

# Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 Faculty Town Hall meetings, October 2019

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# Introduction

- This presentation is a follow up from University town hall briefing last September 2018 (which gave REF basics).
- A lot has happened since then!
- This presentation focuses on our REF Code of Practice and individual staff circumstances
- Reminder of key changes since REF 2014.....

# Overall quality

Outputs

Impact

Environment

FTE x 2.5 = number of  
outputs required

Impact case studies

Environment data and  
template

60%

25%

15%

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# Key changes since REF 2014

- All staff with 'significant responsibility for research' to be returned. Staff census date **31st July 2020**
- Submitted staff to submit between 1 and 5 outputs
- Each UoA total outputs = 2.5 times submitted staff FTE (but **total outputs pool can be reduced for individual staff circumstances**)
- Institutions can submit outputs from staff who have left (if output made publicly available during eligible employment)
- REF Code of Practice required by HEIs, to cover process for:
  - Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research
  - Determining research independence
  - Selecting outputs

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# Key changes since REF 2014 (continued)

- Outputs ‘in scope’ must meet open access requirements i.e. journal article or conference contribution/proceedings accepted for publication on or after 1st April 2016
- Impact similar to REF 2014, impacts on teaching now eligible, impact template included in environment, advance evidence
- Institutional level environment template, to inform unit level information, piloted but not assessed
- Interdisciplinary indicator/flag on outputs
- Measures to support equality and diversity in CoP and environment template
- Greater consistency in panel criteria and working methods

# Keele's REF Code of Practice

- Approved by Research England and EDAP
- Thank you for your contributions

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/research/raise/researchexcellenceframework/#what-is-keele-s-ref-2021-code-of-practice?>

- 4 Processes (within 35 pages & 7 Annexes)
  - Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research
  - Determining research independence
  - Selecting outputs
  - Individual staff circumstances
- Implementation now begins

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# Reminder of definitions

Category A **eligible staff**: academic staff, with a contract of employment of 0.2FTE or greater, on Keele payroll (31st July 2020), whose primary function is to undertake either 'research only' or 'research and teaching.'

**Staff with significant responsibility for research** are those for whom explicit time and resources are made available to engage actively in independent research and that is an expectation of their job role

Workload allocations (2019/20) which allocate 20% or more of an individual's time for research are considered the indicator of recognition of significant responsibility for research at Keele University

# Definitions continued

**Research independence:** an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme

Category A **submitted staff:** those who have been identified as having significant responsibility for research on the census date (31st July 2020). Staff on research only contracts should meet the definition of research independence.

*Funding bodies have confirmed that a list of submitted staff will not be produced at the end of REF.*

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# Process for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research or research independence

Date	Group	Detail
Summer 2019	EDI training	All decision makers
Autumn 2019	UoA Staff groups (x17)	Make recommendations
Winter 2020	REF Strategy Steering Group	Make final decisions
Feb/March 2020	Outcome letter to eligible staff	Opportunity to appeal
Spring 2020	REF appeals panel	Appeal upheld /rejected

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# Details of UoA staff groups & RSSG membership

UoA staff group: PVC Research (Chair)  
UoA lead(s)  
Dean(s) for Research or equivalent role  
Faculty Executive Dean/PVC(s)  
Head(s) of School  
EDI rep from Human Resources  
Representative from [Research Operations](#) (secretary)

## **REF Strategy Steering Group (RSSG)**

Members: Vice Chancellor (Chair)  
Deputy Vice Chancellor  
PVC Research & Enterprise  
Director of Research, Innovation and Engagement  
Head of Research Strategy Delivery  
REF 2014 panel member  
Head of Research Quality  
Head of Human Resources

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# Appeals process

2 possible grounds of appeal:

1. Procedural irregularity i.e. criteria not applied correctly
2. Information not available to the group, at time of meeting

## Membership:

Deputy Pro-Chancellor & member of Council (Chair)

PVC Education

Academic Registrar

HR Director

2 Professors from Keele University

*Note the appeals panel is made up of individuals who are independent of the decision making process, and haven't been involved in the UoA meetings or RSSG*

If the appeal is upheld, this decision is final, and will be reported to RSSG and the UoA outputs group.

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# Process for the selection of outputs

<b>Date</b>	<b>Detail</b>
By March 2020	UoA lead has allocated outputs for internal review
By June 2020	Final output score entered on UoA sheet. All UoA outputs are ranked based on score
UoA outputs group, make final selection	Top X outputs are selected, ensuring min 1 and max of 5 outputs attributed to each person (*approved output reductions fed in from Keele individual circumstances panel)
Final output selections approved by RSSG (alongside equality analysis of the distribution of outputs)	

# Details of UoA output group membership

- Faculty Executive Dean(s) - Chair
- PVC Research
- Dean(s) for Research
- UoA lead(s)
- Head of Research Quality

The **purpose** of the UoA outputs group is to select the required number of outputs for the UoA, based on those which are highest scoring and ensuring a minimum of 1 and maximum of 5 outputs per REF submitted staff (unless in exceptional circumstances the minimum of 1 has been excluded).

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# Individual circumstances timetable

Date	Detail
September 2019	Keele's approved CoP and individual staff circumstances form available on website <a href="http://keele.ac.uk/ref">keele.ac.uk/ref</a> plus any queries to <a href="mailto:ref.circumstances@keele.ac.uk">ref.circumstances@keele.ac.uk</a>
September	Heads of School to email all staff to disseminate CoP
October	3x Faculty Town Hall meetings on CoP
29th Nov	*Initial* deadline for circumstances forms
December	Keele Individual Circumstances Panel
6th March 2020	Deadline for output reduction requests/cases to be submitted to EDAP

# Applicable individual circumstances

- Qualifying as an ECR (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016)
- Absence from work due to secondment or career breaks outside the HE sector
- Qualifying periods of family-related leave
- Junior clinical academics who have not gained a Certificate of Completion of training by 31 July 2020
- Disability (including chronic conditions)
- Ill health, injury or mental health conditions
- Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of the standard allowances
- Caring responsibilities
- Gender reassignment
- Other circumstances

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# Individual Circumstances googleform

- Where individual circumstances have had **an exceptional effect** on their ability to work productively through the REF period, a request may be made for the minimum of one output to be removed
- Completion and return of the form is voluntary, and individuals who do not choose to return it will not be put under any pressure to declare information if they do not wish to do so
- This form is the only means by which the University will be gathering this information; we will not be consulting HR records, contract start dates, etc.

# What happens with the individual staff circumstances?

Reported circumstances will be reviewed by Keele Individual Circumstances Panel (Dec 2019), who will consider:

- the collective circumstances in each Unit of Assessment to see if a Unit has been adversely affected by circumstances.
  - If it is deemed so, they will put in a request to EDAP for a reduction in number of required outputs (required by 6th March 2020)
- Where individual circumstances have had an exceptional effect on an individual (min. of one output to be removed)
- EDAP will not require any further information, apart from the evidence of staff declaration (except ECRs, junior clinical academics and career breaks)

# Ensuring confidentiality

Only the Keele Individual Circumstances Panel will see the individual circumstances googleforms.

- PVC Research & Enterprise
- Head of Human Resources
- Head of Research Quality
- Research Operations Officer

This panel will report to RSSG and UoA outputs groups, any reductions in output numbers (no further details will be shared).

This is apart from where circumstances have had an exceptional effect on the ability of an individual staff member to research productively throughout the period, so that have had the required minimum of one output removed. The UoA outputs group won't be given details of circumstances, just informed where zero outputs are required for a researcher.

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# Reminder of external REF timetable

December 2019	Survey of Submission intentions completion All HEIs Codes of Practice, published on websites
6th March 2020	Deadline for staff circumstances requests
31st July 2020	Staff census date, end of assessment period (impact, environment, data about research income and doctoral degrees awarded)
27th November 2020	Closing date for submissions
31st December 2020	End of publication period
29th January 2021	Deadline for corroborating evidence for impact case studies
Throughout 2021	Panel assesses submissions
December 2021	Results
Spring 2022	Publication of submissions

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