

University of Chester

# CODE OF PRACTICE FOR REF2021

(Revised September 2020 to incorporate timescale amendments recognising the effects of COVID-19)

Director of Research & Knowledge Transfer

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Institutional Policies & Strategies to Promote and Support E&D

The University of Chester is committed to maintaining an intellectual community, workplace and culture which is free from discrimination and which respects, welcomes and promotes equality, diversity and inclusion. We recognise that we must not only comply with equality legislation, but must also continually advance in all aspects of equality in order to ensure an inclusive environment for employees that supports a positive student experience. The University has had an Equality Policy and Equal Pay Policy in place for many years with a wide range of supplementary policies covering time off for dependents, mental health, dignity & respect, parental leave, freedom of speech, flexi-time etc. and guidelines on gender identity. We believe that the principles of equality and diversity are already well embedded within our research practices.

The University strives, as one of our continuing strategic aims, to embed equality principles throughout the University's learning and teaching, research and scholarship, outreach and other University activities and practices, and to enhance participation of staff and students in equality events, programmes and initiatives through:

- increasing knowledge and understanding of key issues;
- fostering an intellectual environment where people are able to express their identity in their work and/or study;
- providing a communication network that invites feedback, access and the generation of innovative ideas;
- promoting an organisational ethos of continuous improvement, growing from the strong foundation of our institutional core values.

A full picture of diversity and equality at the University is presented in the annual Equality Report. However, some of the most significant mechanisms to achieve our aims are summarised here:

#### The Equality Forum

The University's Equality Forum, established in 2011 is open to all staff and students and is a combination of presentations, workshops and general discussion relating to current initiatives, activities and goals. The forum's debate is often led by current Advance HE or Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) guidance, and is an opportunity for staff to discuss how they can best engage with the guidance.

#### The Diversity Festival

Although diversity is embedded throughout university life and equality events run throughout the academic year, the Diversity Festival, which is held each Spring term, is an annually recurring fixture in the University of Chester's Diversity Calendar and has been since 2006. The Festival has been nominated for two national awards and is well respected throughout Cheshire and the North-West.

#### Gender Equality (Athena Swan Award)

The University of Chester was successful in obtaining the institutional bronze award in 2013 and has concluded all the actions in the 2013 action plan. The application to renew the award

under Charter's post-May 2015 criteria was successful in the autumn of 2018.

### Sexual Orientation

The University of Chester has a proactive Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans+ Staff Group (operating under the umbrella term LGBT+), and open to people who self-define as being one or more of: lesbian, gay, bi, trans, and/or any other sexual or gender minority including but not limited to queer, intersex and asexual. LGBT+ covers most people who are not cis-gendered or heterosexual.) The group use the Stonewall Equality Index themes as a basis for their group agenda, activities and action planning, which currently includes an application for Navajo Charter Mark accreditation in the academic year 2018-19.

The University is fully supportive of Chester Pride, participating in the parade and providing staff and students as volunteer stewards. The University will continue to support the event.

### Disability

The University of Chester is a Level 2: Disability Confident Employer (Disability Confident replaced the previous Positive about Disabled People/ Two Ticks scheme). As a Disability Confident Employer, the University is committed to the scheme's many actions underpinning the core theme of employing the right people for the University; and keeping and developing our disabled staff. The University continually reviews how it implements the core actions fully and which of the optional activities it will engage in.

### Communicating with our staff

The University has a growing number of staff networks (Disabled Staff Group; LGBT+ Staff Group; Women's Networking Forum; Parents' Network; Carers' Network) which meet to facilitate staff-staff networking and support,. These forums of discussion identify issues to be raised with Senior Management, in addition to opportunities for Senior Management to consult staff with particular interests on a wide range of issues. The University has also conducted a staff opinion survey every three years in order to collect feedback on a wide range of topics, with analysis and reporting completed by Capita.

### HR Excellence in Research Award

The University has held and renewed this award since 2012, which aims to ensure full compliance with the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, and that within the University the needs of researchers (especially research assistants and early career researchers) are explored, understood and supported. The 6 year review was submitted in May 2019.

### University Research & Knowledge Transfer Strategy

The University's Research and Knowledge Transfer Strategy affirms our commitment to support the promotion of equality and diversity in research activities, including:

- A fair and transparent recruitment process for all academic appointments
- Mentoring and support with career development and promotions
- Promoting the dissemination and publication of research that addresses questions of equality and diversity
- Attracting PGR students from a diverse range of backgrounds and supporting their formation as academics of the future

The strategy acknowledges the benefits of research upon the development of staff and the impact upon their teaching. The University therefore encourages academic staff to gain research degrees and have the opportunity to conduct research, which will in turn add value to the student experience.

## 1.2 Findings of the Equality Impact Assessment of REF2014 and Actions Taken Since REF2014

In comparison to the UK HE sector the University has for many years had a higher proportion of staff identifying as female across both academic and professional services. Several factors underpin this, including:

- the academic portfolio which reflects our mission, for example Faculties such as Health and Social Care and Education and Children’s Services are large and have more female staff; and
- the University is a residential community providing accommodation and catering services to its students, with many of the professional services posts associated with these activities in Hospitality and Residential (Domestic) Services, occupied by women.

Data on research activity as indicated by formal research assessments, has for many years indicated that active researchers at the University of Chester are disproportionately male (around 60%) when compared to the academic staff profile as a whole (typically 47%). This data is consistent with the UK Research Councils Diversity Data report which demonstrates the under-representation of women amongst grant applicants (although success rates are similar for women and men). Our equality impact assessment for REF2014 showed that although women were under-represented, the selection processes had not introduced a disproportionate gender representation (i.e. that there was no statistical significance between actual and expected proportions of selected staff, based on the underlying population of considered staff). The assessment also concluded that contractual status had not had an adverse effect upon fixed term or part-time staff (or indeed a significant effect on staff with other protected characteristics). It is important to recognise that at a University such as this, not all staff are ‘research active’ but are involved in a wide range of activities in addition to teaching – hence the important distinction made for REF2014 between ‘eligible’ (i.e. all academic staff) and ‘considered’ (those with research publications). Nevertheless, the under-representation of women amongst researchers was a matter that UoC considered warranted further investigation and commissioned a research project in 2015-16 to investigate any underlying causes or barriers<sup>1</sup>. The report concluded that the imbalance could partly be attributed to the preponderance of female staff in discipline areas which rely heavily upon professional practice, specifically Education (teacher training) and Health Care (nurse/midwife training). It also made suggestions for action on training which Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee have prioritised:

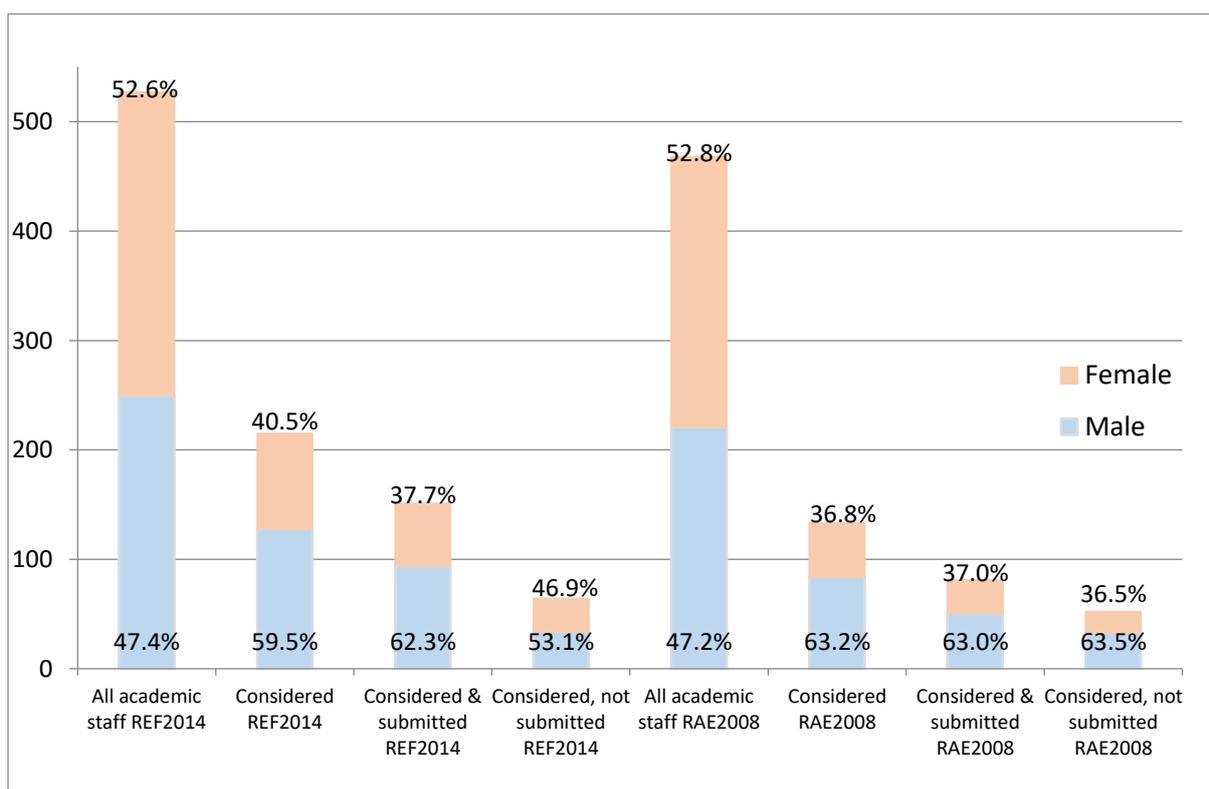
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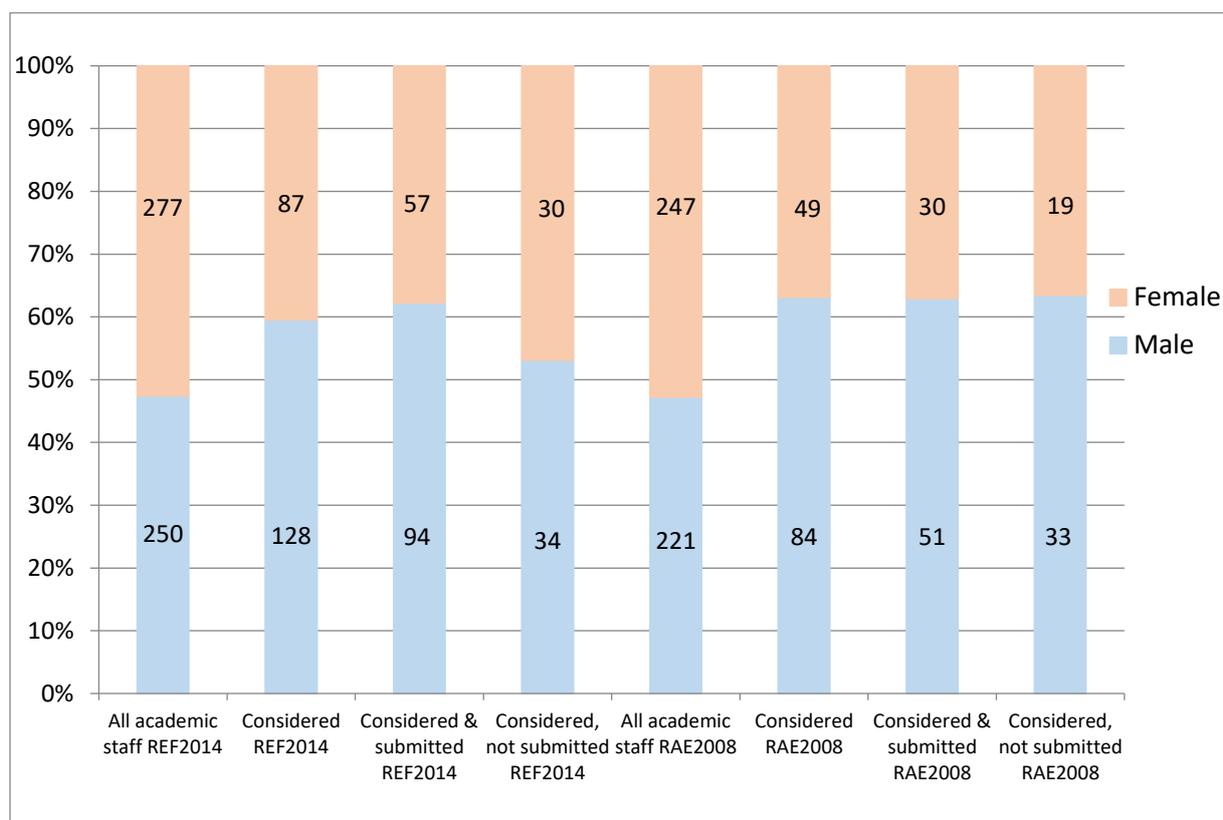
<sup>1</sup> (Davies, Healy, & Cliffe, 2016) “Gendered experiences of academic staff in relation to research activity and the REF2014” <https://chesterrep.openrepository.com/handle/10034/620944>

- Training, mentoring and focused impact initiatives for staff from non-research professional backgrounds.
- Training for line managers on indirect gender-related impacts on research through workload planning.

**Table 1: Comparison of RAE2008 and REF2014 gender data**

REF2014	All academic staff	Staff considered	Staff considered & submitted	Staff considered but not submitted
<b>Male</b>	250 (47.4%)	128 (59.5%)	94 (62.3%)	34 (53.1%)
<b>Female</b>	277 (52.6%)	87 (40.5%)	57 (37.7%)	30 (46.9%)
RAE2008	All academic staff	Staff considered	Staff considered & submitted	Staff considered but not submitted
<b>Male</b>	221 (47.2%)	84 (63.2%)	51 (63.0%)	33 (63.5%)
<b>Female</b>	247 (52.8%)	49 (36.8%)	30 (37.0%)	19 (36.5%)

**Figure 1: Number and proportion of eligible, considered, submitted and not submitted staff to RAE2008 and REF2014 by gender**



**Figure 2: Number and proportion of eligible, considered, submitted and not submitted staff to RAE2008 and REF2014 by gender**

The Athena Swan action plan has also had a significant effect upon the academic community at the University, particularly in relation to promoting gender equality. The introduction of the Associate Professor role, and “Making Professor” workshops have been identified as being particularly beneficial to supporting the career development of female researchers.

### 1.3 The Principles underlying this COP

- Transparency:** All processes for the identification of staff with significant responsibility for research, determining research independence, and selecting outputs for inclusion in REF submissions should be transparent. This Code of Practice will be made available within UoC from July 2019 in an easily accessible format and publicised to all academic and research staff across the institution, including on Portal. Human Resources will also ensure that it is drawn to the attention of those absent from work who have indicated that they wish to be kept informed of key issues. Briefings, open to all Category A eligible staff, will disseminate the Code of Practice and explain the processes related to the identification of staff and eligible outputs for submission (see Plans for Communicating the Code of Practice below). From December 2019, it is proposed to publish the Code of Practice on the University's corporate website.
- Consistency:** The Code of Practice clearly demonstrates the principles to be applied at each stage of the process for the identification of staff with a significant responsibility

for research, determining research independence, and selecting outputs for inclusion in the REF submission. The approach to determine this will be consistent across the University; with advisory and decision-making roles being outlined in Appendix 2: Membership of Committees, Boards and Groups.

- **Accountability:** Responsibilities are clearly defined in the Code, and individuals and bodies that are involved in identifying staff with significant responsibility for research; determining research independence; and selecting eligible outputs for REF submissions are identified by role. The training required of those who are involved in the processes is also set out. Operating criteria and terms of reference for individuals, committees, advisory groups and any other bodies concerned with identifying staff or output selection will be made readily available to all individuals and groups concerned.
- **Inclusivity:** The Code is designed to promote an inclusive environment, enabling the University to identify all staff who have significant responsibility for research, all staff who are independent researchers, and the excellent research produced by staff across all protected groups (including those with part-time or fixed-term working arrangements). Our approach is designed to be flexible and enable staff to move into (and out of) this group as their role and experience changes over time and to facilitate the recognition of the contributions of all staff. The University takes the view that there should be no detriment to staff in not being included in the REF and likewise no advantage to being included. The University wholeheartedly recognises the importance of the many and varied contributions individuals make to its academic activities through teaching, administration, knowledge transfer and leadership etc., and it does not measure the value of its staff simply on the basis of their contribution to the REF submission. The inclusion or otherwise of an individual and their work in the REF submission will not, by itself, influence career progression or professorial candidature.

#### 1.4 Process for Development of the Code of Practice

In developing this Code of Practice we have, where practical, built upon the processes which worked well for REF2014 and have also taken note of REF2014 overview report<sup>2</sup> which highlighted good practice found across all institutions in that exercise.

The Code of Practice has been drafted by the Director of Research & Knowledge Transfer in consultation with the PVC (Research & Knowledge Transfer), PVC (Enhancement) and a representative of the University and College Union. Briefings with UoA co-ordinators have also informed the development of the Code.

1. The broad principles of staff identification and output selection to be included was discussed at Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee on 03/09/18.
2. Approval of the broad principles of staff identification and output selection by the University Council HR Committee (involving the recognised unions) on 23/10/18.
3. Approval of the first full draft by the University Council HR Committee on 19/02/19 as the basis for consultation.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ref.ac.uk/2014/pubs/refcodesofpracticegoodpracticereport/#d.en.75885>

4. Consideration of the first full draft by Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee on 27/02/19.
5. Consultation launched 21/03/19: Publication of the draft on Portal (accessible to all staff) and via email notification to the academic staff group, inviting feedback. Invitation to participate in the consultation was sent to the various staff groups/networks with interests in diversity & equality (Disabled Staff Group, LGBT+ Staff Group, Women's Networking Forum, Parents' Network, Carers' Network). Human Resources provided the draft to and invited feedback from staff absent from work who have indicated that they wish to be kept informed of key issues.
6. Consultation closed: 18/04/19.
7. A revised draft to Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee on 15/05/19, with feedback made available to ensure it is given full consideration.
8. Recommendation on approval by University Council HR Committee on 16/05/19, ratified by Chair of University Council.
9. Publication on Portal, with HRMS writing to absent staff.

***Note that the Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee has representation from all Faculties and the papers are available on Portal to all staff.***

#### 1.5 Plans for Communicating the Code of Practice

Communication of the Code of Practice to staff has been achieved through a number of mechanisms including:

- a. Discussion at relevant committees including Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee.
- b. Briefings for specific staff groups (e.g. Deans and Heads of Subject and further briefings for UoA co-ordinators).
- c. Q&A sessions open to all staff to facilitate consultation and feedback.
- d. News item on the Portal front page and publication of the draft and final COP on Portal pages dedicated to REF2021 (accessible to all staff) & via email notification to the academic and research staff groups. Notification will also be sent to the various staff groups/networks with interests in diversity & equality (Disabled Staff Group, LGBT Staff Group, Women's Networking Forum, Parents' Network, Carers' Network) with an offer that RKTO staff will attend a meeting if they feel that would facilitate discussion and feedback. Human Resources to provide to staff absent from work who have indicated that they wish to be kept informed of key issues.
- e. News item in "Forum" (newsletter distributed electronically and as hard copy).
- f. The COP will be made available in an accessible format.

## Timetable of communication

When	Who	What	
3/09/18	Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee (papers available to all staff via Portal)	Broad principles underlying identification of staff and selection of eligible outputs	
24/10/18	Briefing for Deans and Heads of Subjects		
14/11/18	Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee (papers available to all staff via Portal)		
27/02/19	Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee (papers available to all staff via Portal)	First draft of full draft Code	
13/03/19	Senate (for information and notification regarding the consultation - papers available to all staff via Portal)		
21/03/19	Consultation launched		
21/03/19	Briefing for Deans and Heads of Subject		
22/03/19- 27/03/19	Briefing for UoA co-ordinators		
22/03/19	Portal notice; All staff email notification		
	Circulation to staff groups; HRMS to contact staff who are absent		
12/04/19	Research Festival briefing – open to all staff		
18/04/19	Consultation closes		
15/05/19	Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee (papers available to all staff via Portal)		Final version of Code
17/05/19	Researcher Network event		Final version of Code
June 2019	Publication on Portal	Submitted Code	
Provisionally October 2019	Briefing for all staff on the approved Code of Practice Information to be included in the induction information for all subsequent new members of academic and research staff	Approved Code	

1.6 Complaints and Public Interest Disclosure Policy (Whistleblowing)

The University's policy is available to staff on Portal<sup>3</sup>. The policy names the following individuals as points of contact:

President of the University Council		
Vice-Chancellor		

<sup>3</sup> <https://portal1.chester.ac.uk/finance/Documents/Public%20Interest%20Disclosure-Whistleblowing%20-%20APPROVED%205-7-18%20Updated%20March%202019.pdf>

University Secretary & Secretary to the University Council		
Chair of the Audit & Risk Management Committee		
Internal Auditor (RSM)		

It is expected that complaints regarding the implementation of this Code of Practice would be resolved through the aforementioned University of Chester Complaints and Public Interest Disclosure. However, where this is not possible the UK funding bodies will offer a robust and independent process that will duly consider such complaints and appropriate action. These complaints may be made by individuals directly affected by the (non) implementation of the Code of Practice or by those outside the process who have reason to believe that an institution has breached its approved Code of Practice. Individual complaints will not be able to challenge the adequacy of an approved Code of Practice. Further details of this process will be set out by the funding bodies in Autumn 2019.

## 2. Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

### 2.1 Policies and Procedures

As noted in part 1, the University does not expect to be submitting 100% of the Category A eligible staff across most of the University. Although there is extensive use of a standard “teaching and research” contract, not all staff are research active but might instead be involved in a wide range of activities in addition to teaching. Furthermore, the ‘teaching led, research informed’ approach adopted by the University along with our particular academic portfolio means that a significant proportion of the academic staff are currently engaged in undertaking doctoral studies or, having completed doctoral qualifications, take up academic positions without post-doctoral research experience. Therefore there is a need to include a research independence criterion within our processes for determining ‘significant responsibility for research’. Whilst this scenario may be more prevalent in some units, a uniform approach will be adopted across all units.

REF definition of Category A eligible staff:

Category A eligible staff are defined as academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, on the payroll of the submitting institution on the census date, whose primary employment function is to undertake either ‘research only’ or ‘teaching and research’<sup>4</sup>. Staff should have a substantive research connection with the submitting unit. Staff on ‘research only’ contracts should meet the definition of an independent researcher.

REF definition of independent researcher

For the purposes of the REF, an independent researcher is defined as an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual’s research programme. Possible indicators of independence are listed below. Note that each indicator may not individually demonstrate independence and where appropriate multiple factors may need to be considered:

- leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project
- holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement. An illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of independent fellowships can be found at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk)
- acting as a co-investigator on an externally funded research project<sup>5</sup>
- leading a research group or a substantial work package
- significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research.

<sup>4</sup> Individuals whose primary employment function is to undertake either ‘research only’ or ‘teaching and research’ are staff returned to the Higher Education Statistics Agency Staff Collection with an academic employment function of either ‘Academic contract that is research only’ or ‘Academic contract that is both teaching and research’ (identified as codes ‘2’ or ‘3’ in the ACEMPFUN field)

<sup>5</sup> This might normally indicate independence in cases where large research programmes have discrete and substantial work packages led by co-investigators, which would be equivalent to a principal investigator role on a smaller grant.

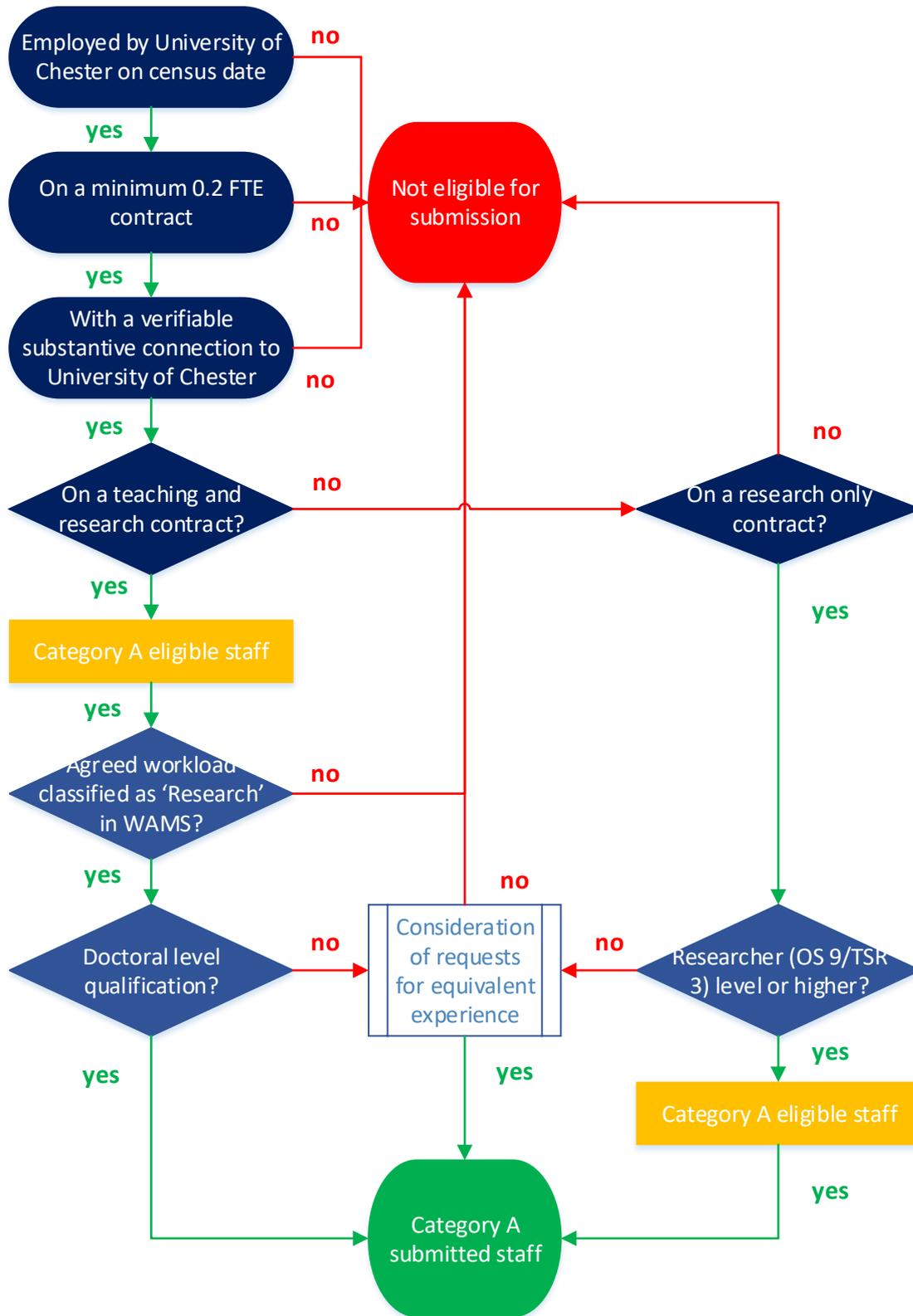


Figure 3: Showing the process for the identification of eligible and submitted staff

## Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

Data from the University's workload management system (WAMS) will be the basis for deciding whether staff have a significant responsibility for research:

- a. In order to be identified as having a 'significant responsibility for research' workload will need to be classified as "Research". Time allocated (and signed off) in the "Research" category will have a specific source of funding associated with it – which may be internal or external – and will normally have an agreed programme of work with planned outcomes. Activities that are classified as 'Research' will include:
  - i. Staff time funded directly by external research grants and recorded as "Externally Funded Research" (including all five sub-categories of funder type).
  - ii. Staff time identified as "Institution Own Funded Research" (IOFR) (including both sub-classes of "no additional monies" or "QR or other internal grant" (which includes the Global Challenges Research Fund)) – the mechanism by which IOFR time is allocated is set out in the WAMS guidance.
  - iii. Staff time identified as "Grant or bid preparation" – the mechanism by which this time is allocated is also set out in the WAMS guidance.

### Notes:

- Support for research, which includes hours allocated to support preparations for REF is not classified as 'Research'.
- Scholarly activity time is not classified as 'Research' but as 'Indirect support for teaching'. This time is contractually determined.
- Many funders of research will not fund existing staff time. Although existing staff time is costed in the grant application process, the grant itself may not fund their time. Staff in receipt of grants of this type (and funding-in-kind) may be granted "Institution Own Funded Research" time, though not necessarily at the rate included in the grant application.

- b. In order to be identified as an Independent researcher:
  - i. "research only" staff should hold a position at Senior Researcher (OS 9/TSR 3) level or higher. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis using a portfolio of evidence of experience provided by the staff member against the REF2021 Guidance on submissions (para. 128-133) and Panel Criteria and Working Methods (para. 187-189).
  - ii. "teaching and research" staff should hold a doctoral level research qualification (or have equivalent experience). Staff will not normally be considered to be independent researchers whilst conducting research for a doctoral qualification (i.e. conducting research under supervision). However, academic staff who are undertaking 'PhD by publication' would fall outside this definition as the degree is awarded on the basis of previously published research normally undertaken independently. Any time allocated to support their doctoral research is not classified as "research", but may be allocated under "CPD" or "Indirect support for teaching". The University also recognises that in some discipline areas, gaining doctoral qualifications has not been a traditional path in academic development. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis using

## Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

a portfolio of evidence of experience provided by the staff member against the REF2021 Guidance on submissions (para. 128-133) and Panel Criteria and Working Methods (para. 187-189).

As noted in section 1, the code is designed to promote an inclusive environment and ensure that the excellent research produced by staff, including those with part-time or fixed-term working arrangements, is submitted. Our criteria for the identification of staff with a significant responsibility for research is based upon workload allocations, which does not differentiate based upon contractual status (beyond pro-rata allocations for part-time working), and will not disadvantage part-time staff.

### 2.2 Implementation of the criteria

Prior to implementing the above criteria, RKTO staff conducted a survey and modelling exercise in January-February 2019 to assess how well the application of the proposed criteria match staff perceptions of whether they have a “significant responsibility for research” and their independence as researchers. The data collected in the survey was also used in the equality impact assessments supporting the development of the Code of Practice.

Once the criteria are confirmed, but prior to the formal approval of the Code of Practice, the REF Technical Officers will obtain workload planning data for 2018/19 from the University central WAMS system and HR staff data. The Officers will then apply the criteria as follows:

1. Filter the staff list for those with an eligible contract (0.2FTE or greater with an employment function that includes research);
2. For those with a “teaching and research contract”:
  - a. Apply a filter to the WAMS data to establish a list of staff with agreed workload classified as “Research”;
  - b. Apply a filter for doctoral level qualification;
  - c. Consider requests for and apply filter for experience equivalent to doctoral qualifications;
3. For those with a “research only” contract:
  - a. Apply a filter for grade to identify those at Senior Researcher (OS 9/TSR 3) level or higher;
  - b. Consider requests for and apply filter for other experience demonstrating research independence.

Consideration of requests to demonstrate equivalent experience (i.e. arising from 2c or 3b) will be through a panel consisting of the PVC (Research & Knowledge Transfer), relevant Faculty Dean, the HR Manager (undertaking the Equality Impact Assessments) and assisted by the REF Technical Officers, who will take advice from relevant UoA co-ordinator(s) (to ensure that disciplinary differences are fully understood). Where the request for recognition of equivalence or advice of UoA co-ordinators is not accepted by the panel, the reason(s) will be recorded to maintain transparency in the decision making process.

Once the preliminary eligibility exercise has been completed, staff will be informed of the preliminary outcome in writing. This notification will also invite staff to raise queries, seek feedback, and allow any apparently erroneous data to be investigated and corrected.

## Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

In the autumn term of 2019 once the Code of Practice is approved the exercise will be repeated using WAMS workload planning data for 2019/20 (which includes the census date of 31/7/20). It will be subsequently undertaken for new staff and those with contract changes during the course of the 2019/20 year. Any changes to previously notified status will be communicated in writing to the member of staff and UoA co-ordinator.

Indicative implementation schedule (a more detailed schedule will be available on Portal):	
No later than October 2019	Staff individually informed in writing of the outcome of the preliminary eligibility exercise (based upon 2018/19 WAMS data) Staff also invited to apply for consideration of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• individual circumstances; and</li> <li>• recognition of experience equivalent to doctoral qualifications</li> </ul>
October - December 2019	Queries, feedback and correction of erroneous data
December 2019	Staff individually notified in writing of the outcome of applications for consideration of individual circumstances and recognition of equivalent experience
No later than February 2020	Staff to complete sign-off of 2019/20 workload for TRAC
March 2020	Staff individually informed in writing of the outcome of the eligibility exercise based upon 2019/20 WAMS data
August-September 2020	Feedback meetings for staff who do not satisfy the eligibility criteria for “Category A eligible with significant responsibility for independent research” with the PVC (Research & Knowledge Transfer)

### 2.3 Development of process

The process of developing the Code of Practice and the procedures for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research and independence are set out in sections 1.4-1.5. The development of process was informed by consultation, modelling exercises, a staff survey and equality impact assessments.

### 2.4 Staff, committees and training

There are a number of ways in which staff become involved in the REF submission within the institution:

- A. Existing staff for whom REF is part of their normal duties on an ongoing basis – for example in relation the development of long-term strategy, policy and procedures, as well as central management of the REF2021 submission. Their involvement in the REF is by virtue of their normal role e.g.
  - PVC Research & Knowledge Transfer (decision maker)
  - Deans of Faculty (decision makers)
  - Director of Research & Knowledge Transfer (advisory capacity)
- B. Staff who are specifically appointed to have a sole focus upon the REF2021 submission
  - REF Data officer (advisory capacity)
- C. Existing staff for whom the REF2021 submission is added to their duties for a specific period of time
  - Unit co-ordinators (advisory capacity)
  - HR Manager (Employee Relations and HR Policy)
  - Grants Officers in RKTO (advisory capacity - may have a supporting role)

The individuals who hold posts described as A or B are contractual appointments which have gone through the normal University appointment procedures overseen by HR with due regard to fairness, transparency and equality of opportunity.

The individuals who hold posts described under C come forward by nomination from their line managers (usually Head of Department or Dean of Faculty). These roles often start informally or may be associated with other roles such as Faculty Research Co-ordinators. The individuals are nominated by managers taking into account a number of factors such as:

1. individual research profile;
2. workload capacity;
3. management skills;
4. previous REF experience (or similar).

As the University moves into the phase of drafting the submission (i.e. once staff with significant responsibility have been identified and outputs are assessed for quality) the REF Steering Group will audit the Unit co-ordinator nomination process. Although the Unit Co-ordinators have a critical role in influencing and shaping the submissions, it must be emphasised that Unit co-ordinators are not decision makers within the submission process.

## Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

Therefore we believe an audit of the nominations will provide appropriate assurance of process.

Equality and Diversity training will be provided by HR and RKTO staff in line with any guidance issued by the REF team and may draw upon resources developed by Advance HE. All staff are already required to undertake a mandatory Equality & Diversity online training module. HR will check and ensure that all individuals involved in REF whether as decision makers or advisors have undertaken the mandatory training. This will be supplemented by training on unconscious bias. Attendance at a training session specifically about equality in relation to the REF will also be required by all decision makers, technical advisors and UoA co-ordinators. Panel members assessing output quality and external advisors will be provided with briefing materials. An indicative schedule of training is included as Appendix 1.

<b>Advisory structure</b>		
<b>Committee/Group</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Formation and Membership</b>
Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee	<p>Provides advice on REF strategy, policy and process including consultation on the Code of Practice: staff identification and output selection criteria.</p> <p>Receives information on the UOAs to which the University will submit.</p> <p>Monitors (via REF Steering Group) implementation of the Code of Practice and other relevant policies.</p>	<p>See Appendix 2 for membership.</p> <p>The gender balance of all committees is monitored on an annual basis. All committees are expected to have, wherever possible, a Chair and deputy of different genders. All Faculties have representation to ensure disciplinary differences are considered.</p>
Senate	Receives and confirms reports from Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee.	<p>See Appendix 2 for membership.</p> <p>See note above on committee formation.</p>

Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

<b>Advisory structure</b>		
<b>Committee/Group</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Formation and Membership</b>
REF Steering Group	<p>Provides advice on procedural aspects of preparing REF submissions.</p> <p>Audits the nomination process for Unit Co-ordinators.</p> <p>Receives and considers the Equality Impact Assessments and advises where action should be taken to address inequalities.</p> <p>Receive and consider the staff/outputs profile for each UoA, seeking clarification of unusual patterns and advise where action should be taken to address inequalities.</p>	<p>Convened by PVC (Research &amp; Knowledge Transfer)</p> <p>Membership:</p> <p>PVC (Research &amp; Knowledge Transfer) (Chair)</p> <p>PVC (Enhancement)</p> <p>Four members of academic staff with experience of managing or preparing research assessment submissions – representing each of the main panels.</p> <p>HR Manager (Employee Relations and HR Policy)</p> <p>Two Technical advisors:</p> <p>Director of Research &amp; Knowledge Transfer</p> <p>REF Data Officer</p> <p>See appendix 2</p> <p>The Steering Group has been formed with gender and subject disciplinary balance in mind.</p>
Technical advisors	<p>Provide technical advice on REF regulations and internal processes. Populate the submission database and respond to REF team queries/audit.</p>	<p>By virtue of their role, staff in the Research &amp; Knowledge Transfer Office dealing with the REF.</p>

Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

<b>Group of Decision Makers</b>		
<b>Position</b>	<b>Role in decision making structure</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Vice-Chancellor	<p>Final approval of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- overall REF strategy and criteria for determining significant responsibility for research and research independence</li> <li>- UOAs to which the University will submit</li> <li>- content of submissions</li> </ul> <p>Advised by PVC (Research &amp; Knowledge Transfer) and Research &amp; Knowledge Transfer Committee.</p>	By virtue of position as head of the institution.
PVC (Research & Knowledge Transfer)	<p>Formulation of overall REF strategy.</p> <p>Recommending final draft of Code of Practice on the identification of staff (for approval by University Council).</p> <p>In consultation with faculty Deans, recommending to the Vice-Chancellor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UOAs to which the University will submit</li> <li>- Identification of staff for inclusion within each UOA</li> <li>- final form and content of submissions</li> </ul> <p>Commissioning external advice on submissions.</p> <p>Approval of the reduction in number of outputs for individual circumstances (and consulting with Deans over complex circumstances).</p> <p>Providing feedback to staff identified as NOT having significant responsibility for independent research.</p>	<p>Responsible for oversight of research across institution and the development and implementation of related strategies and policies.</p> <p>Post holder is required to be an experienced researcher with detailed knowledge of REF requirements and experience of previous research assessment exercises (RAE/REF or similar international exercises).</p>

<b>Group of Decision Makers</b>		
<b>Position</b>	<b>Role in decision making structure</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Faculty Deans	<p>Approval of UOA coordinators and oversight of their activities.</p> <p>Advising PVC (Research &amp; Knowledge Transfer) on Code of Practice on the identification of staff.</p> <p>In consultation with PVC (Research &amp; Knowledge Transfer), recommending:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UOAs to which the University will submit</li> <li>- identification of staff within each UOA (including the approval of evidence of independence)</li> <li>- final form and content of submissions</li> <li>- applications for reduction in the number of outputs recognising individual circumstances</li> </ul>	Responsible for strategy and oversight of research within faculty.

## 2.5 Appeals

The University expects to confirm by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 which staff:

- have been identified as “Category A eligible with significant responsibility for independent research” – these staff will be submitted;
- have been identified as “Category A” but without a significant responsibility for research or not satisfying the research independence criteria – these staff will not be submitted. Staff will be informed of the reasons behind the decision (and provided with any supporting evidence).
- have not been identified as “Category A” – these staff will not be submitted. Staff will be informed of the reasons behind the decision (and provided with any supporting evidence).

The procedure for providing feedback will be managed centrally. Private meetings with the PVC (Research & Knowledge Transfer) will be available during –August-September 2020 to provide personal feedback on how the application of the criteria led to the outcome. Staff who wish to appeal will be expected to have sought formal feedback through this process before submitting their appeal.

## Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

The procedure set out below will allow members of staff to appeal after they have received this formal feedback, and for that appeal to be considered by the University before the final submission is made.

A person may appeal against the decision of not being included as Category A submitted staff on one or more of the following grounds only:

- a. That there were procedural irregularities in the conduct of the decision of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the same conclusion would have been reached if those irregularities had not occurred;
- b. That individual portfolios of evidence of research independence were not fully taken into account;
- c. That there is evidence of bias or unlawful discrimination;
- d. That some additional evidence is available which could not, for good reason, have been made available at the time of conducting the eligibility exercise.

An appeal (including any additional evidence) should be lodged by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020 with the selected senior member of the university's management who has relevant research experience (see Appendix 2), who shall determine by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 whether grounds for appeal exist which warrant consideration by the REF Appeals Board. If it is determined that grounds for appeal exist, the case will be referred to the REF Appeals Board.

The REF Appeals Board will be convened by the University Secretary and will consist of two members of the University Council who can ensure externality and have appropriate research experience – the individuals currently holding these positions can be found in Appendix 2. The Board may seek specialist advice and support as required. Board members are independent of the decision making process of identifying staff and will receive appropriate training. The REF Appeals Board will decide if there is sufficient evidence to warrant reconsideration of the individual by the Group of Decision Makers according to the published procedure and criteria. The University Secretary will write to appellants to inform them of the decision of the Board within one month.

### 2.6 Equality impact assessment

Equality impact assessments will be conducted by the HR Manager (Employee Relations and HR Policy) who will use equality and diversity data already held in that department, for the purposes of making a statutory data return, and report to the REF Steering Group. Equality impact assessments will be conducted on all protected characteristics (and contractual status) on the following data sets:

- All staff on Category A eligible contracts in post on 1/1/19;
- Staff who responded to the Preparations for the REF survey (completed January 2019);
- Initial application of the criteria identified in section "Implementation of the criteria" above.

## Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

These initial assessments are designed to enable the University to respond to any unintentional inequalities which might be introduced through application of the stated criteria and processes. The assessments will be discussed by the REF Steering Group who might recommend actions to address inequalities.

The assessments will be completed:

- April – May 2019 on the “Preparations for the REF survey” data and “Initial application of the criteria” data
- Once provisional staff eligibility has been determined based upon the 2018/19 workload planning data including consideration of portfolios of evidence of independence (September 2019)
- Once final staff eligibility has been determined based upon the 2019/20 workload planning data (March 2020) and any updated portfolios of evidence of independence
- After the final submission has been made (April 2021) (including staff appointed after March 2020)

### 3. Determining research independence.

Determining research independence has been included in the process for determining which staff have significant responsibility for research – see section 2.

## 4. Selection of outputs

### 4.1 Policies and Procedures

Each unit of assessment will undertake an exercise to assess the quality of outputs from the Category A submitted staff and place them in rank order (see figure 3 and appendix 3). Once outputs have been ranked, the eligible outputs (see figure 4) will then be associated with staff – the highest ranked output for each member will be included to ensure they meet the minimum of one output. Thereafter, the highest ranked eligible outputs will be selected until the maximum number of outputs for any given individual is reached. This will be continued until the required number of outputs (2.5 x FTE submitted) for the unit of assessment is reached. Where an output might be associated with more than one author, distribution of outputs between all eligible staff may also be taken into account.

The decoupling of staff and outputs is intended to provide increased flexibility for institutions. The selection of outputs and mapping to individuals – for REF2021 purposes - should be seen as a logic exercise to ensure the submission criteria are met and the submission is optimised. The mapping information submitted will form part of the standard analyses provided to panels – in the form of the distribution of outputs – and there will be an “opportunity” to comment on the distribution in the environment template. As there may be numerous mapping permutations, for UoC internal purposes, each member of staff will be provided with a list of all the outputs submitted on which they were a named author. This will be used to acknowledge the contribution of all staff involved (not as performance measures).

The decoupling of staff and outputs also allows for the inclusion of some eligible outputs from ‘former staff’ who had a significant responsibility for research whilst at the University. The definition of ‘former staff’ includes both those who have left the institution and current staff who are no longer on a Category A eligible contract. In relation all former staff who were employed prior to the implementation of WAMS, indicators of responsibility for research will be considered on a case by case basis, using evidence already held by the University such as: inclusion in REF2014; research grants held whilst in post at UoC; doctoral supervision (the list is indicative, not exhaustive). The outputs of these individuals will be considered and ranked alongside current Category A eligible staff (although the University will not be inviting staff who have left to provide their own initial quality rating).

The process by which the assessment and ranking takes place will follow a set template which will ensure consistency, transparency, accountability and inclusivity. A sample UoA/Departmental process is available as appendix 3. Each unit of assessment will provide to RKTO for publishing on Portal; a list of the panel members, information on how to submit outputs for internal assessment, plus any local variations to the template - including feedback mechanisms.

Panels must be mindful of the responsible use of metrics in their quality rating process (see The Metrics Tide report<sup>6</sup>).

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<sup>6</sup> <http://re.ukri.org/news-events-publications/publications/metric-tide/>

There is no formal appeal process for the rating of outputs as these are based upon academic judgement. However, where staff have exhausted the feedback mechanisms within the unit and are still not happy, they may request a specified output to be included in a sample which may be sent to an external advisor for benchmarking or for the decision to be reviewed by the Faculty Dean. However, due to the timing of the use of external advisors for benchmarking, it may not be possible to do this and no guarantee is given.

The University will endeavour to keep staff informed of which outputs are likely to be submitted. However, as changes can be necessary very late in the submission process due to publication delays/date changes, or arrival/departure of staff, the complex process of mapping outputs to individuals may change the constitution of the optimal submission. Therefore it may not be possible to inform staff of changes in time for there to be an effective feedback process, and it is the responsibility of the decision makers to balance various interests. However, once the submission has been made, all staff submitted will be provided in writing with a list of all outputs submitted on which they were named as author.

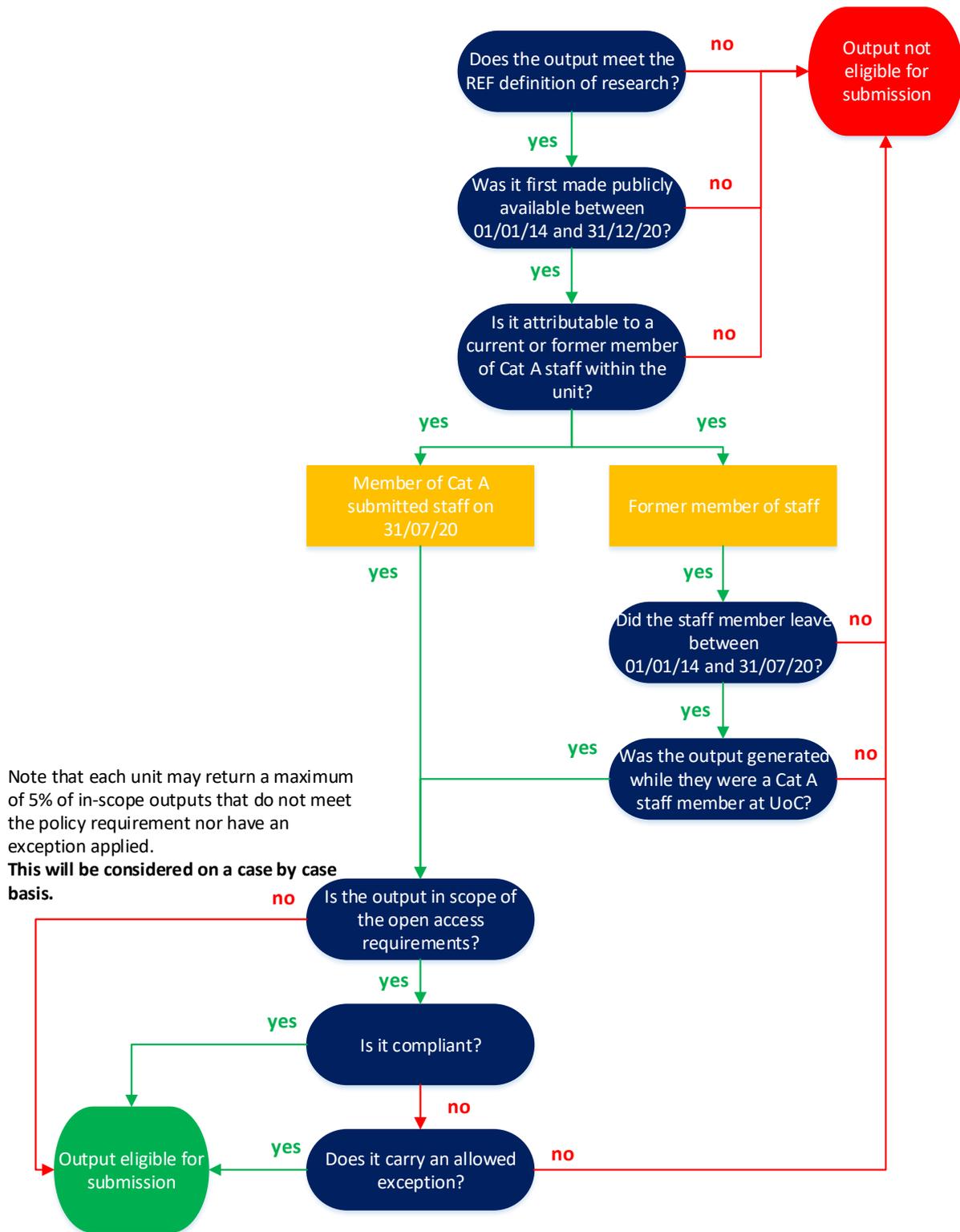


Figure 4: Showing the process for the identification of eligible outputs

## 4.2 Staff, committees and training

The tables in Part 2 which describe the advisory and decision making processes also apply to the selection of outputs. Training is also described there and in Appendix 1.

Appendix 3 sets out the process for assessing the quality of each output through a panel within each discipline. The membership of these panels will be published on Portal. The panels make recommendations on output quality to the UoA co-ordinators, who will make recommendations to the decision makers on the selection and mapping of outputs to individuals in order to optimise the submission.

## 4.3 Disclosure of circumstances

All staff identified as eligible for submission will be invited to make disclosures of their individual circumstances which might have limited their productivity during the assessment period. We will place a clear emphasis on declarations being voluntary; ensuring that the invitation explains what the applicable circumstances are and the adjustments that are available for approved circumstances. Clarification of the processes and adjustments can be sought from the REF Data Officer, and it will also be explained to staff in an open briefing.

The University will implement procedures to enable staff to disclose their circumstances with an appropriate degree of confidentiality. Particular regard will be paid to the disclosure of sensitive issues such as ongoing illness or mental health conditions. Eligible staff will be asked to complete a form (based upon the template provided for REF2021) about their individual circumstances. To enable individuals to disclose circumstances in confidence, this process will be managed centrally, not in UoAs.

The University will take into account, (see Guidance on Submissions paragraph 160):

- a. Qualifying as an ECR (on the basis set out in the Guidance on Submissions).
- b. Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector.
- c. Qualifying periods of family-related leave.
- d. Part-time working in exceptional cases, e.g. where the FTE late in the assessment period does not reflect the average FTE over the period as a whole.
- d. Reductions of up to one output for junior clinical academics (as defined in Guidance on Submissions paragraphs 162 to 163).
- e. Circumstances with an equivalent effect to absence, that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:
  - i. Disability: this is defined in the 'Guidance on codes of practice', Table 1 under 'Disability'.
  - ii. Ill health, injury, or mental health conditions.
  - iii. 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 set out in Annex L of the Guidance on Submissions).

- iv. Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member).
- v. Gender reassignment.
- vi. Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed in the 'Guidance on codes of practice', Table 1, or relating to activities protected by employment legislation

The University's procedures for disclosure and consideration of individual circumstances will be standard across all UOAs. The procedure will be as follows:

- a. All Category A eligible staff will be provided with information on the support offered within and beyond the University for those who are experiencing or have experienced the aforementioned circumstances. In addition to this, those with significant responsibility for independent research will be sent an 'Individual staff circumstances disclosure form', based on the template provided, by October 2019.
- b. Forms should be marked 'confidential' and returned to the REF Data Officer in RKTO by the end of November 2019. The REF Data Officer will collate an anonymised case on each member of staff declaring individual circumstances, ensuring that all paper records are stored securely and that electronic files are password protected and held on the University's secure servers.
- c. Each anonymised case will be processed by the Director of Research & Knowledge Transfer to calculate any reduction according to the published criteria, in order to make a recommendation on whether an individual may be returned with no outputs and/or the potential reduction in the number of outputs required for the UoA. In complex cases, advice may be sought from an HR Manager or Occupational Health Advisor. The decision will be made by a small panel consisting of the PVC (Research & Knowledge Transfer), a Dean and HR Manager. Individuals will be notified (by January 2020) in writing of the panel's decision by the REF Data Officer.
- d. UoA Co-ordinators will be informed of the potential effect on the number of outputs required and the names of individuals who may be returned with no outputs. They will not be informed of the nature of any individual circumstances. More significantly, UoA Coordinators and Heads of Department will not be provided with the names of individuals whose circumstance(s) have a potential impact upon the number of outputs required for the submission. This protects the privacy of the individual whilst also clearly demonstrating that the University does not have set expectations of individual contributions to the output pool.
- e. For staff new to the University from January 2020, there will be an opportunity for the consideration of individual circumstances as per the aforementioned process, with notification of the panel's decision by October 2020.

Data collection statements and privacy notices relating to staff and non-staff are available in Appendix 4.

As noted above, paper records relating to individual circumstances will be stored securely in locked cabinets in the office of the Technical Advisors and password protected electronic files held on the University's secure servers. Anonymised papers which may be required to be considered at decision making meetings will be distributed at the start of a meeting and then collected and shredded at the end of the meeting.

The Guidance on Submissions (paragraph 203) notes that:

“There are many reasons why an excellent researcher may have fewer or more outputs attributable to them in an assessment period. It is therefore not expected that all staff members would be returned with the same number of outputs attributed to them in the submission.”

This is also the view of the University which has not set expectations of individuals in respect to their contribution to the pool of outputs (beyond the minima and maxima specified), therefore the University does not need procedures to adjust expectations on the basis of individual circumstances.

#### 4.4 Process for determining when a reduction to the total output pool will be sought

The Guidance on Submissions states (paragraphs 176-177):

“The funding bodies consider that the size of the available output pool (from which selection will be made) in terms of its proximity to the total number of outputs required would be one useful indicator for determining whether a reduction request should be made”.

“Where making requests, submitting units should apply the tariffs set out in Annex L. Requests must be accompanied by a supporting statement that includes information on the context of the unit (for example, size, proportion of those with declared circumstances), how the circumstances affected the unit's output pool and why this was determined to be disproportionate, and how this complies with the process set out in the institution's Code of Practice”.

As noted above, the University will collect and process individual circumstance requests in order to establish the potential effect on the number of outputs required. The University will then undertake a benchmarking exercise; comparing the number and proportion of individuals, FTE and output reduction calculations (and consequent effect on the required increase in contribution of staff without circumstances) in order to establish the typical effect of individual circumstances on productivity in this University. This benchmarking data will then enable the University to establish where the effect of individual circumstances has had a disproportionate effect on productivity and identify an appropriate threshold to request a reduction in the total number of outputs.

In exceptional cases, the University will consider individual circumstances which satisfy the criteria in paragraphs 178-183 for requests to remove the minimum of one output per person.

#### 4.5 Support measures for staff with individual circumstances

The University has two primary means of providing support to staff with individual circumstances:

**Occupational Health and Counselling** - staff can be referred to Occupational Health for support and advice on any health concerns. Our Occupational Health provider also provides a confidential counselling service. Referrals to this service are via the HR Advisors.

**Employee Assistance Programme** - A confidential telephone counselling service is available for all University employees and relatives who live with them on a permanent basis.

The information will be provided again who come forward with individual circumstances will be provided with information on the formal support services available and on the variety of staff networks that operate within the University.

#### 4.6 Equality impact assessment

A full equality impact assessment will be conducted for all protected characteristics and contractual status on the staff who return the 'Individual staff circumstances disclosure form' in order to establish the impact of our process (December 2019) and on the distribution of outputs between the submitted staff (September 2020). These assessments will be undertaken by the HR Manager (Employee Relations & HR Policy) and discussed by the REF Steering Group who might recommend actions to address inequalities.

Our method for assessing outputs and selecting those of highest quality will almost certainly lead to a situation where only some outputs of the same initial rating will need to be selected from a pool either on the basis of a finer assessment of quality or the distribution of outputs amongst the staff and we will investigate how an equality impact assessment around the outputs receiving the same initial rating might inform our decision making process.

We will also investigate whether it is possible to assess all outputs (not just the distribution of selected outputs) for gender and race inequalities. These characteristics have been identified as the most widely evidenced inequalities within the academic publishing arena. Where resources permit, or other evidence of inequality emerges, an assessment against other characteristics may also be conducted to inform colleagues on the panel assessing outputs.

## 5. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Indicative schedule for Equality & Diversity training

Appendix 2 – Membership of committees, boards and groups

Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee

Senate

REF Steering Group

REF Appeals Board

REF UoA Coordinators

Appendix 3 – REF2021 Output Review Process

Annex A: Level Definitions

Annex B: Output Scoring Proforma

Appendix 4 – Data collection statements for REF2021

Staff

Non-staff

## Appendix 1 – Indicative schedule for Equality & Diversity training

Individual/group	Type of training	Timescale
Technical Advisors & HR Manager (Steering Group)^	1-day workshop provided by Advance HE	April 2019
PVC (Research & Knowledge Transfer) ^ PVC (Enhancement) ^ Deans of Faculty^ Members of the REF Steering Group^	Abridged materials from the Advance HE workshop* (facilitated session)	Autumn 2019
Vice-Chancellor^	Abridged materials from the Advance HE workshop*	Autumn 2019
UoA Co-ordinators^	Abridged materials from the Advance HE workshop* (facilitated session) Materials focussing on unconscious bias	Autumn 2019
Departmental Panel members assessing output quality^	Materials focussing on unconscious bias	July 2019 ongoing
External advisors	Abridged materials from the Advance HE workshop*	June 2019

^All staff are required to undertake online Equality & Diversity training at least every three years

\* Advance HE expect to produce “train the trainer” resources by the end of April 2019. These are awaiting and may be used to replace or supplement the abridged materials from the Advance HE workshop. These materials will be delivered by HR Managers and Technical Advisors to the staff identified.

**Appendix 2 – Membership of University committees**Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee 2018-19

CHAIR: Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research & Knowledge Transfer)	
Director of Research & Knowledge Transfer (Deputy Chair)	
Acting Head of Research & Knowledge Transfer Office	
Representatives of the Faculties:	
Arts and Humanities	
School of Arts & Media	
School of Humanities	
Business & Management	
Education & Children's Services	
Health & Social Care	
Medicine, Dentistry & Life Sciences	
Science and Engineering	
Social Science	
Representatives of LTI	
Representatives of LIS	
Representative of CSU (Vice-President Education)	
Up to <b>two</b> co-opted members (approved by Senate)	
Up to <b>two</b> representatives of the University's Postgraduate Research Student body	
<i>Ex-officio</i> : The Vice-Chancellor	
<i>Ex-officio</i> : Pro Vice-Chancellor (Enhancement)	
<u>In attendance</u>	
Minuting Secretary	
Representative of the University and College Union	

Senate 2018-19

Vice-Chancellor	
Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost of Shrewsbury	
University Secretary & Director of Legal Services	
Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic, Recruitment, Quality and Student Experience)	
Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Enterprise) & Principal of Reaseheath College	
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Enhancement)	
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Knowledge Transfer)	
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Community Liaison & Provost of Warrington)	

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Resources) & Chief Financial Officer	
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professional Services & Operations)	
Associate Dean of Medicine, Dentistry & Life Sciences	
Executive Dean of Arts & Humanities	
Executive Dean of Business & Management	
Executive Dean of Education & Children's Services	
Executive Dean of Science and Engineering	
Executive Dean of Health & Social Care	
Executive Dean of Social Science	
Dean of Agriculture & Veterinary Science	
Director of Student Futures	
Head of International Office	
Registrar	
Co-Director of Undergraduate Modular Programmes	
Director of Research & Knowledge Transfer	
Faculty of Arts & Humanities	
Faculty of Agriculture & Veterinary Science	
Faculty of Business & Management	
Faculty of Education & Children's Services	
Faculty of Science & Engineering	
Faculty of Health & Social Care	
Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Life Sciences	
Faculty of Social Science	
Two co-opted staff representatives nominated by the Vice-Chancellor	
Students' Union President	
Students' Union Vice President (Education)	
Students' Union Vice President (Activities)	
Students' Union Vice President (Warrington)	
Observer	

REF Steering Group

CHAIR: Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research & Knowledge Transfer)	
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Enhancement)	
Associate Dean (Faculty of Social Science)	
Deputy Dean and Director of the School of Humanities	
Professor (Faculty of Science & Engineering)	
tbc	
HR Manager	
Technical Advisors:	
Director of Research & Knowledge Transfer	
REF Data Officer	

REF Appeals Board

A member of the University's Senior Management Team who has relevant research experience and with whom appeals should be lodged, is . They will determine whether grounds for appeal exist which warrant consideration by the REF Appeals Board.

The REF Appeals Board consists of:

Convened by the University Secretary	
University Council members	

REF UoA Co-ordinators

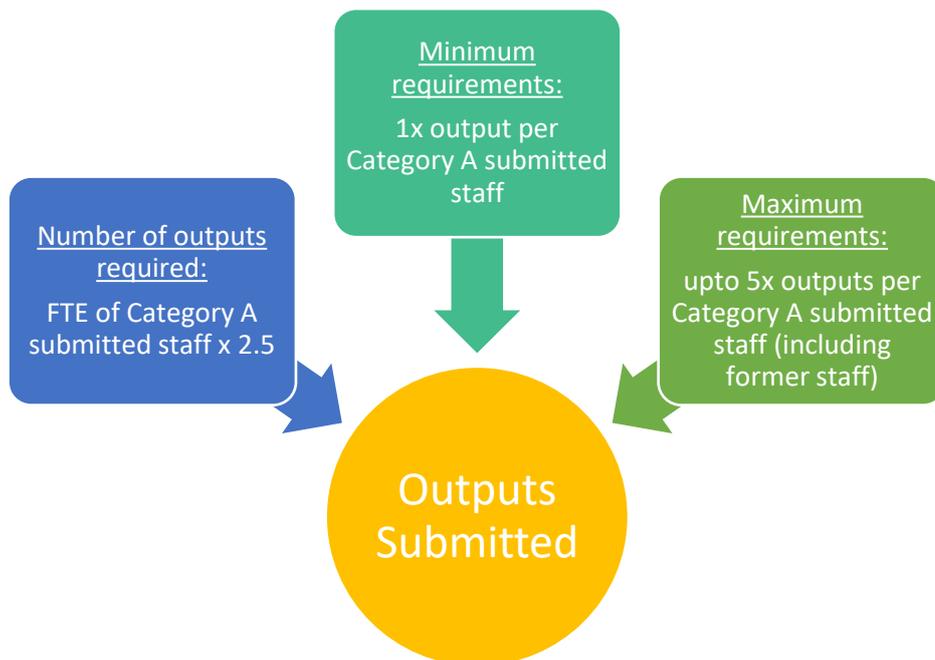
Main Panel A	UoA3	
	UoA4	
	UoA5	
Main Panel B	UoA8	
	UoA10	
	UoA11	
	UoA12	
Main Panel C	UoA14	
	UoA15	
	UoA17	
	UoA20	
	UoA21	
	UoA23	
	UoA24	
Main Panel D	UoA25	
	UoA27	
	UoA28	
	UoA31	
	UoA32	
	UoA33	
	UoA34	

## Appendix 3: University of Chester: REF2021 Output Review Process

### Output Requirements

Each submission requires a number of outputs, equal to 2.5 times the combined FTE of Category A submitted staff, rounded to the nearest whole number. This number will be adjusted, as appropriate, to take account of successful requests for individual circumstances.

There is a minimum requirement of one output for each Category A submitted staff member, which has been produced or authored solely, or co-produced or co-authored, by that staff member (unless exceptional individual circumstances apply). Further outputs up to the total required for the submitting unit, taking into account any applicable reductions for individual circumstances. A maximum of five outputs may be attributed to an individual staff member (both Category A submitted staff, as well as any former staff whose outputs are eligible for submission). The attribution of the maximum number of outputs to a staff member will not preclude the submission of further outputs on which that staff member is a co-author, where these are attributed to other eligible staff in the unit. Information on the attribution of outputs to individual staff members will not be published in REF2021.



### Output Eligibility Criteria

Each output must be:

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

- First brought into the public domain during the publication period 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2020<sup>7</sup> or, if a confidential report, lodged with the body to whom it is confidential during this same period
- Attributable to a current or former member of staff, who made a substantial research contribution to the output, which must be either:
  - Produced or authored solely, or co-produced or co-authored, by a Category A submitted staff member, regardless of where the member of staff was employed at the time they produced that output or
  - Produced or authored solely, or co-produced or co-authored, by a former staff member who was employed according the Category A eligible definition when the output was first made publicly available.
- Available in an open-access form, where the output is within scope of the open access policy.

The introduction of a transitional approach to non-portability of outputs will allow a submitting unit to include the outputs of staff formerly employed as Category A eligible (former staff). Outputs attributable to these staff are eligible for inclusion where the output was first made publicly available while the staff member was employed by the institution as a Category A eligible member of staff. This includes:

- For staff who remain employed at the institution, but are no longer employed as Category A eligible staff on the census date (for example, senior administrative staff), any outputs that were first made publicly available at the point the staff member was employed as Category A eligible.
- Any outputs first made publicly available while a former staff member was on an unpaid leave of absence or secondment (whether to another UK HEI, or beyond HE/overseas), where the leave or secondment period was no greater than two years.

### **Co-authored Outputs**

Outputs may only be submitted once within each submission except in exceptional circumstances, whereby single-weighted co-authored outputs may be returned more than once within the same submission for submissions made to Main Panel D. Where two or more co-authors are returned in different submissions then the output may be listed in each. Such outputs should not account for more than five per cent of the outputs (or one output, whichever is the greater) within a submission.

### **Author Contribution**

Outputs may only attributed to individuals who made a substantial research contribution to the output. Some sub-panels require additional information to determine this contribution.

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<sup>7</sup> In limited circumstances (set out in REF2020/20 'Guidance on revisions to REF 2021') outputs with publication delayed by COVID-19 may be submitted if made publicly available by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

### Main Panel A

- For each submitted co-authored output where there are more than 15 authors and where the submitted member of staff is not identified as the lead or corresponding author, institutions are required to affirm the substantial contribution to the research by the submitted member of staff. This should be done by entering at least one element from a series of optional statements.

### Main Panel B

- For each submitted co-authored output where there are more than 15 authors and where the submitted member of staff is not identified as the lead or corresponding author, institutions are required to affirm the substantial contribution to the research by the submitted member of staff. This should be done by entering up to 100 words in which the author contribution is articulated.

### Main Panels C & D

- Do not require the submission of information about the individual co-author's contribution to a co-authored output.

## Output Distribution

There are many reasons why an excellent researcher may have fewer or more outputs attributable to them in an assessment period. It is therefore not expected that all staff members would be returned with the same number of outputs attributed to them in the submission.

## Double-weighting

Where there are substantial pieces of co-authored work, reflecting large-scale or intensive collaborative research within the same submitting unit, and a double-weighting request has been submitted for the output, institutions may attribute the output to a maximum of two members of staff returned within the same submission. 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 the relevant Panel criteria.

## Citation Data

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'). Citation data will be used to inform the assessment of outputs where panels consider this appropriate for their discipline, as follows:

- **Main Panel A:** all sub-panels
- **Main Panel B:** all sub-panels except UOA 10 Mathematics and UOA 12 Engineering
- **Main Panel C:** UOA 16 (Economics and Econometrics) only
- **Main Panel D:** no sub-panels will use metrics.

The funding bodies do not sanction or recommend that HEIs rely on citation information to inform the selection of 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 having due regard to the equality implications of using citation data.

### **Open Access**

The intent of the REF open access policy is to provide a set of minimum requirements for open access, while encouraging an environment where researchers and HEIs move beyond the minimum requirements. The requirement to comply with the open access policy applies to the following outputs that are listed in REF2:

- the output type is a journal article with an ISSN or the output is a conference contribution in conference proceedings with an ISSN **and**
- the date of acceptance of the output for publication is after 1 April 2016.

In-scope outputs must fulfil the open access criteria (deposit, discovery, and access).

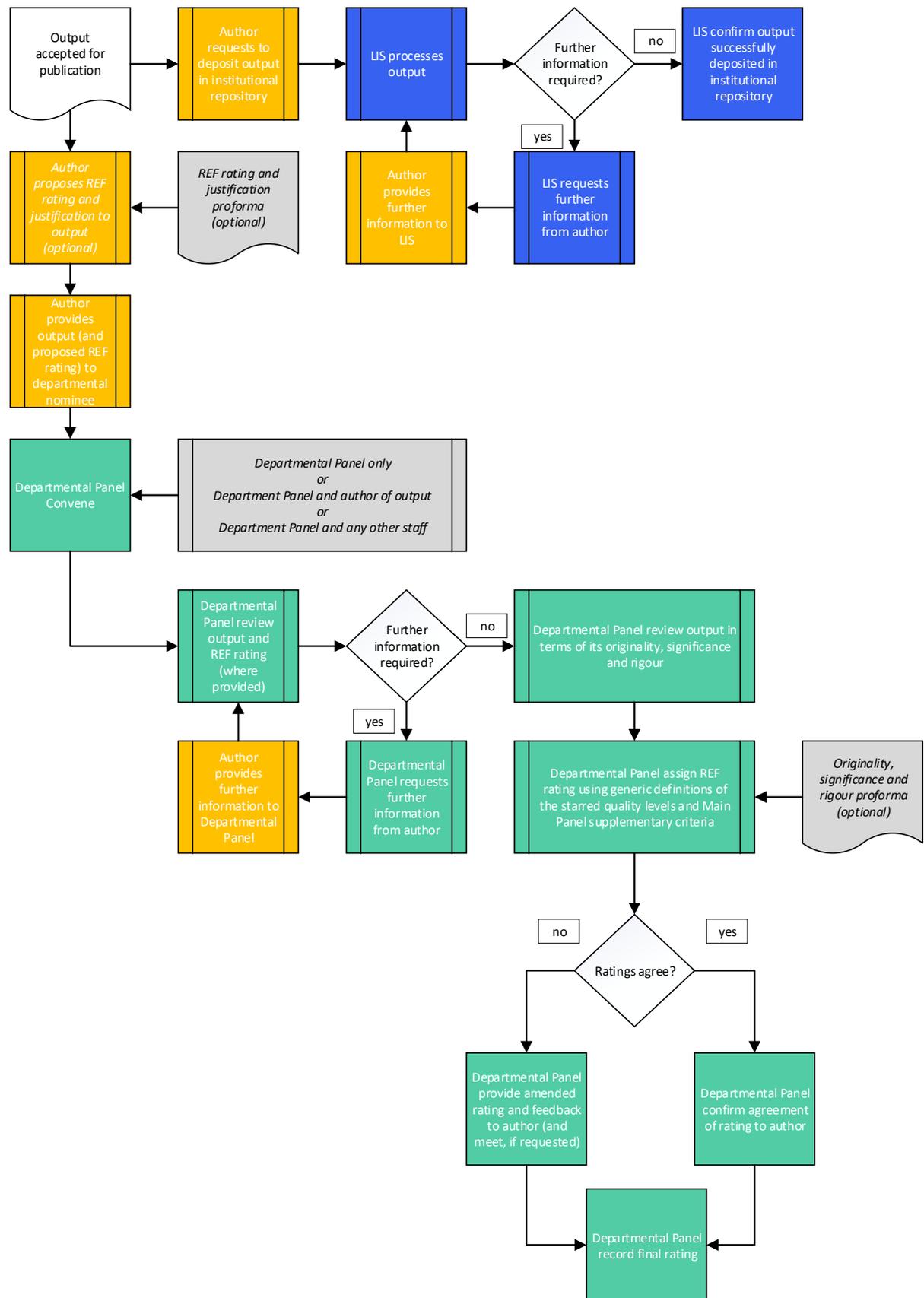
### **Use of External Advisors**

External advisor may be appointed to provide advice on documentation to support the University of Chester's REF2021 preparations. The individuals will be appointed on the basis of their internationally recognised academic expertise, by nomination from Faculties to the PVC (Research & Knowledge Transfer). The precise scope of the task will be agreed on an individual basis. The feedback of external advisors will be used to supplement the views of the departmental panel.

External Advisors will be asked to provide feedback on some of the following:

- a. The likely quality rating of research outputs (using the REF2021 ratings);
- b. The relative quality ranking of a range of outputs (possibly focussing at a particular rating or grade boundary);
- c. Statements for specific outputs of co-author contribution/case for double-weighting/factual information about significance;
- d. Impact case studies;
- e. Unit of assessment environment statements.

### University of Chester Output Review Process



**The University of Chester is committed to an output review and selection process that promotes:**

- Equity: all types of research and all forms of research output shall be assessed on a fair and equal basis
- Equality: all staff shall be able to provide outputs for assessment by a specified internal panel
- Transparency: internal (and on occasions, external) assessments will be clearly communicated to staff

**The University of Chester propose to select outputs for submission to REF2021 as follows:**

- The highest scoring output from each member of staff within the unit of assessment
- The highest scoring outputs from the remaining pool up to the required number of outputs, taking into consideration the diversity and distribution of staff and outputs across this pool

**Proposed Mechanism:**

A specific Faculty or Departmental Working Group is responsible for the overall coordination of output assessment. Where staff within the Department or Faculty align to an alternative Unit of Assessment, the assessment may be undertaken by the Faculty or Department Working Group responsible for the alternative Unit of Assessment.

The Faculty or Departmental Working Group is responsible for:

- Collating an inventory of potential outputs
- Reading all potential outputs to ensure consistency
- Scheduling meetings to read and assess outputs
- Compiling data on the output assessment
- Arranging external moderation/assessment of submission

**Proposed Process:**

- The inventory of potential outputs of will be created in conversation with staff
- The inventory of potential outputs of former staff will be created by a member of the Faculty or Department REF Working Group
- Staff are required to contribute to the scoring process by initially assessing and also attributing a ranking to their self-selected outputs
- The scheduled meetings to read and score outputs will be made up of staff self-selected outputs
- The scheduled meetings to read and score outputs will score outputs against the criteria only (see annex A)
- A short proforma will be completed for each output, scoring the outputs on a 12 point scale: 4; 4/3; 3/4; 3; 3/2; 2/3; 2; 2/1; 1/2; 1; 1/U; U (see annex B)
- A table will be drawn up based upon the highest scoring output from each member of staff, with the remaining outputs ranked from highest to lowest

## Annex A: Level Definitions

In assessing outputs, the sub-panels will look for evidence of originality, significance and rigour and apply the generic definitions of the starred quality levels as follows:

- 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.

‘World-leading’ quality denotes an absolute standard of quality in each unit of assessment.

‘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.

The criterion of ‘reach’ for impacts does not refer specifically to a geographic scale. Subpanels 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’.

Note that each Main Panel also has supplementary criteria that should be consulted.

**Annex B: Output Scoring Proforma**

Output Author:	
Output Details:	

Reviewer:	
Date of Review:	

Originality	Score:		
Comments:			

Significance	Score:		
Comments:			

Rigour	Score:		
Comments:			

<b>Overall/Additional Comments</b>	

<b>Overall Score</b>											
4*		3*			2*			1*		U	
4	4/3	3/4	3	3/2	2/3	2	2/1	1/2	1	1/U	U

## Appendix 4: Data collection statements

### Staff Data Collection Statement for REF2021

The purpose of the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF2021) is to assess the quality of UK research and to inform the selective distribution of public funds for research by the four UK higher education funding bodies. The REF is managed by the REF team, based at Research England (RE), on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies. RE is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and under this arrangement UKRI has the role of ‘data controller’ for personal data submitted by us to the REF.

If you are a researcher who has been included as part of our submission to the REF 2021, in 2021 we will send some of the information we hold about you to UKRI for the purpose of the REF2021. The information will not be in coded form and your name and details such as your date of birth, research groups, and contract dates will be provided along with details of your research. If you are submitted with individual circumstances that allow a reduction in the number of outputs submitted, without penalty, some details of your personal circumstances will be provided.

You can find further information about what data are being collected on the REF website, at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk) in particular publication 2019/01, ‘Guidance on submissions’.

### Sharing information about you

UKRI may pass your data, or parts of it, to any of the following organisations that need it to inform the selective distribution of public funds for research and to carry out their statutory functions connected with funding higher education:

- Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland (DfE)
- Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)
- Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

Some of your data (Unit of Assessment, HESA staff identifier code and date of birth) will also be passed to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to enable it to verify coded data returned to it as part of our HESA staff return (see [www.hesa.ac.uk](http://www.hesa.ac.uk)). Data returned to the REF will be linked to that held on the HESA staff record to allow UKRI and the organisations listed above to conduct additional analysis into the REF and fulfil their statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 (England, Wales and Scotland) or the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Northern Ireland).

UKRI and the organisations listed above will use the information to analyse and monitor the REF2021. This may result in information being released to other users including academic researchers or consultants (commissioned by the funding bodies), to carry out research or analysis, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679). Where information not previously published is released to third parties, this will be anonymised where practicable.

UKRI will require that anyone who has access to your data, held in UKRI’s records, paper or electronic, will respect its confidentiality and will only process it in accordance with instructions issued for the purposes specified by UKRI.

Parts of your data will be passed to the REF expert panels and the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (whose members are independent of UKRI) for the purpose of conducting a systematic evaluation of submissions, in accordance with predetermined criteria and methods. Panels will make judgments

about the material contained in submissions and will not form quality judgments about individuals. All panel members are bound by confidentiality arrangements.

### **Publishing information about your part in our submission**

The results of the assessment exercise will be published by UKRI, on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies, in April 2022. The published results will not be based on individual performance nor identify individuals.

Those parts of submissions that contain factual data and textual information about research activity will also be published by UKRI, on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies, and will be made available online. Published information is likely to include **textual information including impact case studies in which you may be referenced**. Your name and job title may be included in this textual information. Other personal and contractual details, including your date of birth and all information about individual staff circumstances will be removed. Staff may contact the University's REF Contacts ([ref@chester.ac.uk](mailto:ref@chester.ac.uk)) to request redaction of additional details, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the PVC (Research & Knowledge Transfer) who may take advice from other REF Decision Makers.

UKRI will also publish a list of the outputs submitted by us in each UOA. This list will not be listed by author name.

### **Data about personal circumstances**

You may voluntarily disclose personal circumstances to your submitting unit, which could permit us to submit your information to the REF without the 'minimum of one' requirement (without penalty), or to submit a reduced number of outputs without penalty. If (and only if) we apply either form of reduction of outputs, we will need to provide UKRI with data that you have disclosed about your individual circumstances, to show that the criteria have been met for reducing the number of outputs. Please see the 'Guidance on submissions' document (paragraphs 151-201) for more detail about reductions in outputs and what information needs to be submitted. Details of the University's processes for disclosing individual circumstances and making decisions on the submission of requests for reductions can be found in Part 4 of the University's the Code of Practice.

Submitted data will be kept confidential to the REF team, the Equalities and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs. All these bodies are subject to confidentiality arrangements. The REF team will destroy the submitted data about individuals' circumstances on completion of the assessment phase. Details of the process for anonymising data within the University of Chester which will be submitted in the REF6 form can be found in Part 4 of the University's the Code of Practice.

We will send to Research England a report that will include a summary of all voluntarily declared personal circumstances, whether or not they were used to reduce the output requirements. This report will only contain data in aggregated form and will not contain information that will identify individual members of staff.

### **Accessing your personal data**

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR, you have the right to see and receive a copy of any personal information that UKRI holds about you. Further information about the Act and GRPR, and guidance on making a subject access request, can be found on the RE web-site at <https://re.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards/foi-data-protection/>

If you have any concerns about your information being used for these purposes, please contact:

Data Protection Officer  
UK Research and Innovation  
Polaris House  
Swindon, SN2 1FL

Email: [dataprotection@ukri.org](mailto:dataprotection@ukri.org)

**Staff are reminded of the Privacy Notice for Employees which explains the use of personal data. In addition to the standard notice, staff will find a supplementary Staff REF Privacy Notice which relates only to handling of data in relation to individual circumstances.**

## Data Collection Statement for the REF2021 – Non-Staff

### About the REF

The purpose of the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF2021) is to assess the quality of UK research and to inform the selective distribution of public funds for research by the four UK higher education funding bodies. The REF outcomes are used to calculate about £2 billion per year of public funding for universities' research, and affect their international reputations. The results also inform strategic decisions about national research priorities. The next REF will be undertaken in 2021.

The REF was first carried out in 2014, replacing the previous Research Assessment Exercise. It included for the first time an assessment of the broader impact of universities' research beyond academia: on the economy, society, culture, public policy and services, health, the environment and quality of life – within the UK and internationally.

Impact is assessed through the submission of case studies, which describe the changes or benefits brought about by research undertaken by researchers at the institution. Impressive impacts were found across all disciplines, with 44 per cent of submissions judged to be outstanding. A database of case studies submitted in 2014 can be found here: <https://impact.ref.ac.uk/>.

### Data collection

The REF is managed by the REF team, based at Research England (RE), on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies. RE is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and under this arrangement UKRI has the role of 'data controller' for personal data submitted by us to the REF.

You may have provided information for one or more impact case studies or environment statements as part of our submission to the REF 2021. In 2021 we will send information about impact case studies and environment statements to UKRI for the purpose of the REF2021. The information will not be in coded form and your name - and details such as your job title and organisational affiliation - may be provided in these narrative statements. We refer to this information about you as 'your data'.

You can find further information about what data are being collected on the REF website, at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk) in particular publication 2019/01, 'Guidance on submissions'. Annex G of that document sets out the data that we will be required to share with UKRI.

### Sharing information about you

UKRI may pass your data, or parts of it, to any of the following organisations that need it to inform the selective distribution of public funds for research and to carry out their statutory functions connected with funding higher education:

- Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland (DfE)
- Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)
- Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

UKRI and the organisations listed above will use the information to analyse and monitor the REF2021. This may result in information being released to other users including academic researchers or consultants (commissioned by the funding bodies), to carry out research or analysis, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU)

2016/679). Where information not previously published is released to third parties, this will be anonymised where practicable.

UKRI will require that anyone who has access to your data, held in UKRI's records, paper or electronic, will respect its confidentiality and will only process it in accordance with instructions issued for the purposes specified by UKRI.

Parts of your data will be passed to the REF expert panels and the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (whose members are independent of UKRI) for the purpose of conducting a systematic evaluation of submissions, in accordance with predetermined criteria and methods. All panel members are bound by confidentiality arrangements.

### **Publishing information about your part in our submission**

The results of the assessment exercise will be published by UKRI, on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies, in April 2022.

Those parts of submissions that contain factual data and textual information about research activity will also be published by UKRI, on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies, and will be made available online. Published information is likely to include **textual information including impact case studies in which you may be referenced**. Your name and job title may be included in this textual information. Other personal details will normally be removed. Individuals may contact the University's REF Contacts ([ref@chester.ac.uk](mailto:ref@chester.ac.uk)) to request redaction of additional details, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the PVC (Research & Knowledge Transfer) who may take advice from other REF Decision Makers.

### **Accessing your personal data**

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR, you have the right to see and receive a copy of any personal information that UKRI holds about you. Further information about the Act and GRPR, and guidance on making a subject access request, can be found on the RE web-site at <https://re.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards/foi-data-protection/>

If you have any concerns about your information being used for these purposes, please contact:

Data Protection Officer  
UK Research and Innovation  
Polaris House  
Swindon, SN2 1FL

Email: [dataprotection@ukri.org](mailto:dataprotection@ukri.org)

**The [Non-staff REF Privacy notice](#) explains the use of personal data for the purposes of the REF submission.**