

Research Excellence Framework (REF) Code of Practice

Part 1: Introduction

This is the University of Lincoln's *Code of Practice on: the fair and transparent identification of staff with significant responsibility for research; determining who is an independent researcher; and the selection of outputs* for submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021. Under REF2021, this *Code of Practice* is mandatory and must be submitted to the REF for approval no later than noon on 7th June 2019. The Code of Practice has been shared with staff representative groups and with all staff at the University of Lincoln and it has received final approval by the *Research and Employer Engagement Group (REEG)*. It has been written in compliance with the REF 'Guidance on Submissions' and 'Guidance on Codes of Practice'.

The Code of Practice applies to all Units of Assessments (UOAs) and individuals, whether as information for all those submitted to the REF or as guidance for those involved in the support and decision-making processes of REF2021. Underlying it is a fundamental commitment to the development of the research careers of staff.

The Code of Practice should allow the understanding of:

- i. The procedures to determine those with significant responsibility for research;
- ii. The processes to establish REF research independence;
- iii. The quality criteria that will be followed in order to make decisions regarding the selecting of outputs for submission;
- iv. The appeals process;
- v. How all the relevant REF information and decisions will be communicated to staff.

How the code relates to broader institutional policies\strategies that promote and support E&D

This Code of Practice forms part of the University's strategy to support Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in its academic activities, and in particular in research. The University has clear policies for the support and recognition of research activity, including the use of the role profile system to identify staff with a significant responsibility to undertake research, and to ensure they have allocated time and resources, development support, and well-defined expectations to achieve this.

- i. The identification of staff with significant responsibility for research and REF research independence status will adhere to all current legislation and the University's policies on equality, diversity and inclusion, so that equality is embedded into all aspects of the REF within the University.
- ii. The selection of outputs will be conducted with due regard to any circumstances that may have constrained staff's ability to produce research outputs.
- iii. Assessment for selection of outputs for submission will be consistent across all Units of Assessment (UOAs).

- iv. Staff will be informed about all developments regarding the REF with particular emphasis on providing feedback on their involvement in the REF, using appropriate and comprehensive communication methods.
- v. Due regard will be given to the confidential nature of the data collected.
- vi. The University will conduct equality impact assessments (EIAs) on the University's policies and procedures for determining research independence and selecting outputs for submission (see the timetable in Appendix E below) in order to minimize the risk of an adverse impact regarding all the protected characteristics and to highlight any instances in which processes and procedures support the advancement of equality within the institution;
- vii. The University will ensure that all staff understand the responsibilities of those involved in the selection process.
- viii. The University will ensure that all those involved in the selection process have undertaken appropriate equality, diversity and inclusion training and training on all REF-related processes and procedures (Appendix C).

Update of actions taken since REF 2014

The University of Lincoln, upon reflection on the Final REF2014 Equality Impact Assessment for REF2014, made a commitment to feed the learnings from that EIA onto institutional initiatives designed both to support particular groups of staff, e.g. female academics, and to further the development of a research career at the University of Lincoln.

The work undertaken in this regard at institutional level resulted in the opening of the Eleanor Glanville Centre in March 2017. The Centre's mandate is to understand and promote inclusion, diversity and equality of opportunity within higher education and wider society, inspiring the sustainable development of an inclusive culture, and ensuring that no one is left behind. This mandate has translated into initiatives to support the return of academics to work after a career break.

- The Academic Returners' Research Fund was established in 2014 to provide support for female academics working in STEMM subject areas who are embarking upon, or returning to work after, a period of maternity leave. The AR²F scheme was recognised as 'Sector Leading' and 'Innovative Practice in Advancing Equality and Diversity' by HEFCE in 2017. Seven female academic colleagues have received the Fund to date.
- The Back to Science Research programme, launched in September 2014, provides a two-year opportunity for both women and men in STEMM subject areas to join an established research group, build confidence and gain contemporary research experience. Five colleagues have taken part on the Back to Science Research programme to date.
- The Worldw-IDE Fund was established in 2018 to support University staff, across a range of international activities, to alleviate disadvantage or under-representation in terms of Inclusion, Diversity and Equality. The small fund allows researchers to combine their research obligations with their family commitments. One grant has been awarded to date.



The University of Lincoln also implemented Individual Research Plans for all academic staff with responsibility for research from the academic year 2016\17. The Individual Research Planning process serves two purposes:

- Developmental – it provides researchers a structured opportunity to annually review research attainments, set research goals and plans with the advice and critique of an experienced reviewer, and to set a strategy for attaining research objectives.
- Research planning – data from Individual Research Planning feeds into the University of Lincoln’s overall planning processes for research, including for the development of a REF entry, and it is therefore used as part of the process to identify individual contributions to the REF.

Our Final REF2014 Equality Impact Assessment also referred to plans to continue conducting mock REF exercises in the lead-up to REF2021. ‘Light-touch’ mock exercises took place in 2015 and 2016. Significant changes were introduced for the mock REF2018 and mock REF2019 to bring the governance of the exercise entirely under the responsibility of the central administrative REF Team. This was as a result of lessons learnt in the previous years’ exercises and with the principles of consistency, transparency and accountability as the main drivers.

An Equality Impact Assessment is being conducted on the results of the mock REF2018. This living document will be updated once the institution is in a position to conduct the EIA on the mock REF2019 (expected in Summer 2019) and it will become the backbone of the final EIA, which the institution will undertake prior to submission in November 2020. The final REF2021 EIA will be made public on the University of Lincoln’s website. See Appendix E for an Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan.

How the institution is addressing the principles of Transparency, Consistency, Accountability, and Inclusivity in demonstrating fairness

The University is committed to the four principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity in demonstrating fairness and has embedded these principles in all the processes and procedures related to the institutional submission to REF2021.

This Code of Practice reflects these principles by:

- I. Clearly articulating which members of staff have significant responsibility for research, which members of staff are considered to be independent according to the criteria provided by the REF ‘Guidance on Submissions’, and how we will select outputs for submission;
- II. Providing mechanisms to ensure consistency of application;
- III. Ensuring confidentiality is duly observed at all times, but especially for key stages of the process such as the declaration of staff circumstances;
- IV. Establishing clear lines of accountability;
- V. Identifying mechanisms, including Equality Impact Assessments and Appeal mechanisms, to ensure inclusivity and demonstrate fairness;

- VI. This Code of Practice aligns with other institutional policies and helps the institution to create an environment where people feel they are respected and valued;

It is the responsibility of the University to ensure:

- i. That the identification of staff with significant responsibility for research, the identification of REF Research Independence status and the selection of outputs for submission adhere to all current equality, diversity and inclusion legislation and to the guidance given in the REF2021 documentation.
- ii. That all processes to achieve this are demonstrably fair and transparent;
- iii. That the REF-related processes do not discriminate unlawfully against, or otherwise have the effect of harassing or victimising individuals because of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or because they are pregnant or have recently given birth.
- iv. That fixed-term and part-time staff are not treated any less favourably than comparable employees on open contracts or working full time;
- v. That everyone involved with the University's REF2021 submissions understands the University's criteria and procedures for the selection process and have been appropriately trained on these processes.
- vi. That everyone involved with the University's REF2021 submissions understands equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) legislation and how this relates to REF2021 processes and procedures and have been appropriately trained on EDI matters.
- vii. That criteria and procedures related to REF2021 submissions are communicated appropriately to staff across the institution (including those on leave of absence) through various mechanisms and channels.

This Code of Practice is in line with the University's commitment to Equality and Diversity. The processes and procedures described in this Code have been designed in order to actively foster and promote an environment that is free from unfair and unlawful discrimination and harassment and is free from practices that unlawfully discriminate based on a person's protected characteristic.

All members of the University's community are expected to take personal responsibility for upholding this commitment through their behaviour and to promote equality and diversity in all aspects of their working environment and academic activities, including all work related to REF2021 preparations.

The Eleanor Glanville Centre, the interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Equality at the University of Lincoln, has been actively involved in the development of this Code.

How the code is being communicated to staff across the institution

A programme of communication with all academic staff has taken place in the lead up to the submission of this Code of Practice, with opportunity for staff representatives to give their feedback. Feedback has been carefully considered by the REF Oversight Group, responsible for the preparation of this Code of Practice, and the Research and Employer Engagement Group (REEG), responsible for the institutional approval to the Code. Where appropriate,



feedback has been incorporated to the final version of the Code. To date, the Code of Practice programme of communication has followed several strands: Information-sharing meetings with representatives of the representative trade union for academics, the Universities and College Union (UCU), open sessions with all members of staff delivered by the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation, and events targeted to specific groups of staff, such as early career researchers, delivered by the Central Administrative REF Team. Please refer to Appendix A for a timeline and details of the programme of communication. Events were scheduled during working hours, in different days of the week and different times of the day where possible as to align with the principle of inclusivity that governs the REF2021 processes and procedures at the University of Lincoln.

The Code of Practice has also been made available to all University staff via the intranet (REF portal pages). This portal page offered the ability for staff to feed their comments directly to the REF team, which collated them and fed them to the REF Oversight Group during the process of writing up the Code. Information about the Code of Practice was distributed via the REF Newsletter, a monthly bulletin for all members of academic staff. Additionally, email communication with a link to the appropriate REF portal pages was sent to all members of staff with significant responsibility for research and a notice was placed in the 'Staff News', the institution preferred mode of communication for all University news.

Academic colleagues identified as working outside the University or absent from work for any reason at the time of the open events were sent a paper version of the Code of Practice to their postal address, together with a form for them to provide their feedback.

Providing the draft Code of Practice and ample opportunity for feedback aligns with the commitment to the principles of transparency and inclusivity that govern this Code of Practice.

A further programme of communication will take place once the Code of Practice is approved:

- The approved Code of Practice will be made public on the University's website and the REF portal as soon as possible after its approval;
- An electronic copy of the approved Code of Practice will be sent to all academic members of staff with significant responsibility for research;
- A paper copy of the Code of Practice will be sent by post to any staff identified as working outside the University or absent from the University for any reason;
- The Code will be distributed by College Directors of Research, School Directors of Research and Heads of School via College and School Committee Meetings;
- Members of the university REF Oversight Group will be available to explain any aspects of the Code of Practice to staff. Colleagues might request 'ad hoc' presentations via the Central Administrative REF Team.

The Code of Practice will inform all training activities in place to support preparation for REF2021, from equality, diversity and inclusion training sessions to specific training in REF-related processes at institutional or unit level for panels, committees and individuals



involved in preparations for REF2021.

The University of Lincoln has also put in place a series of targeted events to raise awareness about particularly significant elements of the Code of Practice. The following sessions have been identified:

- Sessions on the criteria and processes and procedures used to determine REF research independence. The target audience for these events are members of staff on 'Research-Only' contracts and will take place before the end of June 2019 (before the process to determine REF Research Independence takes place);
- Sessions on the confidential processes and procedures for staff to disclose staff circumstances voluntarily. These sessions will be open to all members of staff with significant responsibility for research and will be delivered during Summer and Autumn 2019.

For more details, please see Appendix A.

Part 2 – Identifying staff with Significant Responsibility to Undertake Research

The University's policy is to submit all 'Category A eligible' staff to the REF in all Units of Assessment. 'Category A eligible' staff is defined as academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 full-time equivalent (FTE) or greater, on the payroll of the University on the census date, whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'Research-Only' or 'Teaching and Research'. For 'Research-Only' contracts, the eligible pool only includes those who are independent researchers.

Part 3: Determining research independence

The sole and main duty of members of staff employed on a 'Research-Only' contract is to undertake research. They have all their time and resources dedicated to this activity.

The University's general practice is to employ researchers in the following positions:

- I. Research Assistant
- II. Research Fellow
- III. Instrument Scientist
- IV. Senior Research Fellow
- V. Principal Research Fellow

University's general practice aligns with the REF 'Guidance on submissions' in so far as Research Assistants, Research Fellows and Instrument Scientists are not eligible to be returned to the REF unless, exceptionally, they meet the definition of an independent researcher on the census date and satisfy the definition of Category A eligible staff.



Senior Research Fellows and Principal Research Fellows are usually independent researchers.

'Research-Only' staff identified as independent researchers will meet the definition of 'Category A eligible' staff.

Criteria

The University of Lincoln will establish a process to determine REF research independence applying the indicators recommended by the REF 'Guidance on Submissions'. 'Research-Only' staff will be considered REF research independent when the following two conditions are met:

- they are employed using central University resources or on a specific named personal fellowship for independent researchers;
- they independently define their own body of research, and do not undertake research under the guidance of others.

REF research independence can therefore be confirmed when 'Research-Only' staff:

- Lead or act as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project;
- hold an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement;
- lead a research group or a substantial or specialised work package.

When applicable, the University of Lincoln will also use the supplementary criteria noted by Main Panels C and D when determining REF research independence:

- being named as a Co-I on an externally funded research grant\award;
- having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research.

The University of Lincoln will use the List of Independent Research Fellowships as provided by REF to determine if a personal fellowship denotes REF research independence.

Processes and procedures

The Central Administrative REF Team, Human Resources, Research and Enterprise and academic Schools will gather the following documentation regarding each member of staff on a 'Research-Only' contract:

- Employment status
- Job Description
- Funding source
- Independence requirements of funders

The Central Administrative REF Team will contact the appropriate Head of School and Research Lead of all 'Research-Only' staff to request that they review the above-mentioned documentation and provide their assessment of the REF research independence status of their 'Research-Only' staff.



The documentation and the assessment of Heads of School and Research leads will be referred to a REF Research Independence Panel. Please see composition and terms of reference for the panel in Appendix B.

The REF Research Independence Panel will review the above-mentioned documentation and assessments and provide a short report assigning a preliminary status of REF independence researcher when:

- they are employed using central University resources or on a specific named personal fellowship for independent researchers;
- they independently define their own body of research, and do not undertake research under the guidance of others.

The REF Research Independence Panel will communicate a preliminary status of REF research independence to all 'Research-Only' staff by the end of June 2019. This will include a description of the process for determining researcher independence, the criteria used to identify research independence, the reasons for reaching the preliminary decision, and the processes to provide any further information that might affect the final decision.

Members of staff may provide any additional information, referenced against the criteria for REF research independence, and indicate if they believe the preliminary status is incorrect. This part of the process has been implemented with the principle of transparency and consistency in mind. Its purpose is to allow researchers to put forward to the REF Research Independence Panel information that might have not be reflected accurately in the paperwork held by Human Resources and/or their Schools.

The REF Research Independence Panel will meet a second time to review additional information provided by researchers and any related documentation. It may gather additional evidence (e.g. from Human Resources of the line manager of the researcher) if it deems this necessary. The REF Research Independence Panel will then make the final determination of research independence.

The principles of transparency, inclusivity and consistency are at the very core of this process.

The REF Research Independence Panel will communicate their final decision, in writing, to all 'Research-Only' staff. The communication to researchers will specify their assigned REF research independence status, together with a written reason for the assignment, by the end of July 2019. This communication in writing will provide details of the appeal mechanisms (see below).

The REF Research Independence Panel will also communicate the final list of independent 'Research-Only' staff to the REF Oversight Group by the end of July 2019.

This schedule will allow the institution to consider any appeals in a timely manner so as to make any required final changes before data regarding REF research independence is returned to the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA) in September 2019.



Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out from the first stage of the process to determine REF Research Independence and it will be updated at different checking points: desk-based exercise; 'self-nominations' phase, provisional decisions; appeals, and final panel decisions. If necessary, any corrective action will be taken by the REF Research Independence Panel before making any final decisions on REF Research Independence. This corrective action could take the form of a revised process to determine research independence for the following year of the exercise.

The REF Oversight Group will also receive the Equality Impact Assessment resulting from the process. The REF Oversight Group may decide to take corrective action, which might take the form of reviewed processes and procedures, following the results of the Equality Impact Assessment.

The exercise to determine REF Research Independence will be repeated in May-July 2020 for any new members of staff on 'Research-Only' contracts.

For more detail on EIAs, please see Appendix E.

Staff, committees and training

The University of Lincoln will hold two open sessions for staff with 'Research-Only' contracts to explain the processes and procedures to determine REF research independence prior to undertaking the process to determine REF research independence. The Central Administrative REF Team will deliver these sessions.

Staff on 'Research-Only' contracts will also be able to contact a member of the Central Administrative REF Team for a one-to-one discussion about the process to determine REF research independence if they are unable to attend the open sessions or they feel that a conversation fits better with their needs. This initiative responds to the principles of transparency and inclusivity, which govern this Code. For more information about these sessions, please see Appendix A.

All the members of the REF Research Independence Panel have been chosen for their understanding of the research environment at their respective Colleges and their knowledge of the research environment and research career paths at University level.

All the members of the REF Appeals Panel have been chosen for their in-depth knowledge of matters to do with equality, diversity and inclusion and the research environment at the University of Lincoln and, more importantly, for their independence from all the other processes that govern preparations for submission to REF2021.

For more information about the composition of the panels, please see Appendix B.

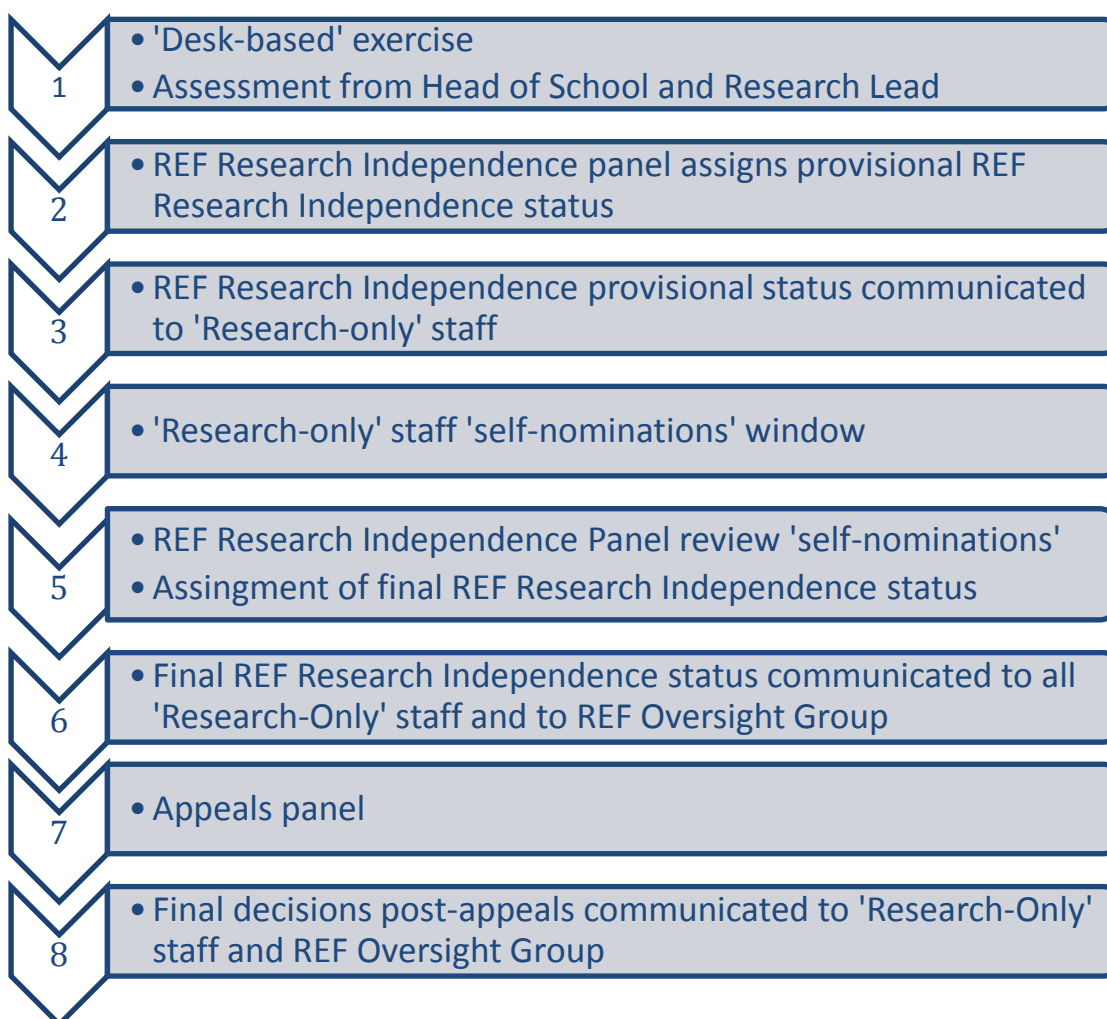
All members of the REF Research Independence Panel and the Central Administrative REF Appeals Panel will receive the following training:

- Training on the criteria, and processes and procedures, to determine REF Research Independence at the University of Lincoln. The training will be delivered by the REF Team in June 2019 and June 2020.
- Training on equality, diversity and inclusion matters in relation to REF processes and procedures. The training will be delivered by the Equality, Engagement and Development Team, Human Resources, University of Lincoln.

These training sessions have been put in place in line with the principles of consistency and transparency that governs this Code.

For detail on the Training content, target audience and timeline, please see Appendix C.

Process to determine Research Independence Status





Appeals

All appeals against the preliminary REF independence status will be considered by a University REF Appeals Panel (see Appendix C), which is independent of the University's REF decision-making body, the REF Oversight Group. All members of the REF Appeals Panel will have received equality, diversity and inclusion training relevant to the REF decision-making processes, including training on REF researcher independence status and the University of Lincoln processes to determine REF research independence status.

One of the duties of the university REF Appeals Panel will be to make sure that decisions regarding 'Category A eligible' staff status in relation to 'Research-Only' staff follow the University of Lincoln's process and adhere to the four principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity in demonstrating fairness.

Grounds for appeal

Members of staff may appeal against the designated REF research independence status, on the following grounds:

- i. REF research independence criteria not applied appropriately;
- ii. related to protected characteristics, defined in the Equality Act (2010).

The appeals process

An appeal against REF researcher independence status should be made by letter and sent to the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation, who will refer the matter to the University REF Appeals Panel.

The letter should state clearly the grounds of the appeal:

i. Status of REF independent researcher - if the appeal relates only to non-designation of REF researcher independence status, the letter should demonstrate that the researcher qualifies as an independent researcher according to REF definitions, as established in this Code of Practice. The letter should state any new information or evidence that may not have been taken into account during the first process undertaken to confirm research independence. The University REF Appeals Panel Chair, in consultation with members of the panel, will give due consideration to the appellant's case. At the Chair's discretion, this may involve convening the Panel and/or meeting with the appellant (who may bring a supporter). The decision of the Chair is final and feedback will be provided to the appellant.

ii. Relating to a protected characteristic - where the appeal relates to one or more protected characteristics, these should be clearly identified in the appellant's letter. It may be necessary, when considering this type of appeal, for the University REF Appeals Panel to see confidential information related to staff circumstances.

Once a decision on the appeal has been reached:

iii. the University REF Appeals Panel will compile a report stating the reasons for their decision in either supporting the appeal or upholding the original decision of the REF Research Independence Panel;

iv. if the appeal is upheld, the Chair of the University REF Appeals Panel will inform the appellant, in writing, and request that the REF Research Independence Panel reconsiders its decision;

v. if the appeal is not upheld, the Chair will inform the appellant, in writing, and report the outcome to the appropriate panels, with the recommendation that the decision of the University REF Appeals Panel is final.

Final decisions will be taken by the REF Research Independence Panel by the end of August 2019. Final decisions will be communicated to the REF Oversight Group.

An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out on the final list and provided to the REF Oversight Group. If necessary, any corrective action will be taken by the Research Independence Panel before making final decisions.

If appropriate, the REF Research Independence Status process will be repeated between May and August 2020 in order to establish the REF research independence status of any new staff recruited on the 'Research-Only' category in the last year before submission to REF2021.

The membership of the University REF Appeals Panel will be separate to the Research Independence Panel. Please see Appendix B for membership and terms of reference.

Part 4: Selection of outputs

Policies and procedures

The University of Lincoln's procedure for REF output selection has three components:

- i. Rating of outputs;
- ii. Identification of potential requests for reductions of total outputs submitted and potential requests for the elimination of the minimum of one output. These processes are driven by the voluntary declaration of staff circumstances;
- iii. Selection of outputs.

The overriding principle for the process of selecting outputs for submission is academic judgement. The University of Lincoln has put in place the following processes and procedures in order to ensure that at all junctures where academic judgement is invoked, there is also full adherence to the principles of Transparency, Consistency, Accountability and Inclusion.

i. Rating of outputs

Assigning provisional output ratings

For selection purposes, the University of Lincoln will assign each output a single rating on a scale of 0-4 in increments of 0.25 together with the associated Unit of Assessment and



potential for a request for double-weighting where applicable. Outputs that may be submitted to more than one UoA will be separately assessed for each potential UoA. In the cases of co-authored outputs, ratings are assigned to the output and are available to be selected for submission for all the authors of the output.

Step-by-step process to assign output ratings

In order to embed the principles of Transparency, Consistency, Accountability and Inclusion in the provisional selection of outputs for submission, the University of Lincoln has devised a process by which all staff with significant responsibility for research have the ability to self-rate their own outputs. This self-rating provides the first step in the process and is clearly understood and accepted by the academic community at Lincoln. Such self-rating is the result of academics reviewing their own research activity with a reviewer in an annual basis within the Individual Research Plans cycle.

In the context of a wider supportive conversation about research activity, staff with significant responsibility for research and their reviewers are asked to provide estimated REF ratings for all outputs that were made public in the review year. The reviewer's role is to provide a first expert view on the outputs rating, but also to provide mentoring and guidance to the member of staff when planning for the forthcoming year, making sure that the expectations and plans are realistic and the members of staff have the necessary support in place to deliver on their research plans.

Within the context of the Individual Research Plans, it is recommended that researcher and reviewer aim to reach a consensus on the estimated score for each output. On occasions when reviewee and reviewer are unable to reach a consensus, two different scores are recorded. If one of those scores is 2.5 or above, the output goes forward for further assessment. This practice is in place to compensate for low or high self-scores from any particular group or individual and to ensure consistency, transparency and fairness.

Members of staff who start part way through the year undertake a process mirroring the Individual Research Plan within their first month in post. This allows them to self-rate their outputs and allows the institution to include their outputs for assessment.

In the case of members of staff with no outputs rated 2.5 or above, their best three outputs will be selected for further assessment. The best of the three outputs will be selected for submission.

Further assessment takes the form of an annual Mock REF exercise, which the University of Lincoln has conducted in the years leading to REF2021.

During the annual mock REF, two internal assessors at the University of Lincoln and one external assessor independently assess outputs organised by potential Unit of Assessment. Internal and external assessors are identified at UoA level and are academic experts on that field.

The role of the assessors is an assessment of each output for that UoA against the published



REF quality ratings. The role of the assessors is to judge the academic quality of the work; they do not take individual staff circumstances or unit's circumstances into account.

In the case of UoAs in which REF sub-panels will consider extra information about outputs, UoA Outputs Assessment Panels are also able to consider such extra information. These UoA Outputs Assessment Panels, however, will still continue to rely on peer review as the primary means for assessing outputs.

The result of this expert review exercise is a series of ratings. Ratings of external assessors are not the sole determinant of whether an output is submitted to the REF and it may be necessary to consult more than one external assessor to help determine the estimated quality of an individual's output.

Internal assessors also provide their assessment following the criteria above.

The University of Lincoln has trialled a new training module about the role of the internal assessors and the reviewing principles that govern the mock REF during the Mock REF2019. This training, delivered by the DVC Research Innovation and the Central Administrative REF Team, has been designed to support the principles of consistency and transparency in the mock REF exercises in the lead-up to REF2021. The effectiveness of the training will be evaluated but it is expected that further training will be delivered again in the final year prior to submission to REF2021.

UoA Outputs Assessment Panels will receive the reports from the internal and external assessors and use this information to reach a preliminary score for each output. Dependencies between similar outputs will also be taken into account when reaching final scores. The Central Administrative REF Team will service all UoA Outputs Assessment Panels and all records of their recommendations become formal records referred to the REF Oversight Group. The role of the Central Administrative REF Team is to ensure consistency and transparency regarding the workings of all UoA Outputs Assessment Panels.

The REF Oversight Group will receive the preliminary scores assigned to outputs by the UoA Outputs Assessment Panels. This group will ensure that the principles of consistency, transparency, accountability and inclusivity have been followed, will receive and consider the Equality Impact Assessment, and may moderate or refer back for consideration scores as necessary. The REF Oversight Group will formally assign the final scores.

This process will be repeated on a number of occasions, in particular to review new outputs from new members of staff.

Please see appendix B for Membership and Terms of Reference of UoA Outputs Assessment Panels.

Once determined via the Mock REF process, final output ratings and an explanation of how the rating were reached are communicated to the authors of the output in confidence by their Unit of Assessment Coordinator. In line with the principles of consistency and transparency, authors may also request the individual assessors' ratings and comments, the



Output Assessment Panel notes and the REF Oversight Group notes regarding their individual outputs.

This process is designed to ensure that all outputs are fairly and equally rated for potential REF quality, and that there is sufficiently granularity to distinguish levels of certainty about the projected REF rating to aid the decision-making bodies when preparing final submission to the REF.

ii. Identification of potential requests for reductions of total outputs submitted and potential requests for the elimination of the minimum of one output

Process for individuals to disclose staff circumstances voluntarily

The University of Lincoln has designed fair, inclusive, robust and transparent processes and procedures to allow staff with significant responsibility for research to disclose their staff circumstances should they wish to do so. This voluntary process is in full alignment with the REF 'Guidance on Submissions' and REF 'Guidance on Codes of Practice'. The process will be managed in its entirety by members of the Central Administrative REF Team, which understand the necessity of high level of confidentiality around this process and have put in place a series of control measures to ensure confidentiality at all times.

The University of Lincoln will consider the following staff circumstances:

- a. Qualifying as an early career researcher according to the REF definition
- b. Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks
- c. Qualifying periods of family-related leave
- d. Other circumstances that apply in Units of Assessments
- e. Circumstances equivalent to absence, that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:
 - a. Disability
 - b. Ill health, injury, or mental health conditions
 - c. Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of – or justify the reduction of further outputs in addition to – the allowances made in paragraph 169 below.
 - d. Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member).
 - e. Gender reassignment
 - f. Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed in REF 2018/03, Table 1, or relating to activities protected by employment legislation."

The Central Administrative REF Team has designed a University-wide process to allow staff with significant responsibility for research to declare their staff circumstances should they wish to do so. Each member of staff with significant responsibility for research, current and future, will receive an 'Individual Staff Circumstances Disclosure Form' (please see Appendix D) and accompanying notes, along with a copy of this Code of Practice. This documentation will be distributed individually to all staff with significant responsibility for research by email



by the Central Administrative REF Team. A paper copy of the form will be sent to the postal address of any staff with significant responsibility for research on leave of absence at the time.

All members of staff with significant responsibility for research will be signposted to the Senior REF Manager (Strategy and Delivery) if they wish to have a confidential conversation about their personal circumstances in relation to REF at any point in the process.

In line with the principles of transparency, consistency and inclusivity, there will be two calls to disclose staff circumstances at different times in the REF preparation stages. The calls will clearly state that this is a voluntary process, that the potential disclosure of staff circumstances is a personal decision and that the disclosure or non-disclosure of staff circumstances has no bearing on any other REF-related process.

The full details regarding disclosed staff circumstances will only be available to the Central Administrative REF team. Assessors and members of the different committees involved in the assessing of outputs will not have access to this confidential information. In this way, the University of Lincoln ensures that there will be no difference in the assessment of the quality of publications of staff with staff circumstances from that of staff without these circumstances. To this end, the process to assign provisional output ratings is completely independent from the processes to determine potential output reductions due to staff circumstances.

Mechanisms in place to support staff with circumstances

The Individual Research Planning cycle sits at the centre of research planning activity at the University of Lincoln. With its dual planning and developmental purposes, this is the time for academics with significant responsibility for research to have a supportive conversation with their reviewers about yearly delivery and realistic plans for the future.

It is in the context of this supportive conversation that adjustment of expectations takes place and reviewers have an opportunity to put in place any supportive measures, such as mentoring or coaching.

Academic colleagues on leave at the time of the Individual Research Planning –November-December- (e.g. family leave or sickness leave) are not required to complete their plans unless they wish to do so. The researcher has absolute control over the process in these circumstances.

It is important to note that the reviewer for an Individual Research Plan is a senior research colleague in the field of expertise of the researcher. This is to provide the researcher with the appropriate setting in which to make the best individual choices in their research plans as well as to be able to have a protected conversation about adjustment of expectations. Reviewer and reviewee agree the research plans as well as any supportive measures for the year ahead.

In cases in which additional support is needed, this will be highlighted by the reviewer, who has the ability to raise the case with the College Directors of Research. Additional support



can take the form of additional mentoring opportunities and/or invitation to apply for research leave in appropriate cases.

The University of Lincoln does not wish to be prescriptive about the degree of adjustment needed in cases in which research expectations are adjusted due to staff circumstances. Each case is assessed individually by the reviewer, who has the appropriate in-depth knowledge to judge the case and agree a set of realistic expectations with the reviewer. In cases in which the reviewer feels that exceptional support is needed, the reviewer has the ability to discuss particular cases with College Directors of Research, who are the higher authority in research terms at College level. Should it be necessary, College Directors of Research might wish to contact Heads of School to discuss the necessary adjustments needed for staff with circumstances.

The Individual Research Planning conversation has been successfully embedded into the Academic Achievement and Development Appraisal Scheme.

Potential reduction of the requirement of the number of outputs for submission

Upon receipt of voluntary disclosure of staff circumstances from members of staff, the Central Administrative REF Team will produce a report per Unit of Assessment. This report will include:

- i. Any removals of the requirements of the minimum of one output that refer to that UoA. The report will include only the name of the member of staff generating the request but no other information about the particular circumstances.
- ii. Anonymous information regarding the potential reduction of outputs available to that Unit of Assessment. The report will contain the number of the potential reduction of outputs available but not the name of the member/s of staff or the nature of the circumstances supporting the potential reduction.

This report will go to the Unit of Assessment Coordinator and to the College Director of Research of that particular UoA only. This is to ensure that the minimum number of members of staff able to make a meaningful recommendation regarding potential requests for reduction of the outputs required for submission are privy to confidential information.

The Unit of Assessment Coordinator and the College Director of Research will be responsible for:

- i. Providing the UoA Outputs Assessment Panel with the number of outputs needed for submission. The UoA Outputs Assessment panels will receive no further information.

As per the REF 'Guidance on submissions', the ability to remove the requirement of the minimum of one output is only available where an individual has not been able to produce an eligible output and any of the following circumstances apply within the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020:

- a) Overall period of a minimum of 46 months from research due to one or more of the applicable circumstances;
- b) Circumstances equivalent to 46 months or more absence from research, where circumstances set out in paragraph 160 of the REF 'Guidance on



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submissions' apply, such as mental health issues, caring responsibilities or long-term health conditions;

- c) Two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave.

ii. Making a recommendation for a potential request for a unit reduction. The recommendation will go to the REF Oversight Group, which will have the final say regarding submitting requests for unit reductions.

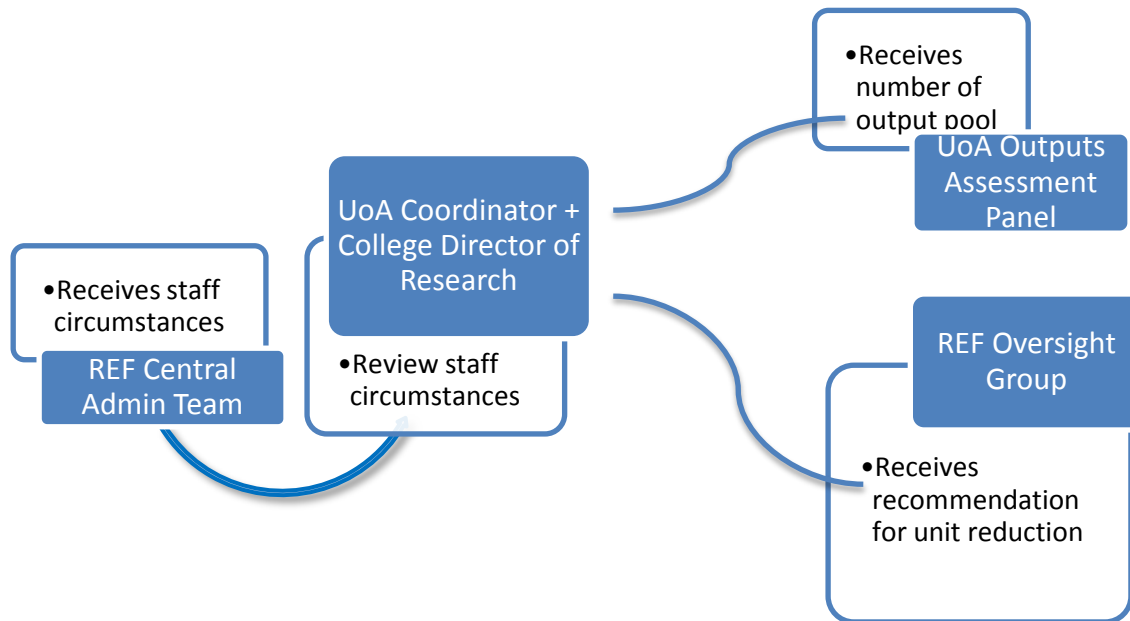
It is expected that a request for a unit reduction will only be made in cases in which staff circumstances have had a disproportionate effect on the unit. Although the University of Lincoln do not wish to be prescriptive about the point from which the effect of staff circumstances become disproportionate, the following aspects will be assessed when making judgments about the nature of the effect of staff circumstances in a unit's ability to deliver research outputs:

- i. The number of potential reductions available in relation to the size of the unit;
- ii. The effect of the absence of the staff with circumstances in the rest of the unit's ability to deliver research outputs due to the increase of teaching workload;
- iii. The University of Lincoln expects to make first time submissions to several UoAs in REF2021. This is because of the opening of several new Schools and subject areas in the last few years. It is envisaged that the effect of staff circumstances in UoAs based mainly around new Schools could be disproportionate in relationship with the same circumstances' effect in more established UoAs due to the teaching centred approach of new Schools during their first years of activity.
- iv. Judgement regarding the effect of staff circumstances on a unit might also be informed by the cognate area of the UoA. It is generally recognised that in some fields the leading time from conception to publication of an output is considerably longer than in others. This is particularly noticeable in Humanities subjects in which the monograph is the main form of output.

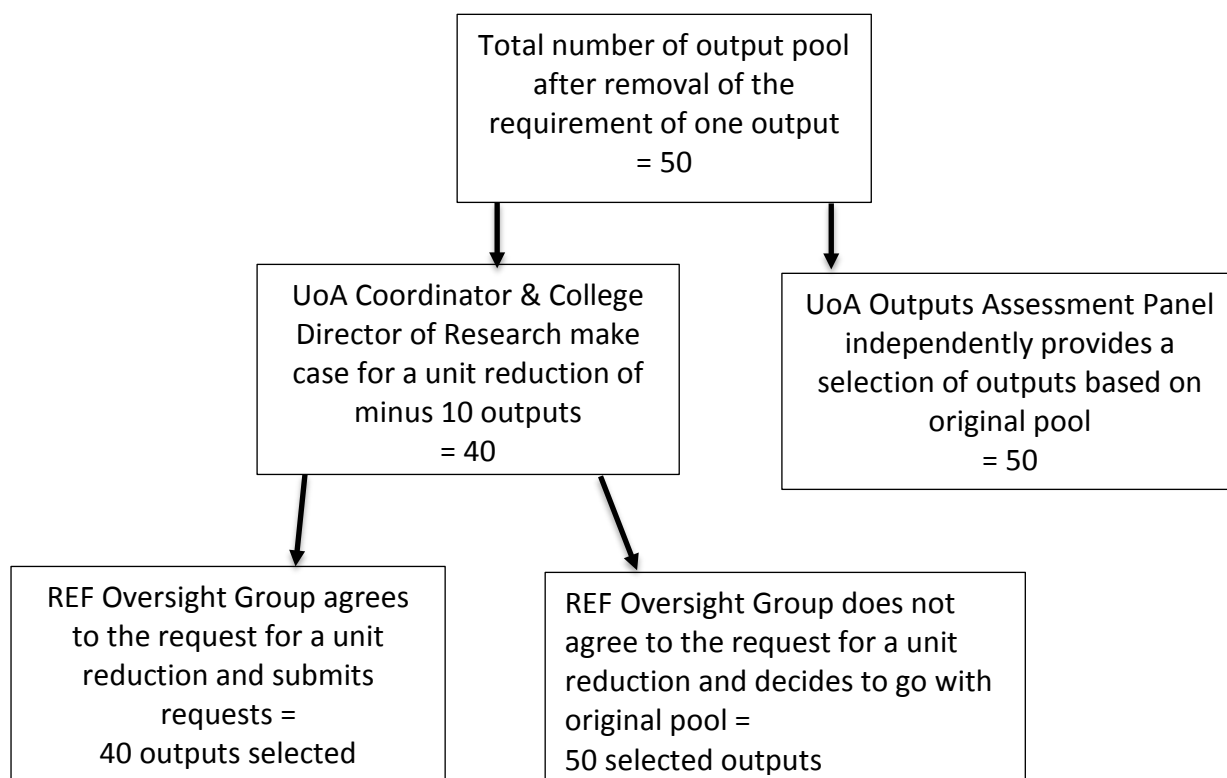
The UoA Coordinator and the College Director of Research will consider the staff circumstances disclosed by members of staff in a particular UoA as a whole and will make a recommendation about a potential request for a unit reduction to the REF Oversight Group. The REF Oversight Group will be responsible for the decision whether to apply for a reduction, and for the size and justification of the reduction.

The principles of accountability and consistency are at the core of this process, which provides separation between the decisions to request a reduction in the output pool from the selection of outputs for submission.

Disassociate processes for establishing the size of the output pool and the final selection of outputs for submission



Worked example of disassociate process for establishing the size of the output pool and the final selection of outputs for submission



Staff, committees and training

The Central Administrative REF Team will run specific training sessions for all Unit of Assessment Coordinators and College Directors of Research on the criteria and the processes and procedures governing the process to disclose staff circumstances and the process to request reductions of outputs. The training will also be compulsory for all the members of the REF Oversight Group, which will make final decisions on requests for reduction of outputs following recommendations from UoA Coordinators and College Directors of Research.

For content, target audience and timeline of the training, please see Appendix C.

iii. Selection of outputs

The selection of outputs follows a three-stage process:

- a. assignment of authors to Unit of Assessment (UoA);
- b. selection of first output;
- c. selection of remaining outputs.

Selection of UoA

The principle followed by the University of Lincoln is to assign individuals to the Unit of Assessment that is most appropriate to the publication profile and provides the best overall result for the University.

Selection of first output

The UoA Output Assessment panel will prepare the final recommendation for submission at UoA level. The recommendation will be based primarily on the output ratings assigned during the several mock REF exercises undertaken in the years leading to REF2021. No other metric will inform the proposed selection except for the “residual output pool.”

The REF Oversight Group will receive recommendations from all REF Output Assessment panels and will prepare the final University of Lincoln submission to REF2021.

Principles of selection of outputs

For the majority of staff with significant responsibility for research in post on the census date at least one output must be submitted (i.e. all those who have not exceptionally had the “minimum of one” reduced to a “minimum of zero”). One output will be assigned to each such individual. The highest scored output available to each researcher in their particular UoA will be assigned.

UoA Output Assessment panels will organise the review of late outputs (those up to December 2020). Late papers might displace existing papers if they provide an improved overall result for the University.

Selection of other outputs

The remaining pool of available outputs in a UoA is placed in ranked order from best to worst; within each rating level, the outputs of staff who are in post at the census date are placed before those of staff who are not. Starting at the top, outputs are assigned so long as



no individual has more than five outputs assigned to them (as necessary, outputs will be reassigned to valid multiple authors to avoid exceeding the maximum limit of five).

When the lowest level of rating that needs to be included is reached, there may remain a residual pool of outputs with same rating of which only a subset may be included in the submission.

The UoA Output Assessment Panel will convene and rank the residual output pool in order; a majority decision will be taken. The order, reasons and number of votes for the ordering will be recorded by the Central Administrative REF Team. The highest ranking residual pool of outputs will be taken to complete the submission, while respecting the rules for maximum number of attributed outputs per individual.

Submission of Staff who have been made redundant

The University will not submit to the REF outputs from permanent members of staff who have been made compulsorily redundant, or from fixed-term members of staff who have been made compulsorily redundant prior to the contracted end of their employment.

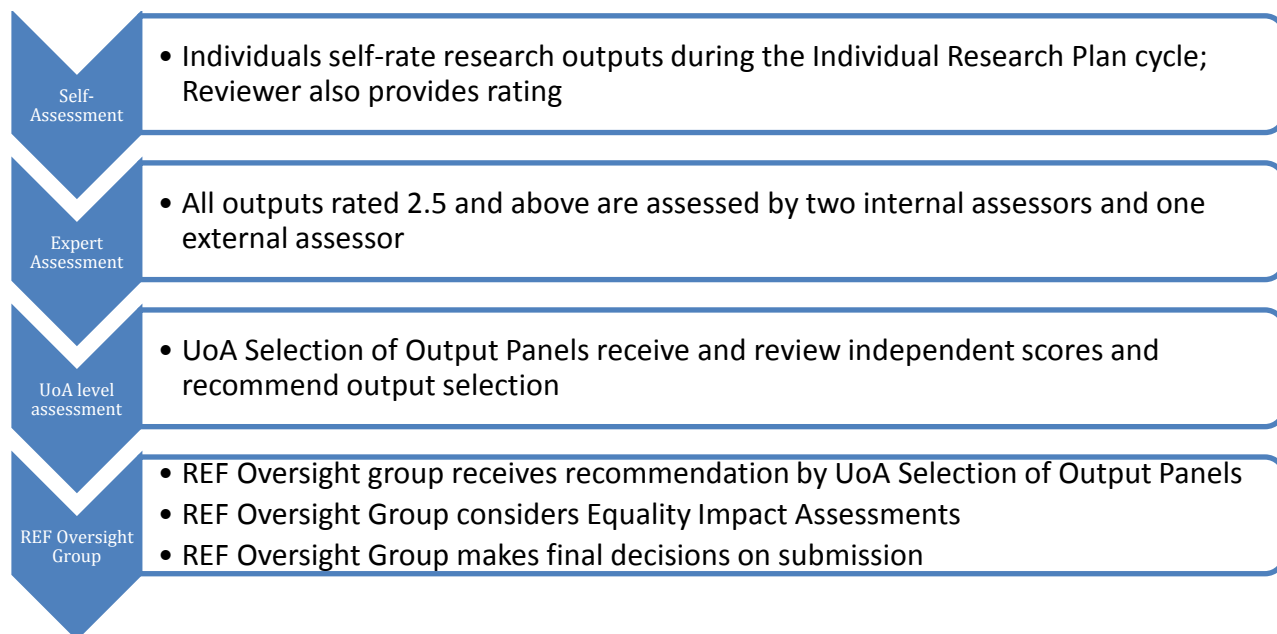
Final University-wide selection

The REF Oversight Group will review all UoA recommendations and compile a final University-wide selection.

The final decision on what outputs are submitted to the REF will be made by the REF Oversight Group by November 2020. Decisions on output selection will not be made by any other University REF advisory or support body. The final ranking of outputs and the decision regarding final selection of outputs for submission will be communicated to the Unit of Assessment Coordinator, who will communicate final decisions to members of staff in person and in confidence.

All members of the UoA Output Assessment Panel and the REF Oversight Group will undertake specific training on the ranking and selection of output processes and the REF decision-making process (see Appendix C).

Summary of process for final selection of outputs



In Summary, this Code of Practice establishes a clear division between the advisory panels, the UoA Selection of Output Panels, and the decision-making panel, the REF Oversight Group. This structure is followed by all Units of Assessment, ensuring that the principles of consistency and transparency are fully adhered to through the process.

Equality Impact Assessment

The Central Administrative REF Team and the Equality, Engagement and Development team, Human Resources, have worked together on initiating Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) for all the processes and procedures defined in this Code of Practice.

A working group consisting of the Senior REF Manager (Strategy & Delivery), the Race Equality Charter Officer (Staff and Students) HR, and the Equalities Officer from the Eleanor Glanville Centre, will be responsible for continuing work on the EIAs on all the processes and procedures related to REF2021 preparations.

The EIAs will:

- I. Identify aims and objectives of the process or procedure;
- II. Gather data to establish evidence of impact on different protected groups;
- III. Consult staff affected by processes or procedures (if applicable);
- IV. Assess the impacts both positive and negative;
- V. At key decision stages: proceed or amend a process or procedure;
- VI. Initiate an action plan to enhance positive or mitigate negative impact;
- VII. Monitor and evaluate the effect of the process or procedure;
- VIII. Provide information and recommendations to REF decision making bodies and sign off for EIA final submission.



Crucially, this working group will be responsible for preparing recommendations for the REF Oversight Group based on the evidence gathered through EIAs. The REF Oversight Group will consider the findings of the EIAs and make final decisions about any potential amendments to processes and procedures related to REF2021 preparations.

The EIAs will include data analysis on the final selection of outputs for submission. This data analysis will build on the EIAs that are being conducted on the results of the mock REF2018 and will be conducted on the results of the mock REF2019.

The Equality Impact Assessments are therefore living documents that will be reviewed at key stages of the REF2021 preparations.

The final EIA will be referred to the REF Oversight Group for review and consideration prior to final decisions on submission to REF2021. If necessary, the REF Oversight Group will take corrective action.

Part 5: Appendices

Appendix A – Timeline and details for Code of Practice Programme of Communication

Event	Date	Delivered by\Led by	Audience
Initial consultation on Code of Practice principles with UCU	December 2018	DVC Research and Innovation	UCU representatives
Targeted information sharing activity with UCU	29 th March 2019	DVC Research and Innovation, HR representative and Research Environment Manager	UCU representatives
UCU declined offers from the DVC Research and Innovation to meet again to discuss feedback on Code of Practice			
Notice about open sessions on draft Code of Practice on University staff news, Research & Enterprise portal & all academic staff email communication	Early April 2019	REF Team	All staff
Draft Code of Practice distributed to all academic members of staff on long-term leave	Early April 2019	HR	All staff on long-term leave
Open sessions to all staff and invitation for feedback	9 th April 2019 10.00am – 11.00am	DVC Research and Innovation	All staff
	11 th April 2019 3.30pm – 4.30 pm		
	15 th May 2019 9.00am – 10.00am		
Targeted information sessions with Early Career Researchers	11 th April 2019 1.00pm – 2.00pm	Research Environment Manager	Early Career Researchers
	26 th April 2019 12.00noon – 1.00pm		
	1 st May 2019 3.00pm – 4.00pm		
	8 th May 2019 1.00pm – 2.00pm		

Planned activity following approval of the Code of Practice			
Sessions on the criteria and processes and procedures used to determine REF research independence	Summer 2019 & Summer 2020	REF Team	All “Research-Only” staff
Sessions on confidential processes to disclose staff circumstances	Summer and Autumn 2019	REF Team	All staff with ‘Significant responsibility for research’



Appendix B - The University REF Committees and Panels

Membership of these committees and panels may change during the course of the REF period, for a variety of reasons. Updated membership will be posted on the University's REF portal page.

REF Oversight Group

Terms of Reference

- To make decisions on the final selection of outputs for submission to the REF, by Unit of Assessment, based on recommendations by the UoA Outputs Assessment Panels.
- To notify Unit of Assessment Coordinators (UoACs) of decisions made for their unit of assessment.
- To oversee the progress of the University's REF strategy;
- To continuously monitor progress towards the REF submission, including outputs, impact and environment;
- To regularly report on REF progress to the Research and Employer Engagement Group (REEG);
- To recommend actions to REEG and other bodies in the University, to optimise REF performance.

Membership

Vice-Chancellor (Chair)

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation

Director of Research, College of Arts

Director of Research, College of Science

Director of Research, College of Social Science

Director of Research, Lincoln International Business School

Distinguished Professor in Social Research

Professor, Founding Director of the Eleanor Glanville Centre

Director of Planning

Head of Research & Industrial Partnerships

Director Research Impact Development

Head of Equality, Engagement & Development (HR)

Deputy Head of Research & Industrial Partnerships

Officer from REF Central Administration Team (non-decision making role)

The Vice-Chancellor (Chair) and the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation are members of this panel by virtue of having the ultimate authority within the University on matters of research and are, therefore, in the best position to make the final decisions on what outputs should be submitted to the REF. They are also members of the panel outside the College structure of the University.

The College Directors of Research have been selected due to their position as the ultimate authority within their College in all matters regarding research.



The other members of the panel bring the following expertise:

- The Distinguished Professor in Social Research brings in-depth knowledge in research assessment in the context not only of Lincoln but the UK;
- The Founding Director of the Eleanor Glanville Centre provides expertise in matters of equality, diversity and inclusion in a Higher Education setting;
- The Director of Planning, the Head of Research & Industrial Partnerships, the Director of Research Impact Development and the Deputy Head of Research & Industrial Partnerships provide a non-academic expert view in all matters of the research environment at the University of Lincoln.

The officer of the group, a member of the Central Administration REF Team, takes formal minutes. These formal minutes are archived on a subsection of the REF Team portal pages (intranet) and made available to all members of the REF Oversight Group and the Central Administration REF team for reference.

The REF Oversight group reports to the Research and Employer Engagement Group (REEG). REEG is a sub-group of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The University of Lincoln's Vice-Chancellor chairs SLT.

Minutes from the REF Oversight Group are submitted formally to REEG.

Research Independence Panel

Terms of Reference

- To consider assessments and documentation regarding the REF research independence status for members of staff on 'Research-Only' contracts;
- To make final decisions on the independence status of 'Research-only' staff;
- To receive and consider 'self-nominations' from 'Research-only' staff after providing an initial provisional REF research independence status;
- To consider the Equality Impact Assessment conducted on the results of the process to determine REF research independence status.

Membership:

Distinguished Professor in Social Research (Chair)
Professor\School Director of Research, College of Arts
Professor\School Director of Research, College of Science
Professor\School Director of Research College of Social Sciences
Professor\Head of Department, Lincoln International Business School
Head of HR Business Partnering
Deputy Head of Research & Industrial Partnerships
Officer – Member of the University REF Team

The members of this panel were selected for their knowledge of the research environment at their respective Colleges and their knowledge of HR legislation in the context of Higher Education (in the case of the representatives staff members from HR). The Deputy Head of



Research & Industrial Partnerships has an institutional role supporting researcher development and is a member of the Doctoral School Management Board and the Lincoln Institute for Advanced Studies Management Board.

The Chair of the panel has an in depth knowledge of the research culture at Lincoln and an extensive knowledge of research assessment-related policy in the context of Higher Education in the UK.

The officer of the group, a member of the Central Administrative REF team, will take formal minutes. These will be archived in the appropriate REF portal page (intranet) with restrictive access only to members of the panel.

Minutes from the REF Research Independence Panel are submitted formally to the REF Oversight Group.

University REF Appeals Panel

Terms of Reference

- To consider all appeals received by 'Research-only' members of staff regarding their assigned REF research independence status;
- To make final decisions with regards to the appeals submitted by staff on 'Research-only' contracts regarding their independence status assigned by the REF Research Independence panel;
- To consider the equality impact assessment conducted on the results of the process to determine REF independence status.

Membership

DVC External Relations - Chair
Director of Research & Enterprise
Director of Human Resources
Officer – Member of the University REF Team

The members of this panel were selected for the following reasons:

The Chair of the panel, as DVC External Relations, brings an academic point of view which is entirely independent from REF preparations at institutional level. The DVC External Relations is responsible at institutional level for internationalisation, partnerships, communication, faith on campus and engagement with a wide variety of local, regional, national and international partners.

The Director of Human Resources brings an in-depth knowledge of equality, diversity and inclusion matters to the appeal process while remaining completely independent from all the other REF-related processes at institutional level. The Director of Research & Enterprise, also independent from the REF-related activity at institutional level, brings in-depth knowledge of the research environment at Lincoln.



The officer of the group, a member of the Central Administrative REF team, will take formal minutes. These will be archived in the appropriate REF portal page (intranet) with restrictive access only to members of the panel.

Minutes from the REF Appeals Panel are submitted formally to the REF Oversight Group.

UoA Outputs Assessment Panels

Terms of Reference

- To reach consensus output ratings after receiving the reports from the external and internal assessors via the mock REF exercises;
- To make recommendations to the REF Oversight Group for output ratings based on the mock REF exercises results;
- To make recommendations for double-weighting of outputs within a particular UoA;
- To make recommendations for the cross-referring of outputs for assessment by a different UoA;
- To make recommendations for final selection of outputs for a particular UoA;
- To record the reasons justifying final recommendations;
- To make recommendations for the potential request for a unit reduction in cases in which the effect of staff circumstances to the unit output pool is considered disproportionate.

Membership

Professor from different UoA (Chair)

Unit of Assessment Coordinator\

College Director of Research

School Director\ of Research of Schools which the UoA falls within

Other senior members of the UoA acting as internal assessors

The members of this panel were selected because their knowledge of the research environment at their respective Units of Assessment and their particular Colleges\Schools.

Chairs, which must be Professors from another Unit of Assessment, have been selected for their impartiality and their role is to ensure that the panel process is rigorous and consistent with the guidance.

The officer of the group, a member of the Central Administrative REF team, will take formal minutes. These will be archived in the appropriate REF portal page (intranet) with restrictive access only to members of the panel.

Minutes from the UoA Outputs Assessment Panels are submitted formally to the REF Oversight Group.

Appendix C – Training

The following training is compulsory for all staff and committees involved in any stage of REF preparations at the University of Lincoln.

Unconscious Bias & Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the REF context

Audience:

- All Members of REF-related committees
- Unit of Assessment Coordinators
- Internal assessors
- Members of the REF team

Delivered by: Equality, Engagement & Development, HR & Eleanor Glanville Centre

Format: In person

Duration: 2 hours

Content:

- Define unconscious bias, stereotype threat and micro-behaviours in the context of REF;
- Explain how unconscious bias might play out in decision-making during REF preparations;
- Recognise how different peoples life experiences, upbringings, cultures, backgrounds and protected characteristics affect what we think and how we behave.

Dates: Two sessions in 2020

Internal process for the review of research outputs for REF purposes

Audience:

- Internal reviewers of research outputs for REF purposes
- Unit of Assessment Coordinators
- Chairs of the UoA Output Assessment Panels
- Members of the REF team

Delivered by: Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation & REF Central Administration Team

Format: In person

Duration: 1 hour

Content:

- The role of the internal assessor in Mock REFs and final REF submission;
- Criteria for the review of outputs;
- Reviewing principles for assessors;
- Composition and role of the UoA Outputs Assessment Panel;
- UoA Outputs Assessment Panel working principles;
- Communication of final scores from mock REF

Dates: March 2019 (Completed) & March\April 2020



'Staff circumstances in the context of REF'

Audience:

- All Members of REF-related committees
- Unit of Assessment Coordinators
- Members of the REF team
- Members of the HR team involved in REF preparations

Delivered by: REF Central Administration Team

Format: In person

Duration: 1 hour

Content:

- University of Lincoln process for staff to voluntarily disclose staff circumstances in the context of REF preparations;
- The need for confidentiality and the mechanisms in place to ensure confidentiality;
- Channels of communication regarding staff circumstances for both staff and members of appropriate REF committees.

Dates: June\July 2019 & April\May 2020

Appendix D – Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances Form and Letter

Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances template

This document is being sent to all Category A staff whose outputs are eligible for submission to REF2021 (see [‘Guidance on submissions’](#), paragraphs 117-122). 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 that 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 entered into REF 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 (see below)
 - circumstances *equivalent* to 46 months or more absence from research due to equality-related circumstances
 - 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 expected workload / 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 reduced required number of outputs to be submitted.

Applicable circumstances

- Qualifying as an ECR (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016)
- Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector
- Qualifying periods of family-related leave
- Junior clinical academics who have not gained a Certificate of Completion of training by 31 July 2020
- 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 following circumstances, you are requested to complete the attached form. Further information can be found in paragraph 160 of the ‘Guidance on



Submissions' (REF 2019/01). Completion and return of the form is voluntary, and individuals who do not choose to return it will not be put under any pressure to declare information if they do not wish to do so. This form is the only means by which the University will be gathering this information; we will not be consulting HR records, contract start dates, etc. 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

If the institution decides to apply to the funding bodies for either form of reduction of outputs (removal of 'minimum of one' requirement or unit circumstances), we will need to provide UKRI with data that you have disclosed about your individual circumstances, to show that the criteria have been met for reducing the number of outputs. Please see the ['Guidance on submissions'](#) document (paragraphs 151-201) for more detail about reductions in outputs and what information needs to be submitted.

Submitted data will be kept confidential to the REF team, the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs. All these bodies are subject to confidentiality arrangements. The REF team will destroy the submitted data about individuals' circumstances on completion of the assessment phase.

Changes in circumstances

The university recognises that staff circumstances may change between completion of the declaration form and the census date (31 July 2020). If this is the case, then staff should contact the Senior REF Manager (Strategy and Delivery) to provide the updated information.

For those not disclosing their staff circumstances

Should you choose not to disclose your staff circumstances and have outputs that you wish the University to consider for possible submission, please contact the Senior REF Manager (Strategy & Deliver) on REF@lincoln.ac.uk. The Central Administrative REF team will be able to submit your output to the repository on your behalf. You are asked to also provide your self-rating of the output so that the University can put the output forward for further assessment if appropriate.



To submit this form you should email it to REF@lincoln.ac.uk to the attention of the Senior REF Manager (Strategy & Delivery) and marked 'Strictly confidential'.

Name: [Click here to insert text.](#)

Department: [Click here to insert text.](#)

Do you have a REF-eligible output published between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2020?

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 requested information in relevant box(es).

Circumstance	Time period affected
Early Career Researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016). <i>Date you became an early career researcher.</i>	Click here to enter a date.
Junior clinical academic who has not gained Certificate of completion of Training by 31 July 2020.	Tick here <input type="checkbox"/>
Career break or secondment outside of the HE sector. <i>Dates and durations in months.</i>	Click here to enter dates and durations.
Family-related leave; <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. <i>For each period of leave, state the nature of the leave taken and the dates and durations in months.</i>	Click here to enter dates and durations.
Disability (including chronic conditions) <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>	Click here to enter text.

<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>
<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 Central Administrative REF Team.



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- 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 the Senior REF Manager (Strategy & Delivery) to contact me to discuss my circumstances, and my requirements in relation this these.

☐ I give my permission for the details of this form to be passed on to the relevant contact within my department/faculty/centre. (Please note, if you do not give permission your department may be unable 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

Appendix E – Equality Impact Assessments Summary Action Plan

Determining REF Research Independence	Stage one – March 2019 - At outset of process
	Stage two – September 2019 – Review of effects of current process
	Stage three – Recommendation\Decision-making – Autumn 2019
	Stage four – Re-run of process - August 2020
	Stage five – Review of effects of process – September 2020
Selection of outputs for submission	Stage one – Mock REF2018, including review of effects of process
	Stage two – Mock REF 2019, including review of effects of process
	Stage three – Final selection for REF2021 submission

Delivered by:

- Senior REF Manager (Strategy & Delivery)
- Race Equality Charter Officer (Staff and Students), HR
- Equalities Officer from the Eleanor Glanville Centre