

## Guidance for institutions on environment indicators

1. This document provides advice and examples on the inclusion of additional quantitative indicators in the environment, based on the work of the Forum for Responsible Research Metrics (FFRRM), and incorporating advice from the REF main and sub-panels.
2. The FFRRM set up a working group to develop its advice on the use of indicators in REF environment. The group met between September 2017 and February 2018. Further details about the background to this work will be available shortly on the FFRRM's webpages, at [www.universitiesuk.ac.uk](http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk).
3. The FFRRM working group developed a set of principles to govern their advice to the REF main panels on the inclusion of indicators for REF 2021 environment. These are reproduced at Annex A, and institutions are encouraged to follow these principles in considering quantitative indicators to include as supporting evidence in the environment element of the REF.
4. Annex B provides example indicators. Informed by the advice of the FFRRM, the following guidance is provided to institutions on the use of indicators:
  - a. Use of additional quantitative indicators is intended to evidence and help to contextualise some statements in the narrative templates (REF5a/b).
  - b. The indicators set out in Annex B are provided as examples, and are intended to be optional for institutions to draw on as appropriate evidence in their own context. Institutions should note the guidance provided in the 'Panel criteria' that the examples should not be regarded as mandatory nor a 'check-list' of additional requirements.
  - c. The examples are not intended to be prescriptive, or exhaustive.
5. In addition to all eight of the principles which has governed the FFRRM's work, they have also advised the following:
  - a. Eligible and/or submitted staff: that the option to present indicators by reference to both Category A submitted and/or Category A eligible staff is available. Submitted staff should include all staff with a significant responsibility for research, and we expect many institutions to submit 100% of their eligible staff. However, some institutions will not submit all eligible staff (where they do not have significant responsibility for research).
  - b. Presentation of the indicators: that submissions take a consistent approach to how they present the data, using either submitted or eligible staff. This will assist the panels in their interpretation of the indicators. In all cases, it should be clear which population is used.
  - c. Census date: It is recommended that many of the indicators are presented at the REF2021 census date (31 July 2020). Presenting indicators in the context of

the Category A submitted staff profile was considered more robust than presenting data across the REF period.

## Annex A: principles governing the inclusion of indicators in the environment

1. Table 1 below sets out the principles that institutions are encouraged to follow in considering quantitative indicators as supporting evidence in the environment element of the REF. These indicators were developed to support and govern the work of the FFRRM.

**Table 1**

1	Primacy of narrative	The narrative element of the environment statement can be supported by evidence from quantitative data. These data should not supplant the primacy of narrative and peer review in the assessment of REF 2021 environment.
2	Indicator menu	A menu of quantitative indicators should be in the guidance on submissions. Institutions will be able to select suitable evidence to support claims, which could include indicators from the menu. This menu is not prescriptive, or exhaustive and should be sensitive to unintended consequences.
3	Equality and diversity	The menu of quantitative indicators will be considered with due regard to equality and diversity, both in the development of the menu and how the use of each indicator might be interpreted by panels.
4	Transparency and robustness	Each quantitative indicator in the menu should be based on robust data which is auditable.
5	Burden	Each quantitative indicator in the menu should reflect data which are already collected, where possible and appropriate.
6	Institutional/ disciplinary differences	The menu of quantitative indicators should be developed at a level which will reflect diversity of the sector, and to allow institutions to demonstrate excellence at discipline and institutional level.
7	Interdisciplinary research (IDR)	The menu of quantitative indicators provided as guidance for the REF 2021 environment should not advantage or disadvantage IDR in the research environment.
8	Data contextualisation	Each quantitative indicator in the menu should be aligned in a manner which enables panels to interpret its meaning, ensuring panels can equitably assess provided evidence. Contextualisation will allow a suitable level of comparability between submissions.

## Annex B: example indicators (REF5a/b)

### Indicators for the institutional-level statement (REF5a)

1. The indicators for REF5a set out below can be drawn on, as relevant, to support information about the institution's research environment. Institutions should reference the 'Guidance on submissions' Part 3, Section 5 and the 'Panel criteria' Part 3, Section 4, for information about how REF5a will be assessed.

### Strategy

Table 2

Indicator	Indicator definition	Notes
Open data	[Compliant / working towards compliance] with the Concordat on Open Research Data at institution level	
Responsible use of metrics in research evaluation	[Commitment to] responsible use of metrics, as evidenced by (for example) signing the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment at institution level or the Leiden manifesto	
Use of metrics in research evaluation	[Have] a policy on the use of research metrics for research assessment at institutional level	
Research integrity	[Compliant] with the Concordat to support Research Integrity at institution level	Compliance with the concordat to support research integrity is a condition of grant in English institutions. Institutions can explain in the narrative how they reach compliance.

## People

**Table 3**

Indicator	Indicator definition	Notes
Early career research staff profile	% of [submitted staff FTE defined as early career researchers] at REF 2021 census date at institution level	This indicator can be derived from submission data by HEIs, as ECR status for submitted staff will be captured through the submission system.
Staff on permanent / fixed-term / atypical contracts	% of [eligible staff FTE and/or submitted staff FTE] on [permanent (can be known as open-ended) / fixed-term / atypical contracts] <sup>1</sup> at REF 2021 census date at institution level	
Disability profile of staff	% of [eligible staff FTE and/or submitted staff FTE] returned with [No known disability; disability declared; unknown] <sup>2</sup> at REF 2021 census date at institution level	
Gender profile of staff	% of [eligible staff FTE and/or submitted staff FTE] returned as [male; female; other] <sup>3</sup> at REF 2021 census date at institution level	
Ethnicity profile of staff	% of [eligible staff FTE and/or submitted staff FTE] returned as [white; black; Chinese; Asian; other/mixed; unknown] <sup>4</sup> at REF 2021 census date at institution level	
Gender pay gap	Average (mean and median) institutional gender pay gap for [academic staff] <sup>5</sup> in 2019.	

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c17025/a/terms>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c16025/a/disable>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c17025/a/sexid>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c16025/a/ethnic>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c17025/a/acempfun>. Staff with an academic employment function coded as 1, 2, 3 or 9.

Athena Swan	Achieved Athena Swan at [bronze, silver, gold] at institution level in [year(s) of award]	
Race Equality Charter	Achieved Race Equality Charter at [bronze, silver] at institution level in [year(s) of award]	
Stonewall Workplace Equality Index	[Participated] in Stonewall Workplace Equality Index at institution level in [year(s)]. <i>Optional</i> [rank in UK workplace index]	Stonewall ranks participants and publishes a list of 100 organisations. All participants will receive a ranked position across all organisations who submitted, as well as a rank within 'education' organisations.
HR Excellence in Research Award	[Achieved] HR Excellence in Research Award at institutional level in [year(s) of award]	
Comparable survey data	Data from benchmarked national surveys should be returned with the following for contextualisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UOA or institution level</li> <li>- survey question (narrative)</li> <li>- respondent type (narrative)</li> <li>- survey response rate (%)</li> <li>- survey date [YY] or [MM/YY]</li> <li>- time series of data points [YY, YY] or [MM/YY, MM/YY]</li> </ul>	Institutions should note that these data have the potential to meet the working group's principles (Annex A) where the data are properly contextualised.

## Indicators for unit-level environment template (REF5b)

2. The indicators for REF5b set out below can be drawn on, as relevant, to support information about the unit's research environment. Any indicators included will be in addition to REF 4a/b/c (research doctoral degrees awarded, research income and income-in-kind), which must be included in each submission (as set out in 'guidance on submissions', Part 3, Section 4). Institutions should also reference the 'Panel criteria' Part 3, Section 4, for details of any specific items of data requested by the panels.

### Section 1: Unit context, research and impact strategy

**Table 4**

Indicator	Indicator definition	Notes
Open data	[Compliant / working towards compliance] with the Concordat on Open Research Data at UOA level	

### Section 2: People

**Table 5**

Indicator	Indicator definition	Notes
Staff contract level profile	% of [eligible staff FTE and/or submitted staff FTE] at [staff contract level <sup>6</sup> ] at REF 2021 census date at UOA level  Staff contract level HESA: <b>F1</b> professor; <b>I0</b> non-academic staff section manager, senior lecturer (pre 92), principal lecturer (post 92), reader, principal research fellow; <b>J0</b> Section/team leader (professional, technical, administrative), lecturer B (pre-92), Senior Lecturer (post 92), Senior Research Fellow; <b>K0</b> Senior	Individuals might fall into more than one HESA 'levels' category, but are only returned to one of the categories.  The data definitions are based on the HESA staff record data descriptions (footnote 1). These definitions may encompass professional service and teaching staff.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c16025/a/levels>

	Professional/Technical Staff, Lecturer A (pre-92), Lecturer (post-92), Research fellow, Researcher/senior research assistant, teaching fellow.	
Staff on permanent / fixed-term / atypical contracts	% of [eligible staff FTE and/or submitted staff FTE] on [permanent (can be known as open-ended) /fixed-term / atypical contracts] <sup>7</sup> at REF 2021 census date at UOA level	
Athena Swan	Achieved Athena Swan at [bronze, silver, gold] at department level relating to submitting unit in [year(s) of award]	Institutions will need to map 'Athena Swan departments' to submitting units.
Comparable survey data	Data from benchmarked national surveys should be returned with the following for contextualisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UOA or institution level</li> <li>- survey question (narrative)</li> <li>- respondent type (narrative)</li> <li>- survey response rate (%)</li> <li>- survey date [YY] or [MM/YY]</li> <li>- time series of data points [YY, YY] or [MM/YY, MM/YY]</li> </ul>	Institutions should note that these data have the potential to meet the working group's principles (Annex A) where the data are properly contextualised.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c17025/a/terms>



### Section 3: Income, infrastructure and facilities

Table 6

Indicator	Indicator definition	Narrative
Diversity of income sources	% of [average annual research income] at UOA level by <u>[Column 1 BEIS Research Councils, The Royal Society, British Academy and The Royal Society of Edinburgh; Columns 2 and 3 UK-based charities; Columns 4, 5, 6, and 7 UK government, industry and other UK sources; Columns 8, 9, 10 and 11 EU; Columns 12, 13 and 14 Non-EU]</u> <sup>8</sup>	The income figures by source are collected in REF 4b which is mandatory – as noted above. This indicator allows institutions to present the distribution of funding as a percentage.

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c16031/table\\_5](https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c16031/table_5)