

REF 2021 DRAFT CODE OF PRACTICE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Version 3 for submission to the REF Funding Bodies, June 2019

Guide to version numbers:

0.x Initial versions developed for REF Project Board in response to all staff consultation in 2018

1.x Version for consultation with staff representative groups and divisional boards

2.x Version approved by REF Project Board in April 2019 and used for staff dry run

3.x Version submitted to the REF Funding Bodies in June 2019

4.x Version updated following the dry run equality impact assessment (EIA) (if needed)

5.x Final version submitted to REF funding bodies (if needed)

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Executive Summary of the Code of Practice

Purpose of the Code of Practice

The Research Excellence Framework 2021 (“the REF”) is the seventh in a series of periodic assessments of research quality undertaken by Research England on behalf of the REF Funding Bodies. It is a UK-wide assessment of research in universities, and provides an objective peer-reviewed score of the quality and impact of research at subject level in each university. The collegiate University is required to develop, document and implement a Code of Practice (“the Code”) for its preparations for the REF in order to be eligible to submit to the REF.

What we are required to cover

The purpose of the Code is principally to cover the following processes:

- How the University will identify staff eligible to be submitted to the REF
- How the University will select research outputs to be submitted

The REF procedures outlined in the Code should also ensure that the University does not discriminate unlawfully against, or otherwise have the effect of harassing or victimising individuals because of any protected characteristic; and ensure that the principles of transparency, consistency, accountability inclusivity both inform and are embedded in the processes described in the Code. We also must ensure that there is a robust and transparent process for supporting staff with individual circumstances which may have constrained researcher productivity over the REF period (2014-2020).

Key to finding major sections of the Code of Practice

- Part 2: the identification of eligible staff
- Part 3, subsection i: roles and responsibilities in relation to identifying eligible staff
- Part 3, subsection ii: appeals on eligibility decisions
- Part 5: measures to ensure equality
- Part 6: communication and consultation with staff.

Part 1: Introduction and background

i. Purpose

1. This Code of Practice (“the Code”) sets out the process to be followed by the University of Oxford for the REF 2021 exercise in relation to:

- i) identifying eligible staff with significant responsibility for research
- ii) ensuring a fair and transparent approach to selecting outputs

2. The Code also provides information about how the submission will be coordinated, how decisions are made, the timeline involved, the support structures available, and how individual staff circumstances will be managed.

ii. Background

3. The Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 is the system put in place by the four UK Higher Education Funding Bodies (the Funding Bodies)¹ for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions (HEIs). The Funding Bodies state the purpose of the REF is:

- To provide accountability for public investment in research and produce evidence of the benefits of this investment.
- To provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks, for use within the HE sector and for public information.
- To inform the selective allocation of funding for research².

4. The Funding Bodies require HEIs making a REF submission to develop, document and apply a Code of Practice to inform the selection of outputs and the identification of eligible staff that will be used to support the REF submission. The Code helps HEIs ensure that they include all eligible staff in submissions, as well as promoting equality, complying with legislation and avoiding discrimination. The head of the HEI confirms adherence to the Code when the REF submission is made.

5. The last REF exercise was completed in 2014, and following that, the Funding Bodies have introduced a number of changes following recommendations made by Lord Stern in the independent review of the REF. Whereas in REF 2014 HEIs were able to select which of its

¹ [Research England](#), the [Scottish Funding Council](#) (SFC), the [Higher Education Funding Council for Wales](#) (HEFCW), and the [Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland](#) (DfE).

² <http://www.ref.ac.uk/about/what-is-the-ref/>

eligible staff were submitted, HEIs are now required to submit all eligible staff with significant responsibility for research. The pool of potentially eligible staff is primarily determined by identification of staff in whose contracts the primary job function is given as 'teaching and research' or 'research-only' in the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) staff return.

iii. The University of Oxford's aims

6. The REF 2021 submission is an institutional return intended to optimise the reputational and financial position of the University of Oxford. Decisions on the composition of the submission will be taken with these aims in mind, whilst also adhering to the principles of equality set out in the Code. The submission to REF 2021 will be guided by the first objective of the University's Strategic Plan, which is to promote and enable ambitious research of exceptional quality³.

iv. Principles governing the Code of Practice

7. The University of Oxford is committed to treating its staff fairly, and in relation to the conduct of the REF 2021 exercise, will adhere to the following principles:

- **Transparency:** it should be clear and transparent in the Code what the processes will be used for identifying eligible staff, and for selecting outputs to be submitted.
- **Consistency:** the processes defined and documented in this Code will be applied consistently throughout the collegiate University.
- **Accountability:** roles and responsibilities of those involved in the identification of eligible staff and the selection of outputs respectively are set out clearly in the Code.
- **Inclusivity:** the processes for identifying eligible staff and selecting outputs promote an inclusive environment for all research staff throughout the collegiate University.

8. These four principles should underpin all of the processes, roles and responsibilities described in the Code.

v. REF responsibilities at the University of Oxford

9. The following people and committees are responsible for contributing to the development of the University's submission to REF 2021.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)⁴

³ <http://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/strategic-plan-2018-23/>

⁴ <http://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/university-officers?wssl=1/>

10. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) chairs Research & Innovation Committee and REF Project Board, and is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the overall preparation of the exercise, afforded and supported by the Deputy Chair of the REF Project Board.

11. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) is responsible for the overall timetable for, and preparation of, the exercise. He will chair review meetings with Divisions and Unit of Assessment (UOA) Coordinators at regular intervals to check progress and will be the final arbitrator in cross-divisional decisions if necessary.

12. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) was selected to oversee the REF submission at Oxford, as the academic with ultimate responsibility for steering research strategy and major research exercises such as the REF at the University.

REF Project Board⁵

13. REF Project Board, which reports directly to Research & Innovation Committee and thence to Council, is the strategic and decision-making Board for the REF 2021 submission. REF Project Board is chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) and oversees all preparations, including setting the timetable for REF at the University of Oxford, and agreeing the Code of Practice. The Project Board considers and approves all Unit of Assessment (UOA) submissions to which the University will provide returns, prior to their submission to the Funding Bodies. It will also operate and review the REF 2021 dry run submissions.

14. The REF Project Board terms of reference and membership can be found on the University's webpages⁵. Membership is drawn from across the collegiate University, with each of the following groups nominating senior academics with responsibility for research in their group: the Academic Divisions; Gardens, Library & Museums; the Department for Continuing Education; Conference of Colleges. Nominations of members were considered in light of the University's equality policy and to ensure inclusivity. In order to ensure that equality considerations are embedded into the University's REF preparations, the Head of the Equality and Diversity Unit (EDU) is an officer of the REF Project Board. The Head of EDU will be supported by the University's consultative groups on equality, which will discuss REF issues as appropriate.

15. The REF Project Board is supported by the REF Operations Group. The REF Operations Group is chaired by the Director of Research Services (a member of the REF Project Board) and comprises university staff who are attending officers at REF Project Board, from the REF team in Research Services and other University Administration Services (UAS) teams with an operational role in REF, and Divisional officers with responsibility for REF. The group reviews administrative and process matters and makes recommendations to REF Project Board to manage the risk of the project.

⁵ <https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/additional-guidance/>

Divisions

16. REF Project Board has delegated the following Divisions to have primary responsibility for developing submissions to the REF Main Panels as outlined below:

Medical Sciences Division: Main Panel A

Mathematical, Physical & Life Sciences Division: Main Panel B

Social Sciences Division: Main Panel C

Humanities Division: Main Panel D

17. Each Division has a Divisional Board which has convened a Main Panel Board (as defined below) to report to them and REF Project Board, and to manage the REF submission in the above fields.

Main Panel Boards

18. Each Main Panel Board, or a body established by a Divisional Board and acting on its behalf for matters relating to the REF, will be responsible for establishing the Main Panel's timetable to prepare for the UOA submissions within their remit, and for maintaining oversight of the submissions as they develop. Each UOA sits under the appropriate Main Panel by discipline.

19. UOAs will sit under the Main Panel responsible for them in the national REF exercise, however it is noted that some UOAs cross Divisional boundaries, so collaboration and cross-referral with other Divisions in their capacity as Main Panel Boards will take place as necessary. A list of Main Panels and UOAs for REF is given in Appendix A.

20. Overall responsibility for submission decisions will rest with the appropriate Main Panel Board(s). This includes:

- Appointment of UOA Coordinators.
- Approval of UOA process(es) for the selection of outputs, in line with the University's policy in Part 4 of the Code.
- Review of the documentation for the submission.
- Decision-making on the eligibility of staff on the basis of indicators described in the Code.

21. The Main Panel Boards will review all the UOA constituent submissions within their remit prior to submitting them to the University's REF Project Board for consideration.

22. Terms of reference and membership of the Main Panel Boards can be found in Appendix B. The Main Panel Board chairs are senior academic officers in the respective Division, and the members include academic staff with experience of research assessment and/or personnel issues, selected to reflect the disciplinary range and characteristics of research staff within the Main Panel Board's remit.

Unit of Assessment (UOA) Coordinators

23. An academic Coordinator has been identified for each UOA to which the University intends to submit a return (a UOA Coordinator). UOA Coordinators are responsible for the coordination of the dry run in 2019 within their UOA, and the preparation of the final submission within their UOA. Details of the types of activity which the UOA Coordinators are expected to undertake or oversee are:

- Coordination of the submission for the unit named above, working in collaboration with and reporting to the Division named above which reports to the REF Project Board.
- Ensuring that the submission is consistent with Oxford's strategy of securing optimal quality while committing to fair treatment of all staff.
- Liaising with the Main Panel Board for the Division named above to ensure that all eligible staff with significant responsibility for research are attributed to the most suitable Unit of Assessment and that the decision is made fairly.
- Making the final decision on the selection of outputs to be submitted with the unit named above and in accordance with the principles set out in the University's Code of Practice
- Documenting the Unit of Assessment's approach to output selection and its results; this includes ensuring that all outputs to be submitted in the above-named unit to REF have an appropriate record on Symplectic Elements, the University's system for managing research outputs.
- Signposting staff to routes for declaring circumstances which have affected their ability to work productively over the REF period, and signposting support mechanisms for affected staff; this includes dealing with such issues in a confidential and sensitive manner.
- Where staff circumstances have had a disproportionate effect on productivity within the Unit of Assessment, liaising with the REF Equality Committee to make a case for unit reductions on the number of outputs required to be applied.
- Taking final responsibility for the development of the REF environment statement for the unit named above.
- Taking final responsibility for the development of the REF impact case studies for the unit named above, in collaboration with the Unit of Assessment Impact Coordinator, if applicable.
- Providing regular progress reports on request to the Division named above and REF Project Board as applicable in order to manage project risks.
- Completing the REF Equality training and agreeing to fulfil the principles outlined in the Code of Practice.

24. UOA Coordinators have been identified by Heads of Division or their delegates on REF Project Board following consultation with academic colleagues. They are senior academics who are expected to work with colleagues to deliver their responsibilities. A list of UOA Coordinators is available from the University's REF webpage and states to which Main Panel each UOA belongs.

Heads of Department/Faculty and College Senior Tutors

25. Heads of Department/Faculty and College Senior Tutors are responsible for identifying staff who may meet the criteria for eligibility set out in Part 2 of the Code. This includes providing recommendations on eligibility along with the evidence of how they understand that the eligibility criteria were met, or for making a case for eligibility or not based on indicators. Where Heads of Department or College Senior Tutors sit on REF Project Board or Main Panel Boards with responsibility for REF, they will recuse themselves from the Main Panel Board or REF Project Board decision-making regarding the eligibility of staff from their own Department or College.

26. Heads of Department and College Senior Tutors were asked to take on this responsibility as they have the appropriate access to, responsibility for and management of staff information which will need to be considered for the REF: their role in REF is an advisory one, as decisions on staff eligibility will be made by the Main Panel Boards, and decisions on output selection will be made by Unit of Assessment Coordinators.

Central Contract Review Group

27. The Central Contract Review Group is a committee of senior academics from across the Divisions and UAS, supported by administrative officers with relevant expertise, which reviews College-only staff contracts and maps them onto equivalent HESA codes (for example 'teaching and research', 'research-only'). It also endorses eligibility recommendations from Gardens, Library and Museums and, where applicable, maps those staff onto HESA codes (for example 'teaching and research', 'research-only').

Pro-Vice-Chancellor for People & Gardens, Library and Museums⁶

28. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for People & Gardens, Library and Museums will chair the REF Eligibility Appeals Committee.

29. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for People & Gardens, Library and Museums was asked to take this role in REF as she is the academic with ultimate responsibility for personnel issues at the University of Oxford. Her role is both advisory in the event that eligibility decisions appear inconsistent on appeal, and decision-making in the event that an eligibility decision made by a Main Panel Board is overturned on appeal.

⁶ www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/university-officers?wssl=1/

REF Eligibility Appeals Committee

30. The REF Eligibility Appeals Committee is the group which will review any appeals on decisions made about staff eligibility related to the REF in a consistent and, where necessary, confidential manner, in accordance with the Code.

31. The REF Eligibility Appeals Committee will:

- Make decisions on staff eligibility where the staff member involved has requested it through the appeals process, by reviewing requests on a case-by-case basis.
- Liaise with Main Panel Boards to report cases of inappropriate or inconsistent decision-making.
- Refer any decisions to REF Project Board for reporting purposes.

32. Membership of the REF Eligibility Appeals Committee will be proposed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for People & Gardens, Library and Museums, to ensure expertise on research and personnel issues, REF guidance, and academic representation. Once convened, the confirmed members and terms of reference will be found on the University's REF webpage. For the avoidance of doubt, membership will be independent of other decision-making bodies connected with the REF preparations at the University (such as Heads of Department/Faculty and College Senior Tutors, UOA Coordinators or members of Main Panel Boards, the Central Contract Review Group and REF Project Board).

The Advocate and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Equality & Diversity)⁷

33. The Advocate and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Equality & Diversity) will chair the REF Equality Committee.

34. The Advocate and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Equality & Diversity) was asked to take on this role in REF as the academic responsible for promoting and steering Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity at the University of Oxford. Her role in REF is both advisory, in reviewing processes through Equality Impact Assessments, and decision-making in relation to reviewing staff circumstances.

REF Equality Committee

35. The REF Equality Committee provides a forum for dealing with individual circumstances related to the REF in a consistent and, where necessary, confidential manner. The REF Equality Committee will:

- Take overall responsibility for the procedure for confidential declaration of any staff circumstances ("circumstances") for eligible staff who will be submitted to REF2021.

⁷ www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/university-officers?wssl=1/

- Review cases where circumstances have affected productivity such that an individual has not produced any outputs over the REF period in order to make a case to the Funding Bodies that the individual may be submitted with no outputs and ensuring that the relevant adjustment is made to the number of outputs required for the UOA.
- Review multiple declared staff circumstances in a UOA to calculate any reductions in outputs for the UOA which may accrue as a result of circumstances, in accordance with the Funding Bodies' guidance.
- Inform UOA Coordinators of the number of staff who have declared circumstances within their UOA, and which staff would be eligible for submission without the minimum of one output.
- Consider cases made by UOA Coordinators that their UOA has been disproportionately affected by multiple circumstances (and so might apply to the Funding Bodies for unit reductions).
- Oversee the conduct of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) on the staff eligibility identification and output selection processes, and making recommendations to REF Project Board on the modification of processes and procedures as a result of EIAs.
- Report the outcomes of the EIAs and any recommended actions for review to the University's Personnel Committee and Research & Innovation Committee.

36. Membership of the REF Equality Committee (the types of roles needed) will be proposed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and the Advocate and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Equality & Diversity), to ensure expertise on equality and personnel issues, REF guidance, and academic representation. Once convened, the members and terms of reference will be found on the University's REF webpage.

Research Services REF team

37. The REF team in Research Services (RS) will:

- Service the REF Project Board, and define the University's overall timetable for preparation.
- Service the REF Eligibility Appeals Committee and the REF Equality Committee.
- Work with Divisional REF Project Managers and UOA Coordinators to prepare the overall submission, and offer policy advice and guidance in matters relating to the REF.
- Collect data from sources across the collegiate University relating to staff, doctoral degrees awarded, and research income, and issue them to Divisional REF Project Managers in a format consistent with that expected by the Funding Bodies.
- Act as first contact point between the University and the Funding Bodies on matters relating to the REF.

- Have responsibility for the testing and implementation of the REF data collection system, and offer guidance and advice on its usage across the University once issued by the Funding Bodies.
- Work with the Equality and Diversity Unit to ensure the University develops, adopts and documents an appropriate Code of Practice, which attends to all relevant equal opportunities legislation in force on the REF census date of 31 July 2020.
- Ensure that the REF submission is coordinated and submitted for the University on a timely basis.

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Arija Crux (REF Administrative and Digital Content Officer)	arija.crux@admin.ox.ac.uk
General enquiries	refinfo@admin.ox.ac.uk

Divisional REF Project Managers

38. Each Division has identified a REF Project Manager who is responsible for co-ordinating the exercise within each Division in its capacity as convenor of a Main Panel for the University. They will work closely with UOA Coordinators and the REF team in Research Services (see above), and ensure the Main Panel Board (or any body established by it for matters relating to the REF) is aware of progress, and the timetable for preparation. The Divisional REF Project Managers will be responsible for ensuring that submissions to the relevant Main Panels via the Research Services REF team are coordinated and returned on a timely basis.

Division taking responsibility for submission in:	Divisional REF Project Manager	Email
Main Panel A (Medical Sciences Division)	Michele Warren	michele.warren@medsci.ox.ac.uk
Main Panel B (Mathematical, Physical & Life Sciences Division)	Rosie Collins	ref@mpls.ox.ac.uk
Main Panel C (Social Sciences Division)	Tim Davies	tim.davies@socsci.ox.ac.uk
Main Panel D (Humanities Division)	Becky Lumbard	ref@humanities.ox.ac.uk

vi. Timetable and Process

REF preparations during 2019

39. The University will conduct a dry run of the REF during 2019. The dry run is a REF-readiness exercise and gives the University an opportunity to address any issues arising from the dry run which might impact on its ability to manage the REF process in accordance with the Code. The dry run will be carried out following the principles of transparency, accountability, consistency and inclusivity as described in Part 1 subsection iv of the Code. For the avoidance of doubt, the dry run will not be making decisions (e.g. relating to staff eligibility or output selection) with respect to the final REF submission. The dry run will take part in three phases, as follows:

- Spring 2019: Staff eligibility review
- Summer 2019: Selection of outputs
- Autumn 2019: Impact case studies and Environment statements.

40. The staff eligibility review part of the dry run will be used to make initial indications of which staff are likely to be eligible for inclusion in the REF. The dry run results will be considered by the Main Panel Boards or their nominated bodies, and then the REF Project Board, based on staff data available as at the end of March 2019 payroll. The staff eligibility dry run results will be submitted by Divisional REF Project Managers to the Research Services REF team in June 2019. The results will be considered by REF Project Board.

41. The output selection part of the dry run will be used to make initial indications of the possible quality profile of Outputs in a UOA, and to ensure that records are up to date and Open Access compliance of outputs is assessed. The results of the output dry run will be submitted by Divisional REF Project Managers to the Research Services REF team in September 2019. The results will be considered by REF Project Board.

42. Following the dry run, an interim EIA will be carried out as further described in Part 5 subsection iii of the Code.

REF preparations during 2020

43. During 2020, Main Panel Boards or their nominated bodies will continue to refine the staff submission, dealing with staff arrivals and departures and changes in circumstances. UOA Coordinators will review, revise and update the output returns prepared for the dry run as necessary.

44. Staff members will be informed whether or not they are eligible to be included in the University's return by the end of February 2020. In a small number of cases it is possible that there will be reasons why a decision on final status will not have been determined the end of February 2020. In such cases individuals will be advised of this by letter or email by this date

and kept informed of the process leading to a final decision, which will be advised to them as soon possible afterwards. Staff may contact the relevant Divisional REF Project Manager with queries relating to their REF inclusion status at any time after 1 March 2020. Information on staff members submitted to REF will not be disseminated within Departments or Colleges.

Part 2: Staff eligibility policies

i. Staff who are eligible for submission to REF 2021

45. The REF Funding Bodies have made it clear in their guidance that only two contract types are eligible for REF submission, defined as contract types where the primary employment function is 'teaching and research' and 'research-only'. Owing to the collegiate University's unique structure, there are staff in colleges, gardens, libraries and museums whose primary employment function meets that definition without currently being logged under the HESA codes which the Funding Bodies refer to. In line with the REF 2021 guidance from the Funding Bodies, **all staff** (a) with significant responsibility for research, and (b) who meet the other REF eligibility criteria as further described in this section, and (c) whose primary employment function as recorded within the HESA staff return is to undertake either 'teaching and research' or 'research-only' - or who as mentioned above are not included in the HESA return but have equivalent contractual status and meet the criteria for eligibility set out in the Code, and (d) who are employed within the collegiate University on the census date of 31st July 2020, **will be included in the University's submission to REF 2021**. The policy of staff eligibility decision-making will be consistent across the collegiate University and will enable identification of all eligible staff.

46. The totality of staff to be submitted will be determined through the application of the Funding Bodies' criteria, using the decision-making process described below and appended at Appendix D. It is acknowledged that in many cases, it will be clear where academic staff meet the eligibility criteria. Where there is a lack of clarity on staff meeting the criteria, eligibility will be determined by establishing how the relevant staff meet required indicators, described below and in Appendix E. These indicators have been developed based principally on the Funding Bodies' guidance, contextualised in some instances for the collegiate University.

47. To support academic freedom, interdisciplinary research, and to uphold equality and diversity, only after an eligibility decision has been made will that staff member be attributed

to the most appropriate UOA, or consideration be made of the exceptional circumstance for the reduction of the number of required outputs to zero (see Part 5, subsection vii below).

48. All staff were given the opportunity (as further described in Part 6 of the Code) to comment on the indicators to be used for identifying eligible staff, and feedback has been taken into account in subsections Part 2 subsections iii-v.

ii. Summary of the Funding Bodies' published guidance for REF 2021⁸

49. To be eligible to be submitted for REF, research-active staff need to be:

- academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2FTE or greater; and
- on the payroll of the submitting institution on 31st July 2020; and
- with a primary employment function to undertake either 'research-only' or 'teaching and research'⁹; who have a substantive connection to the submitting institution (as further defined in subsection iii below); and
- for staff on 'research-only' contracts, those who are independent researchers (as further defined in subsection iv below), or
- for staff on 'teaching and research' contracts, those who have significant responsibility for research (as further defined in subsection v below).

50. In order to satisfy the Funding Bodies' requirements to assess a fully representative research profile of HEIs, a **substantive connection** to the submitting institution must be evidenced for all submitted staff. For staff on a contract of between 0.2 and 0.29 FTE, HEIs are required to submit a statement to the Funding Bodies describing that staff member's connection to the HEI as evidence of their eligibility. Indicators evidencing a substantive connection are described in subsection iii below.

51. For the purposes of REF, the Funding Bodies define an **independent researcher** as "*an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme*". A researcher is not deemed to have undertaken independent research purely on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs. Research assistants/associates are defined as academic staff whose primary employment function is 'research-only', and they are employed to carry out another individual's research programme rather than as independent researchers in their own right. They are usually funded from research grants or contracts from Research Councils, charities, the European Union (EU) or other overseas sources, industry, or other commercial enterprises, but they may also be funded from the institution's own funds. Research assistants are not eligible to be returned to the REF unless, exceptionally, they meet the definition of an independent researcher. Indicators evidencing independent research are described in subsection iv below.

⁸ <https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/key-documents/>

⁹ as defined by contract types 2 and 3 in the submission to the Higher Education Statistics Agency Staff Collection

52. The definition of **staff with significant responsibility for research** is those for whom explicit time and resources are made available to engage actively in independent research, and for whom that is made clear through auditable documentation such as their contract, job description or workload model. Indicators evidencing significant responsibility for research are described in subsection v below.

iii. Substantive connection with the University of Oxford

53. To be eligible for submission, the University must be able to evidence a clear connection of the staff member with the collegiate University.

54. Indicators of a substantive connection to the collegiate University which will be used according to the flow chart in Appendix E are:

- Having a contractual connection with the collegiate University to undertake research of at least a year's duration.

(The **above** indicator **must** be demonstrable on the census date of 31st July 2020, and **at least one** of the following indicators **must** be demonstrable during the REF 2021 assessment period, 2014-2020.)

- Formal links to externally funded research projects within the collegiate University, such as acting as Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator.
- Primary or lead supervisor of a (i) postgraduate research student (e.g. DPhil, MPhil) within a degree-awarding unit, or (ii) postdoctoral research assistant/associate employed by the collegiate University.
- A regular (day-to-day) working connection with the collegiate University, with allocated duties (e.g. teaching, knowledge exchange, research, administrative or governance responsibilities).

iv. Independent research

55. To be eligible for submission, the University must be able to evidence research independence for staff members within the collegiate University who are on 'research-only' contracts.

56. The University's indicators for meeting the criteria of research independence are (**at least one** of the following indicators **must** be demonstrable during the REF 2021 assessment period, 2014-2020):

- Awarded title of University Research Lecturer or Associate Professor, or of equivalent or more senior status.
- Evidence of holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement. An illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of

qualifying fellowships where independence is a requirement has been provided by the Funding Bodies.^{10, 11}

- Evidence of leading, or acting as the Principal Investigator or equivalent, on an externally funded research project.
- Evidence of significant, self-directed, research responsibilities on an externally funded research project (e.g. leading a discrete work package on a large programme, equivalent to Principal Investigator responsibilities on a smaller grant)
- Evidence of leading a research group or a substantial or specialist work package.

Their application is further described in the flow chart given in Appendix E.

v. Significant responsibility for research

57. To be eligible for submission, the University must be able to evidence that for staff members within the collegiate University who are on 'teaching and research' contracts, they have significant responsibility for research.

58. The University's indicators for meeting the criteria of significant responsibility for research are:

- Contract provides evidence of remuneration with dedicated time for research activity beyond term time/teaching hours.
- Job description and contract includes evidence of the expectation that the individual will conduct independent original research.

(The **two indicators** above **must** be demonstrable on the census date of 31st July 2020, and **at least one** of the following indicators **must** be demonstrable during the REF 2021 assessment period, 2014-2020.)

- Track record of active engagement in independent research (see the indicators in 'Independent research' – subsection iii above).
- Evidence in periodic appraisals, or via formal mentoring, that there is a reasonable and regular expectation of leading research and independent research activity, demonstrably resulting in publications or equivalent output.
- Evidence of eligibility to apply for external research project funding as the Principal Investigator.

Their application is further described in the flow chart given in Appendix E.

¹⁰ <https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/additional-guidance/>

¹¹ Oxford Colleges and Museums offer a number of qualifying fellowships; for fellowships which support the transition to independence, Main Panel Boards would consider the independent nature of the application or research proposal, and would expect such fellowships to require the fellow to hold a DPhil or equivalent.

Part 3: Staff eligibility decision-making process

i. Roles and responsibilities in identification process

59. The REF Project Board has approved the following identification and decision-making process for staff eligibility, which can be seen in a diagram at Appendix D and is described further below.

Nomination phase

60. **Research Services REF team** will work with Divisional REF Project Managers to prepare guidance on implementing the process for eligibility review described in the Code, and then issue that along with spreadsheets downloaded from the University's HR system, CoreHR, to Divisional REF Project Managers for distribution to University Departments (further described below). Research Services will also issue guidance on implementing the process for eligibility review described in the Code, payroll checking and evidence gathering to Colleges; and review eligibility recommendations from Colleges and Gardens, Library and Museums (GLAM) for completeness prior to submitting the recommendations to the Central Contracts Review Group.

61. **Divisional REF Project Managers** will work with Research Services to implement the process for eligibility review in line with the Code, and then distribute spreadsheets from the University's HR system, CoreHR, to Departments. Divisional REF Project Managers will review eligibility recommendations from Departments for completeness, returning any queries to Heads of Departments, prior to submitting the recommendations to the applicable Main Panel Board.

62. **Departments** (including the Department for Continuing Education (**ContEd**)): Eligibility for REF is primarily determined through contract and is therefore a personnel issue, so initial consideration of REF eligibility for staff in University Departments will rest with the Head of Department or their nominee (supported in particular by the Head of Administration and Finance or their nominee). Departments will review spreadsheets from the University's HR system, CoreHR, sent to them by the Divisional REF Project Managers. Departments will return to the Divisional REF Project Managers a spreadsheet listing their recommendations of REF eligible staff, that identifies how eligibility was determined, including Y/N answers and the exit point on the flowchart (see Appendix E) where eligibility or ineligibility was determined. Departments will include for each member of eligible staff a proposed Main Panel (A-D) allocation. Departments will flag complex or unclear eligibility cases to Divisional REF Project Managers and secure the relevant evidence. Departments are responsible for

ensuring no-one potentially eligible within their remit is omitted from consideration under the Code.

63. **Gardens, Library & Museums (GLAM)** will review their CoreHR records to identify potentially eligible research-active staff according to the Code and using guidance issued by the Research Services REF team. GLAM will provide evidence to help support eligibility considerations, and propose a Main Panel allocation. GLAM will provide Research Services with a spreadsheet that lists recommendations of REF eligible staff, that identifies how eligibility was determined, including Y/N answers and the exit point on the flowchart (see Appendix E) where eligibility or ineligibility is recommended; copies of suitably redacted (to remove information which does not need to be seen by the Central Contract Review Group) employment contracts for relevant staff; and evidence of how staff meet indicators of eligibility. GLAM will include for each member of eligible staff a proposed Main Panel (A-D) allocation. GLAM is responsible for ensuring no-one potentially eligible within their remit is omitted from consideration under the Code.

64. **Colleges** will review their payroll and employment records to identify potentially eligible research-active staff according to the Code and using guidance issued by Research Services REF team. Colleges will collect evidence from their college-based researchers to help support eligibility considerations, and ask the researchers to nominate a proposed Main Panel allocation. Colleges will provide Research Services with recommendations of REF eligible staff; copies of suitably redacted (to remove information which does not need to be seen by the Central Contract Review Group) employment contracts for relevant staff; and evidence of how staff meet indicators of eligibility. Colleges will include for each member of eligible staff a proposed Main Panel (A-D) allocation. Colleges are responsible for ensuring no-one potentially eligible within their remit is omitted from consideration under the Code.

Checking phase

65. **Central Contract Review Group** will review College-only staff contracts and map them onto equivalent HESA codes (research-only, or teaching and research, etc.), endorse eligibility recommendations from GLAM and, where applicable, map them onto the relevant HESA codes, to be sent to the Divisional REF Project Managers.

66. **Divisional REF Project Managers** will review eligibility recommendations from Departments and the Central Contracts Review Group for completeness, returning any queries to those groups, prior to submitting the recommendations to the applicable Main Panel Board.

Decision phase

67. **Main Panel Boards** are responsible for making final eligibility decisions for staff in the REF Main Panel for which they have responsibility. This will ensure consistency of decision-making, ratifying recommendations in simple cases, and reviewing complex or unclear cases. Following eligibility decisions, Main Panel Boards will make decisions on UOA allocation, following discussions with UOA Coordinators where required and working with other Main Panel Boards to cross-refer UOA allocation decisions as necessary. For all cases, complex or clear, Main Panel Boards will be responsible for keeping evidence of how eligibility decisions have been reached. Main Panel Boards are responsible for ensuring no-one who is potentially eligible is omitted from consideration under the Code. Any cases of staff eligibility or UOA allocation where a decision cannot be reached by Main Panel Boards should be referred to REF Project Board.

68. **REF Project Board** will make final decisions on allocation of eligible staff to a UOA in the event that Main Panel Boards are unable to do so.

69. **Research Services REF team** will work with Personnel Services to have eligibility decisions recorded on the University's HR self-service module with CoreHR (for ease of reference by individual members of University staff), and also return final REF eligibility decisions in writing to Colleges, to allow for any individual staff appeals to be made to the REF Eligibility Appeals Committee. Appeals and the appeals procedure must conform to those described in the Code in subsection ii below.

ii. Appeals

70. Staff members have the right to appeal the decision on an individual's eligibility to be submitted under the criteria of the University's policy (and in line with the Funding Bodies' guidance) as outlined above in Part 2. Appeals will only be considered in respect of eligibility decisions only. For example, appeals will not be accepted for:

- The peer review of the quality of the individual's outputs.
- Which outputs have been allocated to a staff member.
- The number of outputs submitted connected with a staff member.
- The allocation of co-authored outputs.
- Which UOA an individual will be returned in.
- A desire to 'opt out' of the University's submission.

All of the above are irrelevant to consideration of eligibility.

Process for appeals on decisions on staff eligibility

71. If individuals believe that they meet the tests for eligibility and significant responsibility for research, but their potential inclusion in the REF submission has not been given appropriate consideration by the relevant Main Panel Board, they may appeal within one month of receiving confirmation of the decision. Individuals should lodge the request for consideration of an appeal by informing the REF Programme Manager in writing, at refinfo@admin.ox.ac.uk.

72. Requests for consideration of an appeal will be referred to the REF Eligibility Appeals Committee. The REF Eligibility Appeals Committee will request written feedback from the relevant Main Panel Board in respect of the affected individual on how the Main Panel Board reached its decision on eligibility. This feedback will then be sent to the affected individual, and if the affected individual wishes to proceed with having their appeal considered by the REF Eligibility Appeals Committee, they must notify the REF Programme Manager within two weeks of receiving the written feedback. The REF Programme Manager will then refer the case to the REF Eligibility Appeals Committee to be heard. The REF Eligibility Appeals Committee will meet in May, July and September 2020, and on other occasions as the Committee sees fit and as may be necessary to hear appeals cases. The Terms of Reference for the REF Eligibility Appeals Committee are attached at Appendix J.

[iii. Development of the decision-making process](#)

73. The Code and the policies and processes described therein have been developed by the REF Project Board following consultation across the collegiate University as described in Part 1 of the Code. The Code continues to be subject to consultation across the collegiate University, including with staff from protected groups, equality consultative groups, trade union representatives, the Conference of Colleges and Divisional Boards.

[iv. Membership and terms of reference of decision-making groups](#)

Decision-making groups

74. Membership and Terms of Reference of Main Panel Boards are set out in Appendix B.

Part 4: Decision-making process: selection of outputs

i. Policies and procedures

75. The REF 2021 submission is an institutional return intended to optimise the reputational and financial position of the University of Oxford. Decisions on the composition of the submission will be taken with these aims in mind.

76. The submission to REF 2021 will be guided by the first commitment in relation to research in the University's Strategic Plan, which is to promote and enable ambitious research of exceptional quality¹². The University considers that its submission to REF is not a performance management exercise, but a review of the quality profile of research in submitting units.

Funding Bodies' Output selection criteria

77. All staff who are eligible to be submitted to the REF must have at least one research output attributed to them, and no more than five, submitted within the relevant UOA, unless exceptional individual circumstances apply. Unless a reduction for staff circumstances has been applied for as described in Part 5, each UOA must submit 2.5 outputs per the total submitted FTE (rounded to the nearest whole number) employed and eligible on the census date of 31st July 2020.

Principles for output selection in REF 2021

78. As set out in Part 1 of the Code, output selection should be managed in accordance with the principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity. All staff were given the opportunity (as further described in Part 6 of the Code) to comment on specific principles governing the selection of outputs, and feedback has been taken into account in the principles set out below.

79. **A.** Guided by the University's policy that the REF 2021 submission is an institutional return, intended to optimise the reputational and financial position of the University of Oxford, the selection of outputs will be determined by:

- Output eligibility;
- Research quality, defined as originality, significance and rigour.

80. **B.** It is the University's policy that determination of the quality of research outputs for selection for submission should be an academic-led exercise of peer review specific to each

¹² <http://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/strategic-plan-2018-23/>

discipline, and therefore will be led by the academic UoA Coordinator for each sub-panel submission. Each UoA Coordinator will develop a process based on the following guidelines:

- Selection decisions should be based on peer review conducted by subject matter experts, broadly conceived; the process should include an appropriate moderation eg review of each nominated output by two reviews, or a systematic process of review moderation;
- External peer review could be undertaken where necessary;
- Interdisciplinary research and non-traditional outputs should not be disadvantaged.

Where they are used, research metrics should be used responsibly, and in accordance with the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), <https://sfdora.org/> to which the University is a signatory.

81. C. Eligible staff will be asked to participate in the output selection process by nominating outputs for consideration. Noting that the submission is a University submission and not an individual submission, the final decision for output selection rests with the UOA Coordinator. The UOA Coordinator has the right to attribute outputs to a staff member outputs they have not themselves nominated. When staff members are asked to nominate outputs, this request will reflect the guidance on staff circumstances i.e. they will be asked to nominate at least one output, although they may choose to nominate more (for example, up to 5 depending on disciplinary norms), or inform the UOA Coordinator that they wish to be directed to the central confidential disclosure process for staff circumstances. Staff will be referred to routes for the declaration of circumstances as described in Part 5 of the Code.

82. D. Output selection will follow the University's strategy of ensuring the highest-quality possible submission in accordance with the Funding Bodies' guidelines. For each eligible member of staff, their highest quality eligible output will be selected (since each member of staff must be submitted with a minimum of one output), and then the highest-quality outputs will be selected from the remaining output pool for the UOA, following the maximum attribution rules from the Funding Bodies. Where co-authored outputs may be attributed to more than one member of staff, the attribution will be made to optimise the quality profile of the submission.

83. E. In order to allow the best possible representation of the research, the outputs of former staff eligible to submission to REF 2021 will be considered for inclusion only where the UOA Coordinator believes that they will make a substantial contribution to the quality profile of the submission. Such consideration will only be made by the UOA Coordinator following the staff dry run, and UOA Coordinators may opt to work with an advisory group to manage the review of those outputs: they will not contact former staff to make a request for outputs.

84. F. There are a number of reasons why staff members may have a larger or smaller number of outputs attributed to them, for example as a result of their own circumstances or to a

number of other factors beyond the staff member's control, including the average FTE of the unit, and circumstances of other staff. The number of outputs attributed to each staff member will not be used in performance management, appraisal or promotion criteria, nor taken into consideration in the recruitment of new staff following submission.

85. **G.** The attribution of outputs to staff members will not normally be routinely communicated to staff, although individual staff will be able to request information on their output attribution after the University's final submission to REF 2021 has been made.

86. **H.** Outputs will only be included where they meet the REF Funding Bodies' open access requirements or have a confirmed exemption as indicated in that policy. The guidance from the REF Funding Bodies provides a 5% tolerance on compliance with the open access policy, or holding a valid exemption, for in-scope outputs. Due to the challenges of assessing the validity of exemptions, this tolerance is reserved for circumstances where the University believes that the output does meet the open access policy (or have a valid exemption) but this is subsequently not accepted by the Funding Bodies at audit stage.

87. **I.** To allow upload into the submission system, all selected outputs must have a record on the University's research information management system, Symplectic Elements. To allow records to be kept on output selection processes, the Symplectic Elements Assessment Module will be used to record the outcomes of UOA's internal review exercises. These outcomes will not be used or kept by UOA Coordinators following submission: Research Services will keep a record for audit purposes but all other data will be removed and disposed of so that it remains confidential and cannot be used in performance management.

ii. Membership and Terms of Reference of decision-making groups

88. Output selection is the responsibility of the UOA Coordinator (see Part 1). Where the UOA Coordinator may convene an output selection advisory group; model, terms of reference are given in Appendix F. These groups will be convened during the second half of 2019; once convened, terms of reference and membership will be made available from the University's REF webpage.

Part 5: Equality, diversity and inclusivity

i. Promoting and Supporting Equality and Diversity, and Inclusivity

89. The University is committed to running a fair and transparent process in making its submission to REF2021. The Code sets out the University's approach to identifying eligible staff and the selection of outputs, adopting a fair, evidence-based, and transparent process in accordance with the Funding Bodies' requirements. The University commits to submitting all eligible staff who have a significant responsibility for research, as described in Part 2 of the Code, and that the process is undertaken in such a way as to promote equality, avoid discrimination and comply with legislation.

90. The Code should be read in conjunction with the University's Equality Policy¹³. Under this policy, the University seeks to "embed equality in all its activities". The University's Equality Impact Assessment completed immediately following REF 2014 made a number of recommendations to address under-representation, and the relevant extract can be viewed in Appendix G to this Code of Practice. Appendix H contains an extract from University's Annual Equality Report (from 2016-2017) showing equality objectives and progress against the objectives¹⁴.

91. The REF 2021 submission from the University will be an institutional submission from the wider collegiate and departmental university, consistent with the submissions to REF 2014 and RAE 2008. Due to its historic and unique structure, there are significant numbers of college staff with significant responsibility for research who are not included in the University's HESA staff return. Furthermore, the University also has staff with responsibility for research who work at its gardens, libraries and museums but who may not be returned to HESA historically with codes that make this role explicit. The Code sets out the processes by which the University will ensure that all staff within the collegiate University who are eligible for submission (including those who may not be included in relevant sections of its HESA staff return) are identified and included in the University's REF 2021 submission.

92. The REF is not a performance management exercise and staff eligibility has no link to individual career development within the collegiate University; however, the University recognises that submission in REF 2021 has the potential to be consequential in the future careers of these staff at other institutions, and has therefore has developed the Code to ensure equitable treatment for staff not employed by academic departments. Ensuring that the widest possible pool of potentially eligible staff is considered for submission is also

¹³ <https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/policy/equality-policy/>

¹⁴ <https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/policy/data/report/#d.en.164845>

consistent with the University's policy to embed equality in all its activities, and to ensure the most inclusive approach possible.

93. In line with the REF 2021 principles, all staff with significant responsibility for research who meet the other REF eligibility criteria, whose primary employment function as recorded within the HESA staff return is to undertake either 'teaching and research' or 'research-only' or who are not included in the HESA return but have equivalent or sufficiently comparable contractual status, on the census date will be submitted. The policy of staff eligibility review is consistent across the collegiate University and will enable identification of all eligible staff on an equitable basis.

94. The University acknowledges the very significant contribution made by a wide range of researchers on externally funded contracts, and those who work part-time, to the research undertaken in the University. Staff on fixed-term and part-time contracts, including contract research staff, will be considered for inclusion in the REF 2021 in accordance with the University's eligibility policy. Details of support for staff can be found in the Code of Practice on the Employment and Career Development of Research Staff which aims to ensure the University provides a supportive environment for research and research careers.

95. Contextual information on academic careers at the University of Oxford will be available in its Institutional Environment Statement, but an example from the latest institutional Athena Swan award application is given in Appendix I.

ii. Training and guidance

96. The University is committed to running an unimpeachable process for REF 2021 with fairness and transparency at the core of decision-making. Staff who are in decision-making roles will receive tailored guidance and training on equality and diversity principles and how these relate to the assessment of eligibility of staff for submission to the REF, and will be asked to commit to adhering to running a fair and transparent process.

97. The objectives of the guidance and training are to ensure that staff have:

- A clear awareness of the legislative context and Funding Councils' guidance;
- An understanding of relevant University policies for equality and diversity and the REF; and
- Confidence in their ability to make fair and transparent decisions and know where to seek additional support and advice as necessary.

Training materials will be made available via the Research Services REF website for all staff to access.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) training

98. The following groups of people will have a formalised role in decision-making and reviewing nominations for REF eligibility and output selection, and therefore are obliged to receive EDI training:

- Main Panel Board members
- Unit of Assessment Coordinators
- REF Project Board members
- Central Contract Review Group members
- REF Operations Group members
- REF Appeals Committee [to be convened] members
- REF Equality Committee [to be convened] members

These groups of people are termed Participants.

Content and delivery

99. Two strands will be used to deliver the content of the training:

- Participants will be required to complete the University's online training in relation to (a) Equality & Diversity and (b) Unconscious Bias. The Research Services REF team will send information on how to access the modules to all Participants. The training modules require an 80% pass mark, and once passed, a certificate of completion will be downloaded by each Participant and returned electronically to refinfo@admin.ox.ac.uk. Research Services' REF team will store copies securely on the REF Project Board SharePoint site for audit purposes.
- All Participants will be required to attend one in-person training session on Equality and Diversity for REF 2021. These will be delivered by Kirsty Allen (REF Programme Manager) or her nominee. These sessions will cover the specific REF 2021 context, including working through processes and points for discussion to help illustrate consideration of EDI within the REF context. Training will outline how the REF Equality Committee will be convened and what it will do. Participants in these sessions will be asked to sign a register to confirm attendance. The Research Services REF team will store copies of these registers securely on the REF Project Board SharePoint, along with a copy of the slides presented, for audit purposes.

iii. Equality Impact Assessments

100. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) will be undertaken at key stages in the REF process, led by the University's Equality and Diversity Unit (EDU). The findings of the EIAs will be used to determine if revisions are needed to the Code and before final decisions of on staff eligibility are made. The processes for the EIAs will be developed in consultation with representative staff groups.

101. The University has taken the decision to conduct its first REF EIA following the dry run exercises for staff eligibility review and output selection in the first half of 2019, which is the first opportunity to gather the necessary data across the collegiate University in a transparent, consistent and inclusive process following publication of the Funding Bodies' guidance on 31st January 2019.

Interim EIAs

101. The dry run exercise for staff eligibility review and output selection will respectively conclude with an interim EIA.

102. The interim EIA for decision-making on **staff eligibility** will analyse the results of the dry run against records of protected characteristics in so far as information about protected characteristics has been volunteered by staff during recruitment processes. The outcomes of this EIA will be reported to the REF Project Board and used to ensure that any necessary changes to prevent discrimination or promote equality are made before the final REF submission deadline. Any changes will be reflected in a revised Code and clearly communicated to all staff.

103. The interim EIA for **output selection** will analyse the results of the dry run for differences in distribution of outputs across UOAs as a function of declared protected characteristics, to the extent that relevant data is available. Qualitative information on output selection decision-making at the UOA level will also be gathered through consultation with a small sample of staff. The outcomes of this EIA will be reported to the REF Project Board and used to ensure that any necessary changes to prevent discrimination or promote equality are made before the final REF submission deadline. Any changes will be reflected in a revised Code and clearly communicated to all research staff. Differences in the distribution of outputs that are not the result of inequality in the output selection process will be considered further in the full EIA conducted after the submission to the Funding Bodies in 2020. Consideration of the distribution of outputs will take into account the following categories:

- The balance of outputs between current and former staff.
- Whether any outputs have been included for staff made redundant.
- The attribution of outputs in comparison with protected characteristics of staff.

- Whether the distribution of outputs has been done in accordance with the principles of DORA, to which the University is a signatory.

104. Any recommendations arising from the interim EIAs will be reviewed by REF Project Board on a regular basis to ensure that proposals are implemented on an ongoing basis.

Full EIA

105. After the University's final submission in November 2020, a full EIA will analyse the final submission for differences in eligibility and distribution of selected outputs across UOAs as a function of protected characteristics, to the extent that the relevant data is available. Should the full EIA identify areas of inequality/inequity, then University policy will be revised to ensure that all staff have an equitable opportunity to progress in their research careers, and inequality can be addressed where possible in future exercises that assess research excellence.

iv. Disclosure of circumstances

106. Guidance has been produced on how the Funding Bodies will deal with individual circumstances that have constrained that individual's ability to produce one output or to work productively throughout the assessment period¹⁵. Special consideration affects only the decision on the quantity of outputs submitted. This section describes how staff may indicate that they qualify for such consideration, while maintaining confidentiality.

107. Staff may be returned without the minimum of one output in the assessment, or may generate a potential reduction in the required number of outputs for their unit, if one or more clearly defined or complex circumstances significantly constrained their ability to produce outputs or to work productively throughout the period 1st Jan 2014- 31st July 2020:

108. **Clearly defined circumstances** are:

- Qualifying as an early career researcher (eligible staff member who started their careers as an independent researchers on or after 1 August 2016).
- Absence from work due to working part-time, secondments or career break(s).
- Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave, defined as statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave taken substantially during the period, regardless of the length of the leave or additional paternity or adoption leave, or shared parental leave lasting for four months or more, taken substantially during the period.

¹⁵ Add link once published

- Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6: junior clinical academics who are employed primarily as clinical, health or veterinary professionals.

109. **Complex circumstances** require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, and may include:

- Long term medical conditions.
- Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of the allowances made under clearly defined circumstances.
- Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member, or a family member overseas).
- Gender reassignment.
- Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation; or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

110. Requests to be submitted without the minimum of one output may be made for an individual researcher 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:

- An overall period of 46 months or more absence from research, due to one or more of the clearly defined circumstances listed above (such as an early career researcher who has only been employed as an eligible staff member for part of the assessment period);
- Circumstances equivalent to 46 months' or more absence from research, where complex circumstances apply; or
- Two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave.

111. Where the period of absence (or circumstances equivalent to this) does not equal 46 months or more, but the individual's circumstances are deemed to have resulted in a similar impact, a request may still be made and information provided about the effect of the combined circumstances on the researcher's ability to produce an eligible output in the period.

112. Case study examples of complex circumstances are available from Advance Health¹⁶.

¹⁶ Insert reference when published

v. Process for dealing with individual circumstances

113. During Trinity Term 2019, all eligible staff will be notified that they have the option to disclose any clearly defined or complex individual circumstances via a downloadable form available on the University's REF webpages or in hard copy if requested. The form must be returned to the REF Programme Manager at kirsty.allen@admin.ox.ac.uk. The forms will be password protected and stored in a folder with access restricted to the REF Programme Manager and a deputy within Research Services.

114. Part 1 of the form will invite staff to provide details of any clearly defined circumstances and part 2 will allow confidential disclosure of complex individual circumstances. Please see Appendix L for further details.

115. It is expected that all existing circumstances will be disclosed by staff as soon as possible, and not later than the 5 October 2019. For staff eligible and employed by the collegiate University whose eligible employment commenced before 2020, any circumstances that arise after this date may be disclosed up to the end of February 2020.

116. Eligible staff joining the collegiate University during 2020 and before 31st July 2020 will be notified that they have the option to disclose any circumstances and any deadlines for doing so within their induction process.

vii. Process for dealing with requests for submission of an eligible member of staff without the minimum of one output

117. Decision-making on submission of an eligible member of staff without the minimum of one output will be undertaken in confidence by the University's REF Equality Committee, chaired by the Advocate and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Equality & Diversity), as outlined in Appendix K. The REF Equality Committee will:

- Review cases where circumstances have affected productivity such that an individual has not produced any outputs in order to make a case to the Funding Bodies that the individual may be submitted with no outputs and ensuring that the relevant adjustment is made to the UOA; and
- Inform UOA Coordinators about staff who would be eligible for submission without the minimum of one output (without disclosing the nature of the circumstances).

118. Membership of this Committee will be proposed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and the Advocate and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Equality & Diversity), to ensure expertise on equality and personnel issues, REF guidance, and academic representation. The Terms of Reference for the REF Equality Committee are attached at Appendix K.

viii. Process for dealing with requests for reduction in required outputs at a UOA level

119. The Funding Bodies have made it clear that they do not expect unit reductions to be taken unless the number of outputs produced by a UOA during the REF period (between 2014 and 2020) has been disproportionately affected by staff circumstances. In accordance with the Funding Bodies' guidance, the University's policy is that it proposes to support its staff who have declared circumstances by distributing the outputs in each UOA submission through the flexibility inherent in the outputs per FTE allowance given by the Funding Bodies, rather than asking for a defined number for each staff member. The University acknowledges that the productivity of excellent researchers across all disciplines may be affected by individual circumstances, and that researchers should be appropriately supported to enable them to manage their careers. The REF Equality Committee will provide advice to UOA Coordinators to ensure that requests for outputs sent during the dry run and REF submission processes are mindful of the potential for circumstances, and do not expose researchers to undue pressure.

120. Whilst noting the University's policy to seek to support staff with individual circumstances through the existing flexibility inherent in an average number of required outputs (which is not a whole number, therefore everyone will be submitted with either less or more than the average), it is recognised that there may be rare occasions where a particularly large volume of staff circumstances has disproportionately affected the available output pool for the UOA. As per the guidance from the Funding Bodies, it is expected that this would only arise where there is a small number of outputs available per FTE, for example in relatively small UOAs or where the normal practice of the academic discipline is that production of outputs has a long lead time. In such a case, UOA Coordinators may make a case to the REF Equality Committee for consideration of a request to the Funding Bodies to apply reductions in the volume of required outputs for the UOA. The REF Equality Committee will:

- Take overall responsibility for the procedure for confidential declaration of any staff circumstances ("circumstances") for research staff who will be submitted to REF2021;
- Review multiple declared staff circumstances in a UOA to calculate any unit reductions which may accrue as a result of circumstances, in accordance with the Funding Bodies' guidance;
- Inform UOA Coordinators of the number of staff who have declared circumstances within their UOA;
- Consider cases made by UOA Coordinators that their UOA has been disproportionately affected by multiple circumstances (and so might apply to the Funding Bodies for unit reductions);
- Work with the UOA Coordinators on any case to be made to the Funding Bodies when applying for unit reductions.

121. The REF Equality Committee will report to Personnel Committee and Research & Innovation Committee anonymised outcomes of the circumstances declared, including any systematic concerns or failures that might suggest changes to staff or research policies may be required.

Part 6: Communications with Staff

i. Consultation with research staff

122. A University-wide consultation on the principles and indicators for staff eligibility and the principles for output selection informed the preparation of the Code.

123. The consultation was open for five weeks from October to November 2018 and was advertised via the following media:

- The University Gazette, the authorised journal of record for the University of Oxford. Adverts were placed in two separate issues.
- An all-staff email sent by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research.
- The Blueprint, the termly magazine for staff at the University of Oxford.
- The University's REF website.
- Email circulars to all staff involved in research support across the University via Research Services' email circulation lists, with a request to highlight the information to affected colleagues.
- The Research Services Twitter feed.
- An email to the Senior Tutors of all of the Colleges and Permanent Private Halls with a request to circulate the message to their staff.
- Posters put up in as many University Departments as responded to the request, and at events open to all administrative colleagues in the University, signposting where the survey could be found.
- In five REF Roadshows that were open for all staff to attend, and in a range of locations to facilitate access.

124. Staff were invited to give comments either through (a) an online survey or by (b) email to a secure address, and responses were kept anonymous. All responses were reviewed by the REF Project Board. The REF Project Board noted and discussed the comments to help guide the drafting of the Code.

ii. Ongoing communications with research staff

125. The current version of the Code will be available on the University's REF webpage from early 2019 onwards¹⁷. The presence of the Code will be disseminated to all staff, including those absent from the University, in 2019 (along with an offer to provide it in hard copy on

¹⁷ <https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/ref>

request for those who cannot access the internet) using standard divisional dissemination routes, and will give instructions on where any questions should be directed.

126. The Code will be submitted for review and approval to staff representative groups, via meetings involving members of the staff representative groups with the Research Services REF team and Personnel Services, where appropriate, where the Code will be sent in advance of the meeting and discussion of and feedback on the Code will be documented and referred to REF Project Board for consideration in preparing the version to be submitted.

127. The Code will also be sent to all of the relevant boards and committees in the University that have a stake in ensuring Oxford's submission is unimpeachable, and that have responsibility to represent the interests of research staff across the Collegiate University. These are: REF Project Board; Personnel Committee; all Divisional Boards; Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM) Board; Conference of Colleges; Research & Innovation Committee; and finally Council, which will approve the final version to be submitted to the Funding Bodies.

128. Members of committees with REF decision-making responsibilities, UOA Coordinators, Heads of Department, Heads of House, Senior Tutors, Directors of the Departments of Gardens, Library and Museums, and the Director of the Department for Continuing Education, will be issued with a copy of the Code once agreed, and informed of any subsequent amendments. The Code will also be available in accessible formats from the Equality and Diversity Unit.

Part 7: Appendices

Appendix A: Main Panels and Units of Assessment for REF2021

Main panel	Unit of assessment	
A	1	Clinical Medicine
	2	Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care
	3	Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy
	4	Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience
	5	Biological Sciences
	6	Agriculture, Food and Veterinary Sciences
B	7	Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences
	8	Chemistry
	9	Physics
	10	Mathematical Sciences
	11	Computer Science and Informatics
	12	Engineering
C	13	Architecture, Built Environment and Planning
	14	Geography and Environmental Studies
	15	Archaeology
	16	Economics and Econometrics
	17	Business and Management Studies
	18	Law
	19	Politics and International Studies
	20	Social Work and Social Policy
	21	Sociology
	22	Anthropology and Development Studies
	23	Education
	24	Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism
D	25	Area Studies
	26	Modern Languages and Linguistics
	27	English Language and Literature
	28	History
	29	Classics
	30	Philosophy
	31	Theology and Religious Studies
	32	Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory
	33	Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies
	34	Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management

Appendix B: Main Panel Board Terms of Reference and Membership

Terms of reference

The Main Panel Board is responsible for:

- Making decisions on staff eligibility within its Main Panel remit, through reviewing individual cases.
- Ensuring consistent decision making on eligibility throughout the Main Panel.
- Making discipline-specific judgements on the application of the university's indicators, such as the nature of qualifying independent fellowships.
- Making decisions on UOA allocations for eligible staff within its remit, in consultation with UOA Coordinators.
- Liaising with other Main Panel Boards to refer cases as necessary.
- Reporting challenges in fair decision-making within the system of indicators in the University's Code of Practice to REF Project Board, in conjunction with the REF Eligibility Appeals Committee.
- Reviewing distribution of outputs proposed for submission and ensuring principles of the Code of Practice are followed.

Meetings and record-keeping

Main Panel Boards will meet on the following occasions:

- During the University dry run (in 2019).
- At the conclusion of the dry run.
- After the EIA on the dry run, to reflect on its conclusions.
- Prior to the final staff identification.
- At the conclusion of the final staff identification.
- On other occasions as the group sees fit.

The group will document its approach to consistent decision-making through the keeping of minutes, and record the outcomes of eligibility decisions, and indicators met, for each staff member. Outcomes will be passed on to the Research Services REF team so staff eligibility data can be uploaded to the CoreHR system.

Main Panel A

Formation of the Board

REF Project Board has delegated responsibility for managing the submission for Main Panel A to the Medical Sciences Division. As such, Medical Sciences Divisional Board is responsible for appointing a Chair and members of the Main Panel Board which will take responsibility for Main Panel A for the University of Oxford for REF 2021.

The Chair is responsible for reporting the activity and minutes of the Main Panel A Board to the Medical Sciences Division and REF Project Board.

Membership

Chair:	Deputy Head of Division (Research)
Secretary:	Divisional REF Project Manager
Members:	Head of Division Deputy Head of Division (Personnel) Associate Head of Division (Development, Impact and Equality) Four Heads of Department for departments in which eligible staff are expected to be submitted primarily within UOAs within Main Panel A.

Main Panel B

Formation of the Board

REF Project Board has delegated responsibility for managing the submission for Main Panel B to the Mathematical Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS) Division. As such, the MPLS Divisional Board is responsible for appointing a Chair and members of the Main Panel Board which will take responsibility for Main Panel B for the University of Oxford for REF 2021.

The Chair is responsible for reporting the activity and minutes of the Main Panel B Board to the MPLS Division and REF Project Board.

Membership

Chair:	Panel B REF Academic Lead
Secretary:	Divisional REF Project Manager
Members:	Head of Division Associate Head (Research) Head of Strategic Planning Three additional senior academic members to ensure broad representation of the academic community

Main Panel C

Formation of the Board

REF Project Board has delegated responsibility for managing the submission for Main Panel C to the Social Science Division. As such, the Social Science Divisional Board is responsible for appointing a Chair and members of the Main Panel Board which will take responsibility for Main Panel C for the University of Oxford for REF 2021.

The Chair is responsible for reporting the activity and minutes of the Main Panel C Board to the Social Sciences Division, and REF Project Board.

Membership

Chair:	Head of Division
Secretary:	Divisional REF Project Manager
Members:	Associate Head of Research for Social Sciences Division REF Impact Academic Lead for Social Sciences Division Divisional Registrar A former Head of Department An additional senior academic member to ensure broad representation

Main Panel D

Formation of the Board

REF Project Board has delegated responsibility for managing the submission for Main Panel D to the Humanities Division. As such, the Humanities Divisional Board is responsible for appointing a Chair and members of the Main Panel Board which will take responsibility for Main Panel D for the University of Oxford for REF 2021.

The Chair is responsible for reporting the activity and minutes of the Main Panel D Board to the Humanities Division, and REF Project Board.

Membership

Chair:	Associate Head of Research
Secretary:	Divisional REF Project Manager
Members:	Associate Head of Education Divisional Registrar and Head of Humanities Administration A Faculty Board Chair representative A Research Director A College Senior Tutor Head of Humanities Research Support

Appendix C: Central Contracts Review Group Terms of Reference and Membership

Formation of the Group

The membership of the Central Contracts Review Group will be approved by REF Project Board, and should include senior academics supported by administrative officers with relevant experience in REF and/or staff contracts; each of the Divisions and Conference of Colleges will nominate an academic member.

The Central Contracts Review Group is responsible for:

- Reviewing the contracts of staff employed by Colleges (and not included in the University's HESA return) and classifying their contracts by academic employment function in line with the definitions in the HESA staff data return.
- Reviewing the contracts of staff employed in the Gardens, Library and Museums (GLAM) Division, where these are of mixed curatorial & academic function, classifying the contracts by academic employment function as per the definitions in the HESA staff data return, and where necessary, determining the appropriate FTE which should be attributed to the academic function.
- Completing the nomination for eligibility for the staff groups considered by the Central Contracts Review Group through application of the eligibility indicators for the determined contract type.
- Ensuring consistent decision making throughout the Collegiate University, by oversight of the classification by academic employment function throughout the Collegiate University.

Meetings and record keeping

Main panel review groups will meet on the following occasions:

- Prior to the university dry run, to confirm methods of working.
- At the conclusion of the dry run.
- After the EIA on the dry run, to reflect on its conclusions.
- Prior to the final staff identification.
- At the conclusion the final staff identification.
- On other occasions as the group sees fit.

The group will document its approach to consistent decision-making through the keeping of minutes, and record the outcomes of the contract review for each staff member considered. Outcomes will be passed on to the RS REF team and shared with GLAM Division or the Colleges as appropriate.

The Chair is responsible for reporting the activity and minutes of the Central Contracts Review Group to REF project board.

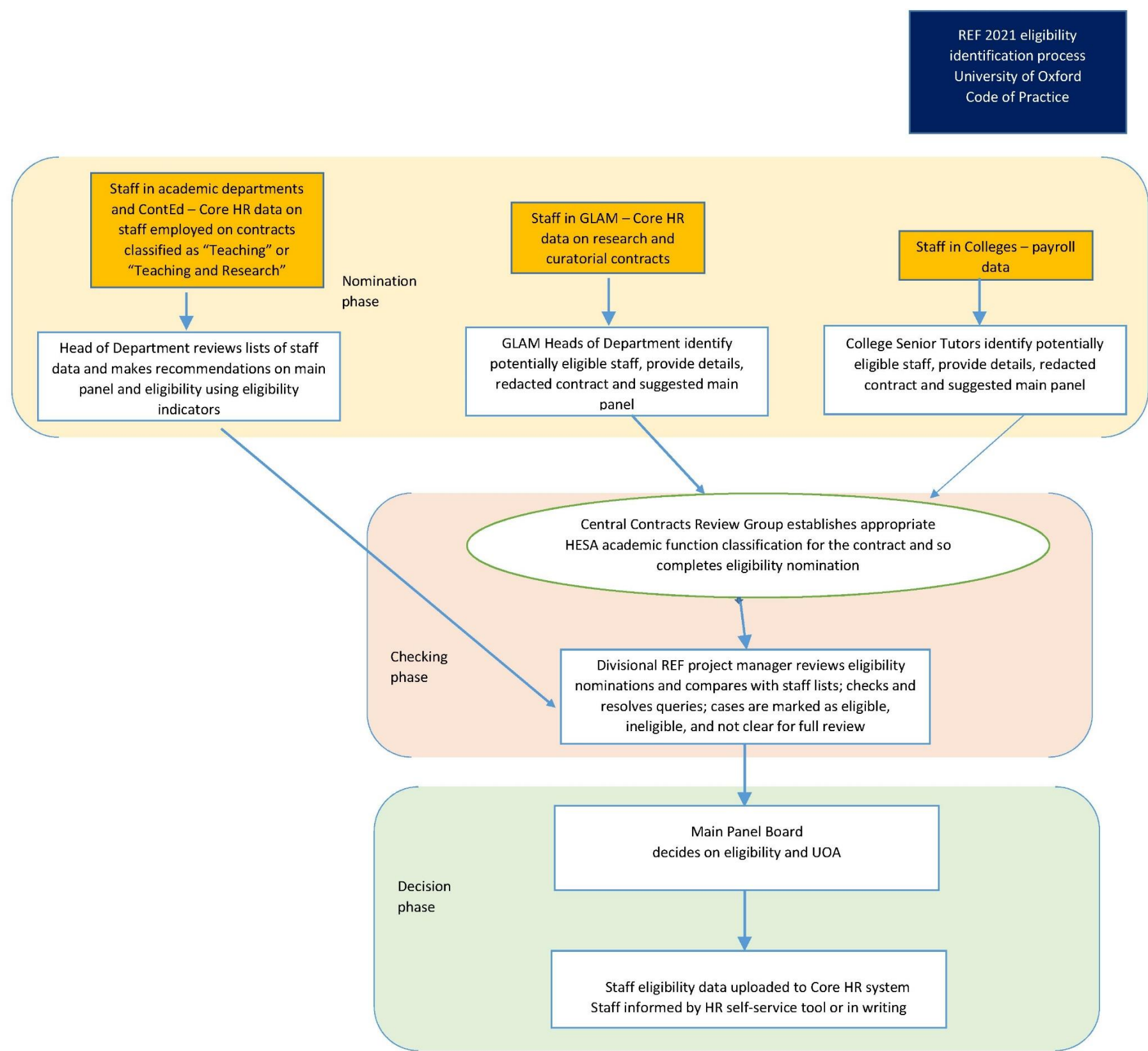
Membership [to be finalised following chair's input]

Chair: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)

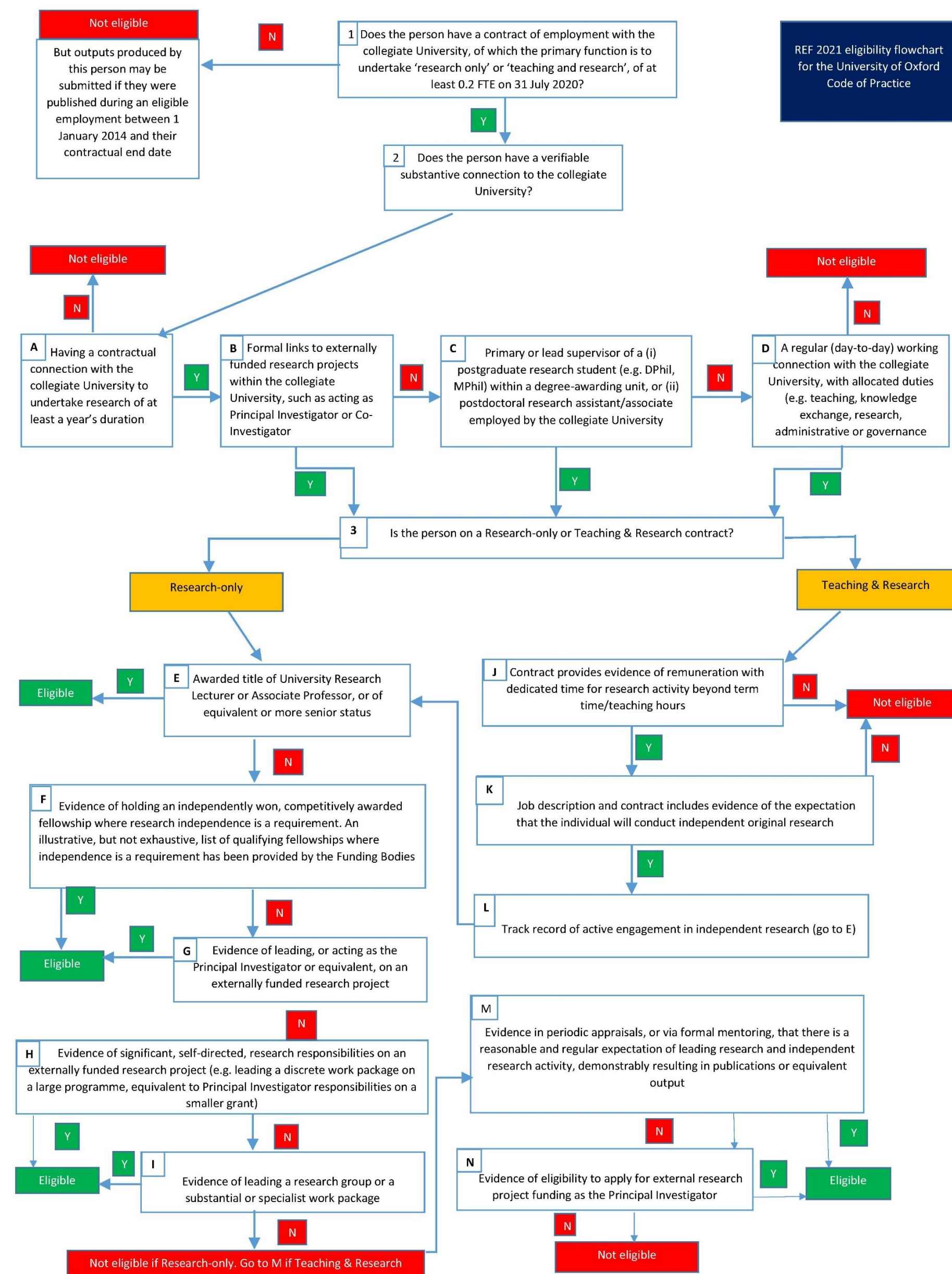
Secretary: Head of Research Evaluation and Impact and REF Programme Manager

Members: Humanities Division representative, current or former faculty Board Chair
Social Sciences Division nominee, current or former Head of Department
MPLS Nominee, a senior departmental administrator
MSD Nominee, current or former Head of Department
Conference of Colleges nominees, a Senior Tutor and a Head of House
Representative from HR Analytics team
Representative from HR policy team
Deputy REF Programme Manager

Appendix D: Staff eligibility decision-making process diagram



Appendix E: Staff eligibility indicators flow chart



Appendix F: UOA Output Selection Advisory Group

Formation of the Output Selection Advisory Group (“the Group”)

The UOA Coordinator, who is responsible for decision-making on output selection within their UOA, can appoint the Group to assist in development of strategy for output selection, and in the assessment of eligible outputs. The UOA Coordinator is responsible for making appointments to the Group, and should do so in consultation with the relevant Division and Heads of Departments for the university departments predominantly represented in the UOA. The members should be academic staff with experience of research assessment or peer review, and should be selected to reflect the disciplinary range and characteristics of the research staff within the UOA.

The Group will support the UOA coordinator in developing and documenting approaches to:

- Double-weighting of outputs.
- Use and selection of external reviewers.
- Review of interdisciplinary outputs.
- Moderating reviews, particularly where it is not possible for each output to be reviewed twice.
- Use of research metrics (consistent with the application of the principles of DORA), where beyond that specified by the relevant REF sub-panel.

The group may also assist the UOA coordinator the review process by:

- Allocating outputs to reviewers.
- Nominating the outputs of former staff.
- Checking for consistency of reviewing and moderating review scores.
- Agreeing a final assessment of quality for each reviewed output.

Meetings and record-keeping

Advisory groups will meet on the following occasions:

- Prior to the university dry run.
- At the conclusion of the dry run.
- After the EIA on the dry run, to reflect on its conclusions.
- Prior to the final output selection.
- At the conclusion the final output selection.
- On other occasions as the group sees fit.

The group will document its approach to output selection through the keeping of minutes, and record the outcomes of the assessment through the Symplectic Elements Assessment Module, and reports produced therefrom.

UOA Coordinators will be responsible for reporting the activity and minutes of the Group to the relevant Academic Division with Main Panel responsibility.

Membership

The UoA Coordinator will act as chair of the group, with the UoA administrative lead as secretary. Members will be appointed by the UoA coordinator and will include all the academic staff with a substantive role in the selection of outputs within the UoA.

Appendix G: Extract from REF2014 final EIA for the University of Oxford¹⁸

Section C: reflections on lessons learnt and further work

1. We are confident that our selection process was conducted as fairly, consistently and transparently as is possible in a devolved collegial structure where decisions were being made at local level across 31 Units of Assessment in respect of staff from 123 departments and 39 colleges. However, we recognise that, despite embedding equality in all our processes, there were some differences in submission rates. We believe the underlying causes of this are complex and will undertake further work to address areas of under-representation in the areas listed below.

Gender

2. The University recognises the extent of gender inequality among academic and research staff and has taken the following actions to address this since 2008.
 - All 28 of our science and medical sciences departments will have applied for an Athena SWAN award by April 2014, and 20 of those departments already hold a Bronze or Silver award, the highest number in the UK.
 - The Faculty of Philosophy is participating in the pilot of the Gender Equality Charter Mark and the University is committed to extending GEM to all relevant departments at Oxford.
 - In preparation for GEM, our Social Sciences division will conduct a scoping exercise identifying the specific barriers to women in social sciences and the best practice that has been implemented nationally and internationally to address those barriers.
 - Our Medical Sciences division has undertaken a systematic review into the barriers for women in medicine and is using the results of that review to inform its work on Athena SWAN.
 - The Vice Chancellor announced in July 2013 a £1 million Diversity Fund to address the under-representation of women at Oxford.
 - The Vice Chancellor and senior team participated in a session on unconscious bias in October 2013 and briefings on unconscious bias are now being extended across the University.
 - The University has introduced a formal pause in recruitment to its most senior professorial posts where there are no female candidates on the short-list.
3. While directly comparable figures for RAE 2008 are not available, there is evidence that the overall situation has improved. In RAE 2008, the Collegiate University submitted 655 women (equivalent to 28% of Category A staff). In REF 2014, this figure increased to 729, which equates to 29% of Category A staff. This represents an increase of 11% in the number of women submitted, where the overall size of the submission only grew by 7%.
4. However, the University recognises that significant barriers remain to the retention and progression of women and have made this area a priority for further action in our new Strategic Plan for the period 2013-18. In particular, the University is currently consulting on indicators and targets in support of our high level public objective to address the under-representation of women in senior posts.

¹⁸ Full document is available at https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/media/global/wwwadminoxacuk/localsites/planningandresourceallocation/documents/research/ref/Final_REF_EIA_-_January_2014.pdf

Developing existing good practice in supporting researchers at key periods

5. The high number of individuals disclosing individual circumstances (28% of staff were submitted with fewer than four outputs) through a systematic process highlights the opportunity for the University to do more to support staff during critical periods. We note, for example, that many staff may need extra support establishing their career (for early career researchers), returning from breaks (for maternity or ill health), or maintaining work during periods of constraint such as caring responsibilities or ill-health.

Fair working arrangements for all

6. During its consideration of cases of complex individual circumstances, the REF Equality Committee identified a number of issues where the Collegiate University could do more to support individuals. Some of these areas are already being tackled through departmental Athena SWAN action plans, including concerns about workload allocation and the balance of research, teaching and administrative duties.

Supporting staff during periods of temporary disruption to their research

7. The University will explore options for supporting staff in maintaining their research productivity during periods of constraint. These might include buying out teaching time, mentoring or keeping in touch during periods of absence.

Caution about informal arrangements

8. Further learning for the institution itself relates to the potential pitfalls of informal arrangements intended to be supportive of individuals. In retrospect, more formal arrangements, including temporary adjustments to patterns of work, might have been more helpful to both the individual and the department. Closer monitoring would also be helpful, to ensure that the arrangements had the intended outcome.

Publicising available support

9. We also wish to increase awareness by individuals and their managers of possible support that is available through the University and promote a departmental culture that recognises that people may have periods of constrained research due to individual circumstances.
10. We hope to develop increased provision for staff with caring responsibilities, since this was a significant element in a number of the complex cases, and is likely to increase.

Appendix H. Extract from the University's Equality Report, 2016-2017

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

This section of the report provides a summary of activity in support of the University's equality objectives, including key data indicating progress towards targets. The University's equality objectives, confirmed by Council in March 2016, support its wider strategic objectives relating to recruitment, staff development, student access and experience, as set out in the Strategic Plan for 2013-18.¹⁹

More detailed data on staff and students is provided in the annexes.

The University's three overarching equality objectives for 2016-20 aim to:

1. Increase the representation of women in senior roles
2. Improve the recruitment and retention of BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) staff, and
3. Widen undergraduate access and admissions.

The University agreed challenging targets in support of the first objective in 2015, followed by additional objectives on gender, race and sexual orientation in 2016.²⁰ The University also joined the 30% Club, committing itself to achieve at least one third representation of women in senior leadership across the institution.²¹

Gender equality: Some progress has been made on the University's gender equality targets, with increases in the proportions of female professors and heads of department. However, the proportion of female associate professors has remained unchanged for the last three years while women's representation in senior leadership overall has plateaued or slightly fallen back.

The University proposed robust actions to tackle these issues in its successful application for an institutional Athena SWAN award in April 2017, including:²²

- Revised procedures, guidance and training for associate professor recruitment, building on the process successfully introduced for statutory professor recruitment;
- An enhanced programme of career development advice, mentoring and other support for female academics and researchers;
- Actions to support grant applicants and increase the proportion of female Principal Investigators (PIs) and co-PIs; and
- Support for women at all career stages to successfully take on leadership and governance roles.

There are signs of a demographic shift that may eventually lead to greater gender equality among academic staff. In 2016/17 over 30% of those recruited to academic roles were female, and women currently comprise 32% of associate professors aged under 50, but the overall rate of change is hindered by low annual turnover of 4%.

¹⁹ www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/strategic-plan

²⁰ www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/policy/equalityobjectives

²¹ <https://30percentclub.org>

²² www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/gender/athenaswan/applications

Employer-Justified Retirement Age: The University has established an employer-justified retirement age (EJRA) of 68 for academic and related staff at grade 8 and above in order to promote its *Aims*,²³ which include promoting intergenerational fairness, maintaining opportunities for career progression and promoting equality and diversity in the University workforce.

Between 2015 and 2017, a University working party carried out a five-year interim review of the policy and concluded that having an EJRA continued to be a proportionate means of achieving its legitimate aims. As part of the revisions to the policy, the age was raised from 67 to 68 in order to improve intergenerational fairness for those in the older generation, in the context of increased life expectancy and increasingly high living costs in Oxford. The scope of the policy was also revised to exclude staff in grades 6 and 7. In addition, in response to the review, a set of improved support mechanisms, including guidance and process maps, have been developed for both staff and managers navigating the retirement process. The changes to the EJRA were approved in Trinity term 2017 following a series of votes in Congregation.²⁴

Race Equality Charter: Following a lengthy consultation and review process, the University submitted a successful application for an institutional Race Equality Charter bronze award in February 2018. Agreed measures to improve race equality at Oxford focused primarily on increasing the ethnic diversity of staff and students, improving the BME student experience, and promoting diversity across scholarship, learning and teaching.²⁵

LGBT+: In 2016, the University set itself a new target for LGBT+ inclusion, as measured by the score obtained in the annual Stonewall Workplace Employers' Index.²⁶ We aimed to increase our score by at least 20% by 2020 in a revised, and more challenging, Index. Over 430 public and private sector organisations took part in the 2018 Index, which requires a rigorous review of employment policy and practice. Having managed to increase our score by over 60% since the target was agreed, we are now consulting on a revised success measure.²⁷

²³ www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/acrelretire8+/erjaaims

²⁴ www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/acrelretire8+/ejrapolicy

²⁵ www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/race/raceequalitychartermark

²⁶ www.stonewall.org.uk/workplace-equality-index

²⁷ www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/top-100-employers-2018

Appendix I: Extract from the Athena Swan institutional application, April 2017²⁸

4.1. Academic and research staff data

Oxford has a distinct career structure:

Main academic grades

- **Statutory Professor** (SP) is the most senior academic grade, expected to take an academic leadership role within the department, the University and beyond.
- **Titular Professors** (TP) are Associate Professors (AP) and senior researchers awarded professorial title in the 'Recognition of Distinction' (RoD) exercise (section 5.1 (iii)). Although SPs and TPs are distinct, both equate to senior professorial appointments elsewhere, and we report on combined figures here and in our HESA returns.
- **Associate Professor** is the main academic grade, carrying out both teaching and research. It is a senior role, recruited at Grade 10; the starting salary equates to that of a Professor or Senior Lecturer elsewhere.
- APs may be **tutorial** (holding a joint contract of employment between the University and a college and contributing teaching and administrative duties to both) or **non-tutorial** (having a college affiliation but teaching solely within their department). There is no difference in status but the balance of duties between the two employers may impact on recruitment and workload.

Other academic contracts

- A range of other staff hold academic contracts, including **Departmental Lecturers** (DL), **Clinical Lecturers** (CL), directors of research centres, keepers of the museums and language assistants. We refer to these collectively as 'other academic staff'.
- DLs are generally fixed-term, Grade 7 posts, used to increase teaching capacity or cover for staff absences. The use of DLs varies across departments, but post-holders will sometimes also conduct research.
- CLs are fixed-term posts within the clinical academic training route, and spend 50% of their time undertaking postdoctoral research.

Researchers

- **Grade 6 research posts** are predominantly found in MSD and often have specialist skills (e.g. research nurses); they support research projects but do not typically provide a route into postdoctoral research.
- **Postdoctoral researchers** are appointed at Grade 7 or 8.
- Some researchers are recruited at higher grades but post-holders are more typically holders of **independent research fellowships** and directly appointed.
- **Senior research positions** are most common in MSD, where there is a greater research focus.

Career pipeline

There is no internal career path from DL or researcher to AP. This reflects the senior nature of the AP role, and an institutional strategy to pursue externally-funded research. Early career staff typically

²⁸ Full application is available at https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/media/global/wwwadminoxacuk/localsites/equalityanddiversity/documents/gender/University_of_Oxford_-_Athena_SWAN_application_-_Silver_-_FINAL_PUBLIC.pdf

move to first academic posts at other universities or progress in research-only careers (at Oxford or elsewhere).

Appendix J: REF Eligibility Appeals Committee Terms of Reference and Membership

Formation of the Committee

The REF Eligibility Appeals Committee (the “Committee”) will be chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (People and Gardens, Library & Museums), and [senior academics from across the Collegiate University, representing a diverse range of academic disciplines, who are not otherwise involved with the REF decision-making process]. [The Academic Divisions, GLAM and Conference of Colleges] will each nominate a member, who should be senior academics with experience of research assessment or personnel issues.

The Committee is responsible for:

- Making decisions on staff eligibility where the staff member involved has requested it through the appeals process, by reviewing requests on a case-by-case basis;
- Liaising with Main Panel Boards (as defined in the REF 2021 Code of Practice for the University of Oxford) to report cases of inappropriate or inconsistent decision-making;
- Referring any decisions to REF Project Board for reporting purposes.

Meetings and record-keeping

The Committee will meet in May, July and September 2020, and on other occasions as the group sees fit.

The Committee will document its approach to decision-making through the keeping of minutes, and record the outcomes of eligibility decisions, and indicators met, for each case it reviews. Outcomes will be passed on to the RS REF team and uploaded to the CoreHR system.

The Chair is responsible for reporting the activity and minutes of the appeals group to the Chair of REF project board.

Membership [to be finalised following chair’s input]

Chair:	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (People and Gardens, Library & Museums)
Secretary:	Deputy REF Programme Manager
Members:	Humanities Division representative, former faculty Board Chair or associate head
	Social Sciences Division nominee, Head of Department
	MPLS Nominee, former head of department
	MSD Nominee, associate Head of Department
	Conference of Colleges nominee, Head of House

Appendix K: REF Equality Committee Terms of Reference and Membership

Formation of the Committee

The REF Equality Committee (the “Committee”) is chaired by the Advocate and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Equality & Diversity), and its membership includes senior academics from across the Collegiate University representing a diverse range of academic expertise, [representatives of staff groups] and the University’s lead advisors on Equality, Personnel, and REF.

The Committee is responsible for:

- Taking overall responsibility for the procedure for confidential declaration of any staff circumstances (“circumstances”) for research staff who will be submitted to REF2021;
- Reviewing cases where circumstances have affected productivity such that an individual has not produced any outputs in order to make a case to the Funding Bodies that the individual may be submitted with no outputs and ensuring that the relevant adjustment is made to the UOA;
- Reviewing multiple declared staff circumstances in a UOA to calculate any unit reductions which may accrue as a result of circumstances, in accordance with the Funding Bodies’ guidance;
- Informing UOA Coordinators of the number of staff who have declared circumstances within their UOA, and which staff would be eligible for submission without the minimum of one output;
- Considering cases made by UOA Coordinators that their UOA has been disproportionately affected by multiple circumstances (and so might apply to the Funding Bodies for unit reductions);
- Overseeing the conduct of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) on the staff eligibility identification and output selection processes, and making recommendations to REF Project Board on the modification of processes and procedures as a result of EIAs;
- Reporting the outcomes of the EIAs and any recommended actions for review to the University’s Personnel Committee and Research & Innovation Committee.

Meetings and record-keeping

The Equality Committee will meet:

- Prior to completion of the University dry run, to review and confirm procedures.
- On undertaking the EIA following the dry run.
- Prior to the Funding Bodies’ March 2020 deadline for requests for output reductions.
- On undertaking the final EIA.
- On other occasions as the group deems necessary.

The group will document its approach to decision-making through the keeping of minutes, and record the outcomes of decisions on any reductions arising from the circumstances declared. Outcomes will be passed on to the Research Services REF team, who will share the minimum required information with the relevant UOA coordinator.

The Chair is responsible for reporting the activity and minutes of the Equality Committee to the Chair of REF Project Board.

Membership [to be finalised following chair's input]

Chair: Advocate and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equality & Diversity)

Secretary: REF Administrative & Digital Content Officer

Members: Humanities Division nominee, Academic lead for Equality and Diversity
Social Sciences Division nominee, academic expert in anti-discrimination law
MPLS Nominee, a member of the MPLS E&D Steering Group
MSD Nominee, Director of Training and Career Development for an MSD department
Conference of Colleges nominee, Head of House
Head of the Equality and Diversity Unit

Appendix L: Staff circumstances declaration process

Self-declaration of staff circumstances: process at the University

An email will be sent to all staff (and separately to college-only staff) directing them to the resources for declaring circumstances, and emphasising that it is an entirely voluntary process, as follows:

- Completed forms should be returned to the REF Programme Manager to a secure email address accessible to 2 people only (within Research Services' REF team)
- The REF Programme Manager will collate declarations for consideration by REF Equality Committee and share and store documentation securely
- The REF Equality Committee will review circumstances cases to decide: (1) if a reduction to zero outputs can be applied for to the Funding Bodies; (2) whether at UOA level the level of staff circumstances has had a disproportionate effect on the productivity of the UOA; (3) if a recommendation needs to be made to Personnel at a central or departmental level about supporting staff with circumstances
- The REF Equality Committee will feed back decisions about zero outputs for affected individuals to those individuals, and to UOACs (without disclosing the nature of the circumstances)
- The REF Equality Committee will liaise with UOACs over any UOAs which may have had their output pool affected disproportionately by circumstances and advise on a suitable reduction to request in an application to the Funding Bodies to reduce a UOA's output requirements.

Appendix M: List of Independent Fellowships (from the Funding Bodies' REF 2021 website)²⁹

Research Fellowships

Table 1 provides a list of competitive research fellowships, presented in alphabetical order by funder, that have been confirmed by the funder to require research independence. This list is intended to guide institutions when developing their criteria to identify independent researchers. **It should not be taken to be exhaustive** and the funding bodies recognise that many relevant fellowship schemes are not captured, including research fellowships funded by HEIs, which may require research independence. Please check the REF Funding Bodies website for an up to date list.²⁹

Table 1

Funder	Fellowship scheme
AHRC	AHRC Leadership Fellowships - Early Career Researchers
AHRC	AHRC Leadership Fellowships
BBSRC	BBSRC David Phillips Fellowships
BBSRC	BBSRC Future Leader Fellowships (from 2018 known as BBSRC Discovery Fellowships)
British Academy	BA/Leverhulme Senior Research Fellowships
British Academy	British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships
British Academy	JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowships
British Academy	Mid-Career Fellowships
British Academy	Newton Advanced Fellowships
British Academy	Newton International Fellowships
British Academy	Wolfson Research Professorships
British Heart Foundation	Career Re-entry Research Fellowships
British Heart Foundation	Clinical Research Leave Fellowships
British Heart Foundation	BHF-Fulbright Commission Scholar Awards
British Heart Foundation	Intermediate Basic Science Research Fellowships
British Heart Foundation	Intermediate Clinical Research Fellowships
British Heart Foundation	Senior Basic Science Research Fellowships
British Heart Foundation	Senior Clinical Research Fellowships
British Heart Foundation	Springboard Award for Biomedical Researchers
British Heart Foundation	Starter Grants for Clinical Lecturers
Cancer Research UK	Advanced Clinician Scientist Fellowship
Cancer Research UK	Career Development Fellowship
Cancer Research UK	Career Establishment Award
Cancer Research UK	Senior Cancer Research Fellowship
EPSRC	EPSRC Early Career Fellowship
EPSRC	EPSRC Established Career Fellowship

²⁹ <https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/additional-guidance/>

EPSRC	EPSRC Postdoctoral Fellowship* ³⁰
ESRC	ESRC Future Cities Catapult Fellowship
ESRC	ESRC Future Leaders Grant
ESRC	ESRC/Turing Fellowships
ESRC/URKI	Early Career Researcher Innovation Fellowships
European Research Council	ERC Advanced Grants
European Research Council	ERC Consolidator Grants
European Research Council	ERC Starting Grants
Health Education England	ICA Clinical Lectureship
Health Education England	ICA Senior Clinical Lectureship
Leverhulme Trust	Early Career Fellowship
Leverhulme Trust	Research Fellowship
Leverhulme Trust	Emeritus Fellowship
Leverhulme Trust	Major Research Fellowship
Leverhulme Trust	International Academic Fellowship
MRC	MRC Career Development Awards*
MRC	MRC New Investigator Research Grants (Non-clinical)*
MRC	MRC New Investigator Research Grants (Clinical)*
MRC	MRC Clinician Scientist Fellowships*
MRC	Senior Non-Clinical Fellowships
MRC	Senior Clinical Fellowships
NC3R	David Sainsbury Fellowship
NC3R	Training fellowship
NERC	Independent Research Fellowships
NERC/UKRI	Industrial Innovation Fellowships
NERC/UKRI	Industrial Mobility Fellowships
NIHR	Advanced Fellowship
NIHR	Career Development Fellowship
NIHR	Clinical Lectureships
NIHR	Clinical Trials Fellowship
NIHR	Clinician Scientist
NIHR	Development and Skills Enhancement Award
NIHR	Knowledge Mobilisation Research Fellowship
NIHR	Post-Doctoral Fellowship

³⁰ Those asterisked support the transition to independence. Applicants should demonstrate readiness to become independent and the award enables them to become so. It could be argued those at the start of an award are not 'independent' yet, but those well in the award may be.

NIHR	Research Professorship
NIHR	School for Primary Care Post-Doctoral Fellowships
NIHR	Senior Research Fellowship
Royal Academy of Engineering	RAEng Engineering for Development Research Fellowship
Royal Academy of Engineering	Industrial Fellowships
Royal Academy of Engineering	RAEng Research Fellowship
Royal Academy of Engineering	RAEng Senior Research Fellowship
Royal Academy of Engineering	UK Intelligence Community (IC) Postdoctoral Research Fellowship
Royal Society	Royal Society Wolfson Fellowship
Royal Society	Dorothy Hodgkin Fellowship*
Royal Society	JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship
Royal Society	Newton Advanced Fellowship
Royal Society	Royal Society/Leverhulme Trust Senior Research Fellowship
Royal Society	University Research Fellowship*
Royal Society and Wellcome Trust	Sir Henry Dale Fellowship*
Royal Society of Edinburgh	RSE Arts & Humanities Awards (for permanent staff)
Royal Society of Edinburgh	RSE Personal Research Fellowship
Royal Society of Edinburgh	RSE Sabbatical Research Grants (for permanent staff)
STFC	CERN Fellowships
STFC	Ernest Rutherford Fellowship
STFC	ESA Fellowships
STFC	Innovations Partnership Scheme Fellowships
STFC	Returner Fellowships
STFC	RSE/STFC Enterprise Fellowships
STFC	Rutherford International Fellowship Programme
UKRI	UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships
UKRI	UKRI Innovation Fellowships
Wellcome Trust	Intermediate Fellowship in Public Health and Tropical Medicine
Wellcome Trust	Principal Research Fellowships
Wellcome Trust	Research Award for Health Professionals
Wellcome Trust	Research Career Development Fellowship
Wellcome Trust	Research Fellowship in Humanities and Social Science
Wellcome Trust	Senior Research Fellowship
Wellcome Trust	Sir Henry Dale Fellowship