



Code of Practice on the Selection of Staff for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014

Purpose

1. In encouraging higher education institutions (HEIs) to submit the work of all their excellent researchers and comply with equality legislation, the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 requires UK HEIs to develop, document and apply an internal code of practice on the fair and transparent selection of staff for inclusion in REF submissions. (REF 02.2011 [Assessment framework and guidance on submissions](#) (July 2011)).
2. The purpose of the Queen's University Code of Practice is to ensure that the process of selecting staff for inclusion in the University's REF2014 submission is carried out in a fair and transparent manner. Queen's University is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity and to creating and sustaining an environment that values the diversity of its staff. The University is intent on submitting the work of all eligible staff demonstrating research excellence. The development of this Code has been informed by REF2014 guidance (REF 02.2011 [Assessment framework and guidance on submissions](#) (July 2011): Part 4) and information and support provided by the Equality Challenge Unit¹. The Code operates within the context of all relevant equality legislation as well as the University's Equality and Diversity Policy². **Annex F** includes a summary of the relevant equality legislation.

Principles

3. This Code of Practice seeks to demonstrate fairness and equality of opportunity in line with the principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity as follows:
 - a. **Transparency:** All processes for the selection of staff for inclusion in the University's REF2014 submission will be transparent.
 - The Code will be publicised to all eligible academic staff across the institution, including individuals who are absent from work or on unpaid leave of absence or secondment. Dissemination will take place via an all staff communications email and through individual Units of Assessment (UoA).
 - The Code will be available in an easily accessible format and placed on Queen's Online (staff portal), as well as Queen's University REF2014 web pages.
 - The Code will be actively disseminated and discussed with members of staff through scheduled REF2014 information sessions. See **Annex B** for a detailed programme of communication activity.

¹ <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF>

² <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/EqualOpportunitiesUnit/EqualityandDiversityPolicy>

- b. **Consistency:** The Code will be applied and implemented consistently across the institution.
 - The Code sets out the principles to be applied to all aspects and stages of the staff selection process and at all levels within the University where decisions will be made. Details can be found in paragraphs 19-47.
- c. **Accountability:** This Code clearly defines and identifies those individuals, committees and advisory groups involved in developing REF2014 submissions and selecting staff.
 - The Code identifies, by name or role, who will be involved in the selection process and describes the training those staff will have undertaken. Details can be found paragraphs 7-18.
 - The Code describes the operating criteria and terms of reference for committees and advisory groups concerned with staff selection. Details can be found in **Annex A**.
- d. **Inclusivity:** This Code aims to promote an inclusive and supportive environment.
 - Queen's University aims to nurture and support individuals to produce excellent research and the REF 2014 submission development process (Paragraphs 19-47) seeks to identify all eligible staff demonstrating research excellence for inclusion in the University's submission.

REF2014 Submission Strategy

4. Queen's University has committed to achieving a high level of world leading and international excellence in all its research activities. An Institutional Research Strategy (2009-2014) has been agreed by the University Senate, with the aim of optimising performance in REF2014. The University has strongly encouraged research staff to publish outputs of world-leading (4*) or internationally excellent (3*) quality standard.
5. The University will aim to optimise its REF2014 submission with respect to the number of eligible Category A staff submitted and the quality of submitted research activity. As such, all eligible staff demonstrating research excellence will be identified for inclusion in the University's submission. Research excellence will be interpreted according to the definitions and criteria set out in the REF2014 assessment methodology (REF 02.2011 [Assessment framework and guidance on submissions](#) (July 2011)) and by the relevant REF Panels (REF 01.2012 [Panel criteria and working methods](#) (January 2012)). Research excellence will therefore be defined differently for different submitting UoAs and will take into account variations in REF Panel Criteria, as well as discipline-specific factors and the University's strategic objectives for individual discipline areas.
6. REF2014 will be based on expert peer review of three distinct elements of each submission, each carrying a specific weighting; research outputs (65%), research environment (15%) and research impact (20%). The impact of research on the economy and society is a new element, and will be assessed through an overarching impact statement and a series of impact case studies (the number of which is determined by the number (FTE) of Category A staff returned in the submission). Therefore, in the context of REF2014, research activity encompasses; the publication

of research outputs, research impact, research income, postgraduate student supervision and other relevant research performance measures. All of these factors will be considered in making an assessment of research quality and excellence, whether at individual, UoA or University level.

Roles and Responsibilities

7. Individuals, committees and advisory groups have been designated with specific responsibilities in developing the University's REF2014 submission. Clear delineation has been made between individuals and committees involved in decision-making and those contributing to the process in an advisory capacity. Management and coordination of the submission development process will be carried out by a number of key individuals within the University. The roles, responsibilities and mechanisms detailed below were proposed by the University's Research Strategy Group (chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Postgraduates and including representation from each Faculty) and subsequently endorsed by the University Management Board (UMB).

Management and coordination

8. The Vice-Chancellor has delegated responsibility for compiling and making the REF 2014 submission to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Postgraduates) who provides institutional leadership for matters relating to research and is a member of UMB, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Postgraduates) is therefore responsible for applying this Code throughout the submission development process and in recommending staff for inclusion in the REF submission. He is tasked with reporting to UMB on the progress REF 2014 preparations, including any emerging equalities issues and outcomes of associated equality screening.
9. REF 2014 UoAs do not map directly to the University's School structure and hence both Heads of School and appointed UoA Champions will coordinate REF 2014 preparations at UoA level. UoA Champions were identified in close consultation between the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Postgraduates) and Faculty Deans. This was endorsed by the Research Strategy Group which reports to the UMB. Faculty Deans and UoA Champions will play a pivotal role in gathering and coordinating feedback from the Advisory Groups. UoA Champions will also be responsible for ensuring that data and information is provided to the REF Faculty Review Panel in a timely manner for review and mock REF2014 exercises. UoA Champions will play an important role in disseminating information and providing guidance and support to individual members of staff regarding REF2014 preparations.
10. The University's submission to REF2014 will be co-ordinated by a REF Manager (Head of Research Policy) within the Research and Enterprise Directorate. The Director of Research and Enterprise assumes overall responsibility for coordinating the REF 2014 administration and has been assigned these duties by the University's Registrar and Chief Operating Officer. The Director of Research and Enterprise together with the REF Manager will implement decisions made by UMB, REF Faculty Review Panels and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Postgraduates), in addition to providing advice and guidance throughout the submission development process. The Research Policy Office will provide administrative support to REF2014 preparations.

Decision-making

11. The UMB will be ultimate decision-making body for the University's REF2014 submission. It will approve the overall REF2014 submission strategy and make all final decisions on the composition of each submitting UoA, including the selection of individual staff members and associated materials returned. The UMB is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and includes the three Pro-Vice-Chancellors, the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer, Faculty Deans and the Director of Finance. As the University's Chief Executive Officer and Chair of the UMB, the Vice Chancellor will be responsible for confirming that this Code has been implemented appropriately throughout the REF2014 submission development process. Terms of Reference for the UMB can be found at **Annex A**.
12. The UMB will be informed and advised by the REF Faculty Review Panels, chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Postgraduates) and including the relevant Faculty Dean. The REF Faculty Review Panel will be constituted on a UoA basis and will include the UoA Champion and the relevant Head(s) of School. The Panels will bring forward recommendations on the composition of individual UoA submissions to UMB for approval. Terms of Reference can be found at **Annex A**.
13. The Deans of Faculty and individual UoA Champions will be responsible for reporting to the REF Faculty Review Panels on the outcomes of review activity carried out by advisory groups as detailed below.
14. The REF Equality and Diversity Panel is chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Postgraduates) and includes the Director of Research and Enterprise, a senior academic representative, REF Manager, REF Administrator, Equal Opportunities Manager and Equal Opportunities Officer. The REF Equality and Diversity Panel is responsible for advising on and monitoring equality and diversity related issues throughout the University's preparations for the REF. This includes the development and ownership of this Code and carrying out a comprehensive equality impact assessment. The Panel will also be responsible for considering disclosed complex individual staff circumstances (see Paragraphs 27-32). Terms of Reference can be found at **Annex A**.

Advisory Groups

15. Faculty Reading Groups have been established to review, assess and provide feedback on research impact case studies, impact statements and environment statements for all UoAs within the relevant Faculty. These groups will continue to operate in this capacity throughout REF2014 preparations. Outcomes of this review process will be reported through the UoA Champions and Faculty Deans to the REF Faculty Review Panels. Faculty Reading Groups consist of academic researchers and where possible external users of research. Terms of Reference can be found at **Annex A**
16. UoA Reading Groups have been established to assess research outputs submitted by individual staff members for potential inclusion in REF2014 returns and provide a provisional quality score. Each group comprises peer reviewers with appropriate range and depth of expertise in the UoA discipline area. Peer reviewers were selected by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Postgraduates) and Faculty Deans, in consultation with Heads of School. UoA Reading Groups are encouraged to seek external assessment of outputs where possible. The roles of UoA Reading Groups and external assessors are limited to advising on provisional scoring of outputs only; they should have no input into the decision making process on which

staff are to be submitted nor should they be given any detailed information concerning individual staff circumstances. Outcomes of the UoA Reading Group assessment process will be reported through the UoA Champions and Faculty Deans to the REF Faculty Review Panels. The Faculty Deans will have responsibility for ensuring that the assessment process is robust and consistent across UoAs within their Faculty. Terms of Reference can be found at **Annex A**.

Equality and Diversity Training

17. All members of staff with specific decision-making or management responsibilities will be required to undertake equality and diversity training prior to the REF mock exercise in autumn 2012. Those individuals involved in the appeals process (see paragraphs 48-55) will also be required to complete this training. Training will therefore be provided to UoA Champions, Heads of School, Faculty Deans, the Director of Research and Enterprise, the REF Manager and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Postgraduates).
18. The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) provides good practice and training materials to support institutions with the equality aspects of their REF preparations. The University's training programme will be tailored to the REF2014 process and will be based on the training materials provided on the ECU website (<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/documents/ref-materials/training-pack>). The programme will be managed and delivered by the University's Equal Opportunities Manager. Details of provisional training dates are provided in **Annex C**.

Submission development: principles

19. The development of the University's REF2014 submission will be carried out through an initial phase of review and assessment, followed by a final decision-making phase when the composition of each submitting UoA will be agreed and decisions will be taken on the selection of individual staff members. Initial activity undertaken to date has focused on establishing the University's submission preparations, with systematic work on the development of the submission strategy largely taking place after publication of 'Guidance on Submissions' (REF 02.2011) by the UK Funding Councils. Paragraphs 20-35 outline the principles to be applied to the final preparation and decision-making processes for key aspects of the University's submission.

Unit of Assessment Selection

20. The proposed UoAs to which the University intends to submit have been identified through a series of REF review exercises that have taken place in academic years 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12. UMB will be asked to confirm the overall shape of the University's REF2014 submission in June 2012 in preparation for responding to the REF2014 survey of submission intentions in autumn 2012.
21. The University's research discipline areas will be mapped to the Units of Assessment given in 'Guidance on Submissions' (REF 02.2011) and careful consideration will be given to the UoA descriptors and boundaries set out in the REF Panel Criteria (REF 01.2012). The REF Faculty Panels will also make recommendations to UMB on whether to seek permission from the UK Funding Councils to make more than one submission to any given UoA; any such recommendation will be guided by the 'Guidance on Submissions' and expectations outlined by REF Panels.

Individual Staff Member Selection

22. The University aims to submit the work of every eligible member of staff demonstrating research excellence in line with Paragraph 24 below. Staff included in submissions must be listed as either Category A or Category C; the associated definitions of eligibility are given in 'Guidance on Submissions' (REF 02.2011) Paragraphs 79-83:
- Category A staff are academic staff with a 'research only' or 'teaching and research' contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater on the census date (31 October 2013).
 - Category C staff are individuals employed by another organisation and whose role includes the undertaking of research which is primarily focused in the submitting unit on the census date (31 October 2013).
23. Research Assistants are not eligible to be returned to the REF unless, exceptionally, they are named as principal investigator or equivalent on a research grant or significant piece of research work on the census date and satisfy the definition of Category A staff.
24. It is necessary that individuals eligible as Category A or C staff satisfy all of the following criteria in order to be returned in the University's REF 2014 submission:
- **The assessed quality of research outputs.** Each Category A and C member of staff will be required to meet a threshold quality level specific to the UoA in which they will be returned in order to be considered for inclusion in the REF submission (as described in Paragraph 39).
 - **The number of research outputs available for submission.** Each Category A and C staff member must normally be submitted with four items of research output. Where relevant, individual staff circumstances will be taken into account in making a judgement on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs to be submitted (as described in Paragraphs 27-32).
 - **The fit of the individual's research activity with one of the identified UoAs.** Under exceptional circumstances, the decision may be taken to exclude a member of staff for reasons of strategic fit with the research activity covered by their most appropriate UoA, despite evidence of research excellence.
25. It is also expected that individuals eligible as Category A staff contribute to research impact and/or research environment through the generation of research income, postgraduate student supervision or other relevant research performance measures. In order to optimise the University's return, an individual's contribution in these areas may be taken into consideration as part of the submission.
26. It should be noted that exclusion from the University's REF2014 submission is not necessarily an indication of research inactivity. Any individual eligible as Category A who is not selected for submission has the right to appeal the decision. Details of the appeal process can be found in Paragraphs 48-55.

Individual staff circumstances and their disclosure

27. The Funding Councils have produced detailed guidance as to how REF panels will deal with individual circumstances that have constrained an individual's ability to produce four outputs or work productively throughout the assessment period. Guidance is given in Paragraphs 64-91 of REF 01.2012 Panel criteria and working methods Part 1: Generic statement (January 2012) and these paragraphs are

reproduced in **Annex D** for completeness. **Annex F** also includes a summary of the relevant equality legislation.

28. There will be a **clearly defined** reduction in outputs for the following circumstances (as given in REF01.2012 Paragraph 69a):

- Qualifying as an early career researcher as defined in 'Guidance on Submissions (REF 02.2011).
- Part time working.
- Secondments or career breaks outside of the higher education sector, during which the individual did not undertake academic research.
- Maternity, paternity or adoption leave.
- Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6, relating to junior clinical academics and Category C staff employed primarily in as clinical, health or veterinary professions.

The following are **complex** circumstances that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs (as given in REF01.2012 Paragraph 69b):

- Disability (as defined in **Annex F** Summary of legislation)
- Ill health or injury.
- Mental health conditions.
- Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of discrete periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave.
- Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member).
- Gender reassignment.
- Other circumstances relating to characteristics protected by equalities legislation and activities protected by employment legislation.

29. In addition to those circumstances described above, the University will treat equally and fairly those staff on fixed-term and part-time contracts in determining suitability for inclusion in the REF.

30. Eligible Category A staff members will be required to disclose their individual staff circumstances, should they wish these to be considered. A disclosure form will be made available (**Annex E**) and brought to the attention of all eligible Category A staff through the dissemination of the Code of Practice. Disclosed individual staff circumstances will be taken into account as part of the mock review in autumn 2012, and the decision-making process thereafter (see Paragraphs 36-47). Category A and C staff may declare individual circumstances at any time through the process, but all disclosures must be submitted to the REF Manager by 31 May 2013 in order to be considered in the final decision-making process. All eligible Category A staff will have the opportunity to raise any individual staff circumstances not previously disclosed as part of the appeal process (see paragraphs 48-55). The disclosure process will be coordinated by the REF Manager and disclosed information will be managed confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's policies on data protection, security and records management.

31. In the case of disclosed clearly defined circumstances, the information will be seen by the relevant REF Faculty Review Panel, UMB and administrative staff within the Research Policy Office. The information will relate to early career researcher status, part-time working, career breaks or secondments, and periods of maternity, additional paternity or adoption leave taken. The REF Equality and Diversity Panel will review a summary of information relating to clearly defined circumstances at regular intervals. Where an individual initiates the appeal process, the information will be made available to members of the University's REF Appeals Panel.

32. In the case of disclosed complex circumstances, information will be seen by the University's REF Equality and Diversity Panel only. This will be information to explain the impact on research of circumstances such as disability, ill health, injury, mental health conditions, gender reassignment, caring responsibilities or constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding, adoption and paternity (in addition to the period of leave taken). The panel will receive anonymised information prepared by the REF Manager and will be informed by REF and ECU guidance in making a judgement on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs. The panel will also be responsible for developing an appropriate evidenced case as part of the REF2014 submission. The REF Manager, as a member of the University's REF Equality and Diversity Panel, will communicate directly with the individual concerned regarding the number of outputs required. The REF Faculty Review Panel will be notified only of the required number of outputs and that complex individual circumstances exist. No other details will be released in relation to complex individual circumstances, except where an individual initiates the appeal process. In the case of an appeal, this information will be made available to members of the University's REF Appeals Panel.

Equality impact assessment

33. An equality impact assessment (EIA) will be carried out on the University's Code of Practice for selecting staff for REF. Equalities data analysis will be undertaken by the University's Equal Opportunities Unit and reviewed by REF Equality and Diversity Panel. The EIA will include analyses to determine whether the staff selection policy for the REF has a differential impact on particular protected groups. The EIA will consider: a review of the data from the University's submission to RAE2008; analysis of the University's staff data with respect to eligible staff; analysis of REF review and mock exercises; key learning outcomes from review and mock exercises and feedback from staff from protected groups.
34. An initial equalities screening analysis will take place following the 2011/12 REF internal review exercise, incorporating outcomes from the 2009/10 and 2010/11 internal review exercises. This analysis has informed the development of the Code prior to its submission to the REF team in July 2012. Screening will take place at key stages of the selection process, up to and including the final submission process, to ensure that any necessary changes to prevent discrimination or promote equality are taken prior to the submission deadline.
35. The final version of the REF EIA will be published on the Queen's University REF2014 web pages following the REF2014 submission, and will include the outcomes of any actions taken to prevent discrimination or advance equality.

Submission development: process

36. As already noted, the development of the University's REF2014 submission will be carried out through an initial phase of review and assessment, followed by a final decision-making phase when the composition of each submitting UoA will be agreed by the UMB and decisions will be taken on the selection of individual staff members.

Review and assessment

37. The review and assessment phase to date has involved an iterative process, incorporating a number of REF review exercises taking place in academic years 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12. A full mock exercise will take place in autumn 2012 following the publication of key REF guidance by the UK Funding Councils. Previous REF review exercises were designed to assess progress in REF2014 preparations,

both in terms of the overall shape of the University's submission and the development of individual UoA submissions. No decisions have been taken in this phase regarding the final selection of individual staff members for inclusion in the University's REF submission.

38. The REF Faculty Review Panels met during review exercises to consider potential staff volume (FTE number of eligible Category A staff) and provisional quality scores of research outputs for each individual, as assessed by the UoA Reading Groups and reported via UoA Champions and Faculty Deans. This process will be taken forward during a further mock exercise in autumn 2012. Information pertaining to research environment and research impact will also be considered and informed by Faculty Reading Group review and assessment.
39. During the mock exercise in autumn 2012 the REF Faculty Review Panels will agree and recommend a research output threshold quality level that individual members of eligible Category A staff must meet. It is expected that this threshold quality level will vary across UoAs and will take into account variations in REF Panel Criteria, as well as discipline-specific factors and the University's strategic objectives for individual discipline areas. The quality threshold for each UoA will be agreed by UMB and subsequently documented and communicated to all eligible staff via Heads of School and UoA Champions. In order to optimise its REF2014 performance, the University will aim to maximise the inclusion of outputs of world-leading (4*) or internationally excellent (3*) quality standard and intends to submit no research outputs of u/c or 1* quality.
40. Academic performance management takes place as part of standard management processes established within University policies³. Concerns regarding the preparedness of individual Category A staff have been and will continue to be noted, recorded and monitored as part of REF review and mock exercises. This may inform performance management activities. REF 2014 measures form only one element of overall academic performance. It should be noted that during review exercises 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12, potential clearly defined individual staff circumstances (including early career researcher status, part-time working and maternity leave provision) were flagged, where known, by UoA Champions and taken into consideration. Only those individual staff circumstances disclosed by staff members will be taken into account as part of the mock review in autumn 2012 and thereafter. Feedback to individual members of staff will continue to take place via Heads of School and UoA Champions following each exercise.
41. An initial equality screening will take place following the 2011/12 REF review exercise, incorporating outcomes from the 2009/10 and 2010/11 review exercises. An equality screening will take place following the mock review in autumn 2012 and this will take into account information on individual staff circumstances collected as part of the disclosure process.

Decision-making

42. The decision-making phase will be carried out through the preparation of draft submissions with a census date of 31 May 2013. UoA Champions, in consultation with relevant Heads of School, will be tasked with compiling draft submission material pertaining to all eligible Category A staff.

³<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/PersonnelDepartment/PerformanceConductAndEmployeeRelations/>

43. All eligible staff will be invited to submit individual circumstances disclosure forms to the REF Manager by the 31 May 2013 census deadline in order to ensure that they are taken into consideration as part of the final decision-making process. The REF Equality and Diversity Panel will meet shortly after 31 May 2013 to review disclosures and make any judgements as to the appropriate reduction in the number of required outputs for staff with complex individual staff circumstances.
44. REF Faculty Review Panels will meet to consider draft submission information, including any disclosures of clearly defined individual staff circumstances and indications of where complex circumstances apply (as provided by the REF Equality and Diversity Panel). Each eligible member of Category A staff will be considered in relation to the confirmed threshold for the particular UoA(s) and a recommendation will be agreed as to whether they are to be included in the UoA submission. Final recommendations will be received by the University Management Board for sign-off by 30 June 2013.
45. It is anticipated that the inclusion of a small number of staff may be dependent upon the publication of one or more key outputs in 2013. Where this cannot be confirmed by 31 May 2013, such staff may be designated as 'provisional' subject to confirmation of that output being publically available in 2013 by 31 October 2013.
46. All eligible staff will be informed of whether or not they are to be included in the University's REF submission by 31 July 2013. Further details on feedback follow below.
47. Any staff joining the institution after the draft census date of 31 May 2013 will be reviewed in line with the assessment criteria outlined above, including consideration of individual staff circumstances by the University's REF Equality and Diversity Panel if applicable. Inclusion in the REF submission will be confirmed by the UoA Champion in consultation with the Head of School, Faculty Dean and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Postgraduates).

Feedback and Appeals

48. As detailed above, all staff who are to be included in REF2014 will be notified by 31 July 2013. Any eligible staff who are not considered suitable for inclusion in REF2014 will also have this confirmed by 31 July 2013 and will be provided with feedback through a one to one meeting with the relevant Head of School.
49. Any eligible member of staff not selected for submission has the right to appeal the decision made by the UMB. Appeals may be made on the following grounds:
 - (i) Where it is felt that insufficient consideration was given to individual staff circumstances as defined in Paragraph 28 above;
 - (ii) Where it can be demonstrated that a procedure or process detailed in this Code of Practice has not been followed;
 - (iii) Where a recommendation has been made by a REF Faculty Review Panel without the availability of full information or evidence.
50. The University's REF Appeal procedure will be available for staff to use from 1 August 2013. To enable sufficient time for an appeal to be considered and any outcomes implemented, the deadline for the receipt of appeals will be 16 August 2013. Appeals should be submitted in writing to the REF Manager, stating the nature and grounds of the appeal.

51. An independent REF Appeals Panel comprising the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Planning, Staffing and External Relations (Chair), two senior academic staff at professorial level, and the Director of Human Resources, and who as far as possible reflect the diversity of the NI community, will consider the appeals. The Panel will be supported by the Research Policy Manager. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Chair) will withdraw from UMB during any discussions on the selection of staff for REF, to ensure objectivity as Chair of the Appeals Panel. Terms of Reference can be found at **Annex A**.
52. The REF Appeals Panel will base its judgement on information provided by the appellant, the records of the REF process pertaining to the appellant and main and sub panel criteria and working methods. Where individual staff circumstances are relevant to an appeal case, the Appeals Panel will form an independent judgement regarding the appropriate reduction in the number of required outputs.
53. A person appealing the decision of the UMB is entitled to appear in person before the REF Appeals Panel, accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative. The appellant may elaborate upon any key points made in their written submission. Having considered the submission made, including written and / or verbal representation, the decision of the REF Appeals Panel shall be final.
54. An appeal will be upheld when the grounds for appeal are proven and the panel concludes that the individual meets the University's criteria for REF submission in the particular UoA.
55. The decisions of the REF Appeals Panel will be communicated to the appellant in writing by 30 September 2013. Letters will be copied to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Postgraduates), Faculty Dean, REF Manager and Head of School.

Table 1: Feedback and Appeals timetable

Deadline Date	Action
30 June 2013	UMB approves final submission
July 2013	Final decisions regarding the inclusion of individual members of Category A staff communicated to Heads of School /UoA Champions
31 July 2013	All eligible staff to receive letters advising them of their position regarding inclusion in the University's REF 2014 submission.
16 August 2013	Deadline for submission of appeals
September 2013	Appeals Panel meetings to consider appeals
30 September 2013	Appeals Panel decisions communicated to appellants

Further information and Guidance

REF Manager (Head of Research Policy) – Helen Hart h.hart@gub.ac.uk ext 2578

REF Administrator (Research Policy Manager) – Helen Baron h.baron@gub.ac.uk ext 2552

ANNEXES

Annex A –Terms of Reference

Annex B – Communications plan

Annex C – Equality and Diversity training

Annex D – Guidance on individual staff circumstances

Annex E – Individual Staff Circumstances Disclosure Form

Annex F - Summary of equality legislation

University Management Board

Terms of Reference:		
<p>(a) Development of integrated corporate plan in line with the approved vision;</p> <p>(b) Development and implementation of approved strategies to support delivery of the corporate plan;</p> <p>(c) Maintaining a general oversight of performance against the University's strategic academic and related objectives;</p> <p>(d) Initiating, and giving preliminary consideration to, strategy and policy matters in order to determine strategic directions for the University and to ensure that these are consistent with the institutional strategy and objectives;</p> <p>(e) Formulating and developing strategic and policy issues, initiatives, (both internal and external) developments etc;</p> <p>(f) Taking management decisions within the framework of the University's agreed corporate plan and related objectives;</p> <p>(g) Development and implementation of academic plans, including ongoing review in the context of an integrated planning and performance enhancement framework;</p> <p>(h) Advising and, where appropriate, making recommendations to the University's Academic Council and Senate and committees, on strategies and policies needed to achieve the University's corporate objectives;</p> <p>(i) Taking decisions on behalf of Senate or the Academic Council in circumstances where there is an urgent need;</p> <p>(j) Advising upon such issues as may be referred to it by the Vice-Chancellor or the Senate;</p> <p>(k) Acting on behalf of the Senate or other University body on such matters as may be delegated to it.</p>		
Membership:		
<u>Composition</u>		<u>Current Members</u>
Chair:	President and Vice-Chancellor	Professor Sir Peter Gregson
Ex Officio:	Pro-Vice-Chancellors	Professor E E Douglas-Cowie Professor A M Gallagher Professor J C McElroy
	Registrar and Chief Operating Officer	Mr J P J O'Kane
	Deans	Professor S P Gorman Professor T J Millar Professor S O'Neill
	Director of Finance	Mrs W Galbraith
In Attendance:	Relevant University Officers	As Required
Serviced by:	Vice-Chancellor's Office	
Reports to:	Senate Academic Council – if required Planning and Finance Committee	
Receives reports from:	University Operating Board Other University Committees and Working Groups as required	

REF Faculty Review Panels

Terms of Reference:		
<p>(a) Develop University and Unit of Assessment submission strategies for REF2014.</p> <p>(b) Ensure a robust and consistent mechanism of assessment and review of research activity through UoA Champions, Faculty Deans and Advisory Groups.</p> <p>(c) Coordinate the decision-making process and bring forward recommendations on the final composition of individual UoA submissions to UMB for approval.</p> <p>(d) Provide guidance, direction and support to UoA champions and Heads of School throughout REF2014 preparations.</p>		
Membership:		
<u>Composition</u>	Name	Position
Chair:	Professor James McElroy	PVC for Research and Postgraduates
Faculty (MHLS)	Professor Sean Gorman	Dean, Medicine, Health and Life Sciences
		Relevant Head of School
		UoA Champion
		Critical Friend
Faculty (EPS)	Professor Tom Millar	Dean, Engineering and Physical Sciences
		Relevant Head of School
		UoA Champion
		Critical Friend
Faculty (AHSS)	Professor Shane O'Neill	Dean, Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
		Relevant Head of School
		UoA Champion
		Critical Friend
	Mr Scott Rutherford	Director of Research and Enterprise
	Mrs Helen Hart	Head of Research Policy Office and REF Manager
Serviced by:	Research Policy Office	
Reports to:	University Management Board.	

REF Equality and Diversity Panel

Terms of Reference:		
<p>(a) Advise on equality and diversity related issues throughout the University's preparations for the REF, making recommendations to the University Management Board and REF Faculty Review Panels as appropriate.</p> <p>(b) Oversee the development and implementation of the University's Code of Practice for the selection of staff for REF2014.</p> <p>(c) Coordinate and review the University's Equalities Impact Assessment and associated screening analyses.</p> <p>(d) Provide oversight for Equality and Diversity training for individuals involved in decision-making and appeals processes.</p> <p>(e) Consider all cases of complex individual staff circumstances and provide advice to REF Faculty Review Panels on each case.</p>		
Membership:		
<u>Composition</u>	Name	Position
Chair:	Professor James McElroy	PVC for Research and Postgraduates
	Professor Yvonne Galligan	Senior Academic Representative
	Mr Scott Rutherford	Director of Research and Enterprise
	Mrs Helen Hart	Head of Research Policy Office and REF Manager
	Mr Paul Browne	Equal Opportunities Manager
	Ms Jane Garvey	Equal Opportunities Officer
	Dr Helen Baron	Research Policy Manager and REF Administrator
Serviced by:	Research Policy Office	
Reports to:	University Management Board	

REF Appeals Panel

Terms of Reference:		
<p>(a) To consider and make recommendations on appeals from eligible academic staff regarding their exclusion from the University's REF submission, in accordance with the University's REF Code of Practice.</p> <p>(b) To request further information and documentation relating to the appeal case where necessary.</p> <p>(c) To consider cases of individual staff circumstances where relevant and form an independent judgement regarding the appropriate reduction in the number of required outputs.</p> <p>(d) To make a judgement on each case based on information provided by the appellant, the grounds of the appeal, the records of the REF process pertaining to the appellant and main and sub panel criteria and working methods.</p> <p>(e) To confirm decisions and associated reasons, in writing, to the individual appellant and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Postgraduates) by 30 September 2013.</p>		
Membership:		
<u>Composition</u>	Name	Position
Chair:	Professor Tony Gallagher	PVC for Academic Planning, Staffing and External Relations
	tbc	Independent Senior Academic
	tbc	Independent Senior Academic
	Mr Sean McGuickin	Director of Human Resources
	Mrs Karis Hewitt	Research Policy Manager
Serviced by:	Research Policy Office	
Reports to:	UMB, through Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Postgraduates) – delegated lead member from UMB and Chair of REF Faculty Review Panels.	

Faculty Reading Groups

Terms of Reference:	
<p>(a) To review, assess and provide guidance on research impact case studies, impact statements and environment statements for all UoAs within the relevant Faculty throughout REF2014 preparations..</p> <p>(b) To report outcomes of review processes through Faculty Deans to the relevant REF Faculty Review Panels.</p> <p>(c) To liaise and consult with external users of research where possible to inform the development of case studies and collate evidence of impact.</p>	
Membership:	
<u>Composition</u>	Position
Chair:	Faculty Dean or nominee
	To comprise a group of <i>circa</i> 4 academic researchers and external users of research.
Serviced by:	Faculty Administrator
Reports to:	REF Faculty Review Panels (via Faculty Dean)

Unit of Assessment Reading Groups

Terms of Reference:	
<p>(a) To coordinate the peer review of research outputs proposed for REF submission and provide provisional quality scores to inform REF2014 review and assessment processes.</p> <p>(b) To report outcomes of review processes through UoA Champions to the relevant REF Faculty Review Panels.</p> <p>(c) To seek external review where possible and to ensure that assessment processes are robust and consistent.</p>	
Membership:	
<u>Composition</u>	Position
Chair:	Head of School or nominee
	UoA Champion and a small number of senior academic researchers from within the disciplines covered by the UoA.
Serviced by:	School Administrator
Reports to:	REF Faculty Review Panels

Queen's University Belfast: REF2014 Code of Practice
Annex B – Communications Plan

This programme of communications activity has been developed in order to ensure that as far as possible all eligible staff are made aware of this Code and the processes for the selection of staff for inclusion within. Every reasonable effort will be made to publicise the Code to all eligible academic staff across the institution, including individuals who are absent from work or on unpaid leave of absence or secondment. The following key communication activities will take place following submission of the code in July 2012 to the Funding Councils.

Activity	Format	Date
Briefing sessions for Heads of School and UoA Champions to raise awareness and understanding of the Code	Briefing session	Mid – End July 2012
Code made available via Queen's Online and Queen's University REF2014 web pages.	Online	Beginning of August 2012
'All staff' email circulation. To include a link to the Code on University REF2014 web pages, raise awareness of the process for disclosure of individual staff circumstances and invite staff to attend briefing sessions.	Email	Beginning of August 2012
Hard-copy circulation of Code to all eligible staff who are absent from work or on unpaid leave of absence or on secondment. To raise awareness of the process for disclosure of individual staff circumstances and invite staff to attend briefing sessions.	Hard-copy circulation	Beginning of August 2012
Briefing sessions for all eligible staff. To raise awareness of the Code and highlight the process for disclosure of individual staff circumstances. To arrange three sessions taking place over a number of weeks.	Briefing sessions	Mid-August – End September 2012

All communication activity relating to the Code will be led by the REF Manager and REF Administrator, within the Research and Enterprise Directorate.

Queen's University Belfast: REF2014 Code of Practice
Annex C – Equality and Diversity Training

All members of staff involved in the decision-making or appeals processes, as well as those staff with REF management responsibilities, will be required to undertake equality and diversity training prior to the REF mock exercise in autumn 2012. This includes REF Faculty Review Panels, the REF Equality and Diversity Panel and the Appeals Panel.

The training programme will be tailored to the REF2014 process and will be based on the training materials provided on the ECU website (<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/documents/ref-materials/training-pack>). The programme will be managed and delivered by the University's Equal Opportunities Manager.

To ensure relevant staff members are trained as close as possible to the 2012 autumn mock REF exercise, 3-4 training sessions will be scheduled during **weeks beginning 24 September and 1 October 2012.**

**Paragraphs 63-91 of REF 01.2012 [Panel criteria and working methods](#) Part 1:
Generic statement (January 2012)**

Staff and individual staff circumstances

Amendment to 'guidance on submissions': Following consultation on the draft panel criteria, the arrangements concerning maternity, paternity and adoption leave in 'guidance on submissions' have been amended, and are now superseded by the guidance as stated below.

For completeness, the full set of arrangements concerning individual staff circumstances are set out in paragraphs 64-91 of this document, which replace paragraphs 88-95 of 'guidance on submissions'.

63. The criteria for determining which staff are eligible to be included in institutions' submissions are common for all UOAs, and are set out in 'guidance on submissions' (paragraphs 78-83).

64. Up to four research outputs must be listed against each member of staff included in the submission. A maximum of four outputs per researcher will provide panels with a sufficient selection of research outputs from each submitted unit upon which to base judgements about the quality of that unit's outputs. Consultations on the development of the REF confirmed that this is an appropriate maximum volume of research outputs for the purposes of assessment.

65. As a key measure to support equality and diversity in research careers, in all UOAs individuals may be returned with fewer than four outputs without penalty in the assessment, where their individual circumstances have significantly constrained their ability to produce four outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period. This measure is intended to encourage institutions to submit all their eligible staff who have produced excellent research.

66. HEIs are allowed to list the maximum of four outputs against any researcher, irrespective of their circumstances or the length of time they have had to conduct research. A minimum of one output must be listed against each individual submitted to the REF.

67. In order to provide clarity and consistency on the number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty, there will be a **clearly defined** reduction in outputs for those types of circumstances listed at paragraph 69a. Circumstances that are more **complex** will require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs; these are listed at paragraph 69b. Arrangements have been put in place for complex circumstances to be considered on a consistent basis, as described at paragraphs 88-91.

68. Where an individual is submitted with fewer than four outputs and they do not satisfy the criteria described at paragraphs 69-91 below, any 'missing' outputs will be graded as 'unclassified'.

69. Category A and C staff may be returned with fewer than four outputs without penalty in the assessment, if one or more of the following circumstances significantly constrained their ability to produce four outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period:

- a. Circumstances with a **clearly defined** reduction in outputs, which are:

- i. Qualifying as an early career researcher (on the basis set out in paragraph 72 and Table 1 below).
 - ii. Absence from work due to working part-time, secondments or career breaks (on the basis set out in paragraphs 73-74 and Table 2 below).
 - iii. Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave (on the basis set out in paragraphs 75-81).
 - iv. Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6, as defined at paragraph 86.
- b. **Complex circumstances** that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:
- i. Disability. This is defined in 'guidance on submissions' Part 4, Table 2 under 'Disability'.
 - ii. Ill health or injury.
 - iii. Mental health conditions.
 - iv. Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of – or justify the reduction of further outputs in addition to – the allowances made in paragraph 75 below.
 - v. Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member).
 - vi. Gender reassignment.
 - vii. Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed at paragraph 190 of 'guidance of submissions' or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

Clearly defined circumstances

70. Where an individual has one or more circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs, the number of outputs that may be reduced should be determined according to the tables and guidance in paragraphs 72-86 below. All sub-panels will accept a reduction in outputs according to this guidance and will assess the remaining number of submitted outputs without any penalty.

71. In REF1b, submissions must include sufficient details of the individual's circumstances to show that these criteria have been applied correctly. The panel secretariat will examine the information in the first instance and advise the sub-panels on whether sufficient information has been provided and the guidance applied correctly. The panel secretariat will be trained to provide such advice, on a consistent basis across all UOAs. Where the sub-panel judges that the criteria have not been met, the 'missing' output(s) will be recorded as unclassified. (For example, an individual became an early career researcher in January 2011 but only one output is submitted

rather than two. In this case the submitted output will be assessed, and the 'missing' output recorded as unclassified.)

Early career researchers

72. Early career researchers are defined in paragraphs 85-86 of 'guidance on submissions'. Table 1 sets out the permitted reduction in outputs without penalty in the assessment for early career researchers who meet this definition.

Table 1 Early career researchers: permitted reduction in outputs

Date at which the individual first met the REF definition of an early career researcher:	Number of outputs may be reduced by up to:
On or before 31 July 2009	0
Between 1 August 2009 and 31 July 2010 inclusive	1
Between 1 August 2010 and 31 July 2011 inclusive	2
On or after 1 August 2011	3

Absence from work due to part-time working, secondments or career breaks

73. Table 2 sets out the permitted reduction in outputs without penalty in the assessment for absence from work due to:

- a. part-time working
- b. secondments or career breaks outside of the higher education sector, and in which the individual did not undertake academic research.

Table 2 Part-time working, secondments or career breaks: permitted reduction in outputs

Total months absent between 1 January 2008 and 31 October 2013 due to working part-time, secondment or career break:	Number of outputs may be reduced by up to:
0-11.99	0
12-27.99	1
28-45.99	2
46 or more	3

74. The allowances in Table 2 are based on the length of the individual's absence or time away from working in higher education. They are defined in terms of total months absent from work. For part-time working, the equivalent 'total months absent' should be calculated by multiplying the number of months worked part-time by the full-time equivalent (FTE) **not** worked during those months. For example, an individual worked part-time for 30 months at 0.6 FTE. The number of equivalent months absent = $30 \times 0.4 = 12$.

Qualifying periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave

75. Individuals may reduce the number of outputs by one, for each discrete period of:

- a. Statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave taken substantially during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2013, regardless of the length of the leave.
- b. Additional paternity or adoption leave¹ lasting for four months or more, taken substantially during the period 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2013.

76. The approach to these circumstances is based on the funding bodies' considered judgement that the impact of such a period of leave and the arrival of a new child into a family is generally sufficiently disruptive of an individual's research work to justify the reduction of an output. This judgement was informed by the consultation on draft panel criteria, in which an overwhelming majority of respondents supported such an approach.

77. The funding bodies' decision not to have a minimum qualifying period for maternity leave was informed by the sector's clear support for this approach in the consultation; recognition of the potential physical implications of pregnancy and childbirth; and the intention to remove any artificial barriers to the inclusion of women in submissions, given that women were significantly less likely to be selected in former RAE exercises.

78. The funding bodies consider it appropriate to make the same provision for those regarded as the 'primary adopter' of a child (that is, a person who takes statutory adoption leave), as the adoption of a child and taking of statutory adoption leave is generally likely to have a comparable impact on a researcher's work to that of taking maternity leave.

79. As regards additional paternity or adoption leave, researchers who take such leave will also have been away from work and acting as the primary carer of a new child within a family. The funding bodies consider that where researchers take such leave over a significant period (four months or more), this is likely to have an impact on their ability to work productively on research that is comparable to the impact on those taking maternity or statutory adoption leave.

¹ 'Additional paternity or adoption leave' refers to leave of up to 26 weeks which is taken to care for a child where the person's spouse, partner or civil partner was entitled to statutory maternity leave or statutory adoption leave, and has since returned to work. The term 'additional paternity leave' is often used to describe this type of leave although it may be taken by parents of either gender. For the purposes of the REF we refer to this leave as 'additional paternity or adoption leave'.

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

- a. By seeking a reduction in outputs under the provision for complex circumstances, for example where the period of leave had an impact in combination with other factors such as ongoing childcare responsibilities.
- b. By combining the number of months for shorter periods of such leave in combination with other clearly defined circumstances, according to Table 2.

81. Any period of maternity, adoption or paternity leave that qualifies for the reduction of an output under the provisions in paragraph 75 above may in individual cases be associated with prolonged constraints on work that justify the reduction of more than one output. In such cases, the circumstances should be explained using the arrangements for complex circumstances.

Combining clearly defined circumstances

82. Where individuals have had a combination of circumstances with clearly defined reductions in outputs, these may be accumulated up to a maximum reduction of three outputs. For each circumstance, the relevant reduction should be applied and added together to calculate the total maximum reduction.

83. Where Table 1 is combined with Table 2, the period of time since 1 January 2008 up until the individual met the definition of an early career researcher should be calculated in months, and Table 2 should be applied.

84. When combining circumstances, only one circumstance should be taken into account for any period of time during which they took place simultaneously. (For example, an individual worked part-time throughout the assessment period and first met the definition of an early career researcher on 1 September 2009. In this case the number of months 'absent' due to part-time working should be calculated from 1 September 2009 onwards, and combined with the reduction due to qualifying as an early career researcher, as indicated in paragraph 83 above.)

85. Where an individual has a combination of circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs **and** complex circumstances, the institution should submit these collectively as 'complex' so that a single judgement can be made about the appropriate reduction in outputs, taking into account all the circumstances. Those circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs should be calculated according to the guidance above (paragraphs 72-84).

Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6

86. In UOAs 1-6, the number of outputs may be reduced by up to two, without penalty in the assessment, for the following:

- a. Category A staff who are junior clinical academics. These are defined as clinically qualified academics who are still completing their clinical training in medicine or dentistry

and have not gained a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) or its equivalent prior to 31 October 2013.

b. Category C staff who are employed primarily as clinical, health or veterinary professionals (for example by the NHS), and whose research is primarily focused in the submitting unit.

87. These allowances are made on the basis that the staff concerned are normally significantly constrained in the time they have available to undertake research during the assessment period. The reduction of two outputs takes account of significant constraints on research work, and is normally sufficient to also take account of additional circumstances that may have affected the individual's research work. Where the individual meets the criteria at paragraph 86, and has had significant additional circumstances – for any of the reasons at paragraph 69 – the institution may return the circumstances as 'complex' with a reduction of three outputs, and provide a justification for this.

Complex circumstances

88. Where staff have had one or more complex circumstances – including in combination with any circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs – the institution will need to make a judgement on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs submitted, and provide a rationale for this judgement.

89. As far as is practicable, the information in REF1b should provide an estimate – in terms of the equivalent number of months absent from work – of the impact of the complex circumstances on the individual's ability to work productively throughout the assessment period, and state any further constraints on the individual's research work in addition to the equivalent months absent. A reduction should be made according to Table 2 in relation to estimated months absent from work, with further constraints taken into account as appropriate. To aid institutions the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) will publish worked examples of complex circumstances, which will indicate how these calculations can be made and the appropriate reduction in outputs for a range of complex circumstances. These will be available at www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/REF from February 2012.

90. All submitted complex circumstances will be considered by the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP), on a consistent basis across all UOAs. The membership and terms of reference of the EDAP are available at www.ref.ac.uk under Equality and diversity. The EDAP will make recommendations about the appropriate number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty to the relevant main panel chairs, who will make the decisions. The relevant sub-panels will then be informed of the decisions and will assess the remaining outputs without any penalty.

91. To enable individuals to disclose the information in a confidential manner, information submitted about individuals' complex circumstances will be kept confidential to the REF team, the EDAP and main panel chairs, and will be destroyed on completion of the REF (as described in 'guidance on submissions', paragraphs 98-99).

Research Excellence Framework 2014

Disclosure of individual staff circumstances

To: All members of staff eligible for return in REF 2014
From: REF Manager, Research and Enterprise
Subject: REF 2014, consideration of individual staff circumstances

Queen's University Belfast is committed to ensuring that decisions about selecting staff for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) are made in a fair, transparent and consistent manner. Information on how eligible staff will be selected for submission to the REF can be found in the Queen's University Code of Practice which can be found at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/ResearchEnterprise/ResearchPolicyOffice/ResearchExcellenceFramework/REFCodeofPractice> .

To ensure that REF processes are fair, Queen's University is collecting data on individual circumstances from staff eligible for submission. The data will be used to identify which staff are eligible for submission with fewer than four outputs. Summary level data collected may also inform the University's monitoring of staff selection procedures at the institutional level.

In determining whether eligible staff may be submitted to the REF with fewer than four research outputs, Queen's University will take the following circumstances into consideration:

Clearly defined circumstances

- = Early career researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2009)
- = Part time employment
- = Career break or secondment outside of the higher education sector in which the individual did not undertake academic research
- = Maternity leave, statutory adoption leave, and additional paternity leave (taken by partners of new mothers or co-adopters)
- = Other circumstances that apply in UOAs 1-6, relating to junior clinical academics and Category C staff employed primarily in as clinical, health or veterinary professions.

Complex circumstances

- = Disability (including conditions such as cancer and chronic fatigue)
- = Ill health or injury
- = Mental health conditions
- = Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding, adoption, paternity or childcare **in addition to** periods of maternity, statutory adoption or additional paternity leave taken. This could include for example, pregnancy related illness and health and safety restrictions in laboratory and field work.
- = Other caring responsibilities (including caring for an elderly or disabled relative)

If your research output has been affected by other circumstances, not including teaching and administration that are not listed above, please detail them on this form as they may be considered.

In determining the number of outputs staff are required to submit, the institution will observe the definitions of individual staff circumstances provided in the published REF 'Panel criteria and working methods' (January 2012) available at www.ref.ac.uk under 'Publications'.

What action do I need to take?

Eligible staff members will be required to disclose their individual staff circumstances via the attached form, should they wish these to be taken into consideration for the purposes of the REF. The University strongly encourages all staff eligible for REF submission to complete the form.

Once completed, the attached form should be signed and returned in hard copy to **REF Manager, Research and Enterprise, 63 University Road.**

If further information is required about any circumstances disclosed, you will be contacted by the REF Manager.

Who will see the information that I provide?

Within the University, the disclosure process will be coordinated by the University's REF Manager and disclosed information will be managed confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's policies on data protection, security and records management.

- For **circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs**, the information that you provide will be seen by the relevant Faculty REF Review Panel, the University Management Board and administrative staff within the Research Policy Office. This information will relate to early career researcher status, part-time working, career breaks or secondments, and periods of maternity, additional paternity or adoption leave taken. Where an individual initiates the appeal process, the information will be made available to members of the University's REF Appeals Panel.
- For **complex circumstances**, the information that you provide will be seen by the the University's REF Equality and Diversity Panel only. This will be information to explain the impact on research of circumstances such as disability, ill health, injury, mental health conditions, gender reassignment, caring responsibilities or constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding, adoption and paternity (in addition to the period of leave taken). The panel will receive anonymised information prepared by the REF Manager and will be informed by REF and ECU guidance in making a judgement on the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs. The panel will also be responsible for developing an appropriate evidenced case as part of the REF2014 submission. The REF Manager, as a member of the University's REF Equality and Diversity Panel, will communicate directly with the individual concerned regarding the number of outputs required. The REF Faculty Review Panel will be notified only of the required number of outputs and that complex

Annex E – Individual Circumstances Disclosure Form

individual circumstances exist. No other details will be released in relation to complex individual circumstances, except where an individual initiates the appeal process. In the case of an appeal, this information will be made available to members of the University's REF Appeals Panel.

External to the University, information provided on the form may be shared for the purposes of evidencing any reduction in the number of research outputs:

- For **circumstances with a clearly defined reduction in outputs**, information will be seen by the relevant REF sub-panel, the REF panel secretariat and the UK funding bodies' REF team. This will be information about early career researcher status, part-time working, career breaks or secondments, and periods of maternity, additional paternity or adoption leave taken.
- For **complex circumstances**, information will be seen only by the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, the REF Main Panel Chairs and the UK funding bodies' REF team. This will be information to explain the impact on your research of circumstances such as disability, ill health, injury, mental health conditions, gender reassignment, caring responsibilities or constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding, adoption and paternity (in addition to the period of leave taken). This information will **not** be seen by the REF sub-panel.

All REF panel members, chairs and secretaries are bound by confidentiality requirements, and acceptance of the confidentiality requirements is a condition of their appointment to the role. No information relating to identifiable individuals' circumstances will be published by the funding bodies REF Team. All data collected, stored and processed by the UK funding bodies REF Team will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The REF Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions

www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02_11/, requires all higher education institutions participating in the REF to ensure appropriate confidentiality in handling individual staff circumstances.

What if my circumstances change?

Queen's University recognises that staff circumstances may change between now and 31 October 2013. If this is the case, and you wish these circumstances to be taken into consideration, it would be important that you download a copy of the attached form at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/ResearchEnterprise/ResearchPolicyOffice/ResearchExcellenceFramework/REFCodeofPractice> and return it, signed and in hard copy format, to **REF Manager, Research and Enterprise, 63 University Road.**

Queen's University Belfast: REF2014 Code of Practice
Annex E – Individual Circumstances Disclosure Form
Individual staff circumstances disclosure form

Name	
School	

Section one:

Please select one of the following:

- ☐ I have no individual circumstances that I wish to be taken into consideration for the purposes of the Research Excellence Framework (REF). *(Please complete section four only)*
- ☐ I have individual circumstances that I wish to make known but I am not seeking a reduction in research outputs for the purposes of the Research Excellence Framework (REF). *(Please complete sections two, three and four)*
- ☐ I have individual circumstances that I wish to make known and I am seeking a reduction in research outputs for the purposes of the Research Excellence Framework (REF). *(Please complete sections two, three and four)*

Section two

I wish to make the University aware of the following circumstances which have had an impact on my ability to produce four outputs or work productively between 1 January 2008 and 31 October 2013:

Please indicate all relevant circumstances by ticking the appropriate box(es) below and providing the necessary information.

Clearly defined circumstances

☐ **Early career researcher** (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2009)

Please identify the date on which you became an early career researcher and provide details of your research career history.

☐ **Part time working**

Please provide details of the FTE, timing and duration in months of your part-time working.

☐ **Career break or secondment outside of the higher education sector**

Please provide details of the timing and duration of the circumstance(s) in months and information about the nature of the circumstance(s).

☐ **Maternity leave, statutory adoption leave, or additional paternity leave (taken by partners of new mothers or co-adopters)**

Please provide details on which type of leave was taken, the timing and duration of the circumstance(s) in months.

☐ **Other circumstances that apply in UoAs 1-6**

Please provide details of the timing and duration of the circumstance(s) in months and information about the nature of the circumstance(s).

Complex circumstances

- ☐ Disability
- ☐ Mental health condition
- ☐ Ill health or injury
- ☐ Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding, paternity, adoption or childcare
- ☐ Other caring responsibilities (including caring for an elderly or disabled relative)
- ☐ Gender reassignment
- ☐ Other exceptional and relevant reasons, not including teaching or administrative work

If you have ticked any of the boxes above, please describe the nature of the circumstance(s) and their impact on your ability to fulfil contractual hours and other impacts on your ability to undertake research. Please give details of the timing and duration of the circumstance(s) in months.

Section three:

Please select as appropriate:

- ☐ I would like to be contacted by a member of Equal Opportunities staff to discuss my circumstances and requirements and/or the support provided by Queen's University Belfast. My contact details for this purpose are:

Email	
Telephone	
Preferred method of communication	

- ☐ I do **not** wish to be contacted by a member of Equal Opportunities staff.

Queen's University Belfast: REF2014 Code of Practice
Annex E – Individual Circumstances Disclosure Form
Section four:

Please confirm the following:

☐ **I confirm that the information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances.**

☐ **I consent to the information I have provided being used for REF purposes and recognise that it will be seen by the relevant Faculty REF Review Panel, the University Management Board and staff within the Research Policy Office and/or the University's REF Equality and Diversity Panel. Upon appeal, I recognise that this information will be made available to members of the University's REF Appeals Panel.**

☐ **I consent to Queen's University sharing information with the UK funding bodies' REF team, who may make the information available to REF panel chairs, members and secretaries and/or the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel. [Where permission is not provided Queen's University will be limited in the action it can take.]**

Signature: Date:
(Staff member)

Age	<p>All employees within the higher education sector are protected from unlawful age discrimination in employment under the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or if they are associated with a person of a particular age group.</p> <p>Age discrimination can occur when people of a particular age group are treated less favourably than people in other age groups. An age group could be for example, people of the same age, the under 30s or people aged 45-50. A person can belong to a number of different age groups.</p> <p>Age discrimination will not be unlawful if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. However, in the context of the REF, the view of the funding bodies is that if a researcher produces excellent research an HEI will not be able to justify not submitting them because of the their age group.</p> <p>It is important to note that early career researchers are likely to come from a range of age groups. The definition of early career researcher used in the REF is not limited to young people.</p> <p>HEIs should also note that given developments in equalities law in the UK and Europe, the default retirement age was abolished from 1 October 2011 in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.</p>
Disability	<p>The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) (Northern Ireland) and the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 prevent unlawful discrimination relating to disability. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to have a disability or if they are associated with a person who is disabled, for example, if they are responsible for caring for a disabled family member.</p> <p>A person is considered to be disabled if they have or have had a physical and/or mental impairment which has 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. Long-term impairments include those that last or are likely to last for at least 12 months.</p> <p>Cancer, HIV, multiple sclerosis and progressive/degenerative conditions are disabilities too, even if they do not currently have an adverse effect on the carrying out of day-to-day activities.</p> <p>The definition of disability is different in Northern Ireland in that a list of day-to-day activities is referred to.</p> <p>While there is no definitive list of what is considered a disability, it covers a wide</p>

	<p>range of impairments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sensory impairments • impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as rheumatoid arthritis, depression and epilepsy • progressive impairments, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, HIV and cancer • organ-specific impairments, including respiratory conditions and cardiovascular diseases • developmental impairments, such as autistic spectrum disorders and dyslexia • mental health conditions such as depression and eating disorders • impairments caused by injury to the body or brain. <p>It is important for HEIs to note that people who have had a past disability are also protected from discrimination, victimisation and harassment because of disability.</p> <p>Equality law requires HEIs to anticipate the needs of disabled people and make reasonable adjustments for them. Failure to make a reasonable adjustment constitutes discrimination. If a disabled researcher's impairment has affected the quantity of their research outputs, they may be submitted with a reduced number of outputs.</p>
Gender reassignment	<p>The Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 protect from discrimination trans people who have proposed, started or completed a process to change their sex. Staff in HE do not have to be under medical supervision to be afforded protection because of gender reassignment and staff are protected if they are perceived to be undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment. They are also protected if they are associated with someone who has proposed, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment.</p> <p>Trans people who undergo gender reassignment will need to take time off for appointments and in some cases, for medical assistance. The transition process is lengthy, often taking several years and it is likely to be a difficult period for the trans person as they seek recognition of their new gender from their family, friends, employer and society as a whole.</p> <p>Consequently, staff within HEIs with responsibility for REF submissions must ensure that the information they receive about gender reassignment is treated with particular care.</p> <p>Staff whose ability to work productively throughout the REF assessment period</p>

	<p>has been constrained due to gender reassignment may be submitted with a reduced number of research outputs. Information about the member of staff will be kept confidential as described in paragraph 98.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>Under the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 as amended, individuals are protected from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of marriage and civil partnership status. The protection from discrimination is to ensure that people who are married or in a civil partnership receive the same benefits and treatment in employment. The protection from discrimination does not apply to single people.</p> <p>In relation to the REF HEIs must ensure that their processes for selecting staff do not inadvertently discriminate against staff who are married or in civil partnerships.</p>
Political opinion	<p>The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 protects staff from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of political opinion.</p> <p>HEIs should be aware of not making any judgements about the selection of staff for REF submissions based on their political opinion.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>Under the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 women are protected from unlawful discrimination related to pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p>Consequently researchers who have taken time out of work or whose ability to work productively throughout the assessment period because of pregnancy and/or maternity, may be submitted with a reduced number of research outputs, as set out in paragraphs 90-100 and in the panel criteria documents.</p> <p>In addition, HEIs should ensure that female researchers who are pregnant or on maternity leave are kept informed about and included in their submissions process.</p> <p>For the purposes of this summary it is important to note that primary adopters have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave.</p>
Race	<p>The Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination connected to race. The definition of race includes colour, ethnic or national origins or nationality. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular race.</p> <p>HEIs should be aware of not making any judgements about the selection of staff for REF submissions based on their race or assumed race (for example, based</p>

	on their name).
Religion and belief including non-belief	<p>The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination to do with religion or belief. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with a person of a particular religion or belief.</p> <p>HEIs should be aware of not making any judgements about the selection of staff for REF submissions based on their actual or perceived religion or belief, including non-belief.</p>
Sex (including breastfeeding and additional paternity and adoption leave)	<p>The Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination to do with sex. Employees are also protected because of their perceived sex or because of their association with someone of a particular sex.</p> <p>From 3 April 2011, partners of new mothers and secondary adopters will be entitled to up to 26 weeks of additional paternity and adoption leave. People who take additional paternity or adoption leave will have similar entitlements to women on maternity leave and barriers that exist to taking the leave, or as a result of having taken it, could constitute unlawful sex discrimination. Consequently researchers who have taken additional paternity and adoption leave may be submitted with a reduced number of outputs, as set out in paragraphs 90-100 and in the panel criteria documents.</p> <p>HEIs need to be wary of selecting researchers by any criterion that it would be easier for men to comply with than women, or vice versa. There are many cases where a requirement to work full-time (or less favourable treatment of people working part-time or flexibly) has been held to discriminate unlawfully against women.</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 protect HEI staff from unlawful discrimination to do with sexual orientation. Individuals are also protected if they are perceived to be or are associated with someone who is of a particular sexual orientation.</p> <p>HEIs should be aware of not making any judgements about the selection of staff for REF submissions based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation.</p>