REF 2021 update

13 December 2018
## Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November-January 2019</td>
<td>Preparation of draft Code of Practice &amp; Institutional environment template</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2019</td>
<td>Publication of final guidance and criteria</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 February 2019</td>
<td>Mock REF Exercise - publication of the requirements and guidance, including the draft Institutional environment template and Code of Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 March 2019</td>
<td>Deadline for the initial identification of independent researchers</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 March 2019</td>
<td>Mock REF Exercise – deadline for submissions</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 June 2019</td>
<td>Submit Code of Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 June 2019</td>
<td>Mock REF Exercise 2019 – completion of the exercise including feedback to Departments</td>
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REF 2021 – Code of Practice

This must cover the institution’s approach to:

• Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research (where a HEI is not submitting 100% of category A eligible staff)

• Determining research independence

• The selection of outputs

Deadline for submission: 7 June 2019
Determining research independence – staff eligibility

- **Category A eligible staff**: “Staff on ‘research only’ contracts should meet the definition of an independent researcher”
- **Category A submitted staff**: “This will include all staff on research-only contracts who are ‘Category A eligible’”. 
Determining research independence – definition of independence

‘An individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual’s research programme’
REF 2021 – Code of Practice

Determining research independence – potential indicators of independence

i) leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project

ii) holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement.

iii) acting as a co-investigator on an externally funded research project

iv) leading a research group or a substantial work package

v) significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research.
REF 2021 – Code of Practice

Determining research independence – provisional University approach

- Builds on the approach from REF2014, but adapted to 2021 guidance.
- Reflects the broader institutional framework established in the University’s Research Performance Expectations.
- Uses grade as the starting point as follows:
  - Grade 8 research staff are regarded as independent researchers
  - Grade 7 research staff are independent in some cases
  - Grade 6 research staff are regarded as research assistants. In rare exceptions, they may be deemed as independent
Determined research independence

• Grade 7* staff research staff may be determined as independent where:

1) They hold a competitively awarded fellowship for which independence is a requirement OR

2) They are a PI on an externally funded research grant OR

3) (In limited circumstances) they are CoI on an externally funded research grant i.e. they meet indicators IV and V and are ‘leading a research group or a substantial work package’ AND ‘have significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research’. This would mean large grants where acting as a CoI was equivalent to being a PI.

* Grade 6 research staff may be determined independent where they are equivalent to a Grade 7 researcher and meet the same criteria. For example, where they hold a externally funded research fellowship which is self directed.
Determining research independence – proposed process

- RSPO provide an indicative list of research staff who are acting in one of the above roles to Departments
- Departments review the list and provide evidence to confirm which staff are independent
- RSPO review the list from Departments in light of the Code of Practice and REF guidance and make a recommendation to the PVC-R on whether to approve or reject the determination of independence
- The PVC-R makes the final decisions and informs the Head of Department
- The Head of Department informs researchers of the outcome
- An appeal process is also detailed as required by the guidance
REF 2021 – Code of Practice

Determining research independence – timing

1. The draft Code of Practice is circulated in advance of the mock REF (February 2019)
2. Provisional identification of independent researchers up to 1st March 2019
3. Where the identification is provisionally agreed, these staff are included in the mock REF (deadline: 29 March 2019)
4. A review of the process is undertaken including an equality impact assessment to inform any amendments to the Code of Practice (April-May 2019)
5. The revised Code of Practice is agreed by the University and submitted to the REF Equality and Diversity Panel (EDAP) for approval (deadline: 7 June 2019)
6. The response from EDAP is received (Autumn 2019) including any requested changes before final approval and publication (December 2019)
7. From January 2020, formal decisions on independence can be made
Selection of outputs

This section details how the selection of outputs in each UoA will be subject to review to ensure a fair and transparent selection process. This includes:

• Undertaking a series of equality impact assessments of the output selection during the preparation of the submission to inform the final selection of outputs.

• A review of the unit environment templates in which each submitting unit is required to “demonstrate how it has paid due regard to equality and diversity issues in the construction of its REF submission, including the selection of the output portfolio, and how data on the distribution of outputs across staff relate to the unit’s approach to supporting equality and diversity”.

• Contextual information on the REF guidance and University policies.
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Mock REF exercise - format

1. **Staff** – consistent with the 2018 REF check but including all independent research only staff identified prior to the deadline.

2. **Outputs** – consistent with the 2018 REF check i.e. FTE * 2.5 but with supporting data on outputs recorded on Pure (for example, requests for double weighting and cross referral).
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Mock REF exercise - format

3. **Impact** – the case studies should be drafted in full so that an assessment of their current and potential quality against the REF assessment criteria can be made. Any significant gaps from the 2018 REF check exercise should therefore be addressed.

4. **Environment** – the template should be drafted in full so that an assessment of its current and potential quality against the REF assessment criteria can be made. Any significant gaps from the 2018 REF check exercise are addressed.
Mock REF exercise – submission requirements

1. Departmental/UoA response form (updated question set)
2. Updated output selection on Pure, with some additional supporting data
3. Updated set of impact case studies
4. Updated Environment template
5. Unit circumstances (tbc)
Mock REF exercise – what will be provided
1. Guidance notes for Departments/UoAs
2. Draft Code of Practice (REF1 & 2)
3. Updated impact case study template (REF3)
4. Research income and PhD award data (REF4a&b data)*
5. Draft institutional environment template (REF5a)
6. Updated unit environment template (REF5b)

* REF4c data (research income in-kind will be shared later in 2019)
REF 2021 – University updates

Since last the briefing in September:

• The University’s response to the draft REF guidance has been submitted

• We participated in a Research England led pilot on capturing research activity costs in UoA4 - Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience

• A REF Operations Group has been formed

• 2 REF Support Administrators (Amy George and Sam McDermott) have been started
REF 2021 – University updates

• Development of the first version of the REF modelling tool
• Development of a decision-making process for the allocation of staff, outputs and impact case studies
• Development of a policy on feedback on output grades
REF 2021 – External updates

• Consultation responses are being currently being considered
• Citation provider – Clarivate Analytics
• Institutional environment panel formed
• Final guidance is due in January 2019
• Submission of survey intentions (December 2019) – panel appointments
## Key dates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment periods and submission deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31 July 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 November 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 December 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>2021</td>
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