assessors)
- the likely volume of work to be submitted in languages other than English.

66. Responses to the survey will not be binding, but institutions should note that the information will be very helpful to the REF team and panels in planning their work and especially to underpin the recruitment and selection of assessors. Responses will be required by December 2012.

### **Data verification**

67. All information provided by HEIs in submissions to the 2014 REF must be capable of verification. We will check a proportion of submitted information from each institution as a matter of course. Panel members will also be asked to draw attention to any

data that they would like us to verify, and these data will be investigated. HEIs should therefore be able to provide justification for all information submitted.

68. We have aligned the data on research doctoral degrees awarded and research income as far as possible with other available data sets, including HESA returns and information held by the Research Councils. As described in Part 3 Section 4, the REF submission system will limit the extent to which such data submitted by an HEI can exceed their prior returns to HESA. While we recognise that the basis of returns for REF and other data sets may differ and exact matches might not be possible, we will investigate instances where there appear to be significant differences between submitted data and other returns.

69. Each submitted impact case study should include details of external sources of information that could corroborate claims made about the impact of the submitted unit's research. We will audit a proportion of case studies and investigate these sources where requested by sub-panels.

70. We will issue a fuller statement on the verification arrangements for REF data at a later date.

71. Where an HEI is unable to provide justification for any piece of information contained in its submission, that information will be excluded from assessment. The funding bodies will consider what further action to take in any case where serious discrepancies are found.

72. We are conscious of the potential additional workload verification may cause HEIs, and aim to minimise this. To this end, data checking and verification will normally be conducted by correspondence with the REF team. If HEIs wish to make it available, our verification team may also seek to rely on any relevant internal audit work that an HEI has undertaken in preparing or submitting REF data. Members of the REF team and other officers of the funding bodies reserve the right to visit HEIs to verify submission information.

### **Data protection**

73. We will collect, store and process all information submitted by HEIs to the REF in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Information will be processed for the purposes of conducting and evaluating the REF. Information may be shared with other organisations



to facilitate this, and will be shared with panel chairs, members, assessors, secretaries and observers, who are all bound by confidentiality arrangements. As stated in paragraph 43, we will extract and pass some information to HESA to enable data verification. We will also publish parts of submissions on the internet (as described in paragraph 36). We will use information from HEIs to monitor the diversity of staff selected for the REF. HEIs should ensure that individuals whose work is included in their submissions are aware of these uses, including the publication of submissions.

### Interdisciplinary and collaborative research

74. An underpinning principle of the REF is that all types of research and all forms of research output across all disciplines shall be assessed on a fair and equal basis, including interdisciplinary and collaborative research. There have been concerns that the assessment of interdisciplinary research has presented challenges in previous RAEs, due to the discipline-based structure of the UOAs, or that collaborative research has not been encouraged due to the competitive nature of the exercise.

75. A number of enhancements to the procedures for assessing interdisciplinary research were introduced in the 2008 RAE, and the REF will build on these:

- a. Given the broader UOAs (these have been reduced from 67 to 36) the REF sub-panels will in general include a broader range of experts, with the expertise to assess a wider range of research. We have specifically sought to include panel members with interdisciplinary experts.
- b. Following the survey of submission intentions we will recruit additional assessors, including people with interdisciplinary expertise, to extend the depth and breadth of panels' expertise to undertake the assessment. Assessors will participate fully in assessing research outputs and impacts. We will seek to appoint assessors to work with more than one sub-panel, where there are strong cross-disciplinary connections between particular sub-panels.
- c. A submitting institution will be able to identify those outputs which it considers to be interdisciplinary, to draw this to the panels' attention.

d. While a submission will normally be assessed only by the sub-panel for the UOA in which it is submitted, mechanisms will be retained to cross-refer parts of submissions to other sub-panels for advice where the relevant main and sub-panel chairs advise that this is necessary<sup>1</sup>:

- i. Specific outputs or impact case studies may be cross-referred for advice; entire submissions may not.
- ii. Both the submitting HEI and the sub-panel receiving the submission may make a request to cross-refer parts of submissions. In all cases, the relevant main and sub-panel chairs will advise the REF manager who will decide on the requests.
- iii. While main panels will oversee the process for managing cross-referral requests, cross-referrals may also be made to sub-panels outside of the main panel area of the receiving UOA.
- iv. Where parts of submissions are cross-referred, advice will be sought and given on the basis of the assessment criteria for the UOA in which the work was originally submitted. The original sub-panel will specify the scope of advice that it is seeking: this may range from advice on the overall quality of outputs or impact of case studies, to advice on specific features of those outputs or case studies. The original sub-panel will retain responsibility for recommending the quality profile.

76. The REF will support collaborative research through the following arrangements:

- a. We encourage joint submissions in a UOA by two or more UK institutions, where this is the most appropriate way of describing the research they have developed or undertaken collaboratively. (See paragraphs 53-58.)
- b. Outputs that are co-authored or co-produced by staff listed in more than one submission (whether within the same HEI or from different HEIs) may be listed in any or all of those submissions, and will be assessed on an equal footing to any other output. (The panel criteria will provide

<sup>1</sup> In addition to cross-referring parts of a submission between sub-panels for advice to inform the assessment, parts of submissions may be made available to other sub-panels for the purposes of calibration exercises. Calibration procedures will be described in more detail in the panel criteria and working methods documents.

guidance on whether an output co-authored by staff within a single submission may be listed against more than one member of staff within that submission.)

- c. Where a submitted impact is underpinned by collaborative research, each submitting unit whose research made a distinct and material contribution to the impact may submit that impact.
- d. Within the environment template, institutions should provide information about how they support interdisciplinary and collaborative research, and panels will give due credit where these arrangements have enhanced the vitality and sustainability of the research environment or the submitted unit's contribution to the wider research base.

# Part 3

## Data requirements and definitions

### Part 3 Section 1: Staff details (REF1a/b/c)

77. Each HEI must decide which individuals to select for submission, in accordance with its internal code of practice (see Part 4). Staff selected for submission must be listed in one of the two possible categories, A or C.

#### Category A staff

78. Category A staff are defined as academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater and on the payroll of the submitting HEI on the census date (31 October 2013), and whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'teaching and research'<sup>2</sup>.

79. Regardless of their job title, all staff who satisfy the definition at paragraph 78, along with the supplementary criteria in paragraphs 79-81, are eligible as Category A staff:

- a. Staff who hold institutional/NHS joint appointments **are** eligible to be returned as Category A. These staff should be returned with an FTE less than 1.0, reflecting their contract of employment with the institution.
- b. Pensioned staff who continue in salaried employment contracted to carry out research and meet the definition at paragraph 78 **are** eligible to be returned as Category A staff.
- c. Academic staff who are on unpaid leave of absence or on secondment on the census date **and** are contracted to return to normal duties up to two years from the start of their period of absence or secondment are eligible to be returned as Category A, provided that any staff recruited specifically to cover their duties are not also listed as Category A.
- d. Academic staff who are employed by the submitting HEI and based in a discrete department or unit outside the UK are eligible **only** if the HEI demonstrates that the primary focus of their research activity on the census date is clearly and directly connected to the submitting unit based in the UK. Staff whose connection cannot be demonstrated to the

satisfaction of the REF manager, as advised by the relevant panel, will be discounted from the assessment and removed from the REF database.

- e. Staff absent from their 'home' institution but working on secondment as contracted academic staff at another UK higher education institution on the census date, may be returned by either or both institutions. In such a case the individual and both institutions concerned should agree how the return is to be made. Their total FTE may not exceed their contracted FTE with their main employer.
- f. Other than individuals on secondment on the terms described in sub-paragraph e, an individual may **only** be returned as Category A by more than one HEI if they have a contract with and receive a salary from more than one HEI. In such cases:
  - i. The two HEIs must ensure that the total FTE value of the individual sums to no more than the lower of 1.0 or the individual's total contracted FTE duties. If any individual is returned in submissions with a contracted FTE that sums to more than 1.0, the REF team will rectify this through verification, and will apportion the FTE to each HEI pro-rata to the individual's contracted FTE at each HEI.
  - ii. The same research outputs may, but need not be, listed in each submission.
- g. No individual may be returned in more than one submission, except as described at sub-paragraphs e and f. Where an individual holds a joint appointment across two or more submitting units within the same institution, the HEI must decide on one submission in which to return the individual.
- h. Staff whose salary is calculated on an hourly or daily basis are eligible **only** if they meet the definition at paragraph 78 **and** on the census date have a contract of employment of at least 0.2 FTE per year over the length of their contract.

<sup>2</sup> These are staff returned to the HESA Staff Collection with an activity code of 'Academic Professional' (currently identified as code '2a' in the ACT1, ACT2 or ACT3 fields) and an academic employment function of either 'Research only' or 'Teaching and research' (currently identified as codes '2' or '3' in the ACEMPFUN field). Revised guidance on the coding of these staff in HESA returns will be issued following the review of the HESA staff record, which is due to conclude in September 2011.

- i. Staff who hold more than one contract for different functions within the HEI, are eligible if one of those contracts satisfies the definition of Category A staff at paragraph 78. Such staff should be returned with an FTE that is no greater than that of the qualifying contract.

#### Research assistants

80. Research assistants are individuals who are on the payroll of and hold a contract of employment with the institution. They are academic staff whose primary employment function is defined as 'research only'. They are employed to carry out another individual's research programme rather than as independent researchers in their own right (except in the circumstances described in paragraph 81). They are usually funded from research grants or contracts from Research Councils, charities, the European Union (EU) or other overseas sources, industry, or other commercial enterprises, but they may also be funded from the institution's own funds. Individuals who meet this definition may be described in HEIs' grading structures as something other than research assistant (for example research associate, assistant researcher).

81. Research assistants, as defined in paragraph 80, are **not** eligible to be returned to the REF unless, exceptionally, they are named as principal investigator or equivalent on a research grant or significant piece of research work on the census date and satisfy the definition of Category A staff in paragraph 78. Research assistants must not be listed as Category A staff purely on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs.

#### Category C staff

82. Category C staff are defined as individuals employed by an organisation other than an HEI, whose contract or job role (as documented by their employer) includes the undertaking of research, and whose research is primarily focused in the submitting unit on the census date (31 October 2013).

83. Category C staff may be employed by the NHS, a Research Council unit, a charity or other organisation except for an HEI. Submitted outputs by Category C staff will inform the quality profiles awarded to submissions, but these staff will not contribute to the volume measure for funding purposes. For clarity, the following are not eligible to be returned as Category C staff:

- a. Any staff employed by the HEI, including vice-chancellors or heads of HEIs; HEI staff on non-academic contracts, including those working in university museums and libraries; or retired staff who are still active in research. (Where they satisfy the definition at paragraph 79i or, for retired staff, paragraph 79b, these staff are eligible to be returned as Category A staff.)
- b. Visiting professors, fellows and lecturers employed by other HEIs.

#### Research staff data requirements (form REF1a)

84. The following data are required on all staff whom the HEI has selected:

- a. HESA staff identifier (Category A staff only). This is for verification and equal opportunities monitoring purposes.
- b. Staff reference code: a code determined by the HEI.
- c. Initials.
- d. Surname.
- e. Date of birth (Category A staff only).
- f. Category of staff (A or C) on the census date.
- g. Contracted FTE on the census date (Category A staff only). The minimum FTE that may be reported is 0.2.
- h. For HEFCW-funded institutions only: Whether the individual is a research fellow<sup>3</sup> (Category A staff only).

<sup>3</sup> HEFCW-funded institutions must indicate which of the staff they submit meet the definition of research fellow that is set out in this footnote. This information is requested for funding purposes. A research fellow holds a specific fellowship award on the basis of their own research record or research proposals. The fellowship award must be to a named individual in recognition of independent research they have undertaken or proposed, must include a significant element of external funding and must follow a process of expert review (including competitive review) involving an input from outside the institution. Such fellowships include Research Council fellows (senior, advanced or postdoctoral) and Royal Society research fellows and professors. Staff on an HEI-funded or awarded fellowship, even with external referees involved in the selection process, may not be identified as a research fellow for REF purposes.

- i. Whether the individual is an early career researcher (ECR), as defined in paragraph 85. All submitted staff who meet this definition must be identified as ECRs, regardless of how many outputs are listed against their name.
  - j. Date (day, month and year) of starting as academic staff at the institution, if between 1 January 2008 and 31 October 2013 (Category A only).
  - k. If the individual is on a fixed-term contract, secondment, or period of unpaid leave the start and end dates (day, month and year) of the contract, secondment or period of unpaid leave (Category A only). Staff on rolling contracts or a series of renewable fixed-term contracts will be regarded as fixed-term for this purpose, although institutions may wish to draw attention to their use of rolling contracts in the textual part of their submissions, especially where a fixed-term contract has an expiry date soon after the census date.
  - l. For Category A staff based in a discrete unit outside the UK, details of the connection between their research activity and the submitted unit in the UK (see paragraph 79d).
  - m. Any research groups that the individual belongs to, where relevant and up to a maximum of four. This is not a mandatory field. Some sub-panels may ask HEIs to describe research groups in REF5 (the environment template), but neither the presence nor absence of research groups is assumed.
- Early career researchers**
85. Early career researchers are defined as members of staff who meet the criteria to be selected as Category A or Category C staff on the census date, **and** who started their careers as independent researchers on or after 1 August 2009. For the purposes of the REF, an individual is deemed to have started their career as an independent researcher from the point at which<sup>4</sup>:
- a. They held a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, which included a primary employment function of undertaking ‘research’ or ‘teaching and research’, with any HEI or other organisation, whether in the UK or overseas, **and**
  - b. They undertook independent research, leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on a research grant or significant piece of research work. (A member of staff is not deemed to have undertaken independent research purely on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs.)
86. The following do **not** meet the definition of an ECR (this list is not exhaustive):
- a. Staff who first acted as an independent researcher while at a previous employer – whether another HEI, business or other organisation in the UK or elsewhere – before 1 August 2009, with a contract of 0.2 FTE or greater.
  - b. Staff who first acted as an independent researcher before 1 August 2009 and have since had a career outside of research or an extended break from their research career, before returning to research work. Such staff may reduce the number of outputs submitted according to paragraph 92a.iv (career breaks).
  - c. Research assistants who are ineligible to be returned to the REF, as defined in paragraphs 80-81.
87. ECRs may be submitted with fewer than four outputs without penalty in the assessment, as described in paragraphs 90-100 and in the panel criteria and working methods documents. Regardless of whether or not they are submitted with fewer than four outputs, all staff included in a submission who meet the definition of an ECR must be identified as ECRs in the submission. This is to enable the funding bodies to analyse the selection rates for ECRs across the sector as a whole, as part of our wider analysis of selection rates. To enable this analysis, the HESA staff return for 2013-14 will include a field for HEIs to identify all academic staff on ‘research’ or ‘teaching and research’ contracts who meet the REF definition of an ECR.

<sup>4</sup> Main Panel A will provide further details in its criteria document about how junior clinical academics meet this definition.

## Individual staff circumstances

**Amendment:** Following consultation on the draft panel criteria, the arrangements concerning maternity, paternity and adoption leave have been amended. Paragraphs 88-95 are replaced by paragraphs 64-91 of the 'Panel criteria and working methods' (REF 01.2012) and are reproduced below.

64. Up to four research outputs must be listed against each member of staff included in the submission. A maximum of four outputs per researcher will provide panels with a sufficient selection of research outputs from each submitted unit upon which to base judgements about the quality of that unit's outputs. Consultations on the development of the REF confirmed that this is an appropriate maximum volume of research outputs for the purposes of assessment.

65. As a key measure to support equality and diversity in research careers, in all UOAs individuals may be returned with fewer than four outputs without penalty in the assessment, where their individual circumstances have significantly constrained their ability to produce four outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period. This measure is intended to encourage institutions to submit all their eligible staff who have produced excellent research.

66. HEIs are allowed to list the maximum of four outputs against any researcher, irrespective of their circumstances or the length of time they have had to conduct research. A minimum of one output must be listed against each individual submitted to the REF.

67. In order to provide clarity and consistency on the number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty, there will be a **clearly defined** reduction in outputs for those types of circumstances listed at paragraph 69a. Circumstances that are more complex will require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs; these are listed at paragraph 69b. Arrangements have been put in place for **complex** circumstances to be considered on a consistent basis, as described at paragraphs 88-91.

68. Where an individual is submitted with fewer

than four outputs and they do not satisfy the criteria described at paragraphs 69-91 below, any 'missing' outputs will be graded as 'unclassified'.

69. Category A and C staff may be returned with fewer than four outputs without penalty in the assessment, if one or more of the following circumstances significantly constrained their ability to produce four outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period:

- a. Circumstances with a **clearly defined** reduction in outputs, which are:
  - i. Qualifying as an early career researcher (on the basis set out in paragraph 72 and Table 1 below).
  - ii. Absence from work due to working part-time, secondments or career breaks (on the basis set out in paragraphs 73-74 and Table 2 below).
  - iii. Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave (on the basis set out in paragraphs 75-81).
  - iv. Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6, as defined at paragraph 86.
- b. **Complex circumstances** that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:
  - i. Disability. This is defined in 'guidance on submissions' Part 4, Table 2 under 'Disability'.
  - ii. Ill health or injury.
  - iii. Mental health conditions.
  - iv. Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of – or justify the reduction of further outputs in addition to – the allowances made in paragraph 75 below.
  - v. Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member).
  - vi. Gender reassignment.
  - vii. Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed at paragraph 190 of 'guidance of submissions' or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

### Clearly defined circumstances

70. Where an individual has one or more circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs, the number of outputs that may be reduced should be determined according to the tables and guidance in paragraphs 72-86 below. All sub-panels will accept a reduction in outputs according to this guidance and will assess the remaining number of submitted outputs without any penalty.

71. In REF1b, submissions must include sufficient details of the individual's circumstances to show that these criteria have been applied correctly. The panel secretariat will examine the information in the first instance and advise the sub-panels on whether sufficient information has been provided and the guidance applied correctly. The panel secretariat will be trained to provide such advice, on a consistent basis across all UOAs. Where the sub-panel judges that the criteria have not been met, the 'missing' output(s) will be recorded as unclassified. (For example, an individual became an early career researcher in January 2011 but only one output is submitted rather than two. In this case the submitted output will be assessed, and the 'missing' output recorded as unclassified.)

### Early career researchers

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

**Table 1: Early career researchers: permitted reduction in outputs**

Date at which the individual first met the REF definition of an early career researcher:	Number of outputs may be reduced by up to:
On or before 31 July 2009	0
Between 1 August 2009 and 31 July 2010 inclusive	1
Between 1 August 2010 and 31 July 2011 inclusive	2
On or after 1 August 2011	3

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

73. Table 2 sets out the permitted reduction in outputs without penalty in the assessment for absence from work due to:

- part-time working
- secondments or career breaks outside of the higher education sector, and in which the individual did not undertake academic research.

**Table 2: Part-time working, secondments or career breaks: permitted reduction in outputs**

Total months absent between 1 January 2008 and 31 October 2013 due to working part-time, secondment or career break:	Number of outputs may be reduced by up to:
0-11.99	0
12-27.99	1
28-45.99	2
46 or more	3

74. The allowances in Table 2 are based on the length of the individual's absence or time away from working in higher education. They are defined in terms of total months absent from work. For part-time working, the equivalent 'total months absent' should be calculated by multiplying the number of months worked part-time by the full-time equivalent (FTE) not worked during those months. For example, an individual worked part-time for 30 months at 0.6 FTE. The number of equivalent months absent =  $30 \times 0.4 = 12$ .

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

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

- Statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave taken substantially during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2013, regardless of the length of the leave.

b. Additional paternity or adoption leave\* lasting for four months or more, taken substantially during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2013.

76. The approach to these circumstances is based on the funding bodies' considered judgement that the impact of such a period of leave and the arrival of a new child into a family is generally sufficiently disruptive of an individual's research work to justify the reduction of an output. This judgement was informed by the consultation on draft panel criteria, in which an overwhelming majority of respondents supported such an approach.

77. The funding bodies' decision not to have a minimum qualifying period for maternity leave was informed by the sector's clear support for this approach in the consultation; recognition of the potential physical implications of pregnancy and childbirth; and the intention to remove any artificial barriers to the inclusion of women in submissions, given that women were significantly less likely to be selected in former RAE exercises.

78. The funding bodies consider it appropriate to make the same provision for those regarded as the 'primary adopter' of a child (that is, a person who takes statutory adoption leave), as the adoption of a child and taking of statutory adoption leave is generally likely to have a comparable impact on a researcher's work to that of taking maternity leave.

79. As regards additional paternity or adoption leave, researchers who take such leave will also have been away from work and acting as the primary carer of a new child within a family. The funding bodies consider that where researchers take such leave over a significant period (four months or more), this is likely to have an impact on their ability to work productively on research that is comparable to the impact on those taking maternity or statutory adoption leave.

80. While the clearly defined reduction of outputs due to additional paternity or adoption leave is subject to a minimum period of four months, shorter periods of such leave can be taken into account as follows:

- a. By seeking a reduction in outputs under the provision for complex circumstances, for example where the period of leave had an impact in combination with other factors such as ongoing childcare responsibilities.
- b. By combining the number of months for shorter periods of such leave in combination with other clearly defined circumstances, according to Table 2.

81. Any period of maternity, adoption or paternity leave that qualifies for the reduction of an output under the provisions in paragraph 75 above may in individual cases be associated with prolonged constraints on work that justify the reduction of more than one output. In such cases, the circumstances should be explained using the arrangements for complex circumstances.

#### Combining clearly defined circumstances

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

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

84. When combining circumstances, only one circumstance should be taken into account for any period of time during which they took place simultaneously. (For example, an individual worked part-time throughout the assessment period and first

\* 'Additional paternity or adoption leave' refers to leave of up to 26 weeks which is taken to care for a child where the person's spouse, partner or civil partner was entitled to statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave, and has since returned to work. The term 'additional paternity leave' is often used to describe this type of leave although it may be taken by parents of either gender. For the purposes of the REF we refer to this leave as 'additional paternity or adoption leave'.



met the definition of an early career researcher on 1 September 2009. In this case the number of months 'absent' due to part-time working should be calculated from 1 September 2009 onwards, and combined with the reduction due to qualifying as an early career researcher, as indicated in paragraph 83 above.)

85. Where an individual has a combination of circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs **and** complex circumstances, the institution should submit these collectively as 'complex' so that a single judgement can be made about the appropriate reduction in outputs, taking into account all the circumstances. Those circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs should be calculated according to the guidance above (paragraphs 72-84).

#### Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6

86. In UOAs 1-6, the number of outputs may be reduced by up to two, without penalty in the assessment, for the following:

- a. Category A staff who are junior clinical academics. These are defined as clinically qualified academics who are still completing their clinical training in medicine or dentistry and have not gained a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) or its equivalent prior to 31 October 2013.
- b. Category C staff who are employed primarily as clinical, health or veterinary professionals (for example by the NHS), and whose research is primarily focused in the submitting unit.

87. These allowances are made on the basis that the staff concerned are normally significantly constrained in the time they have available to undertake research during the assessment period. The reduction of two outputs takes account of significant constraints on research work, and is normally sufficient to also take account of additional circumstances that may have affected the individual's research work. Where the individual meets the criteria at paragraph 86, and has had significant additional circumstances – for any of the reasons at paragraph 69 – the institution may return the circumstances as 'complex' with a reduction of three outputs, and provide a justification for this.

#### Complex circumstances

88. Where staff have had one or more complex circumstances – including in combination with any circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs – the institution will need to make a judgement on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs submitted, and provide a rationale for this judgement.

89. As far as is practicable, the information in REF1b should provide an estimate – 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. A reduction should be made according to Table 2 in relation to estimated months absent from work, with further constraints taken into account as appropriate. To aid institutions the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) will publish worked examples of complex circumstances, which will indicate how these calculations can be made and the appropriate reduction in outputs for a range of complex circumstances. These will be available at [www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF) from February 2012.

90. All submitted complex circumstances will be considered by the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP), on a consistent basis across all UOAs. The membership and terms of reference of the EDAP are available at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk) under Equality and diversity. The EDAP will make recommendations about the appropriate number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty to the relevant main panel chairs, who will make the decisions. The relevant sub-panels will then be informed of the decisions and will assess the remaining outputs without any penalty.

91. To enable individuals to disclose the information in a confidential manner, information submitted about individuals' complex circumstances will be kept confidential to the REF team, the EDAP and main panel chairs, and will be destroyed on completion of the REF (as described in 'guidance on submissions', paragraphs 98-99).

### **Individual staff circumstances data requirements (form REF1b)**

96. For each member of staff returned with fewer than four outputs, submissions must include the following information in REF1b:

- a. **Staff with clearly defined circumstances** (maximum 200 words): For ECRs, institutions must state the date at which the individual became an early career researcher (meeting the definition at paragraph 85); provide brief details of their research career history, specifically identifying the point at which they became an independent researcher, and the number of outputs returned. For staff with other clearly defined circumstances, institutions must provide brief details about the nature of the circumstance(s), their timing and duration, a calculation of the total absence over the period 1 Jan 2008 to 31 Oct 2013, and the number of outputs returned.
- b. **Staff with complex circumstances** (maximum 300 words): Institutions must:
  - describe the nature and timing of the circumstances
  - explain the effects on the individual's contracted working hours or ability to fulfil their contracted working hours
  - explain any other effects on the individual's ability to work productively
  - provide a calculation for the reduction in outputs and the number of outputs returned.

We recommend that in preparing REF1b institutions use the template for complex circumstances available on [www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF).

97. The information returned in REF1b for any type of circumstances must be based on verifiable evidence.

98. Information submitted in form REF1b will be kept confidential to the REF team and the panel members (for clearly defined circumstances) and the EDAP and main panel chairs (for complex circumstances), who are all subject to confidentiality undertakings in respect of all information contained in submissions. REF sub-panels will know that there are complex circumstances and will receive a decision about the appropriate number of outputs to

reduce without penalty, but will not have access to further information about the circumstances. These arrangements will enable individuals to disclose the information in a confidential manner, and enable consistent treatment of complex circumstances across the exercise.

99. Information submitted in REF1b will be used only for the purposes of assessing the REF submission in which it is contained, will not be published at any time and will be destroyed on completion of the REF.

100. It is the responsibility of the HEI to ensure that the information in REF1b is submitted in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and all other legal obligations.

### **Category C staff details (form REF1c)**

101. For each individual returned as Category C, information is required in REF1c to demonstrate that they satisfy the definition of Category C staff at paragraph 82, as follows (maximum of 200 words):

- The name of their employer, job title and specific research responsibilities.
- Evidence that their research is primarily focused in the submitting unit.

102. Institutions will need to be able to provide, if audited, documented evidence about their employment, and that research is included in their contract or documented job description.

103. If a sub-panel is not satisfied by the evidence provided in REF1c and/or in response to an audit, it may take account of this in assessing that individual's contribution to the submission, or the individual may be removed from the submission.

104. The information in REF1c will be published as part of the submission (see paragraph 36).

## **Part 3 Section 2: Research outputs (REF2)**

### **Eligibility definitions for research outputs**

(paragraphs 112-113 have been updated)

105. Submissions must include up to four items of research output listed against each Category A or C staff member included in the submission. Each output must be:

- a. The product of research, briefly defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights,

effectively shared. (The full definition of research for the purposes of the REF is at Annex C.)

- b. First brought into the public domain during the publication period, 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2013 or, if a confidential report, lodged with the body to whom it is confidential during this same period (see paragraphs 111-113).
- c. Produced or authored solely, or co-produced or co-authored, by the member of staff against whom the output is listed, regardless of where the member of staff was employed at the time they produced that output.

106. In addition to printed academic work, research outputs may include, but are not limited to: new materials, devices, images, artefacts, products and buildings; confidential or technical reports; intellectual property, whether in patents or other forms; performances, exhibits or events; work published in non-print media. An underpinning principle of the REF is that all forms of research output will be assessed on a fair and equal basis. Sub-panels will not regard any particular form of output as of greater or lesser quality than another per se.

107. Reviews, textbooks or edited works (including editions of texts and translations) may be included if they embody research as defined in Annex C. Editorships of journals and other activities associated with the dissemination of research findings should not be listed as output on REF2.

108. Where two or more research outputs listed against an individual in a submission include significant material in common (for example, a journal article that also appears as a chapter in a book) the sub-panel may decide to assess each of these outputs only in terms of the distinct material included in each, or judge that they should be treated as a single output if they do not contain sufficiently distinct material.

109. Theses, dissertations or other items submitted for a research degree including doctoral theses may not be listed. Other assessable published items based on research carried out for a research degree may be listed.

110. HEIs may not list as the output of a staff member any output produced by a research assistant

or research student whom they supervised, unless the staff member co-authored or co-produced the output.

#### Timing of publication

111. The relevant date for determining whether or not an output was produced within the publication period, and hence is eligible for submission, will be the date at which the submitted output first became publicly available (or, for confidential reports, was lodged with the relevant body). Where this is near to the start or the end of the publication period (1 January 2008 and 31 December 2013 respectively) and the actual date at which it became publicly available is not clear, we may require HEIs to submit evidence of the date it became publicly available. In particular:

- a. Where the date of imprint on a publication lies outside the publication period but the actual date of appearance is within the publication period, evidence of the actual date of appearance will be required for data verification purposes, such as a letter from the publisher.
- b. Outputs expected to be made publicly available between the submission date and the end of the publication period (that is, between 29 November 2013 and 31 December 2013) should be flagged in submissions; where only some of the data requirements for those outputs can be supplied, we will require full details to be submitted by 31 January 2014. HEIs may have to physically submit any output so flagged for verification purposes. An item expected to be brought into the public domain after 31 December 2013 should not be submitted, even if it has been accepted for publication.
- c. For web content and electronic corpora, HEIs will need to maintain proof of the date at which the item became publicly available and of its content at that date, for example a date-stamped scanned or physical printout or evidence derived from web-site archiving services.
- d. For non-text outputs, such as performances, we will require evidence of when the output was disseminated in the public domain.

**Amendment:** The original definitions at paragraphs 112-113 have been superseded by paragraphs 43-44 in the 'Panel criteria', reproduced below.

43. An output first published in its final form during the REF publication period that was 'pre-published' during calendar year 2007 – whether in full in a different form (for example, an 'online first' article or preprint), or as a preliminary version or working paper – is eligible for submission to the REF, provided that the 'pre-published' output was not submitted to the 2008 RAE.

44. Other than the exception described in paragraph 43 above, an output published during the REF publication period that includes significant material in common with an output published prior to 1 January 2008 is eligible only if it incorporates significant new material. In these cases:

- a. The panel may take the view that not all of the work reported in the listed output should be considered as having been issued within the publication period; and if the previously published output was submitted to the 2008 RAE, the panel will assess only the distinct content of the output submitted to the REF.
- b. Submissions should explain where necessary how far any work published earlier was revised to incorporate new material (see paragraph 127 of 'guidance on submissions').

114. If an HEI cannot make available a requested output or provide evidence of its publication within the publication period that item will be removed from the submission and the 'missing' output awarded a grade of Unclassified. There will be no opportunity to submit a substitute item.

#### Confidential reports

115. Confidential reports include any item produced for and lodged, in the publication period, with a company, government body or other research sponsor(s), but which has not been published because of its commercial or other sensitivity. A confidential report may only be submitted if the HEI has prior permission from the sponsoring organisation that the

output may be made available for assessment. HEIs will confirm permission has been secured when they make submissions. If the REF team requests a confidential report for assessment the HEI must make it available.

116. All panel members, advisers, observers and others involved in the assessment process are bound by a confidentiality agreement. Therefore, it is possible for HEIs to submit confidential reports without compromising any duty of confidentiality upon them. There may be main or sub-panel members who HEIs believe would have a commercial conflict of interest in assessing confidential reports. HEIs will be required to name such individuals when making submissions.

117. Outputs identified by institutions as confidential will not be listed as part of the published submissions.

#### Data requirements for outputs (form REF2)

118. For each output listed, enough information should be given to enable the REF team and panels to determine precisely what is being listed, whether it is a product of sole or multiple authorship or production, in what form it exists and where it may be found. The following are required for each output:

- a. **Output number:** sequentially from one to four for each individual returned. This number is for administrative convenience of referencing only. The submissions system will also enable HEIs to enter an output reference code, determined by the HEI.
- b. **Year of output:** the calendar year in which the output became publicly available.
- c. **Type of output:** Outputs should be categorised into the following broad types (there will be a number of specific data requirements in common for each output type; further details of these will be provided in due course):
  - i. Books (or parts of books).
  - ii. Journal articles and conference contributions.
  - iii. Physical artefacts.
  - iv. Exhibitions and performances.
  - v. Other documents.
  - vi. Digital artefacts (including web content).
  - vii. Other.
- d. **Title of the output:** if the output has no title a description is required.

119. Each of the following is required **where applicable** to the output:

- a. **Co-authors:** the number of additional co-authors.
- b. **Interdisciplinary research:** a flag to indicate to the sub-panel if the output embodies interdisciplinary research.
- c. **The research group** to which the research output is assigned, if applicable. This is not a mandatory field, and neither the presence nor absence of research group is assumed.
- d. **Request for cross-referral:** a request to the sub-panel to consider cross-referring the output to another sub-panel for advice (see paragraph 75d).
- e. **Request to 'double weight' the output:** for outputs of extended scale and scope, the submitting institution may request that the sub-panel weights the output as two (see paragraphs 123-126).
- f. **Additional information:** Only where required in the relevant panel criteria, a brief statement of additional information to inform the assessment (see paragraph 127).
- g. **A brief abstract, for outputs in languages other than English** (see paragraph 128-130).

#### Co-authored/co-produced outputs

120. For co-authored outputs, the number of other authors will be required. Regardless of the number of authors listed on an output, a co-authored output listed against an individual member of staff will count as a single output in the assessment. Co-authored/co-produced outputs will not be counted pro-rata.

121. Where two or more co-authors or co-producers of an output are returned in different submissions (whether from the same HEI or different HEIs), any or all of these may list the same output.

122. Further guidance will be published in the panel criteria documents about:

- a. Whether additional information is required about the contribution of the individual member of staff to a co-authored output (see paragraph 127b); and, if so, how the panels will take account of this information when

undertaking the assessment.

- b. Whether a co-authored output may be listed against more than one member of staff returned within the same submission.

#### Double-weighted outputs

123. Institutions may request that outputs of extended scale and scope be double-weighted (count as two outputs) in the assessment. Panels will describe in their criteria statements how they will judge if an output is of sufficient scale and scope to merit double-weighting in the assessment. Institutions' requests for double-weighting must be accompanied by a statement of up to 100 words explaining how the scale and scope of the output satisfies these criteria.

124. No single output may be counted as more than double-weighted (two outputs). Given that a maximum of four outputs must be listed against each member of staff, submissions may request that no more than two outputs listed against an individual member of staff should be double-weighted.

125. Where requesting an output to be double-weighted, the submitting institution must reduce the number of outputs listed against that member of staff by one (unless a 'reserve' output is permitted, as described in paragraph 126). The sub-panels will decide whether to double-weight each output that has been so requested, according to the published criteria. This decision will be separate to the panel's judgement about the quality of that output. Where the panel decides to double-weight an output, it will count as two of the individual member of staff's maximum of four outputs. Where the panel does not accept the case for double-weighting, it will count the submitted output as a single output, and grade the 'missing' output as Unclassified (unless a 'reserve' output is permitted).

126. In some UOAs, where the panels consider that such an approach is justified in their disciplines, institutions may include a 'reserve' output with each output requested for double-weighting. These UOAs will be identified in the panel criteria statements. In these UOAs, a 'reserve' output will only be assessed in the event that the panel does not accept the request for double weighting.

### Additional information

127. In their criteria documents panels may request additional information relating to outputs if required for the assessment of research in their UOA. The published panel criteria will state which, if any, of the following types of additional information are required, and provide further details about the nature of the required information, and the associated word limits up to a maximum of 300 words. Additional information should **only** be submitted if specifically requested in the relevant panel criteria, otherwise it will be disregarded by the panel. Any additional information provided should **not** be used to volunteer opinions about the quality of an output. Panels may request any of the following:

- a. Details about the research questions, methodology or means of dissemination, where these are not described within the output itself. This applies to practice-based outputs, for example, an exhibition, performance or artefact.
- b. Factual information about the significance of the output where this is not evident within the output (for example, if the output has gained external recognition, led to further developments or has been applied). Citation data may **not** be included in the additional information. Where sub-panels make use of citation data as additional information about the academic significance of outputs, as described in paragraphs 131-134, the citation data will be provided to panels by the REF team on a consistent basis.
- c. Where the output includes significant material published prior to 1 January 2008, details of how far the earlier work was revised to incorporate new material (see paragraph 113).
- d. For co-authored or co-produced outputs, details of the contribution of the individual submitted researcher to the output.

### Outputs in languages other than English

128. For research outputs in a language other than English (including outputs submitted in the medium of Welsh), a short abstract in English should be provided to describe the content and nature of the work (maximum 100 words). A separate field for each output in RA2 will be available for this. Panels will use this abstract to identify appropriate external

specialist advisers to whom the work may be referred. The abstracts themselves will not form the basis for assessment. Work may be referred to external specialist advisers only where panel members and assessors are unable to assess an output in the language in which it is submitted.

129. In the case of research outputs in the medium of Welsh, the specialist adviser(s) will normally be paired with a designated panel member with whom they will discuss the advice provided. If a sub-panel receives a substantial volume of research outputs in the medium of Welsh, the specialist adviser(s) will be invited to attend one or more of the panel meetings during the assessment phase. These provisions are made in recognition of the particular legal status of the Welsh language in Wales.

130. The requirement for an abstract is waived for outputs submitted in UOA 28 if the output is produced in any of the languages within the remit of that UOA; and for any other UOAs that indicate in their criteria statements that they are able to assess outputs in that language.

### Citation data

131. Some sub-panels will consider the number of times that an output has been cited, as additional information about the academic significance of submitted outputs. Those panels that do so will continue to rely on expert review as the primary means of assessing outputs, in order to reach rounded judgements about the full range of assessment criteria ('originality, significance and rigour'). They will also recognise the significance of outputs beyond academia wherever appropriate, and will assess all outputs on an equal basis, regardless of whether or not citation data is available for them.

132. Panels will state in their criteria documents if they will make use of citation data, and if so, provide further details about how they will make use of the data to inform their assessments. In using such data panels will recognise the limited value of citation data for recently published outputs, the variable citation patterns for different fields of research, the possibility of 'negative citations', and the limitations of such data for outputs in languages other than English. Panels will also be instructed to have due regard to the potential equality implications of using citation data as additional information.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See 'Analysis of data from the pilot exercise to develop bibliometric indicators for the REF: The effect of using normalised citation scores for particular staff characteristics' (HEFCE 2011/03). This is available via [www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk) under 2011 publications.

133. Where sub-panels make use of citation data, it will be made available to them as follows:
- The REF team will procure a single source of citation data that provides a good level of coverage across all UOAs in which the sub-panels will make use of such data.
  - Outputs entered onto the REF submission system by HEIs will be matched by the REF team and/or our contractors against this database, using DOIs and other bibliographic data entered onto the submissions system by HEIs. Institutions will be able to verify these matches through the submissions system, and to view the citation counts in the same form that they will be provided to panels (although we will continue to count citations made after the submission deadline, to provide panels with up-to-date information).
  - For all matched outputs submitted by HEIs in the relevant UOAs, the REF team and/or our contractor will provide REF panels with a count of the number of times the output has been cited up to a fixed point in time, at the start of the assessment phase.
134. All sub-panels that make use of citation data in the assessment will have access to the data provided on a consistent and transparent basis; submissions may not include details of citations within any statements of additional information for outputs.
135. We will provide further details about the source of the citation data in autumn 2011, following the completion of a procurement exercise.
136. Those panels that use citation information will continue to rely on expert review as the primary means of assessment. The funding bodies do not sanction or recommend that HEIs rely on citation information to inform the selection of staff or outputs for inclusion in their submissions. Institutions should select and submit outputs that in their judgement reflect their highest quality research in relation to the full range of assessment criteria (originality, significance and rigour), and in accordance with their codes of practice for the selection of staff (see Part 4), having due regard to the potential equality implications of using citation data (see footnote 5).

### Access to submitted outputs

137. The REF team will attempt to source all submitted journal articles and conference proceedings in electronic format directly from the publishers. We will therefore require the submission of a DOI number wherever possible for these types of output.
138. For all other output types, and where we are unable to source journal articles and conference proceedings from the publishers, we will require institutions to make available either:
- The output in electronic format, wherever available.
  - If not available in electronic format, a physical copy of the output or appropriate evidence of the output.
139. Further details of the method of submission will accompany the pilot version of the submission system software in autumn 2012.

## Part 3 Section 3: Impact template and case studies (REF3a/b)

### Definition of impact for the REF

140. For the purposes of the REF, impact is defined as an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia (as set out in paragraph 143).
141. Impact **includes**, but is not limited to, an effect on, change or benefit to:
- the activity, attitude, awareness, behaviour, capacity, opportunity, performance, policy, practice, process or understanding
  - of an audience, beneficiary, community, constituency, organisation or individuals
  - in any geographic location whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.
142. Impact **includes** the reduction or prevention of harm, risk, cost or other negative effects.
143. For the purposes of the impact element of the REF:
- Impacts on research or the advancement of academic knowledge within the higher education sector (whether in the UK or internationally) are **excluded**. (The submitted

unit's contribution to academic research and knowledge is assessed within the 'outputs' and 'environment' elements of REF.)

- b. Impacts on students, teaching or other activities within the submitting HEI are **excluded**.
- c. Other impacts within the higher education sector, including on teaching or students, are **included** where they extend significantly beyond the submitting HEI.

144. Impacts will be assessed in terms of their 'reach and significance' regardless of the geographic location in which they occurred, whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally. The UK funding bodies expect that many impacts will contribute to the economy, society and culture within the UK, but equally value the international contribution of UK research.

145. The REF panels will provide further guidance in relation to the kinds of impact that they would anticipate from research in their UOAs; this guidance will not be restrictive, and any impact that meets the general definition at Annex C will be eligible.

### Submission requirements for impact

146. The REF aims to assess the impact of excellent research undertaken within each submitted unit. This will be evidenced by specific examples of impacts that have been underpinned by research undertaken within the unit over a period of time, and by the submitted unit's general approach to enabling impact from its research. The focus of the assessment is the impact of the submitted unit's research, not the impact of individuals or individual research outputs, although they may contribute to the evidence of the submitted unit's impact.

147. Each submission must include:

- a. **A completed impact template (REF3a):** describing the submitted unit's approach, during the assessment period (1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013), to enabling impact from its research.
- b. **Impact case studies (REF3b):** describing specific impacts that have occurred during

the assessment period (1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013) that were underpinned by excellent research undertaken in the submitted unit. The underpinning research must have been produced by the submitting HEI during the period 1 January 1993 to 31 December 2013<sup>6</sup>.

148. Panels will assess all the evidence provided in the completed impact template (REF3a) and the submitted case studies (REF3b), and will initially form an impact sub-profile for each submission by attributing a weighting of 20 per cent to the impact template (REF3a) and 80 per cent to the case studies (REF3b). Panels will apply their expert judgment based on all the information provided in the impact template and case studies, before confirming the impact sub-profiles.

### Impact template (form REF3a)

149. Submissions must include a completed impact template, describing the submitted unit's approach during the assessment period (1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013) to supporting and enabling impact from research conducted within the unit. This information is intended to enable a more holistic and contextualised assessment of impact than would be possible from case studies alone, through the provision of:

- context for the individual case studies (though panels will recognise that case studies are underpinned by research over a timeframe that is longer than the assessment period, and that individual case studies may therefore not relate directly to the approach set out in the impact template)
- additional information about a wider range of activity within the submitted unit and its capacity for impact, than may be captured in the case studies.

150. The inclusion of the impact template also provides a mechanism for the assessment to take account of particular circumstances of a unit that may have constrained its selection of case studies (for example where it is a new department, or where the focus of its research may have limited opportunities for application).

<sup>6</sup> The end of the period for the underpinning research (31 December 2013) extends beyond the end of the period for the impact (31 July 2013). This is to align with the end of the publication period for outputs, and recognises that research may have had impact prior to the publication of the outputs. Also, the start of the period for underpinning research may be extended, exceptionally, to 1 January 1988 for some UOAs. Any such exceptions will be published in the panel criteria and working methods documents.



151. The impact template will seek information on each of the following:

- context
- the unit's approach to impact during the period 2008-2013
- strategy and plans for supporting impact
- the relationship between the unit's approach to impact and the submitted case studies (recognising that individual case studies may not relate directly to the approach).

152. The impact template recognises that the submitted unit may not have had a specific strategy for impact in place during the REF assessment period, and therefore enables submissions to describe their approach to impact during the assessment period as well as their development of a strategy and plans for the future.

153. Panel criteria statements will provide further guidance on the kinds of information and evidence expected within each section of the impact template. Panels will assess the impact template in terms of the extent to which the unit's approach is conducive to achieving impacts of reach and significance.

154. The completed impact template should:

- a. Focus primarily on the approach taken by the submitted unit to achieving impact from its research – not the approach of the HEI as a whole. However, part of the submitted unit's approach could include a statement of how it has made use of institutional resources and infrastructure, and aligned with a wider HEI strategy.
- b. Not repeat detailed evidence that is included in case studies, though the completed impact template could refer to submitted case studies.
- c. Include evidence and specific details or examples of the submitted unit's approach, rather than broad general statements.

155. Completed impact templates must be submitted according to the guidance on formatting and page limits, set out in Annex F.

## Impact case studies (form REF3b)

### Number of case studies in a submission

156. The number of case studies required in each submission will be determined by the number (FTE) of Category A staff returned in the submission, as set out in Table 1. If a submission includes fewer than the required number of case studies, a grade of unclassified will be awarded to each required case study that is not submitted. Submissions may not include more than the required number of case studies.

**Table 1: Number of case studies required in submissions**

Number of Category A staff submitted (FTE)	Required number of case studies
Up to 14.99	2
15 – 24.99	3
25 – 34.99	4
35 – 44.99	5
45 or more	6, plus 1 further case study per additional 10 FTE

157. Submissions will **not** be expected to provide impact case studies that are representative of the spread of research activity across the whole submitted unit. Institutions should select the strongest examples of impact that are underpinned by the submitted unit's excellent research, and should explain within the impact template how the selected case studies relate to the submitted unit's approach to enabling impact from its research.

### Eligibility definitions for case studies

158. Each case study must provide details of a specific impact that:

- a. Meets the definition of impact for the REF in Annex C.
- b. Occurred during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013 (see paragraph 159).
- c. Was underpinned by excellent research produced by the submitting unit in the period 1 January 1993 to 31 December 2013 (see paragraphs 160-161 and footnote 6).

159. Case studies must describe impacts that occurred specifically within the period 1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013. The impacts may have been at any stage of development or maturity during this period, so long as some effect, change or benefit meeting the definition of impact at Annex C took place during that period. This may include, for example, impacts at an early stage, or impacts that may have started prior to 1 January 2008 but continued into the period 1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013. Case studies will be assessed in terms of the reach and significance of the impact that occurred only during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013, and not in terms of any impact prior to this period or potential future or anticipated impact after this period.

160. To be eligible for assessment as an impact, the impact described in a case study must have been underpinned by excellent research produced by the submitting unit, during the period 1 January 1993 to 31 December 2013 (see footnote 6). Each case study must describe the underpinning research, include references to one or more key research outputs, provide evidence of the quality of that research, and explain how that research underpinned or contributed to the impact. Further guidance on the information required in case studies is at Annex G. The following definitions apply:

- a. 'Research produced by the submitting unit in the period 1 January 1993 to 31 December 2013' means that staff carried out research within the scope of the relevant UOA descriptor, while working in the submitting HEI (even if those staff have since left). This research must be evidenced by outputs referenced in the case study, published between 1 January 1993 and 31 December 2013. The staff may, but need not, have been selected for a previous RAE or the 2014 REF. The research outputs may, but need not, have been submitted to a previous RAE or the 2014 REF. If staff employed by the submitting HEI on the census date conducted all of the research underpinning an impact before joining the institution, the submitting HEI may not submit the impact of this research. (In this case, the institution where the staff conducted the research may submit the impact.)
- b. 'Excellent research' means that the quality of the research is at least equivalent to two star:

'quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour'. Each case study must include references to one or more key research outputs that underpinned the impact and were produced by the submitting HEI, and evidence of the quality of the research as requested in the relevant panel criteria documents. Panels will consider the evidence of research quality, and may review outputs referenced in a case study. A panel will grade as unclassified a case study if it judges that the underpinning research outputs are not predominantly of at least two star quality.

- c. 'Underpinned by' means that the research made a distinct and material contribution to the impact taking place, such that the impact would not have occurred or would have been significantly reduced without the contribution of that research. Each case study must explain how (through what means) the research led to or contributed to the impact, and include appropriate sources of information external to the HEI to corroborate these claims (see Annex G). Where the panel judges that the submitted unit's research did not make a distinct and material contribution to the impact, the case study will be graded as unclassified.
161. There are many ways in which research may have underpinned impact, including but not limited to:
- a. Research that contributed directly or indirectly to an impact. For example, a submitted unit's research may have informed research in another submitted unit (whether in the same or another HEI), which in turn led to an impact. In this case, both submitted units may show that their research made a distinct and material contribution to the impact.
  - b. Research embodied in one or more outputs, conducted by one or more individuals, teams or groups, within one or more submitted units, that led to or underpinned an impact. More than one submitted unit (within the same HEI or in different HEIs) may include the same impact within their respective case studies, so long as each submitted unit produced excellent research that made a distinct and material contribution to the impact.

- c. Impacts on, for example, public awareness, attitudes, understanding or behaviour that arose from engaging the public with research. In these cases, the submitting unit must show that the engagement activity was, at least in part, based on the submitted unit's research and drew materially and distinctly upon it.
- d. Researchers that impacted on others through the provision of professional advice or expert testimony. In such a case, the submitting unit must show that the researcher's appointment to their advisory role, or the specific advice given, was at least in part based on the submitted unit's research and drew materially and distinctly upon it.
- e. Research that led to impact through its deliberate exploitation by the HEI or through its exploitation by others. The submitting HEI need not have been involved in exploiting the research, but must show that its research made a distinct and material contribution to the impact.

162. Institutions must submit impact case studies in the appropriate UOAs. Impacts from research undertaken at the submitting HEI may be submitted either in the REF UOA that relates to the underpinning research, or, if this differs, to the REF UOA that relates to the staff who conducted the research.

#### Case study submission requirements (form REF3a)

163. Submitting units are required to submit case studies using a generic template. The template, annotated with guidance, is at Annex G. The template has been developed, through the impact pilot exercise, to enable submitting units in all UOAs to clearly explain and demonstrate the impact of their research through a narrative that includes indicators and evidence as appropriate to the case being made, and in a format that is suitable for panels to assess them.

164. The onus is on submitting units to provide appropriate evidence within each case study of the particular impact claimed. The REF panels will provide guidance, in the panel criteria documents, about the

kinds of evidence and indicators of impact they would consider appropriate to research in their respective UOAs, but this guidance will not be exhaustive.

### Part 3 Section 4: Environment data (REF4a/b/c)

165. The REF panels will form an environment sub-profile by assessing the information submitted in REF5 (the environment template), informed by the data submitted in REF4a/b/c, as described in this section. When we provide submissions to sub-panels, we will supply a standard analysis of the quantitative data submitted in REF4a/b/c, in respect of each submission in that UOA, and aggregated for all submissions in that UOA, as listed in Annex H. Panels will consider these data within the context of the information provided in REF5, and within the context of the disciplines concerned. Panels' criteria statements will indicate how the data analyses will be used in informing the assessment of the research environment.

#### Research doctoral degrees awarded (REF4a)

166. Each submission must include the number of research doctoral degrees awarded<sup>7</sup> in each academic year (1 August – 31 July) 2008-09 to 2012-13 to students supervised within the submitted unit.

167. The REF team will provide to institutions data collected by HESA on the numbers of research doctoral degrees awarded, to help in preparing submissions. We will provide data collected by HESA for academic years (1 August – 31 July) 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12, at both the level of academic cost centre, and by 2008 RAE UOA (based on the supervisors' 2008 RAE UOA). The REF team will not provide data for 2012-13, and institutions will be required to complete the data for that year based on their own data sources or through their returns to HESA for that year.

168. In preparing their submissions, institutions should allocate these data to the relevant REF UOAs they are submitting in; or they may prepare their data from internal systems using HESA definitions. In

<sup>7</sup> These are students returned in the HESA Student Record whose qualification awarded is recorded as 'Doctorate degree obtained primarily through advanced supervised research written up as a thesis/dissertation' or as a 'New Route PhD' (currently identified as codes 'D00' and 'D01' respectively in the QUAL field).

either case the REF submission system will limit the extent to which the total number of doctoral degrees awarded that is submitted by the institution as a whole can exceed the total reported by the institution to HESA in each academic year and across the period 2008-09 to 2011-12.

169. The REF team will compare the data submitted to the REF with the HESA data, and this will inform our selection of submissions to be audited. If audited, an institution will need to explain any significant variances with the totals submitted to HESA, and to show how they have allocated data to the appropriate UOAs in their REF submissions.

170. Some REF panels may, by exception, state in their panel criteria documents that they require data about the numbers of postgraduate research (PGR) students registered, in addition to the number of research doctoral degrees awarded. Where this is the case, submissions should include such data within the relevant section of the environment template (REF5), and not on REF4a.

#### **Research income (REF4b)**

171. Each submission must include data on the submitted unit's external research income for each academic year 2008-09 to 2012-13, according to HESA definitions of research income in the Finance Statistics Return (FSR) table 5b. Income will be listed against the following sources:

- a. BIS Research Councils, The Royal Society, British Academy and The Royal Society of Edinburgh.
- b. UK-based charities (open competitive process).
- c. UK-based charities (other).
- d. UK central government bodies, local authorities, health and hospital authorities (for submissions in UOAs 1-6, income from specific bodies that fund health research should be reported in a separate line – see paragraph 172).
- e. UK industry, commerce and public corporations.
- f. EU government bodies.
- g. EU-based charities (open competitive process).
- h. EU industry, commerce and public corporations.

- i. EU other.
- j. Non-EU-based charities (open competitive process).
- k. Non-EU industry, commerce and public corporations.
- l. Non-EU other.
- m. Other sources.

172. For submissions in all UOAs in Main Panel A (UOAs 1-6), research income awarded through open competition from the following bodies should be excluded from 'UK central government bodies' (sub-paragraph d above) and returned in a separate line:

- the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR)
- the Chief Scientist Office, Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorates
- the Welsh Government's National Institute for Social Care and Health Research (NISCHR)
- Health and Social Care Research & Development (HSC R&D), Northern Ireland.

These data will be reported to panels alongside income from 'BIS Research Councils' (sub-paragraph a above), reflecting the competitive nature of such income.

173. The REF team will provide to institutions research income data collected by HESA in FSR table 5b for academic years (1 August – 31 July) 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12, at the level of academic cost centre, by source of income. For 2012-13, the REF team will not provide the data and institutions will be required to complete the data for this year based on their own data sources or through their returns to HESA for that year.

174. In preparing their submissions, institutions should allocate these data to the relevant UOAs they are submitting in; or they may prepare their data from internal systems using the same definitions as HESA FSR table 5b. In either case the REF submission system will limit the extent to which the total income submitted by the institution to the REF can exceed the totals reported by the institution to HESA in each year (total for all sources) and across the assessment period as a whole, by each source. The REF team will compare the data submitted to the REF with the HESA data, and this will inform our selection of

submissions to be audited. If audited, an institution will need to explain any significant variances with the totals submitted to HESA, and to show how they have allocated data to the appropriate REF UOAs.

175. When reporting income to the HESA FSR in the past, institutions in Scotland and Wales may not have split their research income from UK charities according to whether or not the charity awarded the grant through an open, competitive process. The split was only compulsory for institutions in England and Northern Ireland for funding purposes. However, for the purposes of REF submissions, institutions in Scotland and Wales should separate out their charity research income according to whether or not the charity awarded the grant through an open competitive process, using the guidance set out in the FSR guidance notes for the corresponding year.

#### Ineligible income

176. We will exclude research income that is passed on to other institutions or organisations as part of a collaborative project or subcontracted work to the extent that this is reflected in the HESA data. We believe that the vast majority of this income would have been excluded from the 2008-09 HESA data. For 2009-10 onwards, an extra row added to the research grants and contracts table will enable us to identify and exclude this income.

#### Other notes

177. Where a grant or contract is held, or work conducted, across more than one UOA it should be divided between submissions in different UOAs according to the way the income has been used. Research projects which are funded from several sources should have their income allocated under the respective headings to reflect the actual source of the income.

#### Research income-in-kind (REF4c)

178. The estimated value of Research Council facility time allocated through peer review and used by researchers at submitted units will be provided to institutions for use in preparing submissions and should be returned in REF4c. For submissions in UOAs 1-6, we will also provide the estimated value of equivalent income-in-kind from the health research funding bodies listed in paragraph 172.

179. The lead Research Council responsible for access and funding of a named facility will supply data on the value of these allocations to the HEIs concerned and to the REF team. We expect that the Research Councils and the bodies listed in paragraph 172 will supply data relating to the period 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2013, and these will be made available to HEIs in sufficient time to be included in their submissions. We will consult with these bodies on the arrangements and will issue further guidance, including confirmation of the provisional dates for the supply of data to HEIs.

180. The income-in-kind data will be reported to panels alongside research income from 'BIS Research Councils' and will be identified in a separate line.

181. The REF team will compare the data on income-in-kind provided by the Research Councils and the bodies listed in paragraph 172 with those submitted to the REF, and this will inform our selection of submissions to be audited. If audited, an institution will need to explain any significant variances and to show how they have allocated data to the appropriate REF UOAs.

182. Some REF panels may, by exception, state in their criteria documents that they require data about other specific sources of income-in-kind. Where this is the case, submissions should include such data within the relevant section of the environment template (REF5) and not on REF4c.

### Part 3 Section 5: Environment template (REF5)

183. Information is required about the research environment for each submitting unit relating to the period 1 January 2008 to 31 July 2013. Each submission must include a single completed REF5 form, consisting of the following sections:

- Overview.
- Research strategy.
- People, including:
  - Staffing strategy and staff development.
  - Research students.
- Income, infrastructure and facilities.
- Collaboration and contribution to the discipline.

184. Where a submission includes staff from distinct 'departments' or other organisational units, the submission should explain this and any distinctive aspects of the research environments of these organisational units, within each section of the environment template. There is no expectation that the environment element of a submission will relate to a single department or coherent organisational unit.

185. Detailed guidance on the requirements for the content of REF5 will be provided in the panel criteria documents. They will state any quantitative indicators that should be included in REF5 and will indicate the nature of the evidence that should be provided about how the submitted unit promotes equality and diversity. The criteria statements will describe how panels will use the information in form REF5 together with the data in forms REF4a/b/c in assessing the submissions to form the environment sub-profiles. In all cases, each section of the environment template (excluding the Overview) will be significant in informing the environment sub-profile, and panels will provide further details of their relative importance.

186. Completed environment templates must be submitted according to the guidance on formatting and page limits, set out in Annex F.

# Part 4

## Codes of practice on the selection of staff

### Introduction

187. The purpose of the guidance in Part 4 is to support institutions in promoting equality and diversity when preparing submissions to the REF, through drawing up and implementing a code of practice on the fair and transparent selection of staff. This will aid institutions in including all their eligible staff in submissions who are conducting excellent research, as well as promoting equality, complying with legislation and avoiding discrimination.

188. Each institution making a submission is required to develop, document and apply a code of practice on selecting staff to include in their REF submissions. On making submissions, the head of institution will be required to confirm adherence to this code. The funding bodies require that institutions' codes of practice be submitted to the REF team by 31 July 2012. The Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) will examine these in advance of the submission deadline, and all institutions' codes will be published with the rest of the submissions at the end of the assessment process.

189. We have developed the guidance in Part 4 with advice from the REF Equalities and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG), and drawing on a review of the 2008 RAE codes of practice. It is intended to assist HEIs in drawing up a code of practice that frames their decision-making processes in relation to the REF 2014 in the context of the principles of equalities and diversity, and all relevant legislation. For those institutions that do not already have an equality code governing their REF preparations, it offers suggestions on procedures they might consider including. Further support on developing and applying a code of practice will be on the ECU web-site [www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF) from September 2011.

### The legislative context

190. The Equality Act 2010 harmonised and consolidated previous anti-discrimination legislation. The Act covers the protected characteristics of:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership

- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

191. As well as prohibiting direct discrimination the Act prohibits indirect discrimination – following a policy that, although applied equally to everyone, is harder for those with a protected characteristic to comply with. Indirect discrimination is not a breach of the Act if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Direct discrimination on the grounds of age will not be unlawful if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

192. With the exceptions of marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity, protection from discrimination extends to people who are perceived to have or are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic. For example, if a researcher is treated less favourably because they care for their disabled parent that could be unlawful disability discrimination.

193. Similarly to previous legislation, it is lawful to treat a disabled person more favourably than a non disabled person, and public bodies including HEIs are required to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

194. The Equality Act places requirements on the funding bodies as public sector organisations and on HEIs as public sector organisations and employers. Most of the Act, as it relates to public functions and employment, came into force in October 2010. The Act covers England, Scotland and Wales. Apart from minor provisions, Northern Ireland is not covered by the Act.

195. The public sector equality duty of the Act came into force in April 2011. Under the public sector equality duty, the higher education funding bodies and HEIs in England, Scotland and Wales, in carrying out their functions, must have due regard 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.

(In this context a ‘relevant’ protected characteristic is one other than marriage and civil partnership.)

196. The scope of equality legislation in Northern Ireland is similar to the Equality Act. In addition, it is unlawful to discriminate against people on the grounds of political opinion. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 also places a statutory obligation on the Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland and HEIs in Northern Ireland in carrying out their public functions to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

### **Funding bodies’ legal responsibilities**

197. In order to demonstrate compliance with the public sector equality duty and section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, the higher education funding bodies need to consider and understand the impact of their policies on equality. The funding bodies have considered the equality impact of the RAE in the development of the REF, and equality has been embedded into all relevant elements of the REF. The funding bodies will analyse the selection rates by staff characteristics at sector level to inform their future work.

### **HEIs’ legal responsibilities**

198. As both employers and public bodies, HEIs need to ensure that their REF procedures do not discriminate unlawfully against individuals because of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation or because they are pregnant or have recently given birth. In addition, in Northern Ireland, HEIs must ensure that their procedures do not discriminate on the grounds of political opinion.

199. When developing their REF procedures, HEIs will also need to be mindful that under the fixed-term employee and part-time workers regulations, fixed-term employees and part-time workers have the right not to be treated by an employer any less favourably than the employer treats comparable employees on open contracts or full-time workers. The relevant regulations are:

- Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000
- Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002
- Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002.

200. As public sector organisations, in order to show compliance with requirements of the public sector equality duty of the Equality Act 2010, HEIs in England, Scotland and Wales need to consider and understand the effect of their REF policies on equality. Equalities legislation in Northern Ireland and Wales places a specific duty on HEIs to conduct equality impact assessments on new and existing policies. Consequently, the funding bodies require all HEIs to conduct equality impact assessments on their policies for selecting staff for the REF.

### **Summary of legislation**

201. A summary of the equality legislation with which institutions have to comply generally, and which they should take into account when preparing REF 2014 submissions is included in Table 2. Panel chairs, members and secretaries have received a briefing about this legislation (see ‘Equality briefing for REF panels’ available at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk) under Publications). The briefing instructs them to develop working methods and assessment criteria that encourage HEIs to submit the work of all of their excellent researchers, including those whose ability to produce four outputs or work productively throughout the assessment period had been constrained for reasons covered by equality legislation.



**Table 2: Summary of equality legislation**

<b>Age</b>	<b>All employees within the higher education sector are protected from unlawful age discrimination in employment under the Equality Act 2010 and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or if they are associated with a person of a particular age group. (These provisions in the Equality Act 2010 are partially in force, but should be fully in place by April 2012.)</b>
	<p>Age discrimination can occur when people of a particular age group are treated less favourably than people in other age groups. An age group could be for example, people of the same age, the under 30s or people aged 45-50. A person can belong to a number of different age groups.</p> <p>Age discrimination will not be unlawful if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. However, in the context of the REF, the view of the funding bodies is that if a researcher produces excellent research an HEI will not be able to justify not submitting them because of their age group.</p> <p>It is important to note that early career researchers are likely to come from a range of age groups. The definition of early career researcher used in the REF (see paragraph 85) is not limited to young people.</p> <p>HEIs should also note that given developments in equalities law in the UK and Europe, the default retirement age will be abolished from 1 October 2011 in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.</p>
<b>Disability</b>	<b>The Equality Act 2010, the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) (Northern Ireland only) and the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 prevent unlawful discrimination relating to disability. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to have a disability or if they are associated with a person who is disabled (for example, if they are responsible for caring for a disabled family member).</b>
	<p>A person is considered to be disabled if they have or have had a physical and/or mental impairment which has 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. Long-term impairments include those that last or are likely to last for at least 12 months.</p> <p>Cancer, HIV, multiple sclerosis and progressive/degenerative conditions are disabilities too, even if they do not currently have an adverse effect on the carrying out of day-to-day activities.</p> <p>The definition of disability is different in Northern Ireland in that a list of day-to-day activities is referred to. There is no list of day-to-day activities for England, Scotland and Wales but day-to-day activities are taken to mean activities that people, not individuals, carry out on a daily or frequent basis.</p> <p>While there is no definitive list of what is considered a disability, it covers a wide range of impairments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sensory impairments</li><li>• impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as rheumatoid arthritis, depression and epilepsy</li><li>• progressive impairments, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, HIV and cancer</li><li>• organ specific impairments, including respiratory conditions and cardiovascular diseases</li><li>• developmental impairments, such as autistic spectrum disorders and dyslexia</li><li>• mental health conditions such as depression and eating disorders</li><li>• impairments caused by injury to the body or brain.</li></ul> <p>It is important for HEIs to note that people who have had a past disability are also protected from discrimination, victimisation and harassment because of disability.</p> <p>Equality law requires HEIs to anticipate the needs of disabled people and make reasonable adjustments for them. Failure to make a reasonable adjustment constitutes discrimination. If a disabled researcher's impairment has affected the quantity of their research outputs, they may be submitted with a reduced number of outputs (see paragraphs 90-100 and the panel criteria).</p>

<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<p><b>The Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 protect from discrimination trans people who have proposed, started or completed a process to change their sex. Staff in HE do not have to be under medical supervision to be afforded protection because of gender reassignment and staff are protected if they are perceived to be undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment. They are also protected if they are associated with someone who has proposed, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment.</b></p> <p>Trans people who undergo gender reassignment will need to take time off for appointments and in some cases, for medical assistance. The transition process is lengthy, often taking several years and it is likely to be a difficult period for the trans person as they seek recognition of their new gender from their family, friends, employer and society as a whole.</p> <p>The Gender Recognition Act 2004 gave enhanced privacy rights to trans people who undergo gender reassignment. A person acting in an official capacity who acquires information about a person's status as a transsexual may commit a criminal offence if they pass the information to a third party without consent.</p> <p>Consequently, staff within HEIs with responsibility for REF submissions must ensure that the information they receive about gender reassignment is treated with particular care.</p> <p>Staff whose ability to work productively throughout the REF assessment period has been constrained due to gender reassignment may be submitted with a reduced number of research outputs (see paragraphs 90-100 and the panel criteria). Information about the member of staff will be kept confidential as described in paragraph 98.</p>
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	<p><b>Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 as amended, individuals are protected from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of marriage and civil partnership status. The protection from discrimination is to ensure that people who are married or in a civil partnership receive the same benefits and treatment in employment. The protection from discrimination does not apply to single people.</b></p> <p>In relation to the REF HEIs must ensure that their processes for selecting staff do not inadvertently discriminate against staff who are married or in civil partnerships.</p>
<b>Political opinion</b>	<p><b>The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 protects staff from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of political opinion.</b></p> <p>HEIs should be aware of not making any judgements about the selection of staff for REF submissions based on their political opinion.</p>
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	<p><b>Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 women are protected from unlawful discrimination related to pregnancy and maternity.</b></p> <p>Consequently researchers who have taken time out of work or whose ability to work productively throughout the assessment period because of pregnancy and/or maternity, may be submitted with a reduced number of research outputs, as set out in paragraphs 90-100 and in the panel criteria documents.</p> <p>In addition, HEIs should ensure that female researchers who are pregnant or on maternity leave are kept informed about and included in their submissions process.</p> <p>For the purposes of this summary it is important to note that primary adopters have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave.</p>

<b>Race</b>	<p><b>The Equality Act 2010 and the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination connected to race. The definition of race includes colour, ethnic or national origins or nationality. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular race.</b></p> <p>HEIs should be aware of not making any judgements about the selection of staff for REF submissions based on their race or assumed race (for example, based on their name).</p>
<b>Religion and belief including non-belief</b>	<p><b>The Equality Act 2010 and the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination to do with religion or belief. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular religion or belief.</b></p> <p>HEIs should be aware of not making any judgements about the selection of staff for REF submissions based on their actual or perceived religion or belief, including non-belief. 'Belief' includes any structured philosophical belief with clear values that has an effect on how its adherents conduct their lives.</p>
<b>Sex (including breastfeeding and additional paternity and adoption leave)</b>	<p><b>The Equality Act 2010 and the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination to do with sex. Employees are also protected because of their perceived sex or because of their association with someone of a particular sex.</b></p> <p>The sex discrimination provisions of the Equality Act explicitly protect women from less favourable treatment because they are breastfeeding. Consequently the impact of breastfeeding on a women's ability to work productively will be taken into account, as set out in paragraph 90-100 and the panel criteria documents.</p> <p>From 3 April 2011, partners of new mothers and secondary adopters will be entitled to up to 26 weeks of additional paternity and adoption leave. People who take additional paternity or adoption leave will have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave and barriers that exist to taking the leave, or as a result of having taken it, could constitute unlawful sex discrimination. Consequently researchers who have taken additional paternity and adoption leave may be submitted with a reduced number of outputs, as set out in paragraphs 90-100 and in the panel criteria documents.</p> <p>HEIs need to be wary of selecting researchers by any criterion that it would be easier for men to comply with than women, or vice versa. There are many cases where a requirement to work full-time (or less favourable treatment of people working part-time or flexibly) has been held to discriminate unlawfully against women.</p>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<p><b>The Equality Act 2010 and the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination to do with sexual orientation. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person who is of a particular sexual orientation.</b></p> <p>HEIs should be aware of not making any judgements about the selection of staff for REF submissions based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation.</p>
<b>Welsh Language</b>	<p><b>The Welsh Language Act 1993 places a duty on public bodies in Wales to treat Welsh and English on an equal basis. This is reinforced by the provisions of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.</b></p> <p>The arrangements for the assessment of outputs in the medium of Welsh by the REF panels are set out in paragraphs 128-130.</p>

## Guidance to institutions

202. It is a requirement of the REF that each submitting institution establishes a code of practice on the selection of staff for REF submissions. The guidance here provides a common framework for institutions' development of policies and procedures within the REF, but does not generate obligations beyond those that HEIs will in any case need to address. It is the responsibility of HEIs to ensure that their codes of practice, and the manner in which they participate in the REF, are lawful.

203. Institutions that conduct mock REF exercises might consider using them as an opportunity to apply their draft code and refine it further. Where external advisors are used in such exercises, institutions should brief them about their developing REF codes of practice and, in particular, provide guidance about the appropriate level of detailed comment by external advisers on individuals. Mock exercises should include equality impact assessments as part of the process, and the implications of these should be considered when preparing the final submission.

### Principles

204. Each institution's code of practice should demonstrate fairness to its staff by addressing the following principles:

- a. **Transparency:** All processes for the selection of staff for inclusion in REF submissions should be transparent. Codes of practice should be drawn up and made available in an easily accessible format and publicised to all academic staff across the institution, including on the staff intranet, and drawn to the attention of those absent from work. We would expect there to be a programme of communication activity to disseminate the code of practice and explain the processes related to selection of staff for submission. This should be documented in the code. We encourage institutions to publish their codes of practice on their external web-site, and they will be published by the REF team as part of the submissions.
- b. **Consistency:** It is essential that policy in respect of staff selection is consistent across the institution and that the code of practice is implemented uniformly. The code of practice

should set out the principles to be applied to all aspects/stages of the process at all levels within the institution where decisions will be made.

- c. **Accountability:** Responsibilities should be clearly defined, and individuals and bodies that are involved in selecting staff for REF submissions should be identified by name or role. Codes should also state what training those who are involved in selecting staff will have had. Operating criteria and terms of reference for individuals, committees, advisory groups and any other bodies concerned with staff selection should be made readily available to all individuals and groups concerned.
- d. **Inclusivity:** The code should promote an inclusive environment, enabling institutions to identify all eligible staff who have produced excellent research for submission to the REF.

### Staff and committees

205. Structural differences between HEIs mean that the method of developing submissions and the positions of individuals responsible for selection will not be uniform across the sector. The procedures for identifying designated staff (even a senior officer such as the pro vice-chancellor of research) and establishing committees responsible for selecting staff should be clearly documented in the code of practice, as should their terms of reference.

206. Staff with such responsibilities must be provided with training on equality and diversity which has been tailored to the REF processes. The code should detail the equality training that designated persons will either undertake or have undertaken since the introduction of the Equality Act 2010, or the level of understanding of the issues they will be required to attain.

207. We recommend that training include case studies that are used to explore issues such as the implications of dealing with personal circumstances in the process of selecting staff for inclusion in the submission. (Training material will be available on the ECU web-site [www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF).)

208. Clear definitions of each person's role within the selection process must be provided, including the rationale for their role and where the role fits into the institutional management framework.

209. Where a committee or committees have designated REF responsibilities – whether it is at departmental, faculty, UOA or central level – these should be detailed in the code of practice, including, for each committee:

- how the committee has been formed
- its membership
- the definition of its position within the advisory or decision-making process
- the steps taken to ensure that members are well informed about their own and the institution's legal obligations regarding equality.

210. The following details should be provided about its mode of operation:

- the criteria that it will use in carrying out its functions
- the method by which these criteria are communicated
- the timescale for selecting staff
- the method and timescale in which feedback will be provided in respect of the decisions made
- the appeals mechanism.

211. Where committees consider reports from other committees or designated staff reporting to them, the basis of the discussion must be clear, and records must be kept. When individual performance is discussed and the individual is absent, committees should be made aware of all the facts relating to the individual.

### **Equality impact assessment**

212. The funding bodies require all HEIs to conduct an equality impact assessment (EIA) on their policy and procedures for selecting staff for the REF. While the funding bodies recognise that there is no longer a prescribed process for conducting an EIA, it should be a thorough and systematic analysis to determine whether the institution's staff selection policy for the REF may have a differential impact on particular groups. It should inform the institution's code of practice and be kept under review as submissions are prepared.

213. EIAs should be informed by an analysis of data on staff who are eligible for selection in respect of all the protected characteristics for which data are available. The analysis should cover all eligible staff.

The funding bodies recognise that it is best practice to use information gained from engaging, consulting or involving staff from protected groups to inform an EIA. (Consultation is a requirement of section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and engagement is a requirement of the Welsh specific duties of the Equality Act 2010. Engagement is also key to showing due regard to the requirements of the public sector equality duty in England and Scotland.)

214. HEIs who conduct mock exercises can use the process to inform their EIA, and HEIs can also consider information on equality from previous RAEs in identifying possible barriers to participation and opportunities to advance equality.

215. The EIA should be reviewed at key stages of the selection process, to ensure that any necessary changes to prevent discrimination or promote equality are taken prior to the submission deadline. Examples of appropriate points to review the EIA are:

- when identifying eligible staff who are likely to be selected
- when considering appeals
- when preparing the final submission.

216. EIAs should enable HEIs to identify where discrimination may inadvertently occur within their REF processes. They will also enable HEIs to identify where a particular policy or practice has a positive impact on the advancement of equality. Where potential discrimination is identified HEIs will need to justify the policy or practice within the constraints of the law or they will need to take actions to change the policy or practice. If a particular policy or practice is found to have a positive impact on equality, HEIs can seek to apply it to other areas of their REF work.

217. HEIs may consider undertaking impact assessments at the level of UOAs as well as at the institutional level, for example if they perceive imbalance in particular UOAs.

218. The funding bodies expect HEIs to publish their equality impact assessments after the submissions have been made, as a matter of good practice. The published information should include the outcomes of any actions taken to prevent discrimination or advance equality. Publication is a legal requirement in Northern Ireland and in Wales where a policy or practice is regarded as having a significant impact.

## **Disclosure of individual staff circumstances**

219. Guidance has been produced on how REF panels will deal with individual circumstances that constrained an individual's ability to produce four outputs or work productively throughout the assessment period. The institution's code of practice on the selection of staff must draw attention to this guidance and be clear on how such circumstances should be declared by staff.

220. Institutions should have robust procedures to enable staff to disclose their circumstances with an appropriate degree of confidentiality. Particular regard should be had to the disclosure of sensitive issues such as ongoing illness or mental health conditions. We recommend that this is conducted proactively: instead of relying on individuals coming forward, all staff potentially eligible for selection should be asked to complete a form about their individual circumstances. To enable individuals to disclose circumstances in confidence, institutions should consider managing this process centrally.

221. Examples of complex individual staff circumstances (see sub-paragraph 92b for an explanation of complex) will be available on the ECU web-site [www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF), indicating the appropriate reduction in outputs for particular circumstances. We recommend that institutions use or adapt the template used for these examples, when preparing submissions.

222. At each selection stage, institutions are encouraged to formally monitor the process for identifying individuals whose circumstances might need special consideration, and to evidence decisions and actions.

223. The institutional code of practice must include a list of circumstances that will be taken into account, and the mechanisms by which panels and the institution will take them into account. The institution's approach must be consistent with the range of circumstances and procedures set out in both the guidance on submissions and panel criteria statements, and must be standard across all departments.

## **Fixed term and part-time staff**

224. In the light of the Fixed-term and Part-time Regulations (see paragraph 199), consideration will also need to be given to how the institution can

demonstrate the implementation of equality for those on fixed-term (relative to open) and part-time (relative to full-time) contracts.

225. The code of practice should therefore include a statement about how the institution supports its fixed-term and part-time staff, including contract research staff, in relation to equality and diversity.

## **Joint submissions**

226. Institutions making joint submissions may wish to make their code of practice available to collaborating institutions. In any case, they should ensure that joint decision-making across institutions does not compromise their adherence to their respective codes of practice.

## **Feedback and appeals**

227. Appropriate and timely procedures should be put in place to inform staff who are not selected of the reasons behind the decision, and for appeals. Appeals procedures should allow members of staff to appeal after they have received this feedback, and for that appeal to be considered by the HEI before the final selection is made. The individuals that handle appeals should be independent of the decisions about selecting staff and should receive appropriate training.

228. The code of practice should include details of the appeals procedures. Institutions should consider carefully before deciding to use existing complaint reporting mechanisms, and should only do so if these are appropriate for the purpose and can be concluded prior to the REF submission deadline.

## **Submitting codes of practice**

229. Codes of practice should be submitted to the REF team on or before 31 July 2012. The EDAP will examine the codes and advise the UK funding bodies on their adherence to this guidance, prior to the final submission deadline. If the EDAP advises them that an institution's code of practice does not adhere to this guidance the funding bodies will take appropriate action.

230. All submitted codes of practice will be published as part of institutions' submissions, after the conclusion of the REF.

231. The funding bodies plan to undertake an evaluation of the codes of practice after the REF has concluded. As with the RAE, we anticipate this will identify areas of good practice.

### **Useful resources**

232. Further information, including the text of legislation and examples of good practice can be accessed through ECU's web-site at [www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF), from September 2011.

# Annex A

## Assessment criteria and level definitions

1. This annex sets out the generic criteria for assessing submissions and the definitions of the starred levels in the overall quality profiles and each of the sub-profiles (for outputs, impact and environment).
2. Sub-panels will use their professional judgement to form the overall quality profile to be awarded to each submission, taking into account all the evidence presented. The primary outcome of the assessment will be an overall quality profile awarded to each submission, showing the proportion of the submission that meets each starred level in the profile.
3. The definitions of the starred levels in the overall quality profile are below.

**Table A1: Overall quality profile: Definitions of starred levels**

Four star	Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
Three star	Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence.
Two star	Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
One star	Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
Unclassified	Quality that falls below the standard of nationally recognised work. Or work which does not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of this assessment.

4. For each of the three elements of the assessment – outputs, impact and environment – sub-panels will develop a sub-profile, showing the proportion of the submission that meets each of four starred quality levels. The assessment criteria and the definitions of the starred levels for the sub-profiles are set out below.

**Table A2: Outputs sub-profile: Criteria and definitions of starred levels**

The criteria for assessing the quality of outputs are 'originality, significance and rigour'.	
Four star	Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
Three star	Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence.
Two star	Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
One star	Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
Unclassified	Quality that falls below the standard of nationally recognised work. Or work which does not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of this assessment.



**Table A3: Impact sub-profile: Criteria and definitions of starred levels**

The criteria for assessing impacts are 'reach and significance':

- In assessing the impact described within a case study, the panel will form an overall view about its 'reach and significance' taken as a whole, rather than assess 'reach and significance' separately.
- In assessing the impact template (REF3a) the panel will consider the extent to which the unit's approach described in the template is conducive to achieving impacts of 'reach and significance'.

Four star	Outstanding impacts in terms of their reach and significance.
Three star	Very considerable impacts in terms of their reach and significance.
Two star	Considerable impacts in terms of their reach and significance.
One star	Recognised but modest impacts in terms of their reach and significance.
Unclassified	The impact is of little or no reach and significance; or the impact was not eligible; or the impact was not underpinned by excellent research produced by the submitted unit.

**Table A4: Environment sub-profile: Criteria and definitions of starred levels**

The research environment will be assessed in terms of its 'vitality and sustainability'. Panels will consider both the 'vitality and sustainability' of the submitted unit, and its contribution to the 'vitality and sustainability' of the wider research base.

Four star	An environment that is conducive to producing research of world-leading quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability.
Three star	An environment that is conducive to producing research of internationally excellent quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability.
Two star	An environment that is conducive to producing research of internationally recognised quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability.
One star	An environment that is conducive to producing research of nationally recognised quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability.
Unclassified	An environment that is not conducive to producing research of nationally recognised quality.

5. The four main panels will explain in more detail, within their statements on the panel criteria and working methods, how their group of sub-panels will apply the assessment criteria and interpret the level definitions in developing the sub-profiles.
6. The method for combining the sub-profiles into the overall quality profile is explained at Annex B.

## Notes on the criteria and definitions of the starred levels

7. 'World-leading' quality denotes an absolute standard of quality in each unit of assessment.
8. 'World leading', 'internationally' and 'nationally' in this context refer to quality standards. They do not refer to the nature or geographical scope of particular subjects, nor to the locus of research nor its place of dissemination. For example, research which is focused within one part of the UK might be of 'world leading' standard. Equally, work with an international focus might not be of 'world leading, internationally excellent or internationally recognised' standard.
9. The criterion of 'reach' for impacts does not refer specifically to a geographic scale. Sub-panels will consider a number of dimensions to the 'reach' of impacts as appropriate to the nature of the research and its impacts. For example, an impact located within one region of the UK might be judged as 'outstanding' (graded as four star). Equally, an impact with international reach might not be judged as 'outstanding', 'very considerable' or 'considerable'.
10. The profile for a submission that contains no research which meets the one star threshold will be 100 per cent unclassified. A submission that contains no research (that is, no work that meets the definition of research for the REF) will not be awarded a quality profile.

# Annex B

## Quality profiles

1. The overall quality profiles will show the proportion of research activity in a submission judged to meet the definitions at each starred level. The overall quality profiles will be published in steps of 1 per cent. Table B1 shows overall quality profiles for two fictional universities.

**Table B1 Sample overall quality profiles\***

Unit of assessment A	FTE Category A staff submitted	Percentage of research activity in the submission judged to meet the standard for:				
		four star	three star	two star	one star	unclassified
University X	50.45	18	41	25	16	0
University Y	65.2	12	32	45	10	1

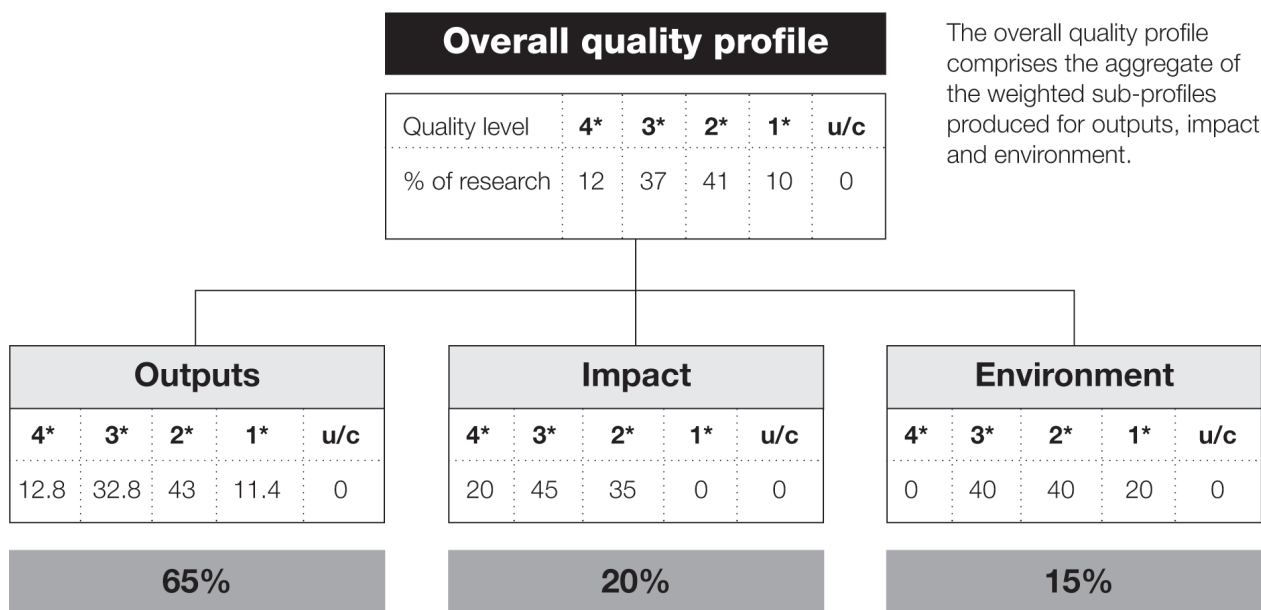
\* The figures are for fictional universities. They do not indicate expected proportions.

2. Sub-panels will produce the overall quality profiles by assessing three distinct elements of the assessment – research outputs, impact and the research environment – to produce a sub-profile for each element. The three sub-profiles will be aggregated to form the overall quality profile for the submission, with each element weighted as follows:

- Outputs: 65 per cent
- Impact: 20 per cent
- Environment: 15 per cent.

3. The rounding methodology described in paragraphs 4-7 of this annex will be used to produce the overall quality profiles. In recommending the overall quality profiles to the main panels, sub-panels will confirm that, in their expert judgement, the overall quality profile is a fair reflection of the research activity in that submission, and that their assessment has taken account of all the different components of the submission.

**Figure B1 Building a quality profile: a worked example**



## Rounding

4. The sub-profiles will be combined using the weights in paragraph 2 of this annex. A cumulative rounding process will then be applied to the combined profile, to produce an overall quality profile. This methodology will ensure that the overall quality profile for any submission will always sum to 100 per cent and to avoid the unfair consequences that simple rounding can produce.

### Worked example

5. Using the example in Figure 1, first calculate the initial overall profile, that is, the sum of the weighted sub-profiles for outputs, environment and impact.

	Starred levels				
	4*	3*	2*	1*	u/c
Outputs	12.8	32.8	43	11.4	0
Environment	0	40	40	20	0
Impact	20	45	35	0	0
Weighted					
65%	8.3	21.3	28	7.4	0
15%	0	6	6	3	0
20%	4	9	7	0	0
Initial profile	12.3	36.3	41	10.4	0

6. Cumulative rounding works in three stages:

a. The initial profile is:

	4*	3*	2*	1*	u/c
	12.3	36.3	41	10.4	0

b. Stage 1: Calculate the cumulative totals (for example the cumulative total at 3\* or better is  $12.3 + 36.3 = 48.6$ ).

	4*	3* or better	2* or better	1* or better	u/c or better
	12.3	48.6	89.6	100	100

c. Stage 2: Round these to the nearest 1 per cent (rounding up if the percentage ends in exactly 0.5).

	4*	3* or better	2* or better	1* or better	u/c or better
	12	49	90	100	100

d. Stage 3: Find the differences between successive cells to give the rounded profile. So, for example, the percentage allocated to 2\* is the difference between the cumulative total at 2\* or better, minus the cumulative total at 3\* or better ( $90 - 49 = 41$ ).

	4*	3*	2*	1*	u/c
	12	37	41	10	0

7. Cumulating the totals the other way (rounding down if the percentage ends in exactly 0.5) gives exactly the same answer.

# Annex C

## Definitions of research and impact for the REF

### Definition of research for the REF

1. For the purposes of the REF, research is defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared.
2. It **includes** work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship<sup>8</sup>; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction. It **excludes** routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes such as for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques. It also **excludes** the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research.
3. It **includes** research that is published, disseminated or made publicly available in the form of assessable research outputs, and confidential reports (as defined at paragraph 115 in Part 3, Section 2).

### Definition of impact for the REF

4. For the purposes of the REF, impact is defined as an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia (as set out in paragraph 7).
5. Impact **includes**, but is not limited to, an effect on, change or benefit to:
  - the activity, attitude, awareness, behaviour, capacity, opportunity, performance, policy, practice, process or understanding
  - of an audience, beneficiary, community, constituency, organisation or individuals
  - in any geographic location whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.
6. Impact **includes** the reduction or prevention of harm, risk, cost or other negative effects.
7. For the purposes of the impact element of the REF:
  - a. Impacts on research or the advancement of academic knowledge within the higher education sector (whether in the UK or internationally) are **excluded**. (The submitted unit's contribution to academic research and knowledge is assessed within the 'outputs' and 'environment' elements of REF.)
  - b. Impacts on students, teaching or other activities within the submitting HEI are **excluded**.
  - c. Other impacts within the higher education sector, including on teaching or students, are **included** where they extend significantly beyond the submitting HEI.

<sup>8</sup> Scholarship for the REF is defined as the creation, development and maintenance of the intellectual infrastructure of subjects and disciplines, in forms such as dictionaries, scholarly editions, catalogues and contributions to major research databases.

# Annex D

## Units of assessment

Main panel	Unit of assessment
A	1 Clinical Medicine
	2 Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care
	3 Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy
	4 Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience
	5 Biological Sciences
	6 Agriculture, Veterinary and Food Science
B	7 Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences
	8 Chemistry
	9 Physics
	10 Mathematical Sciences
	11 Computer Science and Informatics
	12 Aeronautical, Mechanical, Chemical and Manufacturing Engineering
	13 Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Metallurgy and Materials
	14 Civil and Construction Engineering
	15 General Engineering
C	16 Architecture, Built Environment and Planning
	17 Geography, Environmental Studies and Archaeology
	18 Economics and Econometrics
	19 Business and Management Studies
	20 Law
	21 Politics and International Studies
	22 Social Work and Social Policy
	23 Sociology
	24 Anthropology and Development Studies
	25 Education
	26 Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism
D	27 Area Studies
	28 Modern Languages and Linguistics
	29 English Language and Literature
	30 History
	31 Classics
	32 Philosophy
	33 Theology and Religious Studies
	34 Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory
	35 Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts
	36 Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management

# Annex E

## Timetable

March 2010	Publication of 'Initial decisions' by the funding bodies on the conduct of the REF (HEFCE Circular letter 04/2010)
July 2010	Publication of 'Units of assessment and recruitment of expert panels' (REF 01.2010)
November 2010	Publication of reports on the REF impact pilot exercise
February 2011	Panel membership announced
March 2011	Publication of 'Decisions on assessing research impact' (REF 01.2011)
July 2011	Publication of 'Assessment framework and guidance on submissions' (REF 02.2011)
End July 2011	Publication of draft panel criteria and working methods for consultation
5 October 2011	Close of consultation on draft panel criteria and working methods
January 2012	Publication of panel criteria and working methods
31 July 2012	Institutions intending to make submissions to the REF submit their codes of practice on the selection of staff
Autumn 2012	Pilot of the REF submissions system
October 2012	Invitation to HEIs to make submissions; invitation to request multiple submissions; and start of survey of submissions intentions
December 2012	Survey of submissions intentions complete and deadline for requests for multiple submissions
January 2013	Launch of submissions systems and accompanying technical guidance
31 July 2013	End of assessment period (for research impacts, the research environment, and data about research income and research doctoral degrees awarded)
Mid 2013	Appointment of additional assessors to panels
31 October 2013	Census date for staff eligible for selection
29 November 2013	Closing data for submissions
31 December 2013	End of publication period (cut-off point for publication of research outputs, and for outputs underpinning impact case studies)
Throughout 2014	Panels assess submissions
December 2014	Publication of outcomes
Spring 2015	Publication of submissions, panel overview reports and sub-profiles

# Annex F

## Format and page limits for textual parts of submissions

### Format

1. Templates for REF3a, REF3b and REF5 will be provided to institutions in Word. Completed templates and case studies must be submitted as PDF documents. PDF documents must be accessible to screen reading technology (rather than scanned documents). They must adhere to the following:

- Arial font, 11 point (minimum)
- single line spacing (minimum)
- 2 cm margins (minimum).

2. Completed templates may include formatting (bold or underlined text, headings, lists, and so on), tables and non-text content, so long as the guidance on maximum page limits and on minimum font size, line spacing and margin widths are adhered to.

### Page limits

3. All case studies (REF3b) will be limited to **four pages**, including all references (except for the personal details of the corroborating sources listed in section 5 of the case study template, which will be collected in a separate form to make them easier to omit from publication).

4. The maximum page limits for the impact template (REF3a) and the environment template (REF5) will depend on the total FTE Category A staff included in the submission, according to Table F1.

**Table F1: Page limits for REF3a and REF5**

Number of Category A staff in the submission (FTE)	Page limit for impact template (REF3a)	Page limit for environment template (REF5)
1 – 14.99	3	7
15 – 24.99	3	8
25 – 34.99	3	9
35 – 44.99	4	10
45 – 54.99	4	11
55 – 74.99	4	12
75 or more	5, plus 1 further page per additional 60 FTE	13, plus 1 further page per additional 20 FTE



# Annex G

## Impact case study template and guidance

1. This annex provides the template for impact case studies, annotated with guidance about the information required in each of its sections. This should be read alongside the definitions and eligibility criteria for impact case studies in Part 3, Section 3 of the main document, and alongside the panel criteria statements. The case study template for use in preparing submissions will be provided in Word, along with templates for REF3a and REF5, on the REF submission system.
2. Each case study should include sufficiently clear and detailed information to enable panels to make judgements based on the information it contains, without making inferences, gathering additional material, following up references or relying on members' prior knowledge. References to other sources of information will be used for verification purposes only, not as a means for panels to gather further information to inform judgements.
3. Each completed case study template will be limited to **four pages** in length (see Annex F). Within the annotated template below, indicative guidance is provided about the expected maximum length limit of each section, but institutions will have flexibility to exceed these so long as the case study as a whole remains no longer than **four pages** and the guidance on formatting at Annex F is adhered to.

### Impact case study template (REF3b)

<b>Title of case study:</b>
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words) This section should briefly state what specific impact is being described in the case study.
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words) This section should outline the key research insights or findings that underpinned the impact, and provide details of what research was undertaken, when, and by whom. References to specific research outputs that embody the research described in this section, and evidence of its quality, should be provided in the next section. Details of the following should be provided in this section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The nature of the research insights or findings which relate to the impact claimed in the case study.</li><li>• An outline of what the underpinning research produced by the submitted unit was (this may relate to one or more research outputs, projects or programmes).</li><li>• Dates of when it was carried out.</li><li>• Names of the key researchers and what positions they held at the institution at the time of the research (where researchers joined or left the HEI during this time, these dates must also be stated).</li><li>• Any relevant key contextual information about this area of research.</li></ul>

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

This section should provide references to key outputs from the research described in the previous section, and evidence about the quality of the research.

Include the following details for each cited output:

- Author(s).
- Title.
- Year of publication.
- Type of output and other relevant details required to identify the output (for example journal title and issue).
- Details to enable the panel to gain access to the output, if required (for example, a DOI or URL), or stating that the output is listed in REF2 or can be supplied by the HEI on request.

All outputs cited in this section must be capable of being made available to panels. If they are not available in the public domain or listed in REF2, the HEI must be able to provide them if requested by the REF team.

Evidence of the quality of the research must also be provided in this section. Guidance on this will be provided in the panel criteria documents. Where panels request details of key research grants or end of grant reports, the following should be provided:

- Who the grant was awarded to.
- The grant title.
- Sponsor.
- Period of the grant (with dates).
- Value of the grant.

### 4 Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

This section should provide a narrative, with supporting evidence, to explain:

- how the research underpinned (made a distinct and material contribution to) the impact
- the nature and extent of the impact.

The following should be provided:

- A clear explanation of the process or means through which the research led to, underpinned or made a contribution to the impact (for example, how it was disseminated, how it came to influence users or beneficiaries, or how it came to be exploited, taken up or applied).
- Where the submitted unit's research was part of a wider body of research that contributed to the impact (for example, where there has been research collaboration with other institutions), the case study should specify the particular contribution of the submitted unit's research and acknowledge other key research contributions.
- Details of the beneficiaries – who or what community, constituency or organisation has benefitted, been affected or impacted on.
- Details of the nature of the impact – how they have benefitted, been affected or impacted on.
- Evidence or indicators of the extent of the impact described, as appropriate to the case being made.
- Dates of when these impacts occurred.

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

This section should list sources external to the submitting HEI that could, if audited, provide corroboration of specific claims made in the case study. Sources provided in this section should not be a substitute for providing clear evidence of impact in section 4; the information in this section will be used for audit purposes only.

This section should list sufficient sources that could, if audited, corroborate key claims made about the impact of the unit's research. These could include, as appropriate to the case study, the following external sources of corroboration (stating which claim each source provides corroboration for):

- Reports, reviews, web links or other documented sources of information in the public domain.
- Confidential reports or documents (if listed, these must be made available by the HEI if audited).
- Individual users/beneficiaries who could be contacted by the REF team to corroborate claims\*.
- Factual statements already provided to the HEI by key users/beneficiaries, that corroborate specific claims made in the case study and that could be made available to the REF team by the HEI if audited\*.

\* Where the sources are individuals who could be contacted or have provided factual statements to the HEI, the submitted case study should state only the organisation (and, if appropriate, the position) of the individuals concerned, and which claim(s) they can corroborate. Their personal details (name, position, contact details) must be entered separately on the REF submission system and not on REF3b. Details of a maximum of five individuals may be entered for each case study; these data will not be published as part of the submission.

# Annex H

## Standard data analyses

When we provide submissions to sub-panels, we will supply a standard analysis of the data submitted in REF4a/b/c, and some of the data submitted in REF1a, in respect of each submission in that UOA, and aggregated for all submissions in that UOA (see paragraph 165). The items listed below will be provided to panels.

### Summary of each submission within a UOA

1. Total number of submitted staff, by category and ECR status (headcount).
2. Total number of Category A submitted staff (FTE).
3. Total number of outputs submitted.
4. Numbers of submitted staff (headcount) with a maximum of 1, 2, 3 or 4 research outputs (four separate totals).
5. Number of research doctoral degrees awarded, by year.
6. Number of research doctoral degrees awarded per submitted staff<sup>9</sup>, by year.
7. Research income by year, total across all sources.
8. Research income per submitted staff (see footnote 9) by year, total across all sources.
9. Research income by source, total across all years (see Part 3 Section 4 for a list of sources).
10. Research income per submitted staff (see footnote 9) by source, total across all years.

### UOA summary

1. Total number of submitted staff, by category and ECR status (headcount).
2. Total number of category A submitted staff (FTE).
3. Total number of outputs submitted.
4. Average number of research doctoral degrees awarded, by year.
5. Average number of research doctoral degrees awarded per submitted staff (see footnote 9), by year.
6. Average research income by year, total across all sources.
7. Average and median research income per submitted staff (see footnote 9) by year, total across all sources.
8. Average research income by source, total across all years.
9. Average and median research income per submitted staff (see footnote 9) by source, total across all years.

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<sup>9</sup> Two versions of this indicator will be shown: one using headcount of both Category A and Category C staff as the denominator; the second using FTE of only Category A staff as the denominator.

# Annex I

## Index of definitions and data requirements

This annex provides an index of definitions used in this guidance, and of descriptions of the data requirements.

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# Annex J

## List of abbreviations

<b>DEL</b>	Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland
<b>DOI</b>	Digital Object Identifier
<b>ECU</b>	Equality Challenge Unit
<b>ECR</b>	Early career researcher
<b>EDAG</b>	The REF's Equalities and Diversity Advisory Group
<b>EDAP</b>	The REF's Equalities and Diversity Advisory Panel
<b>EIA</b>	Equality impact assessment
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FSR</b>	Financial Statistics Return
<b>FTE</b>	Full-time equivalent
<b>HE</b>	Higher education
<b>HEFCE</b>	Higher Education Funding Council for England
<b>HEFCW</b>	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
<b>HEI</b>	Higher education institution
<b>HESA</b>	Higher Education Statistics Agency
<b>NIHR</b>	National Institute for Health Research
<b>RAE</b>	Research Assessment Exercise
<b>REF</b>	Research Excellence Framework
<b>SFC</b>	Scottish Funding Council
<b>UOA</b>	Unit of assessment



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