

Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel: further particulars for applicants

Research Excellence Framework 2021

Background

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the system for assessing research in UK higher education institutions. The REF is undertaken by the four UK higher education funding bodies. It was first conducted in 2014, and replaced the previous Research Assessment Exercise (RAE).

The REF is a process of expert review, and will include the assessment of research outputs, impact and environment. Institutions will make submissions in units of assessment (UOAs), to be assessed by 34 sub-panels. The sub-panels will work under the guidance of four main panels. The ['Draft guidance on submissions'](#) and ['Consultation on the draft panel criteria and working methods'](#) were published in July 2018, with the final guidance and criteria for the exercise to be published in early 2019.

The UK funding bodies are committed to supporting and promoting equality and diversity in research careers. As part of this commitment, the funding bodies have appointed an Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel. The role of the panel is to advise the funding bodies, the REF team and the REF panels on the development of the full range of measures to promote [equality and diversity in the REF](#).

EDAP is chaired by Professor Dianne Berry OBE and is currently made up of eight members who have expertise in equality and diversity issues affecting research careers, and experience in research leadership and management. They represent a range of institutions from around the UK. During the criteria-setting phase of the REF 2021 exercise, the panel has advised on measures to increase the representativeness of the expert panels, and on the development of the guidance and criteria that appropriately recognise equality and diversity considerations in all elements of submissions.

For the next phase of the exercise during 2019-2021, EDAP will have responsibility for a range of assessment tasks relating to institutional codes of practice; requests for output reductions arising from staff circumstances; the 'People' section of the environment template; and equality and diversity templates from bodies wishing to nominate REF expert panel members. EDAP members will also contribute to an overall review report for the exercise. Further information about the specific tasks is listed later in this document.

Appointment of EDAP members

In order to ensure an appropriate number of members and range of expertise to undertake the assessment phase tasks, the funding bodies are seeking to appoint an additional 4-6 members to EDAP. Through these additional appointments, we are seeking to add specific skills in the areas of mental health practice; GP/medical

experience; and/or HR experience/expertise. Priority will be given to candidates with relevant experience in these three key areas, however we are also looking to diversify the panel in other ways and would also welcome applications from individuals with:

- Experience/expertise in employment practices / legislation
- Experience/expertise in research practices
- Experience/expertise in E&D legislation
- HEI research management experience
- E&D practitioner experience within an HEI context
- Previous REF experience

The additional EDAP members will be appointed through an open, written applications process, and assessed against criteria set out in the person specification (below). The appointments will be made by the chief executives (or equivalent) of the four UK HE funding bodies, after taking advice from the selection panel which includes the EDAP chair, the REF Director, and current members of EDAP.

The chief executives (or equivalent) of the four UK HE funding bodies retain responsibility for appointing all EDAP members, and reserve the right to amend the membership of the panel to ensure the effective conduct of the exercise.

Role of an EDAP member in the assessment phase

Each EDAP member will have responsibility for contributing to the key tasks set out below.

Review of submitted Codes of practice

Each institution making a submission to REF 2021 is required to develop, document and apply a code of practice on the fair and transparent identification of staff with significant responsibility for research (where an HEI is not submitting 100% of Category A eligible staff); determining who is an independent researcher; and the selection of outputs.

The task of reviewing codes of practice will involve:

- Reviewing a proportion of the submitted codes
- Discussing and agreeing collective feedback for the relevant UK funding body on whether each code meets the requirements set out in the [guidance](#) provided to institutions, giving reasons for this (N.B this guidance is currently in draft form and is subject to change following analysis of consultation with the sector)
- Where codes are required for resubmission by an institution, providing advice to the funding bodies where requested on specific elements of the revised code

Review of requests for staff circumstances

As part of the funding bodies' commitment to equality and diversity, proposed measures were set out in the draft guidance to recognise the effect that individuals' circumstances may have on research productivity. These proposals were subject to consultation. The

final arrangements will be set out in the guidance documentation due out in January 2019.

The proposed measures allow for staff to be returned to the exercise without the required minimum of one research output where certain exceptional individual circumstances have affected their ability to meet the requirement, and for HEIs to request an optional reduction in the number of outputs required from the submitting unit overall (usually where units have higher proportions of staff who have not been able to research productively throughout the period because of individual circumstances).

Further information is available within paragraphs 149-193 of the ['Draft guidance on submissions'](#).

The task of reviewing requests for staff circumstances will include:

- Reviewing a proportion of the submitted requests for staff circumstances reductions
- Attending EDAP meetings to discuss any cases requiring a judgement and providing an expert view on whether the circumstances outlined in the request are commensurate to the reduction requested
- Requesting advice from the relevant main panel chair where necessary
- Providing written recommendations on the submitted requests, including the appropriate number of outputs that may be reduced, or a written explanation of why the request is not accepted in full, or in part.

Assessment advice on the 'People' section of the environment template

HEIs participating in REF 2021 are required to submit an 'environment' template which includes information at both the institutional and unit level on strategy and resources to support research and enable impact. The 'People' section of the template invites HEIs to provide information on staffing strategy, support and training of research students, and building on the information provided in codes of practice, evidence about how equality and diversity in research careers is supported and promoted across the institution.

The task of providing assessment advice on the 'People' section of the unit-level environment template will include:

- Taking part in a calibration exercise to develop a common understanding of the assessment criteria and standards
- Reviewing a proportion of the submitted templates
- Providing advice to the REF expert panels on overall strengths or areas of concern, on the basis of the generic [assessment criteria and procedures](#) (see Section 4, paras 338-344)

Review of nominating bodies' equality and diversity templates

In recognition that diversity of background, perspective, and experience contributes fundamental insight and value to the value of the work of REF panels, the funding bodies have put in place a range of [measures](#) to increase the representativeness of panel membership for REF 2021. These measures include a requirement that all organisations wishing to submit nominations for REF panel membership should provide information

about how equality and diversity issues were taken into account in putting forward nominations.

A further round of nominations for the panels will take place in 2020. Building on the recommendations from EDAP's first review of templates submitted in the 2017 round of nominations, nominating bodies will be asked to submit information about their nominations processes. The task of assessing submitted templates from nominating bodies will include:

- Reviewing a proportion of the submitted templates
- Agreeing collective advice and feedback on the templates

End of exercise review report

Toward the end of the exercise, EDAP will produce a final report on the measures to support equality and diversity in the REF 2021. The report will include information on how EDAP carried out its work during the REF assessment, provide observations about the effectiveness of the equality and diversity measures, and make recommendations for the future.

EDAP members will contribute to the report during meetings and via correspondence during 2021.

Terms of appointment

EDAP will meet as follows:

- a. During 2019 we anticipate that EDAP will meet twice. During summer 2019, EDAP members will be allocated a proportion of the submitted Codes of practice to review and provide written feedback to the UK funding bodies.
- b. During 2020 we anticipate that EDAP will meet approximately two or three times. EDAP members will be allocated a proportion of staff circumstances requests for review during spring. Members will assess Nominating bodies' E&D templates during autumn of this year.
- c. During 2021 (the assessment phase) we anticipate that EDAP will meet two or three times. The assessment of environment templates will take place from January onwards, and the EDAP end of exercise report will be drafted during spring / summer.

As part of the role, EDAP members will need to be able to attend approximately two-three meetings per year (usually in London). In preparation for meetings during this phase, EDAP members will be expected to review a range of meeting papers, copies of minutes, and other documents. This, combined with the above specific tasks, will involve a substantial workload for individual members.

EDAP members will receive fees to be paid at regular intervals and members will be provided with a full schedule of fee payments on appointment. Travelling and subsistence expenses will be reimbursed according to an agreed scheme.

Application procedure

To be considered for appointment, please complete an application statement of no more than two sides of A4, addressing **each criterion** in the attached person specification.

If you have any particular requirements in relation to the selection process, please let us know immediately so we can discuss any reasonable adjustments with you. We are requesting this information to make the process as equitable as possible for each candidate.

Applicants will be asked to fill in an anonymous equal opportunities monitoring form with their application. This data will be used to monitor representation on REF panels, compared with the pool of candidates, according to key protected characteristics. Data collected through this form will not be made available to the selection panel during the selection process. This form will be made available on the REF website shortly.

Applications and monitoring forms should be emailed to admin@ref.ac.uk by **noon on 23 November 2018**.

Queries can be addressed to Gina Reid, email admin@ref.ac.uk.

Successful candidates will be informed by early December 2018.

Who can apply?

Applications are open to all individuals who meet the criteria set out in the person specification below, from within and outside the higher education sector.

The funding bodies recognise that diversity of thought and experience contributes fundamental insight and value to the work of the REF panels. We would therefore like to encourage applications from diverse candidates, in particular from individuals from a black or minority ethnic background.

We are seeking to appoint approximately 4-6 additional EDAP members, and seeking diversity of membership in the following areas:

- personal characteristics
- region, including representativeness across the four UK nations
- type of institution (where applicable)

Job Description

Responsibilities

EDAP members will be responsible for:

- Advising the REF team, REF panel chairs and the UK funding bodies on the development of the full range of measures to promote equality and diversity in the REF.
- Contributing to the implementation of equality and diversity measures to increase the representativeness of the expert panels.
- Offering advice to the main and sub-panels where requested, with the aim of ensuring equality and diversity at all times within the assessment process.
- Assessing relevant submitted information to the agreed criteria, working methods and equalities guidance, using consistent application of standards.
- Ensuring the timely delivery of results and feedback to the REF team, REF panel chairs and UK funding bodies on completion of the assessment tasks.
- Identifying the successes of the E&D measures within REF 2021, and making recommendations for futures measures to advance equality and diversity within all elements of the REF process.
- Attending and participating in meetings of the panel.
- Planning, preparing for, and following up meetings as necessary.
- Representing EDAP externally as required.

Key tasks:

- Reviewing submitted COPs and providing advice to the funding bodies
- Reviewing submitted staff circumstances requests and advising the REF team on applicable reductions to outputs.
- Reviewing submitted equality and diversity templates from bodies making nominations for REF expert panel membership.
- Reviewing submissions to the 'People' section of the environment template and advising the sub-panels.
- Contributing to the end of exercise review report and recommendations.

Person specification

Please address each of the criteria below in your application.

Criteria (essential)
A demonstrable commitment to advancing equality and diversity in research careers
Ability to contribute constructively to discussion and provide advice
Willingness and ability to work independently at assessment tasks and to work collaboratively with colleagues to calibrate approach
Ability to attend and participate in EDAP and other meetings as indicated in the further particulars and engage in preparatory and follow up work as required
Where applicable, confirmation that employer is supportive of time commitments the role will require, and/or demonstration of personal willingness to take this on
Priority will be given to appointing at least three applicants who meet the essential criteria and have one or more of the following:
Mental health practice experience
GP/Medical experience
HR experience/expertise
Desirable
Experience/expertise in employment practices / legislation
Research practices
E&D legislation relating to at least one funding body UK nation
HEI research management expertise (spread of HEI types)
E&D practitioner within HEI context
Previous REF experience