

REF 2021

Code of Practice for:

- the identification of staff with significant responsibility for research
 - determining who is an independent researcher
 - the selection of outputs
-

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Part 1: Introduction

1 Purpose of the Code of Practice

- 1.1 This Code of Practice sets out the procedures by which Teesside University will identify staff with significant responsibility for research, determine who is an independent researcher and select outputs for submission to the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF 2021). It was approved by the Vice-Chancellor on 21st May 2019.

The deadline for submitting the Code of Practice is noon on 7th June 2019.

The Code of Practice was subsequently updated in September 2020 as a result of the delay to the REF submission deadline caused by Covid-19.

- 1.2 The Research Excellence Framework (REF) assesses the quality of research in UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The objectives of the REF are:
- To provide accountability for public investment in research;
 - To provide benchmarking information for the Higher Education sector and broader public;
 - To inform the annual allocation of quality-related (QR) funding to HEIs.

Submissions to REF are peer-assessed by panels for each of the thirty-four Units of Assessment (UOAs), working under four main panels.

- 1.3 Research England, on behalf of the UK Funding Councils, has provided detailed guidance on the Research Excellence Framework 2021, available at <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/>.
- 1.4 Members of staff within the University who would like further information on REF 2021 should contact Research and Innovation Services on 01642 342508 or by emailing REF@tees.ac.uk.
- 1.5 The University is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusivity in research careers as outlined in its research priorities:

A key priority at Teesside is the continued investment in research excellence and the development of a sustainable, diverse, inclusive and supportive research community. The number of staff engaged in research across the University continues to grow and we offer a range of programmes and support to assist academic staff from early career researchers to experienced research leaders.

The principles governing this Code of Practice (of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity) are upheld by our Equality and Inclusion Policy and Equality Objectives.

In addition, the University has demonstrated its commitment to inclusivity and transparency by signing up in 2017 to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and publishing (in 2018) its policy and implementation plan on the use of quantitative indicators in research evaluation. This is available as an appendix in part 5, section 30. To further bolster its support for equality, diversity and inclusivity in research careers, the University: (i) maintained its HR Excellence in Research award in 2017; (ii) secured an Athena SWAN Bronze Institution Award in 2018; and (iii) retained Investors In People Gold status in 2018 with the institution's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity specifically commended. The University also maintained its Stonewall Top 100 position in 2019 and was awarded Disability Confident, Level 2 status in 2018.

- 1.6 Since REF 2014, Teesside University has put in place measures to grow research excellence to underpin all academic activities. Positive changes have been made to the way research is structured and supported within the institution including: (i) embedding stand-alone research units in academic schools; (ii) creating academic promotions pathways; (iii) implementing a new Professional Development Plan and Review process; (iv) developing a new Workload Framework and Academic Workload Allocation Model; and (v) concentrating professional support for research activities into a central department, Research and Innovation Services (RIS).

The University has also implemented a number of new processes and systems, aligned to the principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity as set out in this Code of Practice, to improve research management and support ongoing REF preparations. For example, consistency, transparency and accountability underpin the new promotions process, and staff are able to view information related to their research activities via the Pure current research information system (CRIS), which was implemented in 2018.

As part of its commitment to developing the research careers of staff, the University has developed a comprehensive Researcher Development Programme that covers all stages of a research career. The programme equips those in leadership positions with an understanding of issues related to equality, diversity and inclusivity and the responsible use of research indicators in research evaluation.

- 1.7 The University is committed to supporting all members of staff, including staff on part-time or fixed-term contracts. The Equal Opportunities Policy confirms adherence to the principle of equal opportunity for all, and does not identify specific groups. The Flexible Working Policy commits to supporting all members of staff to achieve their full potential, and the Academic Promotions Pathways confirm that all applicants for promotion are measured against the same criteria. The University's Concordat Implementation and Enhancement Action Plan will be used to continue to develop support for research staff in line with the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

2 Principles

2.1 The processes set out in this Code of Practice for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research, determining who is an independent researcher and selecting outputs for submission to REF 2021 will be governed by the following principles:

- **Transparency:** the policies and procedures for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research, determining research independence and selecting outputs will be communicated to all eligible staff across the institution including those absent from work. A communication campaign (part 1, section 4 below) sets out the ways in which the Code of Practice will be disseminated to all members of staff who hold an academic or research contract at the University. The Code of Practice was made available on the staff intranet as part of a staff consultation exercise, and the final version will be published on the University's website and intranet.
- **Consistency:** the principles governing the processes included in this Code of Practice will be applied consistently across the University. Key staff involved in the delivery of these processes have been involved in the development of the Code of Practice, and Terms of Reference for committees have been standardised to ensure consistency of application.
- **Accountability:** the roles and responsibilities of those involved in making decisions in relation to significant responsibility for research, research independence and output selection are detailed in parts 2, 3 and 4 of this Code of Practice. All staff involved in the implementation of these processes (academic and professional staff) will receive training on REF processes and equality, diversity and inclusivity (including unconscious bias) as set out in part 2, section 7. The Terms of Reference and constitution for all decision making and advisory committees are set out in the appendices at part 5 of this document.
- **Inclusivity:** the processes outlined in this Code of Practice have been designed to promote an inclusive environment that allows the University to identify all staff with significant responsibility for research, all staff who are independent researchers, and to select excellent research produced by staff from all protected groups.

3 Application of the Code of Practice

3.1 Staff who are eligible for submission to REF (Category A eligible staff) are defined as:

- All staff with a contract of at least 0.2 FTE and a primary employment function of 'teaching and research'; and
- All staff with a contract of at least 0.2 FTE and a primary employment function of 'research only' who also meet the definition of an independent researcher.

3.2 The provisions set out in this Code of Practice relate to all University staff who are eligible for submission to REF 2021. They also apply to staff who may not be eligible for submission, but are involved in the operations which support the processes set out in

this Code of Practice. Therefore, professional staff who are involved in workload allocation processes, for example, or who support decision making processes will attend REF equality and diversity training (outlined in part 2, section 7).

4 Communication of the Code of Practice

- 4.1 A consultation on the draft Code of Practice was open to all academic and research staff from 4 March 2019 until 15 April 2019. The draft version of the Code was made available on the University's intranet and the consultation was advertised by email to all academic and research staff, and via the University's staff e-newsletter, University Update. Staff were able to submit electronic responses via a JISC online survey (which provided the opportunity to submit an anonymous response) or to REF@tees.ac.uk.
- 4.2 A hard copy of the draft Code of Practice was posted with a covering letter explaining its purpose and the consultation process to all members of academic or research staff who are eligible for submission to REF, and who were absent from the University at the point at which the consultation opened.
- 4.3 Three general staff briefing events were held, on different days of the week and at different times to maximise opportunities to attend for part-time staff and those with teaching and other commitments. These events provided an opportunity for members of staff to ask questions and provide feedback on the draft Code of Practice. An online discussion on Yammer was also made available and advertised to staff.
- 4.4 In addition to the general briefings, additional events were held for targeted stakeholder groups, namely staff who hold 'research only' contracts, as the criteria of research independence specifically affects this group of staff, and members of the University's professoriate.
- 4.5 Briefings were provided to School Executive Teams to ensure that queries from staff are handled consistently or referred to Research and Innovation Services as a central point of contact.
- 4.6 The final Code of Practice will be emailed to all academic and research staff, made available for download on the University's intranet and published on the University's website. Notification will also be included in University Update and a hard copy will be posted to all academic and research staff who are absent from the University at this point. The communications campaign plan can be found as an appendix in part 5, section 28.

Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

5 Policies and procedures

- 5.1 Category A eligible staff are identified within the University's submission to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Staff Collection, or staff return. Within the group of Category A eligible staff who hold a contract of at least 0.2 FTE and a primary employment function of 'teaching and research', those members of staff who are identified as having significant responsibility for research are as standard submitted to REF 2021. The University reserves the right to apply for an exception to the requirement to submit to a UOA, if such a submission meets the definition of a 'small unit' as set out in the REF Guidance on Submissions.¹
- 5.2 Staff with significant responsibility for research are defined as having an allocation for research within their workload of at least 20% of their FTE (i.e., for part-time staff, 20% of their working hours) on the REF census date, 31st July 2020.
- 5.3 The 20% allocation is based on:
- The research element of each staff member's Research and Scholarly Activity Allowance (RSA);
 - Hours which are funded from live externally funded research, innovation and knowledge exchange projects;
 - Personal research allowances;
 - Research and Innovation hours, which are determined by an annual application process as detailed below.
- 5.4 RSA comprises 178 hours per year (pro-rata for part-time members of staff). Staff are asked to confirm how they will use their RSA when submitting an application for additional research and innovation hours (see paragraph 5.5 below). Objectives relating to RSA time are captured as part of the annual Personal Development Plan and Review (PDPR), which is a confidential review undertaken by each member of staff with their line manager. Staff select from the following options, which determines the research element of their RSA:
- 100% Research
 - 75% Research, 25% Scholarly Activity
 - 50% Research, 50% Scholarly Activity
 - 25% Research, 75% Scholarly Activity
 - 100% Scholarly Activity.
- 5.5 Research and Innovation hours are determined by a process in which members of staff are invited to apply for additional workload hours for research, beyond standard Research and Scholarly Activity (RSA) time. Staff are asked to identify objectives for

¹ REF Guidance on Submissions, paragraphs 68 to 72, available at <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/>

the following year, detail their plans for the next three years, and outline their aspirations for the next five years. Staff who submitted a previous application are also asked to provide an update on their progress. This process is open to all academic staff at the University, and is designed to allow: (i) staff to be provided with workload allocations as appropriate to their career stage and aspirations; (ii) research plans to be agreed between staff and their School; and (iii) responsibilities and expectations in terms of research activity (including significant responsibility for research) to be clarified.

- 5.6 From 2019/20 onwards, staff will be allocated workload hours for the coming year and indicative hours for the following two years, to support the development and delivery of their longer-term research plans. Staff will be asked for updates on their activity and plans in 2020/21 and 2021/22 to allow adjustments to workload to be made to reflect new developments, and to ensure that new members of staff are equally able to apply for additional hours. Research allocations are agreed within each School by the Dean, Associate Dean (Research and Innovation), Heads of Department and School Manager.
- 5.7 Personal research allowances are allocated to Professors and Readers as part of the University's standard workload processes.
- 5.8 The REF Guidance on Submissions makes it clear that members of staff are not expected to all produce the same volume or quality of outputs, and that the assessment of impact focuses on the submitting Unit rather than individuals.² The University fully endorses this view and approach.
- 5.9 Guidance is provided to members of staff on the PDPR process, and the Academic Workload Management Framework sets out the University's approach to workload management.
- 6 **Development of processes**
- 6.1 How decisions are being made and communicated to staff, including timescales:
- **March 2019:** Applications for Research and Innovation hours released, with a deadline for submission by staff in May 2019
 - **March to April 2019:** Consultation on draft Code of Practice with all Category A eligible staff
 - **May 2019:** Code of Practice approved by the Vice-Chancellor, and the criteria confirmed for determining significant responsibility for research
 - **July 2019:** Decisions to be made on Research and Innovation hours for the 2019/20 academic year

² REF Guidance on Submissions, paragraph 203 and 303, available at <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/>

- **August 2019:** Associate Deans (Research and Innovation) to review and confirm the data on staff within their School with significant responsibility for research
- **May to August 2019:** PDPRs to be undertaken with Category A eligible staff
- **November 2019:** Following finalisation of workload allocations, members of staff will agree their workload and be notified whether they have significant responsibility for research based on the process for allocating research hours.
- **November 2019 to January 2020:** All affected members of staff will have the opportunity to appeal against their categorisation for having significant responsibility for research.

6.2 Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out in **February / March 2020** once workload allocations are finalised and the appeals process has been held, and in **October/November 2020** following the census date and the determination of the staff to be submitted to REF 2021.

6.3 For **new members of staff** with a primary employment function of ‘teaching and research’, who join the University after this process has been completed:

- Lists of new members of staff will be provided each month by HR to Research and Innovation Services (RIS)
- RIS will liaise with Associate Deans (Research and Innovation) to ensure that new staff members are provided with an opportunity to request Research and Innovation hours, that personal research allowances are identified, and that RSA categorisations are confirmed following completion by staff of their Initial Development Plan (IDP)
- Workloads for new members of staff will be confirmed within the Academic Workload System, which will allow significant responsibility for research to be determined.

6.4 The allocation of at least 20% of a member of staff’s workload, supported by a three-year plan and annual objectives, will be used consistently as the indicator of significant responsibility for research across all of the University’s Schools and Unit of Assessment (UOA) submissions.

6.5 **Development of processes: consultation and agreement with staff representative groups**

The University has consulted with the University and College Union (UCU) as the trade union recognised as representing academic and research staff, in accordance with the agreed consultation mechanism. The University has sought and obtained their agreement to the REF Code of Practice on behalf of Category A eligible staff at the University. This is available as an appendix in part 5, section 32.

A representative from the University and College Union (UCU) joined the Code of

Practice Group to ensure input into the development of the code. This group also included representation from HR, a representative of the Professoriate, a senior academic member of staff who is also a member of the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) External Advisory Group, two School Managers (who oversee the staffing, resources and physical assets of each academic School), and a Principal Lecturer (Staff and Resources) from each School who oversee the workload allocations of academic staff.

Early consultation also took place with UCU on the criteria being used to determine significant responsibility for research.

7 **Staff, committees and training**

- 7.1 The **Vice-Chancellor** has overall responsibility for the University's REF 2021 submission including the development of the Code of Practice for the identification of staff with significant responsibility for research, determining who is an independent researcher, and the selection of research outputs.
- 7.2 The **REF Strategy Group (REFSG)**, chaired by the **Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)** has responsibility for making strategic and academic decisions relating to the submission, and subsequently advising the Vice-Chancellor and University Executive Team of these. The REFSG is responsible for decisions relating to: processes for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research; processes for identifying independent researchers; and the final selection of outputs and impact case studies. It is also responsible for reviewing recommendations from the Unit of Assessment (UOA) Committees, providing feedback to UOA Committees on the developing portfolio of outputs and impact case studies, and approving each UOA's Environment Template (REF 5b).
- 7.3 Membership of the REFSG is recommended by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) in consultation with the University's Research and Innovation Committee. In determining membership of the REFSG, the PVC (R&I) considers the following criteria: REF experience; alignment of research expertise to the disciplines covered by the REF main panels; research experience; and representativeness in terms of equality, diversity and inclusivity.
- 7.4 Members of the REFSG have decision making powers with the exception of the professional staff, who attend in an advisory capacity. This includes the Executive Director of Human Resources and the Director of Research and Innovation Services. The Terms of Reference for the REFSG were approved by the University's Research and Innovation Committee on 22nd February 2018 and are included as an appendix in part 5, section 20.

- 7.5 **UOA Committees** (chaired by the UOA lead) will make recommendations on the final selection of outputs and impact case studies to be submitted to REF 2021 and are responsible for drafting the UOA's Environment Template (REF 5b).
- 7.6 UOA Committee membership is recommended by the relevant Associate Dean(s) for Research and Innovation (R&I), reflecting their responsibility for the development and direction of research in their School. Associate Deans (R&I) consider the following criteria when making recommendations on the constitution of each UOA Committee: REF experience; representation of disciplines relevant to the UOA; research experience; and representativeness in terms of equality, diversity and inclusivity. The Terms of Reference for the UOA Committees were reviewed and approved by the REF Strategy Group in February 2019 and are included as an appendix in part 5, section 21.
- 7.7 Staff from **Research and Innovation Services** act as the secretariat for the REFSG and UOA Committees to keep a record of the meetings and the decisions taken. Research and Innovation Services also oversee and project manage the preparation of the University's REF 2021 submission and provide advice and guidance to the REFSG and the UOA Committees, consulting with Research England and AdvanceHE where appropriate.
- 7.8 The **REF Reading Groups** are sub-groups of the UOA Committees and advise on the quality and ranking of the unit's research outputs using a process of peer review, informed where appropriate by citation data. The REF Reading Groups will also advise on the quality and viability of impact case studies using guidance agreed by the University Impact Group.
- 7.9 The constitution of the REF Reading Groups is recommended by the UOA Committee Chair in consultation with the relevant Associate Dean(s). Each group's size and constitution varies depending on the disciplinary breadth of the unit. Criteria used to inform the constitution of the groups include: relevant disciplinary expertise; research experience; REF experience; and representativeness in terms of equality, diversity and inclusivity. The Terms of Reference of the REF Reading Groups were approved by the REF Strategy Group in February 2019 and can be found as an appendix in part 5, section 22.
- 7.10 The **University Impact Group** is an advisory group that monitors and supports the development of the impact case studies and provides advice on their viability and quality to the UOA Committees. It is chaired by the Research Evaluation, Data and Systems Manager and includes UOA leads, School Impact Champions and professional staff from the Department for Academic Enterprise, Research and Innovation Services, and Corporate Communications. The constitution of the group is recommended by the University's Research Evaluation, Data and Systems Manager based on staff roles. The Terms of Reference and constitution for the University Impact Group were reviewed and agreed by the REF Strategy Group in February 2019 and are included as an appendix in part 5, section 23.

In the later stages of the REF cycle, the monitoring and support of the impact case studies was carried out in UOA Committee meetings. This was felt to offer a more appropriate means of focusing on the requirements of each UOA. The University Impact Group therefore did not meet during this period.

- 7.11 The University's **Code of Practice Group** was a sub-group of the REF Strategy Group with responsibility for drafting the University's Code of Practice. The group, chaired by the Director of Research and Innovation Services, included academic staff, representation from the University College Union (UCU), two School Managers, and the School Principal Lecturers (Staff and Resources) (who have responsibility for overseeing workloads within Schools) and representatives from HR and Research and Innovation Services.

The constitution of the group was recommended by the Director of Research and Innovation Services informed by staff roles, academic representation and disciplinary spread. Its Terms of Reference and constitution were approved by the REF Strategy Group in February 2019 and are included as an appendix in part 5, section 24.

- 7.12 The University's **Individual Staff Circumstances Group** will have responsibility for reviewing cases where a member of staff's circumstances have constrained their ability to work productively during the REF period, and for advising individuals and UOA Committees on any permitted reduction in research outputs. The group will be chaired by the Deputy Director of Human Resources, and will include the University's Equality and Diversity Adviser, Occupational Health Adviser, and the Research Evaluation, Data and Systems Manager.

The Deputy Director of Human Resources will document decisions relating to output reductions. These records will be handled in line with the University's standard procedures for processing confidential staff information and the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. The records will be destroyed following completion of the REF in December 2021.

Decisions will be communicated to the member of staff making the case. The relevant UOA Committee Chair will be informed only of the reduction in the number of required outputs and the name of the member of staff, and will be given no other details.

The constitution of the Group was recommended by the REFSG in consultation with the Executive Director of Human Resources and the Director of Research and Innovation Services. Its Terms of Reference were approved by the REF Strategy Group in February 2019 and can be found as an appendix in part 5, section 25.

- 7.13 The **REF Appeals Group** will consider any appeals made by members of staff, and will communicate decisions to the UOA Committee Chairs and the REFSG. The group will be chaired by the Executive Director of Human Resources, and will also comprise: (i) one other member of the University Executive Team who has not taken part in the University's REF preparations; and (ii) two members of the University's professoriate,

who are not Associate Deans (Research and Innovation), UOA Leads or Deputy Leads, and who are based in a different School and UOA to the member(s) of staff who have submitted an appeal. This is designed to ensure independence as well as the provision of expertise on significant responsibility for research. The Human Resources department will act as the secretariat for REF Appeals Group, and will handle records relating to appeals in accordance with the University's standard procedures for dealing with confidential staff information and fulfilling the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

The Terms of Reference for the REF Appeals Group were approved by the REF Strategy Group in February 2019 and can be found as an appendix in part 5, section 26.

- 7.14 All members of committees with responsibilities in relation to the University's policies and procedures for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research, determining research independence, and the selection of outputs, will undertake equality and diversity training to outline their and the University's legal obligations. Professional staff who are involved in the preparation of the REF 2021 submission, or who support the workload allocation process, are also required to attend the training. Training sessions were delivered to UOA leads, deputy leads, impact champions, Associate Deans (Research and Innovation), members of the Code of Practice Group, the PVC (Research and Innovation) and RIS staff in March 2019 and further training will be delivered in the Autumn of 2020. The training has been tailored to the REF 2021 processes and delivered by AdvanceHE. The training schedule is given as an appendix in part 5, section 29.

8 Appeals

- 8.1 Members of staff will be able to submit an appeal based on their categorisation in terms of significant responsibility for research, or research independence. In line with REF 2021 guidance, it will not be possible to submit an appeal based on the selection of outputs to be submitted to REF 2021.
- Members of staff with a primary employment function of 'teaching and research' will be able to appeal on the basis of their categorisation of significant responsibility for research.
 - Members of staff with a primary employment function of 'research only' will be able to appeal on the basis of their categorisation of research independence.
- 8.2 A page will be developed on the University's intranet to give further details of the appeals process, and will link to the pages for the Academic Workload Management Framework and the REF Code of Practice.
- 8.3 For existing members of staff, there will be an opportunity to appeal in **November 2019 to January 2020**. For new members of staff who join the University after this date:

- For members of staff with a primary employment function of ‘teaching and research’, information on the appeals process will be provided at the point at which their workload is confirmed. Staff will be given four weeks following the receipt of their workload allocations to submit an appeal, and appeals will be considered monthly.
- For members of staff with a primary employment function of ‘research only, staff will be given four weeks following receipt of their categorisation of research independence to submit an appeal, and any appeals will be considered monthly.

8.4 Before submitting an appeal based on whether they have significant responsibility for research, members of staff will be encouraged to discuss their workload allocations with their Head of Department. Before submitting an appeal based on whether they have been categorised as an independent researcher, members of staff will be encouraged to contact their Associate Dean (Research and Innovation). In both cases, the objective will be to discuss and if possible address concerns and queries.

8.5 For members of staff who wish to submit an appeal, a template will be provided and made available on the University’s intranet. Appeals, comprising the template and any supporting information, will be submitted by email to a dedicated inbox accessible only to the Executive Director of Human Resources, the Deputy Director of Human Resources, and the Research Evaluation, Data and Systems Manager.

8.6 Appeals will be considered by the REF Appeals Group. The outcome of any appeal will be confirmed to the member of staff submitting the appeal within four weeks of the appeal being considered, and feedback will be provided. The outcome and feedback will be communicated via an email to the member of staff’s University email address, and a hard copy will also be posted to their home address. Details of the appeals process will be provided as part of the publication within the University of the final Code of Practice, and will be circulated again at the point at which workloads for 2019/20 (including research allocations) are confirmed.

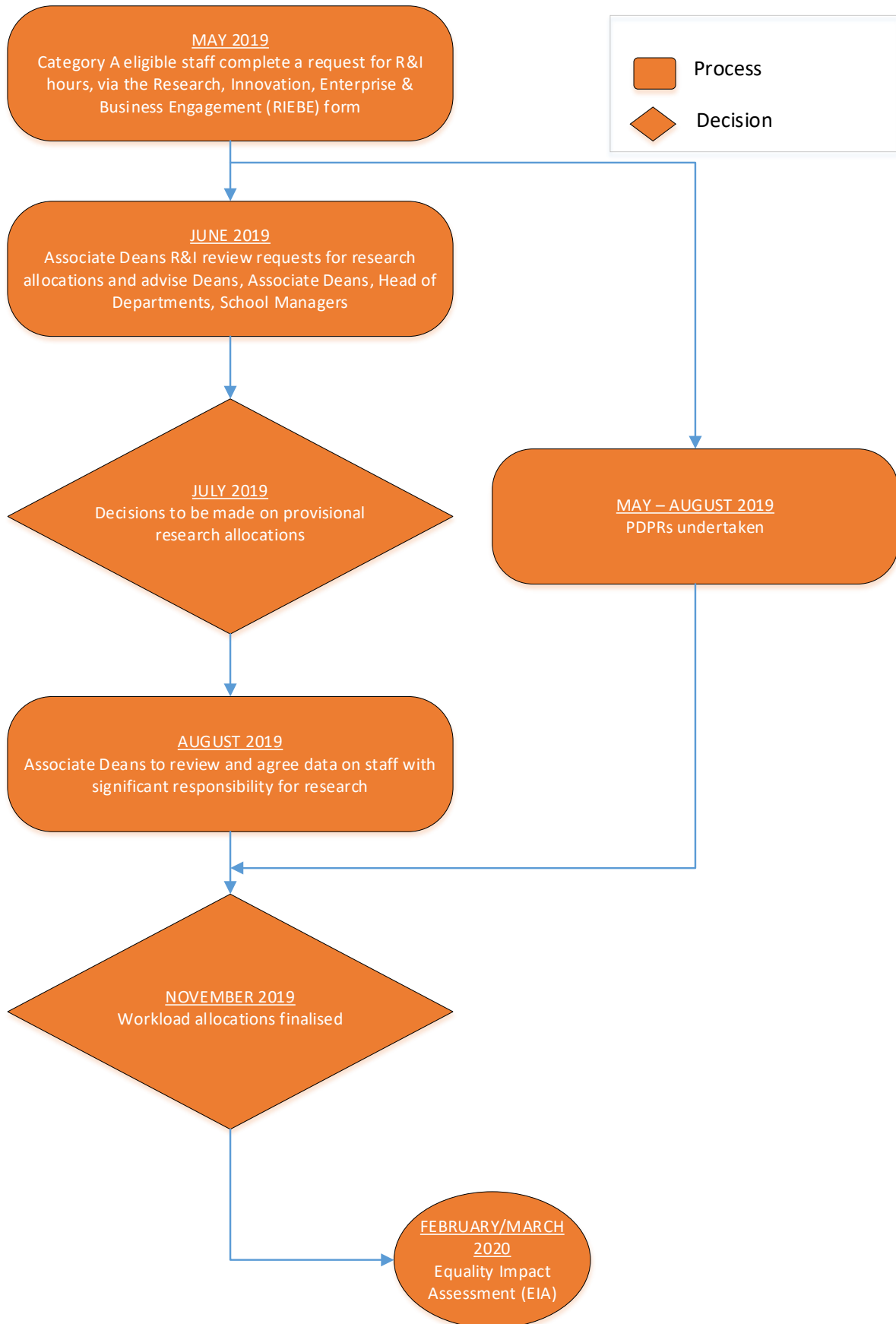
9 Equality Impact Assessment

9.1 EIAs will be conducted and/or updated at key points:

- **February/March 2020** (when workload allocations for 2019/20 are finalised and the appeals process has been completed)
- **October/November 2020** following the census date and prior to the REF submission being signed-off by the REF Strategy Group and UET.

9.2 EIAs will compare the characteristics of staff who have been identified as having a significant responsibility for research, with the broader body of Category A eligible staff. EIAs will be considered by UOA Committees to inform the Environment statements and future development strategies, the REF Strategy Group and the Athena SWAN Implementation Group (both to inform the development of future equality and inclusion strategies).

Identification of Staff with Significant Responsibility for Research



Part 3: Determining research independence

10 Policies and procedures

- 10.1 The REF Guidance on Submissions provides the following definition of 'research independence', along with suggested indicators:

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.³

- 10.2 Additional indicators for main panels C (broadly, the panel for social science disciplines) and D (broadly, the panel for arts and humanities disciplines) are given in the REF Panel Criteria and Working Methods.⁴
- 10.3 The University considers all members of staff with a primary employment function of 'teaching and research' to be independent researchers. None of these staff are employed to deliver another person's programme of research, and none are restricted in terms of their contract of employment from undertaking independent research, and from associated indicators such as leading applications for research funding.

The exceptions to this are the Graduate Tutors. These members of staff are Category A eligible and carry out a limited amount of teaching whilst studying for a PhD. As their primary role is to undertake a PhD, these members of staff are not considered to be independent researchers. As such, and because their workload is divided between PhD study and teaching, they do not meet the criteria set out in paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 for having significant responsibility for research. When Graduate Tutors complete their PhD, they transition to a Lecturer post within the University. At this point, they are invited to apply for additional Research and Innovation hours within their workload as per paragraph 5.5 and can be identified as having significant responsibility for research.

- 10.4 Members of staff with a primary employment function of 'research only' are considered to be either Research Assistants, who carry out another person's research programme, or independent researchers. Only independent researchers are eligible for submission to REF 2021; Research Assistants are not eligible to be submitted.

³ See paragraphs 131 to 133 of the Guidance on Submissions and paragraph 188 of the Main Panel Criteria and Working Methods, available at <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/>,

⁴ See paragraph 189 of the Panel Criteria and Working Methods, available at <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/>.

11 **Development of processes**

11.1 The independent researcher status of those with a primary employment function of 'research only' is determined as follows:

- A list is provided to Research and Innovation Services (RIS) by HR of all staff with a primary employment function of 'research only', as part of the compilation of the annual Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) staff return. At this stage, all staff on the list are categorised as Research Assistants by default.
- Set criteria are then applied by RIS. All Research Assistants (point 12 to 22 on the national pay grades; Grade 4 – 5 on the University's pay scales) and Research Associates (point 22 – 34; TU Grade 6 – 7) are categorised at this stage as Research Assistants, as these members of staff are typically employed to deliver the research programmes of academic staff.
- As an exception to this, any member of staff who delivers their own programme of work and was categorised in the previous year's HESA return as an independent researcher is identified and again categorised as an independent researcher. This categorisation will have been made in conjunction with their School Associate Dean (Research and Innovation), based on information regarding their research independence as per the REF guidance.
- All Research Fellows (usually point 34 – 44 on the national pay grades; Grade 8a/b on the University's pay scales) are looked at by RIS on a case-by-case basis. Those who are employed as part of an externally funded project, or a number of projects, and therefore deliver the research programme of another member of staff, are categorised as Research Assistants. Those Research Fellows who deliver their own programme of work independently are categorised as independent researchers; this is informed by the previous year's categorisation, and RIS's knowledge of the staff concerned.
- Categorisations are determined using the indicators set out in the REF guidance^{3, 4}, and an understanding of whether the member of staff directs their own programme of work rather than delivering that of a supervising colleague.
- The updated lists showing these categorisations are then provided to the Associate Dean (Research and Innovation) for each academic School, who is asked to check and verify the data. If required, further information may be sought within the School, or from HR and/or Finance and Commercial Development, such as job descriptions or details of externally funded projects. Categorisations are changed as necessary at this stage.
- The final lists are then collated by RIS and forwarded to HR for inclusion in the HESA staff return.

12 **How decisions are made and communicated**

12.1 The process of determining independent researcher status is followed on a regular basis to support the preparation of the University's REF submission and the HESA staff return. Independent researcher status categorisations for the 2018/19 staff return

will be finalised by reviewing all staff with a primary employment function of 'research only' at the end of the year, working to the following dates:

- **July 2019:** A list will be provided by HR of all members of staff with a primary employment function of 'research only'.
- **August 2019:** RIS will apply the criteria above to the lists of staff, categorising Research Assistants and Research Associates as Research Assistants (unless otherwise categorised in last year's HESA return) and categorising Research Fellows on a case-by-case basis determined by their previous categorisation and understanding of their research independence.
- **August 2019:** RIS will send the updated lists to the Associate Deans (Research and Innovation) in each academic School, so that they can verify the categorisations. Further information will be sought if necessary within the School or from HR and Finance and Commercial Development. Any required changes will be made, referring to the REF guidance.
- **September 2019:** RIS will forward the final list to HR.

Members of staff with a primary employment function of 'research only' will receive confirmation by email in **November 2019** of whether they have been categorised as a Research Assistant or an independent researcher and the rationale for their categorisation, and will have the opportunity to appeal. The names of those members of staff who have been categorised as independent researchers will be provided to the relevant UOA Committee chair to confirm that these members of staff have significant responsibility for research, and should therefore be included in REF submission preparations.

For new members of staff who join the University after July 2019, HR will provide RIS with a list of new members of staff each month. RIS will assign a preliminary categorisation based on the process outlined above, and will work with Associate Deans (Research and Innovation) to confirm this categorisation, which will then be relayed to the members of staff, HR and the relevant UOA Committee chair.

13 **Staff, committees and training**

13.1 As per Part 2

14 **Appeals**

14.1 As per Part 2

15 **Equality Impact Assessment**

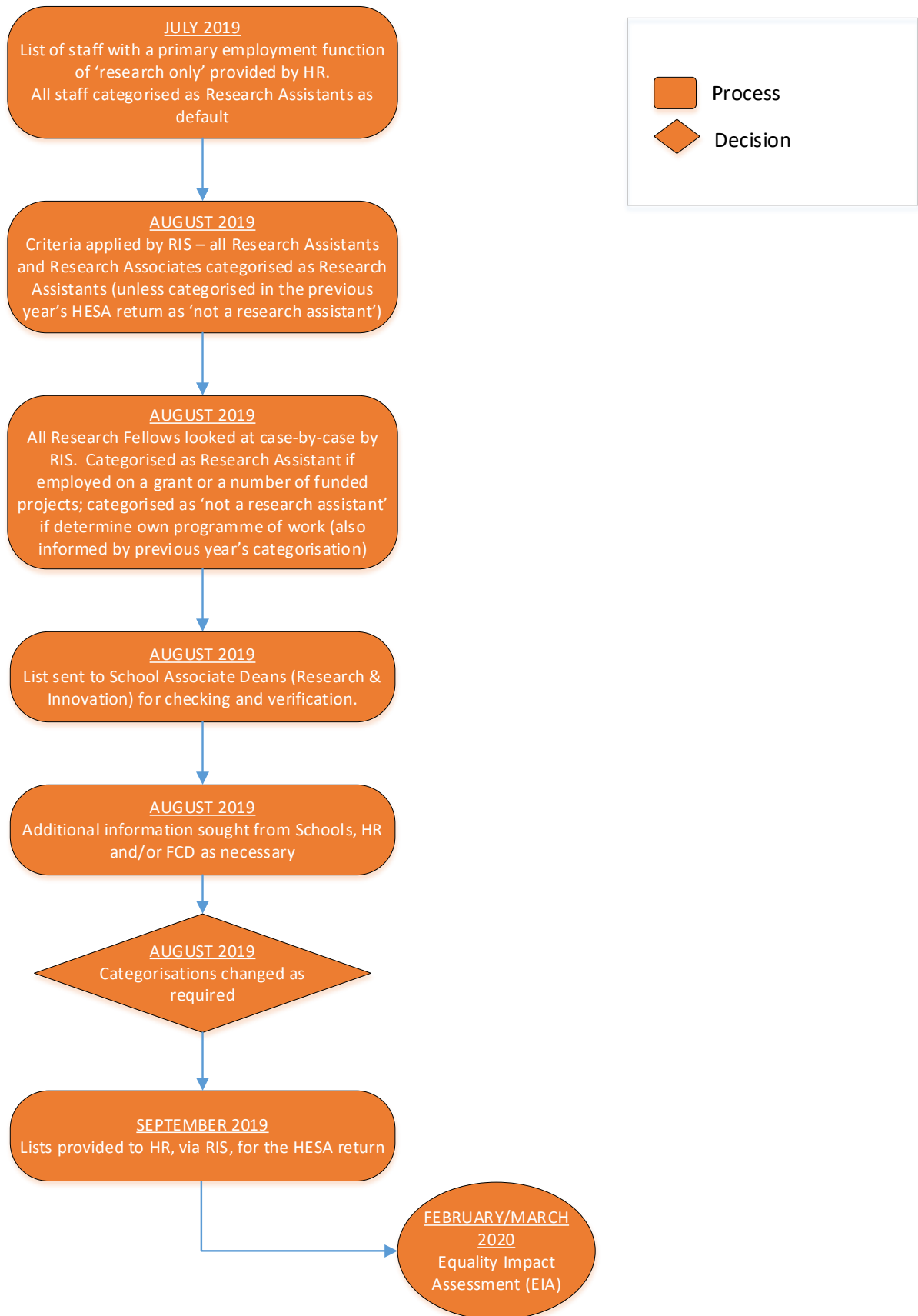
15.1 As detailed in Part 2, EIAs will be conducted and/or updated at key points:

- **February/March 2020** (when research independence categorisations, along with workload allocations for academic year 2019/20 and the appeal process, are finalised)
- **October/November 2020** following the census date and prior to the REF

submission being signed-off by the REF Strategy Group and UET.

- 15.2 The University has a relatively small number of staff with a primary employment function of 'research only'. Options for a comparator pool to allow comparison of the characteristics of those determined to be independent researchers include: the total group of staff with a primary employment function of 'research only'; and the wider body of early career researchers (including those on academic contracts). As in Part 2, EIAs will be considered by UOA Committees to inform the Environment statements and future development strategies, and by the REF Strategy Group and the Athena SWAN Implementation Group (both to inform the development of future equality and inclusion strategies).

Independent Researcher Process



Part 4: Selection of outputs

16 Policies and procedures

- 16.1 The University's approach to the selection of outputs and the overall preparation of the REF 2021 submission has been influenced by the external policy context as well as institutional strategies. REF 2021 is a measure of research excellence which affects reputation and income; and growing research excellence is central to Teesside University's 2020 strategy and subsequent five-year corporate strategy, Teesside 2025.
- 16.2 The principal criterion for output selection will be research excellence (in terms of originality, significance and rigour, as per the REF Guidance on Submissions and Main Panel Criteria and Working Methods). However, in selecting between research outputs of similar quality, UOA Committee decisions will be informed by the following criteria (ranked in order):
- Output quality
 - Output fit with the overall profile of the UOA
 - Representativeness of the selection of outputs in relation to the UOA's staff profile
- The University will therefore have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty whilst maintaining a primary focus on output quality.
- 16.3 In making decisions on research excellence it is acknowledged that there will be some variation in approach between Main Panels, as reflected in the Main Panel Criteria and Working Methods, and/or disciplinary differences between the Units of Assessment (UOAs).
- 16.4 One example is that selected bibliometrics (citation counts) will be supplied to some UOA sub-panels as part of the REF assessment process by Clarivate Analytics' Institute for Scientific Information (ISI).
- 16.5 The following UOA sub-panels, to which the University intends to submit, have confirmed their intention to use citation data to support the peer review process:⁵
- UOA 3 – Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy
 - UOA 4 – Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience
- 16.6 The University recognises the contribution that appropriate quantitative indicators can make to the evaluation of research quality when used alongside qualitative indicators and expert opinion. It supports the responsible use of research indicators to inform the judgement of the UOA Committees for UOAs 3 and 4 as outlined above.

⁵ See paragraphs 274 to 282 of the Panel Criteria and Working Methods, available at <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/>.

- 16.7 As a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), the University supports the principle that Journal Impact Factors (JIF) should not be used when making decisions on research quality. External and internal reviewers will be advised not to use JIFs to determine the quality of research outputs.
- 16.8 External reviewers will be provided with a copy and briefing paper on this Code of Practice once finalised and published on the University's website. Some external output reviews were undertaken during the development of the Code of Practice, and the reviewers were provided with a briefing paper summarising the key points within the developing document.
- 16.9 The University has published a policy and implementation plan on the use of quantitative indicators in research evaluation, which is available as an appendix in part 5, section 30.
- 16.10 The University also supports the development of CRediT as a taxonomy to improve the attribution and visibility of contributions to scholarly outputs.⁶
- 16.11 The REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions decouples members of staff from the selection of outputs. This is in recognition that staff productivity may vary for a range of reasons, and allows institutions flexibility when developing their portfolio of outputs. Therefore, not all staff will be returned with the same number of outputs and in exceptional cases some staff may be returned without a single output. The University has changed its promotions process to address concerns which members of staff may have regarding inadvertent discrimination (caused by the portfolio of outputs submitted to REF 2021), linked to its strategic commitment to equality. The promotions application process will explicitly state from 2019/20 that staff cannot identify whether outputs included in promotion applications were submitted to REF 2021. Similarly, the selection of outputs for submission to REF 2021 will not be considered as part of performance management processes within the University.

17 **Development of processes**

- 17.1 The University has been preparing for REF 2021 for a number of years, and has undertaken annual internal reviews of the developing portfolios of research outputs. It has also undertaken a review of research outputs using external assessors. Although these preparations have informed the development of the portfolio of research outputs, it is important to note that decisions on the selection of outputs for REF 2021 will be made using the processes set out in this Code of Practice.
- 17.2 The processes outlined here have been developed by the University's Code of Practice Group in consultation with Associate Deans (Research and Innovation) and

⁶ Further details are available at <https://casrai.org/credit/>

UOA leads. The REF Strategy Group (REFSG) approved the processes for the selection of outputs set out in this Code of Practice prior to the consultation with staff in March and April 2019.

- 17.3 The selection process for outputs is intended to be iterative, to allow submissions to be refined in light of staff changes, new publications and/or changes to the profile of the unit.
- 17.4 Members of staff within the University are responsible for adding their outputs to the Pure system (available at <https://research.tees.ac.uk/>). All outputs should be added to Pure, including those produced in a language other than English.
- 17.5 The University's REF Strategy Group (REFSG), UOA Committees and REF Reading Groups are involved in the selection of outputs for REF 2021. UOA Committees are responsible for recommending the selection of outputs to be considered by the REFSG. The final output selection for each UOA will be approved by the REFSG and included as part of the REF 2021 submission.

Details on the staff and committees involved in the selection of outputs, and the Equality and Diversity training they will receive, is outlined in part 2, section 7 above.

- 17.6 The selection process for outputs involves the following steps, which happen on a frequent or ongoing basis:
- Staff deposit their outputs in the University's repository, which is part of the Pure system.
 - Outputs are checked on a regular basis for compliance with Research England's Open Access Policy by Student and Library Services, who work with Research and Innovation Services to provide regular Open Access Compliance Reports to UOA Committees.

Members of staff have already identified outputs to be considered for submission to REF 2021, and internal reviews of outputs have taken place. An external review of outputs also took place as part of a Research Review held by the University in June 2018.

As part of the June 2018 Research Review, the details of eligible outputs produced by members of staff who have since left the University were accessed via the University's repository and reviewed on the same basis as all other outputs. The outputs of former members of staff will continue to be reviewed. UOA Committees will decide whether to include the outputs of former members of staff on a case-by-case basis when recommending their final selection of outputs to the REF Strategy Group.

17.7 The following steps will take place as part of the final selection of outputs for submission:

- **February – August 2020:** Staff will provide an updated list of eligible outputs to be considered for submission to the relevant UOA Committee Chair.
- **March – September 2020:** Additional or new outputs under consideration for submission to REF 2021 (which have not yet been internally reviewed) will be peer reviewed and graded by each UOA's REF Reading Group.
- **September/October 2020:** Each UOA Committee Chair will be asked to work with their UoA Committee to review the quality of all outputs under consideration (based on appraisals from the REF Reading Groups and external reviewers) and identify and recommend outputs for submission (using the criteria set out in paragraph 16.2 above).
- Each UOA Committee's initial recommendations will include as standard: a single output related to each member of staff with significant responsibility for research; and the remaining outputs to be included in the UOA submission (ensuring that no member of staff exceeds the maximum five outputs which can be returned).
- Any reductions in the number of outputs confirmed by the Individual Staff Circumstances Group will be taken into consideration, including cases where a member of staff can be submitted without a single output.
- **October/November 2020:** The UOA Committee Chair will present and justify the recommended selection of outputs to the REFSG.
- **November/December 2020:** An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken on the selection of outputs
- **January/February 2021:** UOA Committee Chairs will be asked to present their final selection of outputs to the REFSG. This will reflect any changes made following the development of the Equality Impact Assessment, additional publications and additional reviews since the presentation of the output pools in October/November 2020. The REFSG will determine the final selection of outputs and the Equality Impact Assessment will be updated.

Outputs under consideration have been or will be externally reviewed and graded as far as practicable in the preparation period leading up to the final selection of outputs.

18 **Supporting staff with individual circumstances**

18.1 All members of staff who are eligible to be submitted to REF will have the opportunity to disclose individual circumstances, which have adversely affected their ability to work productively during the REF period. Staff who are affected by circumstances will receive clarification of the number of outputs by which the output pool could be reduced, as a result of their circumstances. However, it is important to note that the University has no set expectations of the volume of outputs which any member of staff will contribute to the output pool.

- 18.2 All members of staff will be invited by email in **November 2019** to disclose such circumstances. Information will also be added to the University's intranet pages. Details of the disclosure process were provided during the staff briefing events held as part of the consultation on the Code of Practice. Information on how to disclose circumstances will be sent by post to staff who are absent from work at the time that the email is circulated.
- 18.3 Staff will be provided with: (i) a template (available as an appendix in part 5, section 31) to complete if they choose to do so; (ii) details of applicable circumstances; (iii) details of who will have access to the information they disclose; (iv) confirmation of how long the information will be retained; (v) confirmation that the process of disclosing circumstances is voluntary; and (vi) the Terms of Reference and constitution of the Individual Staff Circumstances Group. Disclosed circumstances will be handled in confidence by the Human Resources department, and retained in accordance with REF guidelines. The initial deadline for disclosing circumstances will be in **January 2020**.
- 18.4 Only circumstances disclosed as part of this process will be considered as part of the REF submission process. As key contacts for research management within the Schools, the Deans, Associate Deans (Research and Innovation), other members of the School Executive Teams, Principal Lecturers (Research and Innovation) and UOA Committee members will be given information on the disclosure process and confirmation of the University's responsibilities in ensuring that the process is voluntary.
- 18.5 Any permitted reductions in the number of outputs to be submitted will be determined by the Individual Staff Circumstances Group in **February 2020**. The group will make decisions using the tariffs set out in the REF Guidance on Submissions⁷ (and included as an appendix in part 5, section 32). In the case of Early Career Researchers (ECRs) and staff who declare secondments or career breaks outside of Higher Education, staff records will be consulted as required as part of the verification process.
- 18.6 The decisions of the Individual Staff Circumstances Group will be communicated to the member of staff making the disclosure and the UOA Committee Chair. Only the reduction in the number of outputs and the member of staff's name will be confirmed to the UOA Committee Chair, and no other details will be provided. This will ensure that the UOA Committee Chair is aware of the number of outputs by which the output pool could be reduced. This will also enable the UOA Committee Chair to manage the output pool as a whole, including by identifying any members of staff who can be submitted without a single output.

⁷ REF Guidance on Submissions, Annex L and paragraphs 178 to 183, available at <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/>

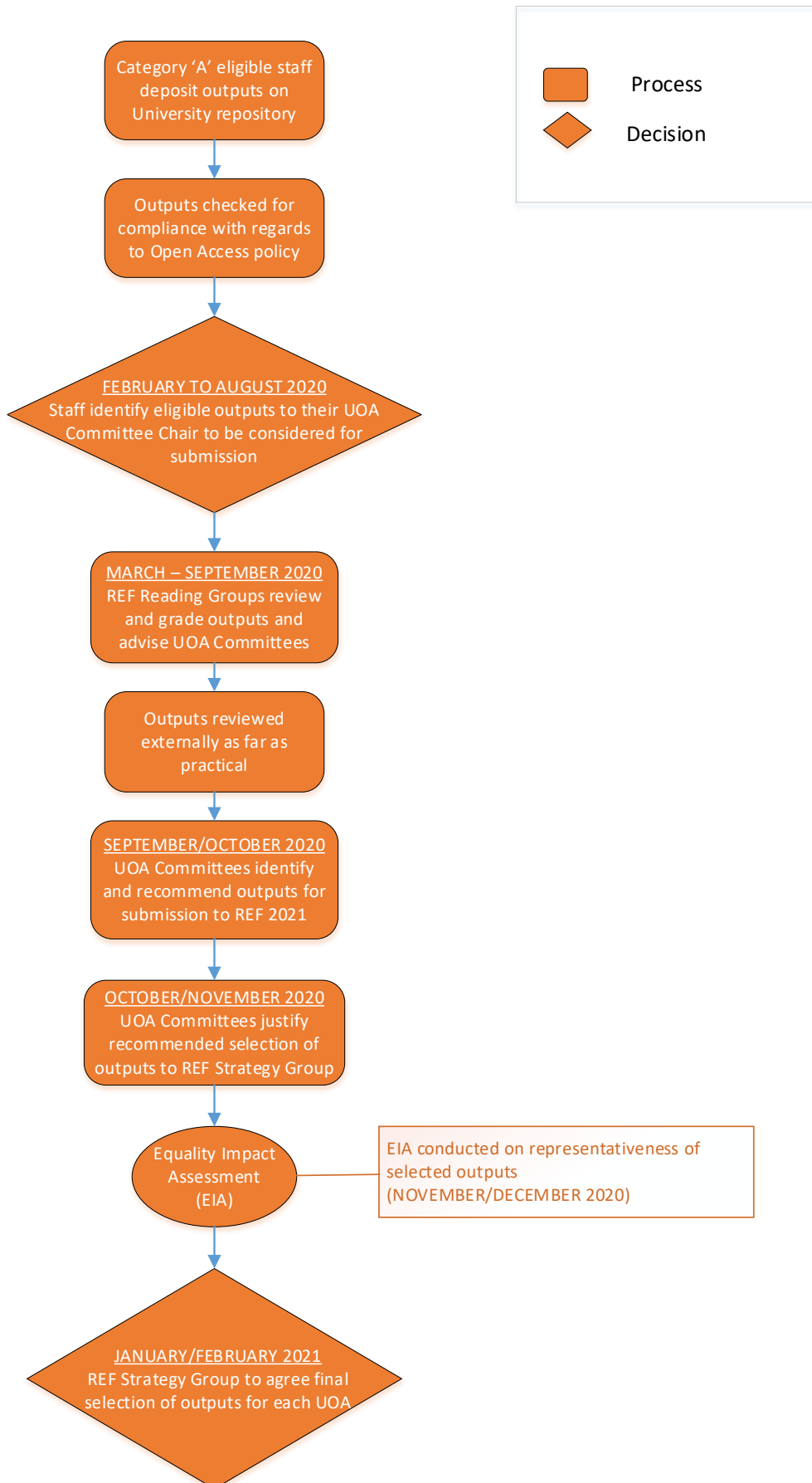
- 18.7 In addition, staff will have the option, when they complete the disclosure template, to give their permission for the HR Department to contact them to discuss their circumstances and any requirements that they may have for consideration by the Individual Staff Circumstances Group. This will allow staff to have a confidential and supportive discussion with an appropriate member of the HR team. Where appropriate, staff will be referred to relevant University processes to enable adjustments and/or support to be put in place if required.
- 18.8 These arrangements are designed to maintain the confidentiality of the disclosure of circumstances, by restricting as far as possible the communication of the outcomes. This process will be applied consistently across the University. Submitted circumstances disclosure templates will be destroyed by the end of December 2021, in line with REF audit guidance.
- 18.9 The UOA Committee will decide whether to request a reduction in the total number of outputs required for the submission to their UOA. This will be based, in line with REF guidance, on the proportion of staff within the UOA who have been affected by circumstances and the scale of the permitted reduction in outputs, the size of the UOA, the size of the available output pool compared to the number of outputs required, and expected publication patterns and levels within relevant disciplines.
- 18.10 The process of disclosing circumstances open again in **October 2020** to allow additional disclosures and to ensure that new members of staff have the opportunity to disclose their circumstances.
- 18.11 The circumstances which will be taken into account are informed by the REF guidance and comprise: qualifying as an ECR; secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector; disability; ill health or injury; mental health conditions; caring responsibilities; gender reassignment; and maternity, paternity and adoption leave, and associated constraints or restrictions. The University does not employ junior clinical academics.
- 18.12 Members of staff who meet the definition of an Early Career Researcher (ECR) will be identified in the University's HESA staff return for 2019/20, as per the REF guidance.⁸ However, the ECR status of a member of staff will only be considered by the Individual Staff Circumstances Group, when determining permitted reductions to the number of outputs to be submitted, if the member of staff has disclosed their ECR status as part of the process set out in this section. The University acknowledges that not all ECR staff will wish to disclose their status, and that such disclosure will be voluntary in the same way as for all other circumstances.

⁸ REF Guidance on Submissions, paragraphs 146 – 149

19 **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 19.1 An EIA will be conducted on the representativeness of outputs in relation to the protected characteristics of staff for each UOA, and of all UOAs combined, in November/December 2020 and February 2021 (prior to the final REF submission). The outcome of the EIAs will be shared with UOA Committees to inform their final selection of outputs.
- 19.2 UOA Committees will consider the impact that the selection of outputs may have on a particular group when finalising the recommended selection of outputs.
- 19.3 The REFSG will consider the representativeness of outputs in relation to the protected characteristics of all staff who have been identified as having significant responsibility for research, at the level of each UOA and that of the institution, when deciding the final selection of outputs for submission to REF 2021 in February 2021.
- 19.4 In addition to using the EIA findings to inform the selection of outputs, the University will use them to identify any concerns regarding inadvertent discrimination in relation to the REF processes, or where a particular policy or process has had a positive impact on the advancement of equality. In December 2020, each UOA lead will reflect on the findings of the first EIA and report any insights and suggestions for improvements to the REFSG.
- 19.5 The REFSG will review insights from the EIAs on the selection of outputs for submission, the processes for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research, and the processes for determining research independence, in order to consider the combined impact of its policies and processes on equality. These insights will inform improvements to REF policies and procedures, the outcomes of which will be reflected in the University's final EIA.

Output Selection Process



Part 5: Appendices

20 Terms of Reference - REF Strategy Group

The REF Strategy Group provides advice to the Vice Chancellor, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), the University's Executive Team and Academic Board. The Group's remit is:

- (i) To discuss and advise on the University's strategic approach to its REF 2021 submission in the light of latest guidance from Research England.
- (ii) To oversee the University's preparations for its REF2021 submission.
- (iii) To develop the University's Code of Practice in relation to identifying staff with a significant responsibility for research, determining research independence and selecting research outputs.
- (iv) To make final decisions, based on advice and recommendations from the UOA Committee Chairs, on the final selection of outputs to be submitted to REF 2021.
- (v) To develop the Institutional Environment Statement and approve the UOA environment templates to be submitted to REF 2021.
- (vi) To receive and consider information received from internal and external review on the progress and readiness of submissions – in terms of output quality, impact case studies and the environment for conducting research.
- (vii) To consider and approve requests for exclusion to Research England and advise the Vice-Chancellor and UET as appropriate.
- (viii) To consider the selection of outputs and the staff and UOA they will be attached to.
- (ix) To advise Associate Deans and Unit of Assessment Leads on approaches to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and monitor the representativeness of each Unit of Assessment's outputs in relation to the protected characteristics of the staff submitting.
- (x) To make progress reports to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team, to the Research and Innovation Committee and to Academic Board.

Constitution

- Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) (Chair)
- Director, Research and Innovation Services (Deputy Chair)
- Professor of Exercise Science
- Dean of the School of Science, Engineering and Design
- Dean of the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Law
- Professor of Cultural and Urban History

- Research Evaluation, Data and Systems Manager, Research and Innovation Services
- Representative from Human Resources

Addition members to be co-opted as necessary

21 **Terms of Reference – UOA Committees**

Purpose: To oversee the development of the University’s submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in each Unit of Assessment (UOA) and advise the REF Strategy Group on the final submission.

Terms of Reference:

1. To coordinate and oversee the preparation of the University’s submission to the REF in each UOA
2. To work with the REF Reading Group for the UOA to coordinate the internal review of research outputs, and with Research and Innovation Services to coordinate external output reviews
3. To make recommendations to the REF Strategy Group on the outputs to be submitted within the UOA
4. To support and oversee the development and preparation of impact case studies, and to make recommendations to the REF Strategy Group on the impact case studies to be submitted within the UOA
5. To prepare the environment statement for the UOA

Constitution:

- UOA Lead (Chair)
- UOA Deputy Lead
- Impact Champion for the UOA
- Associate Dean (Research and Innovation)
- Principal Lecturer (Research and Innovation)
- Other academic members as deemed appropriate given the scale and scope of the UOA submission
- Support and secretariat: Research and Innovation Services

22 **Terms of Reference - REF Reading Groups**

Purpose: To review research outputs on behalf of UOA Committees, using REF assessment criteria.

Terms of Reference:

1. To peer review research outputs produced within the UOA

2. To provide advice to the UOA Committee regarding the quality of the reviewed outputs, based on REF assessment criteria and guidance
3. To provide internal peer review of the impact case studies under development for each UOA, and to provide feedback to the UOA Committee

Constitution:

- UOA Lead (Chair)
- UOA Deputy Lead
- Impact Champion for the UOA
- Other academic members as deemed appropriate given the scale and scope of the UOA submission

23 Terms of Reference – University Impact Group

1. The objectives of this group are:
 - a. To monitor and manage research impact portfolios across the University in order to maximise the reach and significance of impact
 - b. To support Schools and School REF leads in the development and preparation of impact case studies (ICSs)
 - c. To have oversight of ICSs submitted to REF 2021
 - d. To advise on the use of the Pure system in order to capture and categorise evidence of impact
 - e. To advise on training and development programmes and actions to enhance and maximise research impact
 - f. To put systems and procedures in place to improve pathways to impact
 - g. To consider and support the development of impact that falls beyond that which can be submitted to REF 2021.

2. Constitution:

- Head of Research Evaluation, Research and Innovation Services (Chair)
- Impact Champions
- UOA Leads
- Representatives from the Department of Academic Enterprise
- Representatives from the Corporate Communications department
- Additional representatives and secretariat from Research and Innovation Services

24 Terms of Reference - Code of Practice Group

Purpose: To advise on the development of the University's Code of Practice (COP) for REF2021

Terms of Reference

1. To advise the REF Strategy Group on the criteria and processes set out in the University's Code of Practice to determine: the fair and transparent identification of staff with significant responsibility for research; who counts as an independent researcher; and the selection of outputs for REF 2021.
2. To ensure that the Code of Practice is developed in relation to the University's broader institutional strategies in relation to research evaluation and funding, and policies and processes that support equality, diversity and inclusivity (such as the Athena Swan Bronze and San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) action plans).
3. To support the implementation and embedding of the principles and processes outlined in the University's Code of Practice in Schools and relevant Services.
4. To liaise and consult with UCU at the earliest opportunity and involve their representatives in the iterative development of the Code of Practice for REF 2021.
5. To liaise with the Director of Corporate Communications and Public Relations and Executive Director of Human Resources on the development and implementation of a communications plan to support staff consultation with the Code of Practice on the processes for determining a significant responsibility for research.
6. To advise on the disclosure and processing of equality-related individual staff circumstances to reduce staff outputs at UOA level.
7. To advise on the development of the University's appeal process.
8. To advise on the design, timing and delivery of equality, diversity and inclusivity training for REF 2021 to relevant staff involved in determining criteria for significant responsibility for research, independent researcher status, the selection of research outputs and reduced output requirements in relation to staff circumstances.
9. To advise on the design, timing, communication and publication of Equality Impact Assessments (including the final EIA following submission) to best support the development of the University's Code of Practice for REF 2021.

Constitution:

- Director of Research and Innovation Services (Chair)
- Research Evaluation, Data and Systems Manager, RIS (Deputy Chair)
- Deputy Director of Human Resources, HR
- Equality & Diversity Adviser, HR
- Professor (Research), School of Health & Social Care
- Reader, School of Computing, Media and the Arts

- School Manager, School of Health & Social Care
- School Manager, Teesside University Business School
- Principal Lecturer (Staff & Resources), School of Computing, Media and the Arts
- Principal Lecturer (Staff & Resources), School of Health & Social Care
- Principal Lecturer (Staff & Resources), School of Science, Engineering and Design
- Principal Lecturer (Staff & Resources), School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Law
- Principal Lecturer (Staff & Resources), Teesside University Business School
- Secretariat: member of Research and Innovation Services

25 **Terms of Reference - Individual Staff Circumstances Group**

Purpose: To advise whether individual staff circumstances will result in a reduction in the number of outputs to be submitted to REF 2021.

Terms of Reference:

1. To receive the disclosure of individual staff circumstances from members of staff eligible for submission to REF 2021
2. To take into account, where necessary and appropriate and whilst respecting issues of confidentiality, previous contact with the University's Occupational Health team
3. To review disclosed information working with the REF guidance, and to determine whether a reduction in the number of outputs should be permitted for the relevant UOA(s)
4. To confirm to each member of staff making the disclosure whether a reduction in the number of outputs required has been agreed
5. To confirm any reductions in the number of required outputs with the relevant UOA Committee chair

Constitution:

- Deputy Director of Human Resources (Chair)
- Equality and Diversity Adviser, HR
- Occupational Health Adviser, HR
- Research Evaluation, Data and Systems Manager, Research and Innovation Services

26 **Terms of Reference – REF Appeals Group**

Purpose: To review appeals made by eligible members of staff, based on either: (i) their significant responsibility for research categorisation; or (ii) their research independence status.

Terms of Reference:

- To receive appeals made by eligible members of staff based on one of the above criteria
- To consider appeals based on the information provided by those making an appeal and information provided in response by the relevant School(s), using the REF guidance where applicable
- To confirm the outcomes of the appeals process to those making an appeal
- To confirm the outcomes of the appeals process to the relevant School(s), the relevant UOA Committee chair(s) and the REF Strategy Group
- To respond to queries from the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) relating to requests for reductions in the number of required outputs

Constitution:

- Executive Director of Human Resources (Chair)
- One other member of the University Executive Team who has not taken part in the University's REF preparations
- Two members of the University's professoriate, who are not Associate Deans (Research and Innovation), UOA Leads or Deputy Leads; and who are based in a different School and UOA to those submitting an appeal
- Secretariat provided by Human Resources

28 Internal communications campaign

EVENT	Consultation regarding the REF Code of Practice Proposed date 4th March 2019 (bold when confirmed)																																								
AUDIENCE	Internal only Research-active staff; Professional service staff who support research; Union representatives																																								
BACKGROUND	<p>The Research Excellence Framework (REF) assesses the quality of research in UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The objectives of the REF are; to provide accountability for public investment in research; to provide benchmarking information for the Higher Education sector and broader public; to inform the annual allocation of quality-related (QR) funding to HEIs.</p> <p>Submissions to REF are peer-assessed by panels for each of the thirty-four Units of Assessment (UOAs), working under four main panels. The deadline to submit to REF 2021 is 27th November 2020.</p> <p>The Code of Practice sets out the procedures by which Teesside University will identify staff with significant responsibility for research, determine who is an independent researcher and select outputs to submit to the REF 2021.</p>																																								
COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Action</th> <th></th> <th>Research-active staff</th> <th>Professional service staff</th> <th>Union reps</th> <th>When?</th> <th>Status</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>SharePoint page set up with Code of Practice and context</td> <td>RIS- Head of Research Evaluation</td> <td>X</td> <td>X</td> <td></td> <td>1/03/19</td> <td>Completed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dedicated email address in place for feedback</td> <td>Completed</td> <td>X</td> <td>X</td> <td></td> <td>Completed</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Face-to-face meeting</td> <td>RIS-Director; HR-Deputy Director</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>X</td> <td>1/03/19</td> <td>Completed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Code of Practice to be shared by email,</td> <td>CCPR- all-staff email or</td> <td>X</td> <td>X</td> <td>X</td> <td>04/03/19</td> <td>Completed</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						Action		Research-active staff	Professional service staff	Union reps	When?	Status	SharePoint page set up with Code of Practice and context	RIS- Head of Research Evaluation	X	X		1/03/19	Completed	Dedicated email address in place for feedback	Completed	X	X		Completed		Face-to-face meeting	RIS-Director; HR-Deputy Director			X	1/03/19	Completed	Code of Practice to be shared by email,	CCPR- all-staff email or	X	X	X	04/03/19	Completed
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along with dates/times of feedback sessions	dedicated research comms					
Code of Practice and cover letter sent to all category A eligible staff absent from work- post out on 04/03/19	HR	X			04/03/19	Completed
Briefing paper produced for School/UOA leads	RIS- Head of RE	X			1/03/19	Completed
Visits to School management teams	RIS- Director PVC (Research & Innovation)	X	X		From w/c 1/03/19	Completed
Hold staff briefing sessions Session 1 Session 2 Session 3	RIS- Director PVC (R&I)	X	X		w/c 25 th March	Completed
Host Yammer discussion at advertised time	RIS- Head of RE	X	X	X	27 Mar (morning)	Completed
Final COP published on intranet and mailed hard copy to Category A eligible staff as required	RIS- Head of RE	X	X		Hard copies to be sent by 14/06/19	

COMMS
OBJECTIVES

Engage and inform staff
Ensure COP is fit for purpose and proper consultation has taken place
Meet expectations of REF re: consultation
Raise awareness of REF 2021 preparedness and planning taking place

OWNER

Director, RIS
PVC (Research & Innovation)

29 Equality and Diversity training schedule

Embedding equality and diversity in REF2021

Teesside University, 20th and 21st March 2019

Workshop outline

- 1) This session is designed to equip participants with the knowledge, skills and understanding to embed equality and diversity in all decision-making in relation to REF2021.
- 2) The objectives of the session are to enable participants to:
 - Understand the legislative and policy drivers and context for embedding consideration of equality and diversity in REF2021.
 - Ensure that equality is appropriately considered in the development of the University's Code of Practice and is embedded in all decisions on REF2021, at the level of individuals, UOAs, and institutionally, including in:
 - selection of staff
 - selection of outputs
 - consideration of impact
 - the institutional and UOA environment statements.
 - Understand the concepts of conscious and unconscious bias and how these can play out in any decision-making around REF 2021, and more broadly, for example in institutional recruitment or promotion exercises.
 - Begin work on creating a culture and process in which individuals are able, but not compelled, to disclose circumstances that may entitle them to a reduction in research outputs for REF2021.
 - Manage at UOA level the effects of individual circumstances on the total output pool.
 - Begin to develop individual and institutional actions and strategies to minimise the potential for bias in REF decision-making.

February 2019

30 Policy on the use of quantitative indicators in research evaluation

The use of Quantitative Indicators in Research Evaluation

Policy on the use of Quantitative Indicators in Research Evaluation			
Version No.	V1.1	Policy Owner	Professor Simon Hodgson
Superseded version	V1.0	Author Role Title	PVC (Research and Innovation)
Approval Date	24 October 2018	Approved by	Academic Board
Effective Date	1 November 2018	Review Date	1 May 2019

The use of Quantitative Indicators in Research Evaluation	Page Number
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4. Policy Statement	42
5. Roles and Responsibilities	43

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Teesside University signed up to [the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment](#) (DORA) in December (2017) to demonstrate its commitment to the fair evaluation of research performance. It also supports the principles outlined in the [Leiden Manifesto](#) and the [Metric Tide](#) report.
- 1.2 DORA is a set of recommendations for improving the way research is assessed targeted at: research funders, academic institutions, publishers, organisations that provide research data and individuals.
- 1.3 In particular DORA seeks to address the practice of equating the Journal Impact Factor (JIF) of the journal in which an article may appear with the quality of the article, or a researcher's contributions. The JIF was originally a mechanism used by librarians to support the procurement of journals and is not appropriate to evaluate the quality of research articles.
- 1.4 Since the publication of DORA (2013) other frameworks have emerged in relation to the use of quantitative research indicators in the assessment and management of research. These are the Leiden Manifesto (2015) and The Metric Tide Report (2015).
- 1.6 In 2017 The Forum for Responsible Metrics (FFRM) – a partnership between HEFCE (now Research England), Research Councils UK, the Wellcome Trust, Universities UK and JISC - was established to develop a programme of activities to support the responsible use of metrics in higher education institutions and research organisations across the UK. Although the FFRM focuses on the recommendations made in the Metric Tide Report it supports the principles in set out in both Leiden and DORA.
- 1.7 In signing up to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment Teesside University acknowledges the damaging effects research indicators used in isolation can have on academic careers and pledges to support the responsible use of research indicators.

2. Purpose

This policy sets out Teesside University's position on the use of quantitative research indicators to evaluate research performance, provides guiding principles on the institutional approach to using such indicators and an action plan to embed these principles.

The University has reviewed the recommendations for institutions and researchers set out in DORA, The Leiden Manifesto and The Metric Tide to create the principles set

out in this policy on the use of research indicators in research evaluation. An implementation plan to embed the principles set out in this policy is at appendix 1.

3. Scope

The guidance in this document applies to academic staff, research staff, postgraduate research students and professional staff supporting the evaluation of research activities (DAE, FCM, SLS, HR and RIS).

Using research indicators responsibly will impact on the ways in which staff in Schools and Services capture and use data to evaluate the quality of research for the purposes of recruitment, promotion, appraisal and research assessment exercises.

The guidance sets out to modify behaviours of academic staff, research staff and postgraduate research students using research indicators to evaluate the research quality of themselves and others.

4 Policy Statement

- 4.1 Teesside University recognises the contribution that appropriate quantitative indicators can make to the evaluation of research quality when used alongside qualitative indicators and expert opinion.
- 4.2 The University will support staff using research data (including academic, research and professional staff) to understand the appropriate use and limitations of research indicators.
- 4.3 The University is committed to managing data in an open and transparent way, to improving its research information infrastructure and encouraging its researchers to self-verify their data and obtain an ORCID ID.
- 4.4 When utilising research indicators to inform decisions on recruitment, promotion and assessment the University and its staff will specify the criteria used for selecting those indicators.
- 4.5 Teesside University will work with the sector to explore, develop and share best practice in relation to the responsible use of research indicators and new approaches to evaluating research.
- 4.6 Researchers at Teesside University will be expected to uphold the highest standards of research integrity, including acknowledging the contributions of others and citing original research.

4.7 Researchers at Teesside University will be encouraged to use research indicators responsibly including in their own CVs and personal statements.

5 Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The PVC (Research and Innovation), Deans, Directors and Associate Deans (Research and Innovation) are responsible for disseminating this policy and raising awareness of staff and PGR students through discussion and debate.

5.2 An action plan, managed by the PVC (Research and Innovation), setting out responsibilities and detailing how the principles set out in this policy will be embedded in Schools and Services is included at appendix 1.

Appendix 1: Implementation plan to embed the responsible use of research indicators

	Action	Deadline	Responsibility
Awareness raising and impact monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish University policy on research evaluation and the use of research indicators 	Nov 2018	PVC (R&I)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate the research evaluation policy to staff through web pages and University Update, all staff briefings, the Professoriate, research staff training events, research induction and other research fora. 	Dec 2018	PVC (R&I)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate the research evaluation policy to an external audience through the web site, academic fora, and through professional sector networks (SCONUL, ARMA, CIPD) 	Dec 2018	PVC (R&I)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Athena Swan SAT to analyse recruitment and promotions data and monitor any changes in the representativeness of staff within disciplines and at all career levels following changes to recruitment/promotions processes. 	Jun 2019	HR Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver researcher development programme on the uses and limitations of research indicators. 	Oct 2018	RIS Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed the responsible use of metrics in the researcher development programmes for publication and research integrity. 	Oct 2018	RIS Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed training on the responsible use of research indicators in researcher evaluation in the research leadership programme. 	Oct 2018	RIS Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable staff to access training and resources on the use and management of research data. 	Oct 2019	RIS Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver an internal communications campaign to promote ORCID ID 	June 2019	SLS Director
Open and transparent evaluation processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop selection processes for REF outputs combining quantitative (where appropriate) and qualitative data with expert opinion. 	Jun 2019	PVC (R&I)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the criteria to select REF outputs in the Code of Practice. 	Jun 2019	PVC (R&I)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change recruitment practices including allowing candidates to select and describe the significance of a select number of research outputs, the wider societal impact of their research and their five-year research aspirations and plans. 	July 2019	HR Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the promotions process to specify and justify which quantitative indicators will be used and ensure that these data are available to individual academic staff via the PURE system. 	Dec 2019	HR Director & RIS Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide research CV templates that combine five year aspirational plans with selected research outputs via the PURE system. 	Dec 2019	RIS Director
Robust data and systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement PURE and Unit 4 research finance systems 	Jan 2019	Finance Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the research data requirements of the University and agree the use of consistent definitions 	Jan 2019	RIS Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build opportunities for researchers to self-verify data in PURE and provide feedback to data owner. 	July 2019	RIS Director

31 Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances template

This document is being sent to all Category A staff who are eligible for submission to REF2021.

As part of the University's commitment to supporting equality and diversity in REF, we have put in place safe and supportive structures for staff to declare information about any equality-related circumstances which may have affected their ability to research productively during the assessment period (1 January 2014 – 31 July 2020), and particularly their ability to produce research outputs at the same rate as staff not affected by circumstances.

The purpose of collecting this information is threefold:

- To enable staff who have not been able to produce a REF-eligible output during the assessment period to be submitted to REF without the minimum requirement of one output, where they have:
 - circumstances that have resulted in an overall period of 46 months or more absence from research during the assessment period, due to equality-related circumstances;
 - circumstances *equivalent* to 46 months or more absence from research due to equality-related circumstances; or
 - two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave
- To recognise the effect that equality-related circumstances can have on an individual's ability to research productively, and to adjust expectations in terms of the expected production of research outputs
- To establish whether there are any Units of Assessment where the proportion of declared circumstances is sufficiently high to warrant a request to the higher education funding bodies for a reduction in the number of outputs to be submitted.

Applicable circumstances

- Qualifying as an Early Career Researcher (ECR), for staff who:
 - began their first academic post on or after 1 August 2016, or
 - first worked as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016. 'Independent researcher' refers to Research Fellows, Associates and other research staff, who direct their own research rather than supporting the delivery of another person's research programme
- Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector
- Qualifying periods of family-related leave
- Disability, including chronic conditions
- Ill health, injury or mental health conditions

- Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of the standard allowances
- Caring responsibilities
- Gender reassignment

If your ability to research productively during the assessment period has been constrained due to one or more of the above circumstances, you are requested to complete the attached form.

Completion and return of the form is voluntary. You are under no pressure to return the form, or to declare information if you do not wish to do so.

This form is the only means by which the University will gather this information for purposes relating to REF 2021. We will not consult HR records or any other documentation.

You should therefore complete and return the form if any of the above circumstances apply and you are willing to provide the associated information.

Ensuring Confidentiality

Any information which you disclose will be handled in confidence by the Human Resources department. Returned forms will be considered by the Individual Staff Circumstances Group, who will determine whether a member of staff's expected contribution to the output pool should be reduced due to the disclosed circumstances. The Individual Staff Circumstances Group will refer to the REF guidelines, including Annex L of the Guidance on Submissions.⁹

The outcomes of the Individual Staff Circumstances Group will be communicated to the member of staff who made the disclosure, and to the relevant Unit of Assessment (UOA) Committee Chair. Only the reduction in the number of outputs and the member of staff's name will be confirmed to the UOA Committee Chair, and no other details will be provided.

The Individual Staff Circumstances Group will be chaired by the Deputy Director of Human Resources, and will include the University's Equality and Diversity Adviser, Occupational Health Adviser, and the Head of Research Evaluation. The Deputy Director of HR will document decisions relating to output reductions.

If the University decides to apply to the funding bodies for a reduction in the number of outputs to be submitted to REF 2021, we will need to provide UK Research and Innovation with information that you have disclosed about your individual

⁹ REF Guidance on Submissions, Annex L, p114, available at <https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/key-documents/>

circumstances, to show that the criteria for reducing the number of outputs have been met.¹⁰

The information which we submit as a University will be kept confidential to the national REF team, the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs. All of these contacts are subject to confidentiality arrangements. The REF team will destroy the submitted information about individuals' circumstances on completion of the assessment phase.

Changes in circumstances

The University recognises that staff circumstances may change between the completion of the declaration form and the REF census date (31 July 2020). If your circumstances change, you should contact the Deputy Director of Human Resources to provide updated information.

¹⁰ Please see the REF Guidance on Submissions, paragraphs 151 – 201, available at <https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/key-documents/>, for more detail about reductions in outputs and what information needs to be submitted

If you wish to disclose individual circumstances, please complete this form and submit to the Deputy Director of Human Resources.

Name: Click here to insert text.Click here to insert text.Click here to insert text.

Department: Click here to insert text.Click here to insert text.Click here to insert text.

Do you have a REF-eligible output published (or expected to be published) between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2020? ¹¹

Yes

No

Please complete this form if you have one or more applicable equality-related circumstance (see above) which you are willing to declare. Please provide the requested information in the relevant box(es).

Circumstance	Time period affected
<p>Early Career Researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016).</p> <p><i>Date you became an early career researcher.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter a date.</p>
<p>Career break or secondment outside of the HE sector.</p> <p><i>Dates and durations in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter dates and durations.</p>
<p>Family-related leave;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • statutory maternity leave • statutory adoption leave • Additional paternity or adoption leave or shared parental leave lasting for four months or more. <p><i>For each period of leave, state the nature of the leave taken and the dates and durations in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter dates and durations.</p>

¹¹ Eligible outputs are defined in the REF Guidance on Submissions, paragraphs 205, 209 and 217 – 222, available at <https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/key-documents/>

Circumstance	Time period affected
<p>Disability (including chronic conditions)</p> <p><i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Mental health condition</p> <p><i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Ill health or injury</p> <p><i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of standard allowance</p> <p><i>To include: Type of leave taken and brief description of additional constraints, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Caring responsibilities</p> <p><i>To include: Nature of responsibility, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>

Circumstance	Time period affected
<p>Gender reassignment</p> <p><i>To include: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Any other exceptional reasons e.g. bereavement.</p> <p><i>To include: brief explanation of reason, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>

Please confirm, by ticking the box provided, that:

- The above information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances as of the date below
- I realise that the above information will be used for REF purposes only and will be seen by the Individual Staff Circumstances Group.
- I realise it may be necessary to share the information with the REF team, the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs.

I agree

Name: Print name here
Signed: Sign or initial here
Date: Insert date here

I give my permission for HR to contact me to discuss my circumstances, and my requirements in relation this these. (Please note, if you do not give permission it may not be possible to adjust expectations and put in place appropriate support for you).

I give my permission for confirmation of any output reductions to be passed to the relevant UOA Committee Chair. (Please note, if you do not give permission it may not be possible to adjust expectations and put in place appropriate support for you).

I would like to be contacted by:

Email Insert email address
Phone Insert contact telephone number

32 Reductions for staff circumstances

1. This Appendix summarises Annex L of the REF Guidance on Submissions¹². It sets out the tariffs which will be used to assess whether a member of staff's contribution to the output pool of their Unit of Assessment (UOA) may be reduced due to individual circumstances, and by how many outputs.
2. Information is provided at the end of this Appendix on the criteria for removing the requirement for a member of staff to be submitted with at least one output. This is set out in more detail in paragraphs 178 to 183 of the REF Guidance on Submissions.
3. The relevant circumstances from Annex L of the REF Guidance on Submissions are given below:
 - **Early Career Researcher status**
4. Table 1 below gives the permitted reduction in outputs owing to the Early Career Researcher (ECR) status of staff:

Table 1:

Date at which a member of staff first met the REF definition of an ECR:	Output pool may be reduced by up to:
On or before 31 July 2016	0
Between 1 August 2016 and 31 July 2017 inclusive	0.5
Between 1 August 2017 and 31 July 2018 inclusive	1
On or after 1 August 2018	1.5

- **Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks**
5. Table 2 below sets out permitted reduction in outputs relating to absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside of the HE sector, and in which the staff member did not undertake academic research.

Table 2:

Total months absent between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2020 due to a staff member's secondment or career break	Output pool may be reduced by up to:
Fewer than 12 calendar months	0
At least 12 calendar months but less than 28	0.5
At least 28 calendar months but less than 46	1
46 calendar months or more	1.5

¹² Available at https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1092/ref-2019_01-guidance-on-submissions.pdf

6. Please note that as part-time working is taken account of within the calculation for the overall number of outputs required for the unit (which is determined by multiplying the unit's FTE by 2.5), reduction requests on the basis of part-time working hours should only be made exceptionally. For example, where the FTE of a staff member late in the assessment period does not reflect their average FTE over the period as a whole.

- **Qualifying periods of family-related leave**

7. The total output pool may be reduced by 0.5 for each discrete period of:

a. Statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave taken substantially during the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020, regardless of the length of the leave.

b. Additional paternity or adoption leave¹³, or shared parental leave¹⁴ lasting for four months or more, taken substantially during the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020.

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

a. By applying a reduction in outputs where there are additional circumstances, for example where the period of leave had an impact in combination with other factors such as ongoing childcare responsibilities.

b. By combining the number of months for shorter periods of such leave in combination with other circumstances, according to Table 2 above.

9. Any period of maternity, adoption, paternity or shared parental leave that qualifies for the reduction of an output under the provisions of paragraph 7 above may in individual cases be associated with prolonged constraints on work that justify more than the defined reductions set out. In such cases, the member of staff should explain the circumstances in their completed disclosure template.

- **Combining circumstances**

10. Where a member of staff has been affected by a combination of circumstances which result in a defined reduction in outputs, these may be accumulated up to a maximum reduction of 1.5 outputs. For each circumstance, the relevant reduction should be applied and added together to calculate the total maximum reduction.

¹³ 'Additional paternity or adoption leave' refers to leave of up to 26 weeks which is taken to care for a child where the person's spouse, partner or civil partner was entitled to statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave, and has since returned to work. The term 'additional paternity leave' is often used to describe this type of leave although it may be taken by parents of either gender. For the purposes of the REF, we refer to this leave as 'additional paternity or adoption leave'.

¹⁴ 'Shared parental leave' refers to leave of up to 50 weeks which can be shared by parents having a baby or adopting a child. This can be taken in blocks, or all in one go.

11. Where Table 1 is combined with Table 2, the period of time since 1 January 2014 up until the member of staff met the definition of an ECR should be calculated in months, and Table 2 should be applied.

12. When combining circumstances, only one circumstance should be taken into account for any period of time during which they took place simultaneously.

13. Where a member of staff has a combination of circumstances with a defined reduction in outputs and additional circumstances that require a judgement, a single judgement will be made about the appropriate reduction in outputs, taking into account all of the circumstances. The circumstances with a defined reduction in outputs will be calculated according to the guidance above (paragraphs 4 to 10).

- **Circumstances requiring a judgement about reductions**

14. Where staff have had other circumstances during the period, including in combination with any of the circumstances set out above with a defined reduction in outputs, the University will be required to make a judgement about the effect of the circumstances in terms of the equivalent period of time absent. Output reductions will then be determined using Table 2 above.

15. These circumstances include:

- Disability
- Ill health, injury, or mental health conditions
- Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare
- Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member)
- Gender reassignment
- Other circumstances relating to protected characteristics or activities protected by employment legislation

- **Removing the minimum requirement of one output**

16. All Category A submitted staff must be returned with a minimum of one output attributed to them in the submission, including staff with individual circumstances.

17. However, where a member of staff's circumstances have had an exceptional effect on their ability to work productively throughout the assessment period (1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020), so that the member of staff has not been able to produce an eligible output, a request may be made for the 'minimum of one' requirement to be removed. These requests will be reviewed by the REF Equality and Diversity Panel (EDAP).

18. Where the request is accepted, a member of staff may be returned with no outputs attributed to them in the submission, and the total number of outputs required by the unit will be reduced by one.

19. Requests may be made for a member of staff who has not been able to produce an eligible output where any of the following circumstances apply within the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020:
- a. an overall period of 46 months or more absence from research during the assessment period, due to one or more of the circumstances set out in this appendix (such as an ECR who has only been employed as an eligible staff member for part of the assessment period)¹⁵
 - b. circumstances equivalent to 46 months or more absence from research, where circumstances set out in this appendix apply (such as mental health issues, caring responsibility, long-term health conditions), or
 - c. two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave, as defined in paragraphs 7 to 9 of this appendix.
20. Where the circumstances cases do not apply, but the member of staff's circumstances are deemed to have resulted in a similar impact (including where there are a combination of circumstances that would not individually meet the thresholds set out), a request may still be made. Where a member of staff has a combination of circumstances, all the applicable circumstances should be cited in their circumstances disclosure template and information provided about the effect of the combined circumstances on the member of staff's ability to produce an eligible output in the period.
21. Where a request is agreed, one output will be removed from the total output pool required for the submitting unit. This will be in addition to any reduction (of up to 1.5 outputs) applied for that staff member according to the guidance set out in this appendix.

¹⁵ This may include absence from work due to working part-time, where this has had an exceptional effect on ability to work productively throughout the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020, so that the individual has not been able to produce an eligible output. For part-time working, the equivalent 'total months absent' should be calculated by multiplying the number of months worked part-time by the full-time equivalent (FTE) not worked during those months. For example, an individual worked part-time for 30 months at 0.4 FTE. The number of equivalent months absent = $30 \times 0.4 = 12$.

33 Letter from UCU, Teesside Branch Chair



24 May 2019

Kirsty Metcalfe
Interim Head of Research Evaluation
Teesside University
Research Innovation Services
P3.09, Phoenix Building
Middlesbrough
TS1 3BX

Dear Kirsty,

REF – Code of Practice

I have read the code of practice, guidance and associated forms and documents prepared by the University in reflect of the forthcoming REF exercise.

I have also discussed these with the University REF Development Team, our relevant Officials and our Regional and Branch Executives.

I am happy to agree the University and College Unions agreement as to this approach to REF and commend the opportunity present in the documentation for equalities issues to be addressed during the process.

Regards

Dr Terence Murphy
University and College Union
Northern Regional and Teesside Branch Chair