

REF2021 Code of Practice
University of Westminster

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Part 1: Introduction

1.1 Context

This Code of Practice sets out the procedural framework that underlies the University of Westminster's submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021. The REF is the process for assessing research in UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). It is undertaken by Research England on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies to: 1) provide accountability for public investment in research and produce evidence of the benefits of this investment; 2) provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks for use within the HE system and for public information; and 3) to inform the selective allocation of funding for research.

The assessment is carried out by expert sub-panels representing each of 34 subject-based units of assessment (UOAs), under the guidance of four main panels. For each submission to a UOA, three distinct elements are assessed: the quality of outputs (e.g. publications, performances, exhibitions, etc.), their impact beyond academia, and the research environment.

1.2 Purposes of the Code of Practice

By developing and setting out the procedural framework that underlies the University's REF submission in this Code of Practice, Westminster is committed to ensuring that our processes and submission accords with the University's purpose, mission and values, its existing 'Single Equality' and 'Diversity and Dignity at Work and Study' policies and plans, as well as with all relevant legislation. Westminster's Code of Practice is underpinned by the important obligation that the University has to ensure that its REF procedures do not discriminate unlawfully against, or otherwise have the effect of harassing or victimizing, individuals because of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, because they are pregnant or have recently given birth, or any other protected characteristic. This includes impacts on staff whose volume of research output has been limited for reasons covered by equalities legislation in circumstances recognised under the REF guidance. The Code also seeks to ensure that fractional and fixed-term staff are not discriminated against by any aspect of the University's REF procedures, including in the criteria for meeting the REF2021 requirements on staff submissions which require that all staff with 'significant responsibility for research' be returned.

The primary purposes of this Code are thus:

- To establish transparent, consistent, accountable and inclusive procedures to govern the University's REF2021 preparations;

- To define roles, responsibilities, terms of reference and criteria, and to ensure appropriate equality and diversity training, for all committees, groups and individuals involved in REF preparation and decisions;
- To outline the University's definitions of 'significant responsibility for research' and 'research independence' as criteria for staff eligibility for submission;
- To outline the University's processes and procedures for selecting outputs for submission to REF2021 in a consistent and transparent way across each of our Units of Assessment;
- To ensure that the University's REF processes and criteria are clearly communicated and widely disseminated in accessible forms across the University, including to staff who may be on leave of absence;
- To ensure that REF2021 preparations and decisions have due regard for equality and diversity duties;
- To ensure adherence to relevant existing University policies, including those concerning equality and diversity and dignity at work, in all aspects of Westminster's REF process;
- To provide for an appeals procedure, independent of other decision-making processes, for the review of decisions on which staff have research independence and/or significant responsibility for research, and to ensure that staff have adequate opportunity to complete the appeals process before the REF submission deadline;
- To ensure that there are robust procedures in place to enable staff to disclose any individual circumstances that may have affected their ability to research productively during the current REF period safely and confidentially;
- To demonstrate the alignment of University policy and procedure with best practice and legal requirements as set out in the REF2021 Guidance, 2010 Equality Act and by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU).

1.3 Relation of this Code to Institutional Policies and Strategies

The University's corporate social responsibility statement makes clear its commitment to supporting diversity and equal opportunities in all dealings with students, staff, applicants and the public across the institution. The University acknowledges, in particular, the special role of higher education in promoting equality of opportunity and furthering social inclusion. As such, all staff and students at Westminster are considered to have rights and responsibilities in relation to the promotion of equality of opportunity, and all members of staff and students are required to become familiar with - and observe - the spirit and letter of the University's equality and diversity related policies.

In developing this Code of Practice there has been a commitment to ensuring that our REF processes are embedded within and draw upon existing policies and plans. In support of the University's longer-term strategies for enhancing equality of opportunity, growth and sustainability, wherever possible we will also use the REF preparations, including the findings of the Equality Impact Assessments, to inform the

development of existing policies and activities more generally, in order to support the development of staff research within an inclusive environment beyond REF2021.

Outlined below are the specific key University policies that frame this Code.

1.3.1 Single Equality Policy and Plan (SEPP)

The University's commitment to creating a stimulating and supportive working environment based on mutual respect and trust is set out in our Single Equality Policy and Plan (SEPP), which was produced via consultation with staff and students between November 2014 and March 2015, and which was ratified by the University Court of Governors in October 2015 (see Appendix E). The SEPP replaced the University's previous Equal Opportunity Policy, and is integral to the ethos and values of the University. The SEPP was aligned to the previous University Strategy and also the current Strategy *Being Westminster 2018-2023*. The SEPP guarantees the opportunity for all 'staff and students to reach their full potential, regardless of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, marital/civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, ethnic or national origins, family circumstances, nationality, political beliefs and affiliations, socio-economic background, or other irrelevant distinction'. It also incorporates ongoing actions and recommendations identified through the annual statutory EDI report, and the action plans associated with the University's Athena Swan and HR Excellence in Research awards.

The University has committed to taking all necessary steps to implement effectively the SEPP since 2015 and to improve it through regular monitoring, consultation and review. Continuous development of plans supports the equality and diversity agenda by reporting on progress to date, and by providing an overarching action plan which addresses all equality strands. All reports prepared as a result of the SEPP and its implementation will be presented to the Human Resources Committee and University Executive Board.

1.3.2 Diversity and Dignity at Work and Study Policy

The University of Westminster Diversity and Dignity at Work and Study Policy was ratified by the University Court of Governors on 23 November 2016. This is specifically designed to protect the well-being of all members of the University. The purpose of this document is to set out the University's position on bullying and harassment (including victimisation) and to provide a framework for students and staff to bring complaints about such behaviours.

1.3.3 Further Key Policies

The following key policies and guidance (as reviewed and updated from time to time) are also equality-related and feed into the broader equality and diversity aims of the overarching Single Equality Policy at Westminster:

- Flexible Working Policies and Procedure
- Freedom of Speech – Code of Practice
- Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave and Pay Policies
- Parental Leave Policy
- Shared Parental Leave Policy
- Time Off for Dependents Policy
- The Transgender Equality Code of Conduct and guidance on transitioning at Westminster (developed in conjunction with the staff LGBTQ+ network)

Both the Single Equality and Diversity and Dignity at Work and Study policies are published on the University's public website (<http://www.westminster.ac.uk/policies-and-procedures>) and are available for download in a range of formats, including Word, PDF, plain text, and alternative formats such as large print or Braille on request. All our other relevant policies and guidance are available via the staff intranet SharePoint site. They have also been publicised internally through a variety of staff and student channels and were sent to all Heads of College, Directors and key committees for dissemination as widely as possible. An Annual Staff Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report with Appendices is also made available on the public website under Annual Reporting.

1.4 Ensuring Transparency, Consistency, Accountability, and Inclusivity

The following principles are an inherent part of the REF process and we outline below how they link to the University's approach to determining submissions to REF2021:

1.4.1 Transparency

The University recognises that the promotion of equality within any process requires that decisions are taken on the basis of clear, appropriate and justifiable criteria which are applied fairly and consistently by those with relevant knowledge and expertise. The processes and procedures outlined in this Code will be openly available and widely publicised within the University (Section 1.7). General criteria for defining significant responsibility for research and research independence, as well as procedures for the selection of outputs, are documented clearly within this Code, and individual Heads of School, College Research Directors, School Research Leads and UoA Leads will be required to clearly document any local discipline-specific practices underpinning the allocation of workload hours for research and for the selection of outputs, and to ensure that these are clearly articulated and publicised to all relevant staff. All documentation will be provided to the University REF Equality and Diversity Group, which reports to the REF2021 Sub-Committee, to evidence that Colleges, Schools and UoAs have adhered to the Code throughout the submission process.

1.4.2 Consistency

The principles underlying the decision-making process will be applied across the University in accordance with the framework presented within this Code. The allocation of research hours within overall staff workloads (Section 2), determination of research independence (Section 3) and selection decisions on outputs (Section 4) will be taken by staff with relevant expertise and appropriate awareness of current equality legislation and University equality and diversity policies, and their implications for the REF. Individual circumstances of all eligible staff, including those on fixed-term and/or fractional contracts, will also be judged by reference to clearly defined and consistent criteria (see 'Staff Circumstances' in Section 4). A series of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) will inform all policies and procedures, which will thus be kept under review as submissions are prepared. More detail on the latter is provided in Sections 2, 3 and 4 of this code.

1.4.3 Accountability

This code will ensure that responsibilities are clearly defined and that any individuals and bodies involved in assigning significant responsibility for research, defining research independence and coordinating the selection of outputs for REF submission are accountable and clearly indicated to all staff through our dissemination protocols. More detail on roles and responsibilities regarding REF2021 preparations and decision-making is provided in 'Institutional Management Framework' in section 1.5 below.

1.4.4. Inclusivity

The University's strategy and Code of Practice aims to ensure that all eligible staff who have a significant responsibility for research, as reflected in workload allocations, are included in the submission, so as to give as fully-rounded picture as possible of our research. The University values the contributions of all staff, regardless of the terms of their contracts. University policy ensures equal treatment for all staff including those on part-time and fixed-term contracts, who have the same contractual status and the same rights to research time, resources, support, staff development and promotion opportunities as do full-time and permanent staff. With regard to the REF2021 submission, all eligible academic staff including those on part-time and fixed-term contracts will be equally considered to meet the definition of staff with 'significant responsibility for research' in accordance with the process and criteria set out in this Code. Fixed-term and part-time staff will also be fully included in the dissemination protocols for all REF-related material.

To ensure inclusivity and transparency, the University will proactively communicate this code to all staff on either teaching and research or research only contracts, including those on leave of absence (see 'How this code is being communicated to staff' in this section below). The impact of the University's REF process and criteria on staff on fixed-term or fractional contracts, as well as groups with protected characteristics, will also be monitored through an analysis of rates of staff determined to have 'significant responsibility for research' and research independence, and of the selection of outputs in the reviews of the Equality Impact Assessments (see Sections 2, 3 and 4). The University will also make clear to all staff in each iteration of the

communication of this Code that, while its REF strategy is to maximise the quality of Westminster's submission as far as possible, decisions related to REF2021 will not be taken into account in any future promotion, progression, extension of contracts or performance management processes within the University. This conforms to the University's larger commitment to equality of status between research, teaching and other academic responsibilities, reflected in, for example, the opportunities for promotion to Professorial and Reader positions available under 'Teaching, Scholarly Activity and Leadership' and 'Business, Enterprise and Scholarly Activity' pathways.

1.5 Institutional Management Framework for REF2021

Ultimate responsibility for Westminster's preparations for REF2021 resides with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor who is University Executive Board Lead for the REF, and who chairs the University REF2021 Sub-Committee. Day-to-day management of REF processes across the University is overseen by the Head of the Research Office (advisory/coordination role) and by the University REF Director (decision-making role). The role of REF Director was advertised in late 2018 via email to all Readers and Professors in the University with applicants interviewed and appointed in an open process supported by HR following the process similar to those used for external appointments. A diagram of the key committee structures is shown in Appendix A. Terms of reference and memberships of committees is shown in Appendix B. Minutes and notes for REF-related meetings ensure a clear record of discussions and decisions, and will be held by the Research Office for reference and audit purposes.

1.6 Training for REF Decision Makers

Those involved in REF2021 decision-making processes, including the REF2021 Sub-committee, Heads of School, College Research Directors, School Research Leads, UoA Leads, internal reviewers and external advisors, and Appeals Panel members, will be expected to be fully conversant with equal opportunities issues and the legislative environment and its implications for the REF. Training (both online and workshops) will be mandatory for everyone undertaking key decisions on staff eligibility and selection of outputs, but will also be made available to staff more widely. Further details of specific training programmes can be found in Sections 2 and 4 below.

1.7 How this code is being communicated to staff

The University REF Director and Head of the Research Office staged an initial series of open briefings and consultation workshops across each of Westminster's four campuses in late January / early February 2019, attended by more than 150 colleagues. The slides from the two-hour briefings, covering all elements of the REF process and of internal preparations for REF2021, including provisional plans for the Code of Practice and definition of 'significant responsibility for research', were then uploaded onto the University's intranet site and publicised by the Westminster Weekly newsletter that is emailed to all staff, along with details on who to contact with any questions or feedback.

Following consultation with the University and College Union (UCU) and other key stakeholders in March and April 2019 (see section 2.2), the full draft Code of Practice was uploaded to the staff intranet site for individual feedback in early May 2019. Staff were asked to send any responses to a central Research Office email address: research-office@westminster.ac.uk. The option of providing comments anonymously via a feedback form was also provided. Comments received from staff were reviewed by the REF Director and taken into account (and responded to) in preparing the final version of the Code. The final version of the Code of Practice, as agreed by UCU (see Section 2.21), was then submitted to the University Research Committee and Academic Council for approval.

The final Code of Practice will be disseminated electronically to all eligible staff, and will be available on the REF section of the Researcher Support webpages of the University's public website. It will also be sent by post as well as to the personal (non-work) emails of any academic or research staff who are on leave of absence from the University. Additionally, it will be made available in a range of formats, including Word, PDF, plain text and alternative accessible formats such as large print or Braille on request.

Attention will further be drawn to the Code of Practice during all internal staff briefings and workshops relating to the REF, as well as when information is sent to all staff (including those absent from the University) regarding the determination of significant responsibility for research, research independence and the arrangements for considering individual circumstances (detailed in Section 4.3 of this document).

Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

2.1 Staff eligibility and submission

For the purposes of REF2021, the University will distinguish between those Category A staff who are 'REF eligible' (i.e. employed on a 'teaching and research' or 'research only' contract of 0.2 FTE or above by the University) and those who will be actually 'REF submitted' (i.e. who fulfil the University's criteria for having 'significant responsibility for research' as a part of their overall workload) on the census date of 31 July 2020.

In line with the spirit of Lord Stern's 2016 recommendation that 'it is important that all academic staff who have any significant responsibility to undertake research are returned to the REF', Westminster has taken a clear, straightforward and robust approach to defining significant responsibility for research. Any member of staff for whom explicit time/resources are made available to engage actively in independent research as a part of their overall workload, and for whom research is thus an expectation of their job role, will, as a matter of principle, be returned to REF2021 within one of the Units of Assessment in which the University is submitting.¹

At the same time, the University wishes to emphasise its recognition of the invaluable contribution made by staff across the institution to its mission, including those for whom research is not a part of their current workload allocation. The University of Westminster's parent institution was the UK's first polytechnic institution, established in 1838 to educate the working people of London and later known for its public exhibitions, technical, practical and commercial education and commitment to widening participation. In line with this history, the University employs a large number of staff on academic contracts whose essential contribution to Westminster's educational mission resides, first and foremost, in teaching, professional practice and enterprise, including, but not limited to, staff in finance and accountancy; art, design and architectural practice; construction; events management; fashion buying, marketing and promotion; journalism; professional interpreting; language teaching; programming; web design; radio, film, music and TV production; quantity surveying and commercial management; and real estate. In recognising and valuing these different contributions it is necessary as part of the REF2021 process to take a clear

¹ An exception to the submission of any individual with research hours may (very rarely) be made for those staff who have hours and resources allocated specifically to undertake independent research, and thus fulfil the individual criteria for significant responsibility for research, but whose work falls within the remit of what are, at present, very small (under 5 FTE) and developing subject areas at Westminster. In this instance, the University expects to put in a request in late 2019 for an exception to submission for such units.

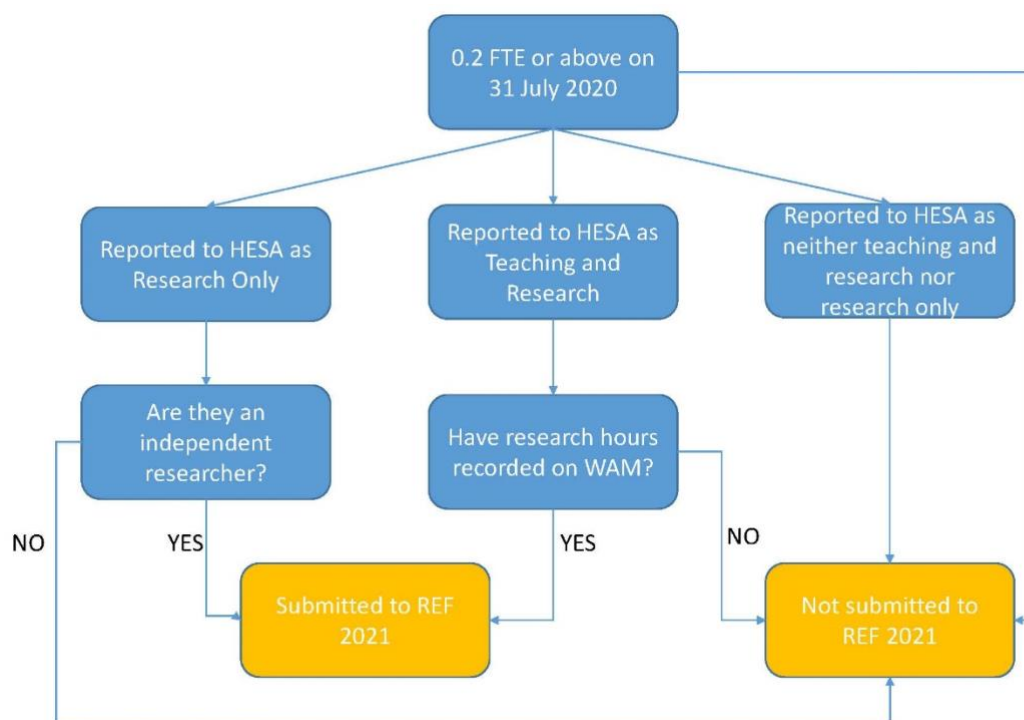
and transparent approach to defining those specific staff that hold significant responsibility for research.

2.1.1 Defining significant responsibility for Research

Since 2014 Westminster has developed a **work allocation model (WAM)**, which identifies the time spent by individual staff on a range of specified activities, including research. Having been operated, tested and refined over the last five years, the WAM therefore represents the most robust and appropriate means of identifying those Category A eligible staff who hold significant responsibility for research and will be submitted to REF2021, based on whether or not explicit time/resources have been made available to them to engage actively in independent research within the overall hours allocated to them in WAM.

The work modelling process utilises a web-based tool, which was first piloted in 2015 and implemented gradually by a number of departments between 2015 and 2018. From the academic year 2018-19 all Schools and Colleges were expected to use the online system for recording staff hours for research.

Figure 1: diagram setting out REF2021 eligibility



2.1.2 WAM allocation processes

Academic work is classified by WAM broadly into six 'types': *Teaching, Research, Academic Enterprise, Scholarship, Administration, and Other Professional Duties*. The Research category in WAM specifically designates 'time [that] involves the production of research outputs that lead to original, new insights effectively shared, applications to (and resulting activities for) research councils, charitable bodies and other funding bodies, and impact activities resulting from original research'. It also includes allocated hours for research administration roles.

While hours for supervision of MPhil and PhD students may also be allocated under the 'Research' category in WAM at a local level, these hours, when allocated to an individual member of staff who has not otherwise been allocated hours for independent research, are not considered by the University to constitute a significant responsibility for research in themselves. This recognises that in some subject areas there may be a need for staff who do not themselves have significant independent research responsibility to serve on supervisory teams in order to provide specific expertise, including in professional practice.

Workload allocation is carried out annually in line with the local 'Guidelines for Implementation of the Professional Contract for Academic Staff' that was agreed with University and College Union (UCU) representatives in September 2016, in particular (in the section on The Determination of Academic Duties):

- Staff are required to undertake all teaching, examining, research, academic enterprise and other duties assigned by their line manager, which will be reviewed regularly, through the appropriate approved processes.
- The proportion of time an individual should devote to any of these activities is a matter for professional judgement. The focus of this process is a meaningful discussion (with a view to reaching agreement) between the individual and their line manager or nominee. This discussion should be informed by the collective views of appropriate colleagues.
- The duties of individual academics will be determined and recorded, on an annual basis, by the line manager in meaningful consultation with the individual. This discussion will take into account the needs of individuals as well as those of the University, and where possible the timetable will have regard to the family responsibilities of individuals.

Ultimate responsibility for deciding whether a member of staff has responsibility for research as part of their overall duties in each year resides then with the relevant line manager (usually, the Head of School or Assistant Head of School) in agreement with the member of staff concerned. In the case of the allocation of research time, School Research Leads are also expected to perform an advisory role in determining which staff should be allocated hours for independent research activity in WAM. All allocations of research hours and resources to eligible staff will be carried out according to fair and transparent criteria, which are consistent across the university and which set out standard tariffs for recognising research effort at different levels. All

eligible staff have, as part of this process, the opportunity for meaningful discussion about the allocation of research hours in WAM with their line manager or nominee and local research lead.

The processes outlined in this document are intended to make clear, in line with our Diversity and Dignity at Work and Study Policy (see Section 1), that no member of academic staff will be offered a change in their working terms and conditions or advised or pressured to alter their contractual or workload arrangements as a consequence of REF2021 preparations. All line managers, and other staff involved in advising on the allocation of hours for research, are obliged to be aware in this regard of appropriate legislation, including the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, which requires employers to provide a safe and healthy working environment, including protection from bullying and harassment at work; and the Equality Act 2010, which covers bullying that may be linked to gender reassignment, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, or nationality. Equally, the University will make clear to all staff in each iteration of the communication of this Code that, while our REF strategy is to maximise the quality of our submission as far as possible, decisions related to the allocation of significant responsibility for research for the purposes of REF2021 will not be taken into account in any future promotion, progression, extension of contracts or performance management processes within the University.

2.1.3 Support for staff who wish to develop a significant responsibility for research

The University is committed to equality of status between research, teaching and other academic activities, and to ensuring that those who do not have a 'significant responsibility for research' nonetheless have equal opportunities for staff development support, progression and promotion. At the same time, it recognises that individual staff – including those, for example, coming from industry and business into academia – may wish to develop their careers, and hence their balance of different academic activities, in varied ways, including staff who may wish to assume a significant responsibility for research where this has not previously been an expectation of their job role. As with any other significant responsibility, the University will provide support in the form of staff development towards taking on a significant responsibility for research, where this is agreed with the relevant line manager. This will include the appointment of an appropriate research mentor and the undertaking of a customised researcher development training programme delivered via the Research Office.

2.2 Consultation and communication with staff

2.2.1 Consultation and staff agreement on defining significant responsibility

Two initial meetings were held with UCU representatives in December 2018 and January 2019, chaired by the Head of the Westminster Business School (Pro Vice-Chancellor) and attended by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for REF, the University REF Director and Head of HR. At this meeting the key principles for this Code of Practice were discussed.

The main criteria for determining significant responsibility and research independence were then included in staff briefing information disseminated across the University for further discussion and consultation in Jan/Feb 2019 (see Section 1.7). In May 2019 further feedback was invited from all staff within the University on the final draft version Code of Practice (see Section 1.7).

Meetings with UCU were held in March, April and May 2019 to review the Code of Practice. Agreement was reached on the final version of this document in May 2019.

2.2.2 Communication to staff on their responsibility for Research

Following discussion of their workload allocation with the relevant line manager, the fact that each individual member of staff is able to access their own WAM sheet online means that all staff can clearly see in any academic year whether they would be determined to have a 'significant responsibility for research' for REF purposes. In order to confirm this, however, on an individualised basis, the University will also ensure that all staff on research and teaching and research only contracts receive an email from the Research Office (cc'd to their Head of School) before the September 2019 staff HESA return and, again, in early Spring 2020, indicating, based on current information, whether or not they meet the Code of Practice definition of significant responsibility (teaching and research staff) or research independence (research only staff). In the case of staff absent from the University, a letter to their given residential address and personal/home email address clearly indicating whether or not they currently meet the University's criteria for REF submission will be sent. The letter will include links to the Code of Practice and indicate the channels available in order to receive further feedback on the decision and the appeals process (see Section 2.5). Where further feedback is requested from staff who have not been judged to have significant responsibility for research, this will be provided in a timely manner by the relevant line manager or their nominee, and, in particular, will be completed in sufficient time to allow for the potential operation of the Appeals procedure prior to the submission.

2.3 Staff, committees and training

2.3.1 Staff with responsibility for setting workloads

As set out above, primary responsibility for deciding whether a member of staff has responsibility for research as part of their overall workload resides, as is the case with all assignments of individual 'duties', with the relevant line manager (usually, the Head of School or Assistant Head of School) in consultation with the individual concerned and as informed by the annual staff appraisal process. In the case of research, School Research Leads are also expected to perform a strong advisory role in determining which staff should be allocated hours for independent research activity. Annual records of such decisions are recorded in WAM.

2.3.2 UoA leads

In late 2017 a list of potential UoA submission areas was drawn up by the University Research Committee. Department Heads were asked to nominate appropriately experienced senior staff to lead the preparation of individual UoA submissions. These nominations were approved by the then Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research, and reviewed again in Autumn 2018. A list of these UoA Leads have been communicated to all staff via Heads of School, College Research Directors and REF briefings and workshops, and are available on the staff intranet site. The list of UoA submission areas / UoA Leads will be continuously reviewed and adjusted by the REF2021 Sub-Committee where circumstances require this (e.g., change of staff, etc).

2.3.3 Identification of Staff with Research Hours in WAM and Record Keeping

In March 2019, lists of those staff determined to have significant responsibility for research on the basis of HR and WAM records were provided by the REF Data Management Group to all UoA Leads and Heads of School, who were asked then to confirm (or otherwise) that these accorded with their own records of research hours allocations and to confirm (or otherwise) provisional assignments of staff to specific UoAs on the basis of existing HESA staff data, where necessary in consultation with individual staff members. Where the UoA to which an individual's research is to be assigned is unclear, the case will be referred to the REF UoA Leads Group by their Head of School / line manager to be considered by relevant UoA Leads and referred to the REF sub-committee if required, and reviewed further in consultation with the staff concerned. The process will normally involve taking each case for review on a one-to-one basis.

Initial lists of those staff determined to have significant responsibility for research were subsequently sent to the REF2021 Sub-Committee for approval in May 2019 as identifying potentially REF eligible staff. This will constitute the basis for our HESA staff return (and accompanying EIA) in September 2019.

The role of the REF2021 Sub-Committee in approving such lists is not to decide on whether or not any individual in fact has significant responsibility, but rather to ensure that correct and consistent procedures, as outlined in this Code, have been followed by Heads of School and School Research Leads in allocating research hours. The REF2021 Data Group will be tasked with cross-checking that WAM records accurately match the draft HESA data and reporting on this to the Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee also has responsibility for ensuring that, in line with the recommendations of the Stern Review, no other criteria for determining submission of individual staff – including judgements as to quantity or quality of individuals' outputs or general research contribution – are used other than that of a significant responsibility for research as recorded in the allocation of specific hours to undertake research in the WAM system.

Annual WAM records are archived annually within the online system in May/June, prior to the 'rollover' to the next academic year. Reports of research hours allocations will also be downloaded from the WAM system and securely stored by the Research

Office at least twice in each academic year for purposes of audit and monitoring.

2.4 Staff Training

All staff involved in making key decisions concerning our submission to REF2021 (Sub-committee Members, Heads of School, College Research Directors, UoA Leads, School Research Leads and REF2021 Appeals Panel members and reviewers) will receive appropriate mandatory training on equality and diversity principles coordinated by the Research Office and HR. Specific guidance on how such principles relate to REF policies and procedures will also be provided through in-person workshops, and all staff in decision-making roles will be asked to commit to running a fair and transparent process. All staff involved in REF preparations (including external advisors) will also be directly provided with the REF and ECU guidance on equality and diversity as well as with copies of this Code.

Mandatory training in equality and diversity principles has two components:

- All staff at Westminster are required to take the mandatory Equality and Diversity Essentials e-Learning Module, which aims to raise awareness and knowledge of diversity issues across the University and to ensure commitment to embracing diversity and promoting equality. This includes case studies, statistics, and reflective exercises. The training module requires an 80% pass mark and scores are recorded for all staff in the University's online Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment. Heads of School are further expected to attend a specific Recruitment and Selection workshop run by HR and an e-learning module, which includes sections on employing diverse teams and managing unconscious bias.
- All staff in REF2021 decision-making roles are required to attend an in-person Equality and Diversity and Unconscious Bias training workshop with guidance specifically tailored to REF processes and procedures. These will be delivered by the Head of the Research Office and an external consultant from another University who specialises in academic equality and diversity issues. The first two such sessions were scheduled for May and June 2019. These workshops will seek to ensure that all staff with decision-making responsibilities have (i) a clear understanding of the legislative context and Funding Councils' guidance on equality and diversity principles; (ii) awareness of University policies on equality, diversity and inclusivity, and their relation to REF2021; and (iii) confidence in making fair and consistent decisions regarding the University's REF2021 submission and an awareness of where to find additional advice and support where needed. The workshops will also incorporate the use of case studies to assist in understanding how equality, diversity and inclusivity issues should be given due consideration within the specific context of determining significant responsibility for research, research independence and the selection of outputs for REF2021. Staff required to attend the sessions are asked to register for one of the workshops and to sign a register to record their

attendance at the workshop itself. These registers will then be securely stored by the Research Office for audit purposes.

All training materials, including case studies, will be made available via the Research Office's REF Support website for all staff to access in summer 2019.

2.5 Appeals

2.5.1 Allocation of Research Hours and University Guidelines for Implementation of the Professional Contract for Academic Staff

The local 'Guidelines for Implementation of the Professional Contract for Academic Staff' that were previously agreed with University and College Union (UCU) representatives at Westminster in September 2016 allow for appeals where any 'member of staff disagrees with the allocation of duties [in WAM] or with the interpretation of these guidelines'. Such duties would include the allocation of hours for research. Initial appeals in this instance should be '[r]aised informally with the immediate line manager responsible for the decision', and 'should be dealt with promptly' by the manager concerned. In the case of research hours allocation, Heads of School may also nominate the relevant School Research Lead, where they have advised on the allocation of hours, to provide feedback to the member of staff. If the member of staff is still dissatisfied, the issue may then be raised formally in writing with the next senior line manager (usually, the Head of College), who, following the Guidelines, 'should respond within 5 working days'. The staff member also has the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at any subsequent meeting.

2.5.2 Grounds for Appealing REF2021 Eligibility for Submission

Members of 'teaching and research' or 'research only' staff also have the right to submit an appeal via the specific University of Westminster REF2021 appeals process if they believe (i) that the data used to determine their eligibility for inclusion or not in REF2021 was incorrect, and where this error has had a significant impact on the outcome; (ii) that the processes and procedures outlined in the Code of Practice to determine eligibility via significant responsibility or research independence were not followed and that this resulted in a significant impact on the outcome of the process; and/or (iii) that they fulfil the criteria for significant responsibility for research or research independence, but their potential inclusion in the University's REF2021 submission has not been given due or appropriate consideration by the REF2021 Sub-committee.

Appeals will be considered in respect of decisions concerning eligibility for submission alone, and solely on the basis of a defect in the application of this Code of Practice. Issues involving, for example, an individual's HESA category or specific workload allocations do not represent grounds for appeal via the REF2021 eligibility for submission appeals process, although they may be subject to appeal via other processes outside of the scope of the REF (see Section 2.5.1 above).

2.5.3 REF2021 Eligibility for Submission appeals process

The University believes that staff confidence in the independence and integrity of those constituting the REF2021 appeals process is crucial to the good working of our REF policies and procedures as a whole. All staff sitting on an appeals panel will be independent of other REF-related decision-making processes and will receive mandatory training from the Research Office in order to ensure that all of the regulations concerning staff eligibility set out in the REF2021 Guidance documentation, as well as the specific policies and procedures elaborated in this Code of Practice, are familiar to them and that they understand how these should be applied.

Step 1: Informal investigation

Any member of 'teaching and research' or 'research only' staff considering appealing their inclusion or exclusion from REF2021 should in the first instance discuss this with the relevant Head of School and/or UoA lead who may be able to clarify the reasons for their inclusion or exclusion from REF2021. If the UoA lead is unable to assist, the individual may make an informal query to their College Research Director who can seek support and information from the Head of Research Office and/or REF Director to resolve the issues via an informal process.

Step 2: Formal process

If the informal processes outlined in step 1 have not resolved the issues raised or the staff member remains unsatisfied by the outcome the staff member can begin a formal appeal process by writing to the chair of the REF2021 sub-committee (DVC with responsibility for REF) and submitting a formal appeal to research-office@westminster.ac.uk. Notice of the appeal must include the staff member's name and an explanation of the nature of the appeal along with any supporting evidence and a summary of the steps taken via the informal process (step 1).

All appeals submitted via step 2 will be acknowledged and a record of such appeals will be maintained by the REF2021 Sub-Committee. Each appeal will be investigated by an appeals panel, which shall include three senior staff members (e.g. Research Community Lead, College Research Directors or Research Centre lead), who are independent of other University REF decision-making processes. The College Research Director of the College of the staff member making the appeal would not be represented. The Appeals panel may seek information from the Research Office, REF Director and others as required to ensure that the appeal is fully investigated, and the grounds of appeal and context adequately understood.

The appeals panel will provide the REF2021 Sub-Committee with a report detailing the panel's findings and their recommendation. The REF Sub-Committee will be expected to take on the recommendation of the appeals panel. The REF Sub-committee will write to the appeals panel, the staff member making the appeal and the PVC Research detailing the outcome of the appeal and the reason for the outcome.

Step 3: Review

If the staff member is not satisfied with the outcome of step 2 the staff member may request a review of the decision. Reviews will be carried out by the PVC for Research and the request to review should be submitted via email to research-office@westminster.ac.uk. The review request must include the staff member's name, the reason for requesting a review and any supporting evidence.

Reviews will normally only be pursued if the staff member requesting the review can demonstrate that the appeals panel did not carry out the process correctly or if new evidence has come to light that could impact upon the decision made by the appeals panel.

The PVC Research (who does not otherwise have a decision-making role in REF preparations at Westminster) will consider the review and take necessary and appropriate steps to review the decision reached by the appeals panel. The PVC for Research will notify in writing the staff member and the REF Sub-committee of the outcome of the review. The decision of the PVC Research is considered final and further appeals by the staff member will not be taken further.

2.6 Equality impact assessment

Consideration of the possible equality and diversity impacts of emerging REF policy has informed the development of this Code. To assess whether its REF2021 submission policies may have any discriminatory effect, the University has undertaken an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) of those staff deemed to have significant responsibility for research and to be independent researchers in March 2019, drawing on the WAM data available at this point. See Appendix D. This was also informed by the results and interpretation of the final EIA undertaken for REF 2014.

Conducted in accordance with the University's standard EIA procedure, by staff with expertise in REF2021, Human Resources and Equality and Diversity issues, the initial EIA and future assessments will address the potential impact of the University's REF policies and procedures including this Code under a range of headings. Consideration of the initial EIA, and future reviews thereof, is supported by a baseline dataset of the population of eligible academic staff analysed by protected characteristics and contractual status (age, ethnicity, gender, disability, full or part-time status, contract type and grade). The initial EIA was made available on the University's REF2021 staff intranet site along with the draft Code of Practice in early May 2019 (see Section 1.7).

The initial March 2019 EIA was carried out using the same categories as used for EIA for REF 2014. Feedback received from staff has indicated that further categories should be added to the EIA. The March 2019 EIA will now be updated to include gender non-binary and transgender categories where staff data makes this possible and these categories will be included in any future EIA for REF2021. Future EIA reviews will also seek to incorporate consideration of possible impacts on groups where

disclosure rates within the University's standard data capture processes are less robust, for example, sexual orientation.

Analysis of the initial EIA indicated that the majority of characteristics are broadly comparable between those eligible for submission to REF2021 and the overall academic staff profile. We do observe, however, that a notably lower proportion of part-time staff are currently eligible for REF2021 submission than is the case with the overall staff profile. To understand this further we will be conducting a further EIA by UoA in order to see whether or not this is explained by specific operational needs in particular subject areas.

The initial Equality Impact Assessment will be reviewed iteratively as the University develops and refines its submission, assessing rates of staff with significant responsibility for research and research independence in December 2019 following the HESA staff return in September 2019 and, again, following the REF census date of 31 July 2020. Additional Equality Impact Assessments will also be undertaken specifically to assess the selection of outputs at First Draft Submission stage (in December 2019) and subsequently at Final Draft Submission stage (in Summer 2020), and will also be crosschecked with those EIAs on staff determined to have significant responsibility for research and research independence in order to determine whether the REF policies and procedures are in fact exerting any discriminatory effect.

If any groups are shown by these EIAs to be clearly under / over-represented across the University or in any UoA, the University will firstly review the processes and procedures outlined in this Code of Practice to consider whether these are in themselves discriminatory. Should this under-representation prove to result from possible issues regarding the uneven distribution of actual allocation of time and resources to undertake research or support for researcher development at School level, this will be referred to University Research Committee to take further action to ensure fair, transparent and consistent policies and procedures across the University.

2.6.1 EIA Timetable

Date of EIA	Data for EIA	Use of EIA data
Mid-March 2019	Initial data based on March 1 st workload allocation	To inform CoP
October 2019	HESA staff return data	To monitor and identify any newly emerging issues
Mid-March 2020	Data from March 1 st WAM and initial outputs selection data	To monitor and provide UoA leads with EIA data to support selection of outputs

Aug 2020	Final July 31 st staff data and draft outputs selection data	To monitor and review decisions and outcomes
Early 2021	Final output selection data	To monitor and review decisions and outcomes

Part 3: Determining research independence

3.1 Independent researchers

All staff submitted to REF2021 must be independent researchers. Guidance provided by Research England states that: “an independent researcher is defined as an individual who undertakes self-directed research rather than carrying out another individual’s research programme” (Guidance on Submissions, para 131).

3.1.1 Teaching and research staff

The allocation of research hours to staff on teaching and research contracts via the WAM process is explicitly to enable staff to undertake self-directed research. All staff on teaching and research contracts that have specific WAM hours to undertake research and therefore hold significant responsibility for research will thus be, by definition, an independent researcher and will therefore be entered for REF2021.

3.1.1 Senior and Principal Research Fellows

Staff employed at University of Westminster on ‘research only’ contracts with the job titles Senior Research Fellow and Principal Research Fellow have the production of independent, self-directed research or related activities as an explicit part of their job role and description. It is expected that the majority of these staff will be returned as Category A submitted staff to REF2021. This includes those staff that hold these job titles who are externally funded through competitive research fellowships. In exceptional cases where a staff member employed in these job roles does not meet the criteria of research independence as outlined below in 3.1.2 and therefore should not be submitted to REF2021 the Head of School should provide evidence indicating that a staff member does not meet the criteria of research independence (see process outlined in 3.1.3).

3.1.2 Research Associates, Research Assistants and other research only staff

Staff employed on ‘research only’ contracts who hold job titles other than Senior Research Fellow and Principal Research Fellow are not normally expected to undertake self-directed research and will usually be carrying out research objectives that have been set by another person and related to a specific project or programme of work.

As an institution, it is anticipated that the majority of such staff will not be considered as independent researchers. In some cases, an individual may set research-related objectives within the context of their role to support their personal development. While this is encouraged, since the setting of objectives is not a requirement of the work itself this does not indicate research independence. In exceptional cases staff may be able to provide evidence that they are undertaking self-directed research by providing evidence of the following cases outlined below.

- That they have acted as Principal Investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project (or as a Co-Investigator in the case of those staff whose research falls within the remits of Panel C or D);
- That they hold an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement;²
- That they have led a research group or a substantial/specialised work package at Westminster.

In the case of those staff whose research falls within the remits of Panel C or D specifically, significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research that they are employed to undertake may also be taken as evidence of research independence.

3.1.3 Processes for recording individual staff research independence

The Research Office provided Heads of School and School Research/UoA Leads, or (where nominated by the latter) other relevant senior staff members who are responsible for setting the individual's research objectives, with an initial list of names of researchers employed on research only contracts (irrespective of any end of contract date) along with their job titles in March 2019. For researchers with job titles of Senior Research Fellow and Principal Research Fellow, Heads of School were asked to confirm that the staff member meets the independent research criteria or, in exceptional cases, to provide evidence that they do not. For staff with job titles other than Senior Research Fellow and Principal Research Fellow, Head of Schools were asked to confirm that each individual is not an independent researcher or to provide evidence in line with the above to indicate that they exceptionally met the independence criteria. All decisions on staff research independence will be securely recorded and stored by the Research Office for the purposes of audit.

This will be an iterative process with final confirmation of decisions on research independence, including the reviewing of further appointments on an ongoing basis, made following the census date of 31 July 2020 when a final list of all such staff will be sent for checking to Heads of School and UoA leads and onto the REF2021 Sub-Committee for final approval and confirmation.

3.1.4 Consultation and staff agreement on defining research independence

See Section 2.2.1

3.1.5 Communication with staff

As with decisions concerning significant responsibility for research, the University will ensure that all staff on 'research only' contracts receive an email from the Research

² See the non-exhaustive list at: <https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1030/c-users-daislha-desktop-list-of-research-fellowships-updated-22032019.pdf>

Office (cc'd to the Head of School) before the September 2019 staff HESA return and, again, in early Spring 2020 – and, in the case of staff absent from the University, a letter to their given residential address and home/personal email address – clearly indicating whether or not the University believes that they currently meet the criteria for REF submission. This will be done in each instance regardless of whether, according to their current contract at time of writing, the member of staff is expected to be in post on the census date of 31 July 2020. Where, following this, further feedback is requested from staff who have not been judged to meet the criteria for research independence, this will be provided in a timely manner by the relevant line manager or their nominee in person, and, in particular, will be completed in sufficient time to allow for the potential operation of the Appeals procedure prior to the submission.

3.2 Staff, committees and training

See Sections 2.3 and 2.4

3.3 Appeals

See Sections 2.5.2 and 2.5.3

3.4 Equality impact assessment

See Section 2.6

Part 4: Selection of outputs

4.1 Principles and process of output selection

Each Higher Education Institution entering into the REF must decide which outputs to select for submission in each Unit of Assessment, in accordance with the REF2021 Guidance on Submissions and its own internal Code of Practice. Submissions must include a set number of research outputs of a total equal to 2.5 times the combined FTE of Category A submitted staff included in each Unit of Assessment. This number will be adjusted, as appropriate, to take account of successful requests for staff circumstances (see Section 4.3).

Each submission must include a minimum of one output for each Category A submitted staff member, which has been produced or authored solely, or co-produced or co-authored, by that staff member (unless individual circumstances apply; see Section 4.3.5). Further outputs will then be included up to the total required for the submitting unit, taking into account any applicable reductions for staff circumstances (see Section 4.3). A maximum of five outputs may be attributed to any individual staff member. The attribution of the maximum number of outputs to a staff member does not preclude, however, the submission of further outputs on which that staff member is a co-author, as long as these are attributed to other eligible staff in the unit.

For REF2021, a submitting unit may also include the outputs of staff formerly employed as Category A eligible (former staff) during the census period. Outputs attributable to these staff are eligible for inclusion where the output was first made publicly available while the staff member was employed by the University of Westminster as a Category A eligible member of staff. (The former staff member will not however count towards the overall FTE from which the overall number of outputs required for each UoA is derived.)

The University of Westminster will reach decisions on those outputs to be submitted to REF2021 in accordance with the Code of Practice outlined in this document and through iterative consideration by the REF2021 Sub-committee of submission plans for individual Units of Assessment. In reaching academic judgments on the quality of outputs, impact and contributions to the research environment, the University will be guided by the quality level descriptors set out in the REF2021 Guidance on Submissions and Panel Criteria and Working Methods. These will be primarily assessed through an internal academic peer review process, coordinated by the relevant UoA Lead. Each output in the pool of potential submissions will be read by at least two reviewers. Consideration of outputs, as well as final selection of impact case studies, will also be informed by the advice of external subject experts appointed to each UoA, but final decisions on the selection of outputs and case studies are reserved to the University REF Sub-committee, as advised by the relevant UoA Lead. The final selection of outputs for submission to REF2021 will seek to maximise the quality of the body of research submitted to each UoA.

4.1.1 Process of Internal and external assessment

Internal reviewers will be selected on the basis of:

- relevant research expertise within the discipline
- representativeness (where possible) of the cohort of eligible staff

A list of internal reviewers from within the subject area were proposed by UoA Leads to the University REF2021 Sub-Committee for approval by the end of May 2019 (following the criteria outlined above).

External advisors will be selected on the basis of:

- relevant research expertise and seniority within the field
- experience of REF assessment processes in previous exercises

External advisors will have been proposed by UoA Leads to the University REF Director for approval by summer 2019 at the latest (following the criteria outlined above). They will then be formally invited to take on this role by the Research Office, and are expected to have been appointed by September 2019.

Both internal reviewers and external advisors will be asked to make assessments of outputs according to a 'nine-point scale' (1*, 1.5*, 2*, etc.), in order to provide as granular a set of grades as possible for the purposes of selection, as guided by the quality level descriptors set out in the REF2021 Guidance on Submissions and Panel Criteria and Working Methods. External Advisors will also be given guidance as to the appropriate level of detailed comment they should provide and their comments will be viewed alongside other evidence about the overall quality profile of outputs, impact and environment and appropriateness of draft submissions by the REF2021 Sub-Committee. All External Advisors appointed by the University are made aware of the Code of Practice and other relevant equality and diversity policies. Both internal reviewers and external advisors will further be expected (i) to ensure that interdisciplinary and non-traditional outputs are in no way disadvantaged by assessment processes, and (ii) that, where employed, any use of research indicators (also known as metrics) to support this qualitative, expert review will take into account disciplinary differences and the career stage of the individual, and will be carried out in line with the guidance provided by the UK Forum for Responsible Research Metrics and in line with the principles outlined in the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), Leiden Manifesto and Metric Tide frameworks.³ No assessment will include use of journal impact factors or any hierarchy of journals.

³ See UK Forum for Responsible Research Metrics: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/research-policy/open-science/Pages/forum-for-responsible-research-metrics.aspx>
San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment: <https://sf-dora.org/>
Leiden Manifesto for Research Metrics: <http://www.leidenmanifesto.org/>
Metric Tide report: <https://responsiblemetrics.org/the-metric-tide-report-now-published/>

Staff will not be informed who has individually assessed their outputs in order to preserve anonymity. Accountability for the quality assessment process will be with UoA Leads, who have responsibility for proposing internal reviewers, coordinating the overall process of review, and assigning individual outputs to reviewers, and for employing the results of these reviews in a fair and consistent way in line with the policies and processes set out in this Code of Practice.

4.1.2 Determination of output pool

Output selection will be managed via the REF Admin module available within the University's research information management system (known internally as the Virtual Research Environment or VRE). This will be used to record all REF data connected to outputs uploaded by staff to the VRE Repository module, which populates the University's institutional repository WestminsterResearch:

<https://westminsterresearch.westminster.ac.uk/>. This includes fields to capture, confidentially, all internal reviewer grades and (where relevant) external advisor comments. The system also allows UoA leads to trigger a process by which a message goes to the individual author to ask them to confirm that their list of outputs is complete, to confirm that all Open Access requirements have been met, and to indicate which outputs meet the REF definition of research. The open access eligibility of each output will then be checked by the Repository and Open Access Advisor, who will record the result of this within the VRE. This will then provide a pool of potential outputs that will be refined following the various stages of quality review up to submission in November 2020 (see Section 4.1.6).

Assessment of the quality of outputs for the purposes of selection is an academic-led process of peer review, and, as such, is most appropriately led and coordinated by the UoA Lead for each submission. All staff with significant responsibility for research will be requested to play a role in the determination of the output pool for each UoA by nominating outputs for consideration to the appropriate UoA Lead (up to the maximum of five allowed for each individual). However, final responsibility for decisions on output selection resides with the UoA Lead (as approved by the REF Subcommittee), who will have the right to consider for submission, and request review of, outputs by staff that they may not have nominated themselves, as well as any eligible outputs by former members of staff.

It is important to emphasise that the University recognises that there may be many reasons why individuals produce outputs at different rates. As such, while Heads or Assistant Heads of School may reasonably set certain expectations in allocating research hours, the University does not expect every eligible staff member to contribute equally (in numerical terms) to either the initial 'pool' of potential outputs for submission nor the final selection of outputs submitted. The University fully concurs in this respect with the Stern Review's proposition that '[r]educing the focus on individual members of staff and instead painting a picture of the submitting unit as a whole will reduce the current consequences for morale of non-submission', and will help to 'encourage cohesiveness and productivity within the submitting unit'. Any University published targets for REF2021 are thus explicitly set at the level of the

University submission as a whole and not as a target for any individual. No individual staff member will be set any specifically REF2021-related target as regards their individual contribution to the output pool for a particular Unit of Assessment.

The University is mindful of the recommendations of the Stern Review that processes for deciding on REF inclusion and selection of outputs should do everything possible to avoid generating 'problems' regarding 'career choices, progression and morale'. In line with the general policy outlined in this Code of Practice, the University will thus make clear at all stages of the communication of its REF strategy and procedures that decisions related to the selection of specific outputs (including any internal grades or number of outputs by any one member of staff returned in the final submission) for REF2021 will not be taken into account in any future promotion, progression, extension of contracts or performance management processes within the University. This conforms to the University's larger commitment to equality of status between research, teaching and other academic responsibilities, reflected in, for example, the opportunities for promotion to Professorial and Reader positions available under 'Teaching, Scholarly Activity and Leadership' and 'Business, Enterprise and Scholarly Activity' pathways.

It should be noted that any staff member with significant responsibility for research who does not have an eligible output for submission for whatever reason must still be submitted. This will result in a single 'unclassified' grade being assigned to the UoA, unless an exemption is granted from the requirement for a minimum one output as a result of individual staff circumstances (see Section 4.3.5.).

4.1.3 Outputs of former staff

The University considers that the possibility to submit outputs by staff formerly employed by the institution during the REF period but who are not in post on the census date of 31 July 2020 – including those who may have retired or moved on to employment elsewhere – is to be welcomed in providing an accurate overview of research carried out by units since the previous REF and in recognising the contribution of former staff to Westminster's research culture and community, and anticipates including a number of these within our individual UoA submissions. However, it has been determined by the REF2021 Sub-Committee that, as a matter of policy, the University will not submit to the REF2021 the work of the fairly small number of staff who have been made redundant during the current REF period, since it agrees with UCU that this does not abide with the spirit of the Stern Review's recommendations concerning the decoupling of staff and outputs.

4.1.4 Open Access Requirements

REF2021 open access requirements apply to journal articles and conference contributions (with an ISSN) which are accepted for publication from 1 April 2016 and published on or before 31 December 2020. It requires these research outputs to be made open access for those outputs to be eligible for submission in REF2021. This will be delivered at Westminster through the institutional repository,

WestminsterResearch – the open access, discoverability layer of the VRE Repository module – which will ensure that all relevant outputs will be deposited, discoverable, and free to read, download and search within, by anyone with an internet connection. Any legitimate exceptions will also be recorded where appropriate in the VRE Repository module by the Repository and Open Access Advisor.

For each submission to a UoA, the REF2021 regulations allow for the submission of a maximum of five per cent non-compliant in-scope outputs, or one non-compliant in-scope output, whichever is higher, per UoA. Where necessary, the Repository Manager will review the percentage of listed, in-scope outputs that have been identified as not compliant (or as having a legitimate exception) for each UoA prior to submission. Where, exceptionally, this exceeds the allowed 5% non-compliance, the UoA Lead will have responsibility for deciding, in light of the policies outlined in the Code of Practice, which output(s) should be included by considering potential impacts upon both individuals and the quality profile, and representativeness and inclusivity, of the UoA as a whole. This will then be subject to final approval by the REF2021 Sub-committee.

4.1.5 Selection and confirmation of outputs

The data generated from the grading process will provide the basis for constructing quality submissions in each UoA. The procedure for doing so will be as follows:

1. Attribution of a single 'highest rated' output to each individual within the unit (for their minimum one output), as based on internal reviews (and external advice, where appropriate), in such a way as to maximise the overall quality profile.
2. Selection of the 'best of the rest' of the available outputs up to the number of total outputs required for the submission (i.e. FTE x 2.5) – including those by former staff produced at Westminster during the REF period (excepting those by staff who have been made redundant) – in such a way as to maximise the overall quality profile while ensuring that no individual has more than 5 outputs (including any double-weighting).

This process will be initially trialled and checked for consistency and robustness in constructing a draft submission as part of an internal 'mock REF' in Autumn 2019.

Subsequent iterative consideration by the REF Sub-committee of submission plans for individual Units of Assessment will then incorporate both advice from external advisors on the submissions as a whole, as well as by the interim EIAs to be carried out following this First Draft Submission stage (in December 2019) and at the Final Draft Submission stage (in Summer 2020).

In constructing the final list of selected outputs for submission during summer/autumn 2020, initial selection decisions may be changed – subject to approval by the REF Sub-committee – if it is thought possible to make any UoA submission more inclusive and representative without a diminution of quality. Specifically, where decisions need to be

made concerning the submission of outputs that have been assigned the same grade, the following secondary criteria may be applied:

- enhancing the inclusivity and representativeness of outputs produced by staff with protected characteristics included in the submission
- enhancing the representativeness of outputs from different research areas within the UoA

For the sake of clarity, decisions on the selection of outputs is a matter of academic judgement and is not subject to appeal via the University's REF2021 eligibility for submission appeals process (see Section 2.5.2). As such, appeals will not be accepted regarding the following, which have no bearing on the determination of eligibility for submission:

- Internal and external judgements on quality of individual outputs;
- The number of outputs submitted that are associated with any individual;
- The allocation of co-authored outputs;
- The UoA in which an individual (and their outputs) is returned.

If an individual feels the University has not properly followed the policies and processes outlined in this Code of Practice, they may be able to submit an appeal to Research England using their published procedure for doing so.

4.1.6 Timetable for output selection

Date	Stages of output selection	Staff
Nov 2017 – Feb 2018	Initial developmental review of REF preparations, including provisional internal grades for outputs, drafts of impact case studies and environment statements in each proposed UoA.	UoA Leads and Initial Mini REF Panel, chaired by University Research Director
September 2019	Final decisions on UoAs in which University intends to submit	REF2021 Sub-Committee; UoA Leads Group
Autumn 2019	Internal Mock REF incorporating all staff with significant responsibility for research (irrespective of contract end date)	REF2021 Sub-Committee; UoA Leads Group; Data Group; Internal Reviewers
December 2019	EIA on Draft Selection of Outputs	E&D Impact Group
March 2020	Final reports on UoAs from external advisors	External Advisors

July – Sept 2020	Draft submission incorporating final agreed and calibrated grades recorded for outputs by all eligible staff in post on census date	REF2021 Sub-Committee; UoA Leads Group; Data Group; Internal Reviewers
Summer 2020	EIA on Final Draft Selection of Outputs	E&D Impact Group
November 2020	Final submission	REF2021 Sub-Committee; Data Group

4.2 Staff, committees and training

Mandatory training for REF Sub-committee members (as outlined in Section 2 and Appendix A) and UoA Leads is covered in Section 2 of this document. All staff who act as internal reviewers will also be expected to have passed the mandatory Equality and Diversity Essentials e-Learning Module, which aims to raise awareness and knowledge of diversity issues across the University, and will further be provided with REF-specific information concerning output assessment, quality levels and responsible use of metrics by the University REF Director and Head of the Research Office, as well as locally by the relevant UoA Lead and/or School Research Lead. Both internal reviewers and external advisors will also be provided directly with copies of this Code and with all relevant equality and diversity policies and plans at Westminster, once the Code of Practice has been approved.

4.3 Staff circumstances

4.3.1 Approach to staff circumstances

There are many reasons why a researcher may have fewer or more outputs attributable to them in an assessment period and in some cases personal circumstance may have affected an individual's ability to research productively during the REF period. As the decoupling of staff and outputs in REF2021 provides institutions with increased flexibility in building the portfolio of outputs for submission, the University will not articulate any specific expectations concerning individual contributions to the overall 'output pool' for any UoA in REF2021. It is anticipated that the University will only make requests to seek an overall reduction in the number of required outputs for any UoA in exceptional circumstances where the overall productivity of the unit is judged to have been disproportionately affected by cumulative individual staff circumstances over the REF period.

4.3.2 Ensuring voluntary declaration and confidentiality

It is the University's view that the individual staff member is best placed to consider whether equality-related circumstances have affected their productivity over the REF assessment period and that they should not feel under pressure to declare their

circumstances where they do not wish to do so. All processes will be applied equally to all applicable circumstances, whether previously known to the institution or first identified through the staff circumstances process. As such, we will not take account in our REF2021 processes and procedures of any individual circumstances other than those that staff have consented to declare voluntarily via the process outlined below. Information submitted in requests will be used only for the respective purposes of considering: requests for a reduction in the number of outputs required from the submitting unit overall, and for removing the minimum of one requirement for an individual staff member.

Procedures for taking into account staff whose circumstances have affected their ability to research productively throughout the period in relation to an individual unit's total output requirement will be administered centrally by a specified REF2021 Equality and Diversity group, independently of any selection of outputs decision-making process. This will be consistent across all UoAs.

The REF Equality and Diversity group will observe confidentiality and information will be stored securely. All information on declared circumstance will be retained to support later review and assessment of processes, but will be destroyed on completion of the REF in December 2021. Personal information about the individuals within the Unit who have made declarations may be shared with REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel and Research England, as required to request reductions. Individuals in any requesting UoA will be notified at that time of the intention to submit a request to Research England, further notification will be provided when the outcome is confirmed by the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) via Research England.

4.3.3 Process for declaring staff circumstances

All staff, including those on leave of absence, will be sent a Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances form (see Appendix C) by September 31st 2019 and the form will also be made available via the Research Office REF Support webpages.

As set out below, the funding bodies have identified the following equality-related circumstances that, in isolation or together, may significantly constrain the ability of submitted staff to produce outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period. The form will therefore provide a mechanism for staff to declare that they have been affected by any one or more of these circumstances over the REF period.

- Qualifying as an Early Career Researcher (starting career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016)
- Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector
- Qualifying periods of family-related leave
- Staff in UoAs 1–6 who are junior clinical academics who have not gained a Certificate of Completion of Training by 31 July 2020
- Circumstances with an equivalent effect to absence, that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:
 - i. Disability (including chronic conditions)

- ii. Ill health, injury, or mental health conditions
- iii. Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside the other allowances set out in the REF2021 Guidance
- iv. Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member)
- v. Gender reassignment
- vi. Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed in Section 1, or relating to activities protected by employment legislation

Forms will be returned to the REF2021 equality and diversity group via email, internal mail or hand delivery. The University will also make clear when sending out the form that it recognises that staff circumstances may change between completion of the declaration form and the census date (31 July 2020), and that, if this is the case, staff should contact REF2021-equality@westminster.ac.uk to provide any updated information.

4.3.4 Unit level reductions

The group will review declared circumstances in Autumn 2019 and Spring 2020 and in those cases where a UoA has been significantly impacted by circumstance will propose to the REF2021 Sub-committee that a request is made to Research England for a unit level reduction. If the REF2021 Sub-committee accepts the request, the Equality and Diversity group will manage the request to Research England and keep the REF2021 Sub-committee updated on progress and outcomes of the request.

The Guidance from the funding bodies sets out potential reductions to the total number of outputs required by Units of between 0.5 and 1.5, depending on the nature and duration of each declared circumstance in that Unit. These reductions will provide a guideline for how the combined volume of circumstances have affected a Unit's output pool.

4.3.5 Waiver of minimum one output

The REF Equality and Diversity Group will review all cases where an individual declares circumstances that could justify a request to remove the requirement to submit the minimum one output. The Group will determine via the individual's VRE record if they have an eligible output or not and where there is no output recorded will contact the individual to determine if they are likely to have an eligible output by the end of the REF assessment period. If it is unlikely that they will have an eligible output the REF Equality and Diversity Group will ask the individual for permission to discuss the situation with the relevant UoA lead. The individual will be reassured that the UoA lead will not be informed of the individual's circumstance. They may however choose to disclose them to the UoA lead if they wish. If the UoA lead agrees and with the individual's expressed permission the REF Equality and Diversity Group will make a request to Research England to waive the minimum one output. The Equality and Diversity Group will manage the request and communication of the outcome to the individual and the UoA lead.

Should the Equality and Diversity Group determine that a request by an individual to remove the minimum one output should not be forwarded to Research England, the individual can request that this decision be reviewed by the PVC Research and this will be dealt with in a similar manner to the review process (step 3) for appeals as outlined in Section 2.5. Following a review, the PVC Research may request that the Equality and Diversity Group look again at the individual's case, request that the Equality and Diversity Group make a request to Research England, or close the case. The decision of the PVC Research is final and will not be further considered.

4.4 Equality impact assessment

For details on our Equality Impact Assessments, as these relate to the selection of outputs, see the relevant part of Section 2. Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken to assess the selection of outputs at First Draft Submission stage (in March 2020) and subsequently at Final Draft Submission stage (in Summer 2020). If any groups are shown by these EIAs to be clearly under/ over represented across the selection of outputs in any UoA, the University will firstly review the processes and procedures outlined in this Code of Practice to consider whether these are in themselves discriminatory. Should this under-representation prove to result from possible issues regarding the uneven distribution of actual allocation of time and resources to undertake research or support for researcher development at School level, this will be referred to University Research Committee to take further action to ensure fair, transparent and consistent policies and procedures across the University.

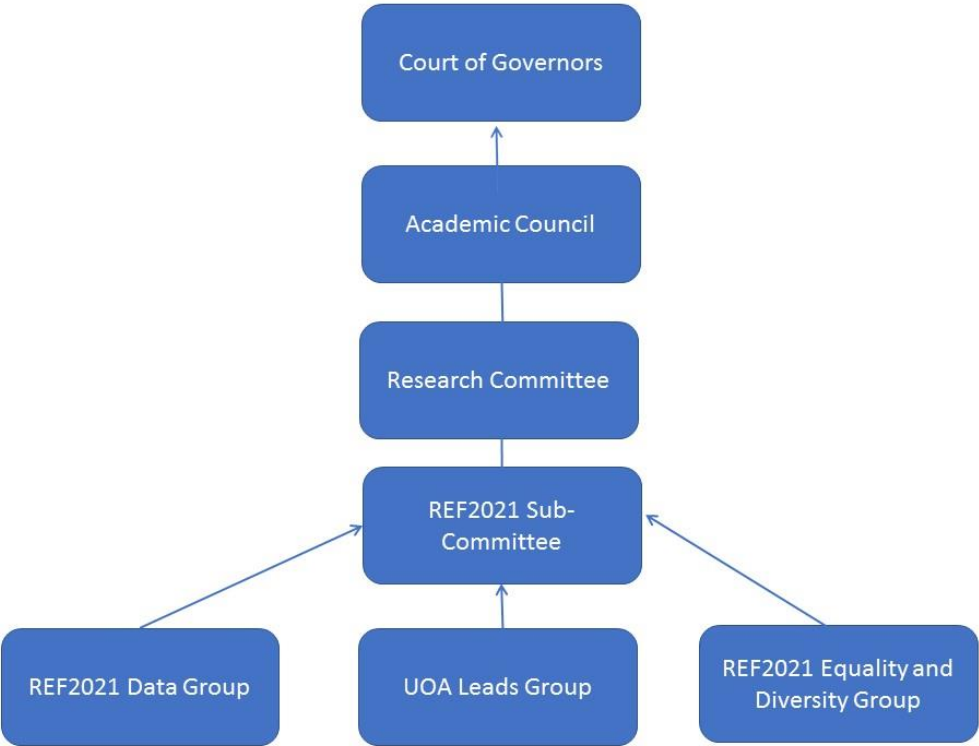
As noted above, final decisions on the selection of outputs may also be informed by the interim EIAs, particularly where improving representativeness across a UoA in terms of protected characteristics of staff included in the submission can be achieved without a diminution of quality as determined by internal assessment processes.

4.4.1 EIA Timetable

See Section 2.6

Part 5: Appendices

Appendix A: Committees and Groups for REF2021



Appendix B: Terms of Reference and Membership - Committees and Groups for REF2021

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2021 SUB-COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

The Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF2021) Sub-committee is a fixed-term task and finish group reporting to the Research Committee.

The REF2021 Sub-committee is responsible for governance and decision-making relating to the University's submission to the REF2021.

To fulfill this responsibility, the Sub-committee will:

- 1) Lead the development of an institutional Code of Practice that is in line with REF2021 requirements.
- 2) Provide assurance to the Vice Chancellor of the University's adherence to the agreed Code of Practice.
- 3) Oversee the production of equality impact assessments and ensure appropriate equalities training is undertaken by the members of the group and any other staff in key roles relating to the REF2021.
- 4) Oversee the production of the REF2021 submission, monitoring the achievement of key milestones, identifying solutions to issues referred by the REF Director, and recommending the final submission to the Research Committee for approval.
- 5) Agree the Units of Assessment for the University's submission.
- 6) Agree the outputs and impact case studies for inclusion in the University's submission.
- 7) Formulate an action plan for collection of data and other evidence, and monitor progress and completion.
- 8) Agree requests to, and confirm responses to, Research England regarding the institution's submission.
- 9) Report on progress and completion of the REF2021 exercise, referring matters outside the scope of the group to the Research Committee, and other committees as appropriate.

Membership

Ex-officio (4)

Deputy Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for the REF (Chair)
REF Director (Deputy Chair)
Head of Research Office
Equality & Diversity Lead (to oversee CoP compliance)

Nominated (3)

3 Professors nominated by Chair (representing Panels A and B, Panel C, and Panel D)

Co-opted (1)

Open Access and Repository Advisor

Secretariat

Research Ethics and Integrity Officer, or nominee

Quorum

The quorum shall comprise a minimum of 40% of the members, including the Chair or the Deputy Chair.

Meetings

The group shall meet as required by the Chair to fulfil the responsibilities outlined above. Business may be conducted outside of meetings by means of electronic communication/individual action, subject to the approval of the Chair.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2021 UNITS OF ASSESSMENT LEADS GROUP

Terms of Reference

The Research Excellence Framework 2021 Units of Assessment (REF2021 UoAs) Leads Group is a fixed-term task and finish group reporting to the REF2021 Sub-committee.

The REF2021 UoA Leads Group is responsible for development of the University's submission to the REF2021.

To fulfill this responsibility, the working group will:

1. Share practice across UoAs and develop the REF submission
2. Coordinate and monitor the grading of outputs and impact case studies via internal reviewers and external advisors
3. Coordinate and share good practices to develop the environment templates
4. Support the REF2021 Sub-committee by further promoting the dissemination of information and consultation with staff on REF including the Code of Practice, appeals processes and declaration of individual staff circumstances
5. Support the REF Director and Head of Research Office in working with Heads of School, College Research Directors and others to coordinate data gathering to support the REF2021 submission
6. Make recommendations to the REF2021 Sub-committee on the selection of outputs and impact case studies

Membership

Ex-officio

REF Director (Chair)

Head of Research Office (Deputy Chair)

UOA lead or nominated representative for each Unit of Assessment

Secretariat

Research Impact Officer, or nominee

Quorum

The quorum shall comprise a minimum of 40% of the members, including the Chair or the Deputy Chair.

Meetings

The group shall meet as required by the Chair to fulfil the responsibilities outlined above. Business may be conducted outside of meetings by means of electronic communication/individual action, subject to the approval of the Chair.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2021 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY GROUP

Terms of Reference

The Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF2021) Equality and Diversity Group is a fixed-term task and finish group reporting to the REF2021 Sub-committee

The REF2021 Equality and Diversity Group is responsible for governance and decision-making relating to the University's submission to the REF2021.

The REF2021 Equality and Diversity Group is tasked with ensuring that all aspects of our REF2021 preparations are compliant with the Code of Practice, as well as managing the Equality Impact Assessment process and considering data relating to Equality and Diversity that is derived from this and other sources. This group will also manage the process for declaration of staff circumstances and communication with Research England on removal of the minimum one output requirement and reduction in output pool as required.

To fulfill this responsibility, the Group will:

- 1) Advise on all aspects of Equality and Diversity within the context of REF2021
- 2) Coordinate and ensure timely completion of EIAs, consider the data and make any recommendations necessary to the REF2021 Sub-committee
- 3) Oversee the process for staff to declare equality related circumstance
- 4) Manage securely data related to staff members declaration of circumstance and use the information only in the context of REF2021. Ensure only anonymised data is reported
- 5) Consider the declared staff circumstances and guidance from Research England to support decisions on making requests to Research England to waive the minimum one output.
- 6) Inform the REF Sub-committee where staff across a UoA have declared circumstances that may qualify for a reduction across the UoA. At the request of the REF Sub-committee manage the requests to Research England

Membership

Ex-officio (4)

University Lead for Diversity and Inclusion Research Community (Chair)

Head of Research Office

Deputy Director Human Resources

Head of Corporate Social Responsibility

Secretariat

Research Ethics and Integrity Officer, or nominee

Quorum

The quorum shall comprise a minimum of 40% of the members, including the Chair or the Deputy Chair.

Meetings

The group shall meet as required by the Chair to fulfil the responsibilities outlined above. Business may be conducted outside of meetings by means of electronic communication/individual action, subject to the approval of the Chair.

Appendix C: Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances form

This document is being sent to all Category A staff at Westminster whose outputs are eligible for submission to REF2021 (see the REF's own ['Guidance on submissions'](#), paragraphs 117-122, as well as the University of Westminster Code of Practice on our website). As part of the University's commitment to supporting equality and diversity in REF, we have put in place safe and supportive structures for staff to declare information about any equality-related circumstances that may have affected their ability to research productively during the assessment period (1 January 2014 – 31 July 2020), and particularly their ability to produce research outputs at the same rate as staff not affected by circumstances. The purpose of collecting this information is threefold:

- To enable staff who have not been able to produce a REF-eligible output during the assessment period to be entered into REF2021 where they have;
 - circumstances that have resulted in an overall period of 46 months or more absence from research during the assessment period, due to equality-related circumstances (see below)
 - circumstances *equivalent* to 46 months or more absence from research due to equality-related circumstances
 - two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave.
- To recognise the effect that equality-related circumstances can have on an individual's ability to research productively, and to adjust expectations in terms of expected workload / production of research outputs.
- To establish whether there are any Units of Assessment where the proportion of declared circumstances is sufficiently high to warrant a request to the higher education funding bodies for a reduced required number of outputs to be submitted.

Applicable circumstances

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

If your ability to research productively during the assessment period has been constrained due to one or more of the following circumstances, you are requested to complete the attached form. Further information can be found in paragraph 160 of the

Guidance on Submissions (REF 2019/01). Completion and return of the form is entirely voluntary, and individuals who do not choose to return it will not be put under any pressure to declare information if they do not wish to do so. This form is the only means by which the University will be gathering this information; we will not be consulting HR records, contract start dates, etc. You should therefore complete and return the form if any of the above circumstances apply and you are willing to provide the associated information.

To submit this form you should email the form to REF2021-equality@westminster.ac.uk or to one of the members of the REF2021 Equality and Diversity Group. Alternatively, you may mail the form to the Head of Research Office. All received forms will be acknowledged by email and if requested by phone as per your preference expressed on the form.

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

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

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

Yes ☐

No ☐

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

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

<p>Family-related leave;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • statutory maternity leave • statutory adoption leave • Additional paternity or adoption leave or shared parental leave lasting for four months or more. <p>For each period of leave, state the nature of the leave taken and the dates and durations in months.</p>	<p>Click here to enter dates and durations.</p>
<p>Disability (including chronic conditions)</p> <p>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Mental health condition</p> <p>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Ill health or injury</p> <p>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>

<p>Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of standard allowance</p> <p>To include: Type of leave taken and brief description of additional constraints, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Caring responsibilities</p> <p>To include: Nature of responsibility, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Gender reassignment</p> <p>To include: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Any other exceptional reasons e.g. bereavement.</p> <p>To include: brief explanation of reason, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>

Please confirm, by ticking the box provided, that:

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

I agree ☐

Name: Print name here

Signed: Sign or initial here

Date: Insert date here

☐ I give my permission for a member of the University of Westminster REF2021 Equality and Diversity group to contact me to discuss my circumstances, and my requirements in relation this these.

☐ I give my permission for the details of this form to be passed on to the relevant contact within my UoA or School. (Please note, if you do not give permission your UoA/School may be unable to adjust expectations and put in place appropriate support for you).

I would like to be contacted by:

Email ☐ Insert email address

Phone ☐ Insert contact telephone number

Appendix D: Initial EIA/March 2019

Equalities Denominator	No. of staff selected for REF submission	% of staff selected for REF submission	No. of T&R* or RO** staff in the University	% of T&R or RO staff in the University
Age				
16-24			1	0.11%
25-34	32	7.03%	65	7.37%
35-44	139	30.55%	214	24.26%
45-54	152	33.41%	301	34.13%
55-64	106	23.30%	244	27.66%
65 and over	26	5.71%	57	6.46%
Ethnicity				
BME	80	17.58%	175	19.84%
Information Refused	6	1.32%	9	1.02%
Unknown	19	4.18%	42	4.76%
White	350	76.92%	656	74.38%
Gender				
Female	213	46.81%	428	48.53%
Male	242	53.19%	454	51.47%
Disability				
No	442	97.14%	841	95.35%
Prefer not to say				
Unknown	1	0.22%	3	0.34%

Yes	12	2.64%	38	4.31%
Status				
Full-time	337	74.07%	594	67.35%
Part-time	118	25.93%	288	32.65%
Contract Type				
Fixed Term	29	6.37%	100	11.34%
Permanent	426	93.63%	782	88.66%
Grade				
Fixed Salary	19	4.18%	46	5.22%
Lecturer	72	15.82%	145	16.44%
Principal Lecturer	34	7.47%	80	9.07%
Principal Research Fellow	5	1.10%	6	0.68%
Professor	64	14.07%	67	7.60%
Reader	67	14.73%	68	7.71%
Research Assistant			2	0.23%
Research Associate	3	0.66%	25	2.83%
Research Fellow	7	1.54%	26	2.95%
Senior Academic			2	0.23%
Senior Lecturer	174	38.24%	404	45.80%
Senior Research Fellow	10	2.20%	11	1.25%

*T&R - Teaching and Research (Academic employment function)

**RO - Research Only (Academic employment function)

Appendix E: Single Equality Policy Statement

The University of Westminster is committed to supporting diversity and equal opportunities in our dealings with job applicants, students, colleagues and the public. We are fully committed to creating a stimulating and supportive learning and working environment which is supportive and fair, based on mutual respect and trust, and in which harassment and discrimination are neither tolerated nor acceptable.

This will allow colleagues and students to reach their full potential, regardless of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, marital/civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, ethnic or national origins, family circumstances, nationality, political beliefs and affiliations, socio-economic background, or other irrelevant distinction. We aim to encourage a working and learning environment which is supportive and fair and in which harassment and discrimination are neither tolerated nor acceptable.

We will continue to respect and value diversity within our communities of colleagues and students, to promote equality of opportunity, and to challenge and strive to eliminate unlawful discrimination.

The University acknowledges the special role of higher education in promoting equality of opportunity and furthering social inclusion. We recognise that ensuring equality of opportunity is essential for the high-quality performance and long-term success of the University. All colleagues and students have rights and responsibilities in relation to the promotion of equality of opportunity, as acknowledged by this policy.

All colleagues and students are required to become familiar with and observe the spirit and letter of the University's equality and diversity related policies.

It should be noted that any breaches of the legislation on equal opportunities or of the University's equality and diversity policies may lead to disciplinary action.

Where bullying or harassment of any form has taken place, colleagues and students are encouraged to advise an appropriate colleague as soon as possible. For further information please refer to the Diversity and Dignity at Work and Study Policy, which explains the procedure should that policy be breached in any way. This and the Single Equality Policy are available on our website: <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/about-us/our-university/vision-mission-and-values/corporate-social-responsibility/equality-and-diversity>

Building Good Relations⁴

⁴ Adapted from the University of Westminster Religion and Belief Policy, which drew upon: <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/all-publications/all-publications/101-mission-dialogue-and-inter-religious-encounter/file>

A plural community can only function as an educative community when all of its members feel affirmed and respected as well as challenged and questioned. The University's Single Equality Policy therefore advocates the following statement as guidelines to build confidence in a diverse community.

As members of the University community we should show each other respect and courtesy. In our dealings with other people, this means exercising goodwill and:

- Respecting other people's freedom within the law to express themselves and their convictions
- Finding ways to live our lives with integrity and within the framework of the University's Single Equality Policy, and allowing others to do so too
- Learning to understand what others value, and letting them express this in their own terms
- Respecting the convictions of others about the way in which they live (including food, dress and social etiquette)
- Recognising that all of us at times fall short of the ideals of our own traditions, and never comparing our own ideals with other people's practices
- Working to prevent disagreement from leading to conflict
- Always seeking to avoid violence in our relationships

When we talk to each other about our convictions and values, we need to do so with sensitivity, honesty and straightforwardness. This means:

- Recognising that listening as well as speaking is necessary for genuine conversation
- Being honest about our beliefs and allegiances
- Not misrepresenting or disparaging other people's beliefs and practices
- Correct misunderstanding or misrepresentations, not only of our own but of those of others whenever we come across them
- Being straightforward about our intentions

We have a great deal to learn from one another, which can enrich us without undermining our own identities. Together, listening and responding with openness and respect, we can move forward to work in ways that acknowledge genuine differences but build on shared hopes and values.

For Note Publishing

The policy will be published on the University's public website (<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/about-us/our-university/vision-mission-and-values/corporate-social-responsibility/equality-and-diversity>); and will be available for download in a range of formats e.g. Word, PDF, plain text, alternative formats such as large print or Braille on request.

A variety of methods will be used to publicise the policy internally through colleague and students channels and will be sent to all senior colleagues and key University and College committees for dissemination.

Monitoring and Review

The University will take all necessary steps to effectively implement the SEP and improve it through regular monitoring, consultation and review. Continuous development of plans supports the equality and diversity agenda by reporting on progress to date, and providing an overarching action plan which addresses all equality strands. All reports prepared as a result of the SEPP and its implementation will be presented to the Human Resources Committee and the University Executive Board.