

Code of Practice

Institution name: The University of Winchester

Date of submission: 4th February 2026

Part 1: Introduction

1. How the Code of Practice (CoP) supports the principles of:

1.1 Robustness

1.2 The University operates a single academic contract and an integrated Workload Allocation Model (WAM), which is reviewed annually and the subject of consultation with staff representative bodies and approved by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), is a means to ensure that work is allocated to academic staff in an equitable and transparent manner. The WAM is applied to all HESA-defined Teaching and Research staff consistently, with the exception of Heads of Department. Equalities trends and any impacts are monitored at a university level by the Academic Workloads Review Group. Scholarship/Research/KE and Professional Development form one of the three elements that comprise the WAM. The University has a single academic contract. Scholarship/Research/KE and Professional Development hours (universal hours) are applied to all academic members of staff, with additional hours explicitly for research applied dependent on a quality-based application process under the Research Excellence Acceleration and Development (READ) Programme.

1.3 Staff who are allocated hours explicitly for research as a result of engagement with the READ Programme are also eligible to apply, under a separate annual process, for additional hours dedicated to leading impact case studies (ICS), with hours applied in the workload the following academic year. The ICS process is reviewed annually, with the expectations of leading impactful research aligned with REF2029 guidance, clearly outlined in the Guidelines and the criteria for allocation of time for this purpose.

1.4 Under REF2029, Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) is defined as a contractual expectation to undertake independent research, supported by the provision of explicit time and

resources within the academic workload. SRR is a role-based expectation and is distinct from measures of research performance, output quality or funding success.

1.5 At the University of Winchester, this contractual expectation is operationalised through the Research Excellence Acceleration (REA) stream of the READ Programme. This reflects the institution's single academic contract and integrated workload model, which require a formal mechanism to allocate protected research time. Where explicit research time is not allocated through REA, no alternative contractual mechanism exists by which SRR could be evidenced.

1.6 Identifying Staff Contracts with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR)

1.7 The processes described in this CoP ensure that only staff on HESA defined Teaching and Research (ACEMPFUN 3) contracts. Within this category, SRR is determined through the University's READ/REA governance framework, informed by the allocation of explicit protected research workload through the REA stream of the READ Programme. This ensures that only staff whose roles include a defined responsibility for independent research, supported by explicit time and resource are included in the REF volume measure. Prior to the implementation of the READ Programme in 2024-25, which was phased in over two years, staff on HESA-defined research contracts were allocated hours in workloads and funds for research and therefore had SRR according to their contract/role profile.

1.8 The READ Programme is divided into two streams: Research Excellence Development (RED) and Research Excellence Acceleration (REA), each designed to meet distinct needs. The REA stream is focused on REF2029-aligned objectives and research trajectories and provides academics with explicit research workload allocation, which evidences an institutional expectation to undertake independent research and informs the University's READ/REA governance framework in determining SRR.

1.9 The full process is outlined in Part 2 of this CoP document and **Appendix 7**.

1.10 Determining Research Independence

1.11 The University will determine research independence based on alignment to the criteria set out in the REF2029 Guidance on Submissions, including indicators such as leadership of research projects, principal investigator (PI) status on externally funded grants, and supervision of doctoral students. A 'research only' contract is considered to demonstrate research independence where the staff member undertakes self-directed research, rather than acting in a research assistant capacity.

1.12 The full process is outlined in Part 3 of this CoP document and **Appendix 8**.

1.13 Reporting Lines and Responsibilities

1.14 Reporting lines with clear responsibilities for decision making are detailed in the appropriate Terms of Reference for REF Unit of Assessment Working Groups, University Research Group (URG) and University Research Management Group (URMG) (**Appendices 1-3**).

1.15 Clear responsibilities for REF Unit of Assessment Leads are set out in the UoA Lead Role Descriptor (**Appendix 4**).

1.16 Transparency

1.17 The University's commitment to transparency, equity, consistency, and inclusivity in relation to this CoP is demonstrated in the following ways:

- A dedicated REF2029 intranet page, accessible to all staff, with guidance for UoA leads, including on the external review of outputs process.
- The READ scheme, which is informed by consultation with UCU as the staff representative body, is opened annually and shared directly with all eligible academic staff and their line managers.
- Dedicated Research and Innovation (R&I) intranet pages, accessible to all staff, with information on ethics, research integrity training and open access
- Membership and Terms of Reference for research-related Committees and Working Groups available on R&I intranet pages, accessible to all staff
- Research funding guidelines and process for resource allocation available on dedicated intranet page
- UoA research strategies, agreed with UoA members and approved by URMG, include a rationale for the allocation of funding, demonstrating that the approach will be fair and transparent.
- Staff who are on leave of absence or offsite can access the REF2029 and intranet pages above whilst offsite
- All relevant policies, scheme/programme guidelines and application forms include a statement indicating the availability of alternative formats and methods of supplying the information.
- An up-to-date CoP will be made publicly available for unrestricted access.

1.18 Equity and inclusion

1.19 Decisions about submissions are fair and impartial. This is demonstrated through consistent application of processes and through supporting and encouraging a diversity of people and types of research:

- Core processes are designed with equity and inclusion in mind, following appropriate consultation, as required.
- Terms of Reference for UoA Working Groups are annually reviewed to ensure clarity of expectations and consistency of practice
- EIAs are undertaken across processes for determining SRR, research independence and selection of outputs (conducted in consultation with members of the wider interest groups related to equality and diversity, listed below).
- An EIA Impact Report on central Research and Innovation (R&I) initiatives is produced annually.
- EDI training on submissions is provided to all UoA Working Groups, URG and URMG.

2. Contextualisation within Institutional Policies:

2.1 Values are central to our mission and vision, and this includes the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Embedding EDI throughout our practice is a stated priority in our *People & Culture Strategy 2024-28*. These values are, therefore, embedded in this CoP, its implementation, and in discussions about the University's overarching approaches to REF2029. As the *R&I Enabling Strategy 2024-28* makes clear, the institution prioritises an inclusive culture of excellence: 'By creating a dynamic, fair-minded, inclusive, and sustainable research and innovation culture of excellence, we will enable academics, researchers and PGR students to achieve their full potential as scholars' (p.8).

2.2 EDI Policies

2.3 Within the wider context of the University's Strategic Plan 2023-28 the CoP links to the following institutional policies and strategies that promote and support EDI:

- Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy
- Staff Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Maternity, Paternity, Parents and Carers Policy
- Gender Identity and Reassignment Policy
- Relationships Policy
- Staff Reasonable Adjustments Policy

2.4 These are available at [Policies and Regulations - University of Winchester](#).

2.5 Infrastructure

2.6 As part of the wider culture, the institution has an EDI Committee and Forum. The EDI Committee consists of staff and student representatives from different areas across the University. It reviews and discusses the provision of policies, procedures and facilities in relation to EDI within the institution. The Forum is open to all staff and students who are interested in advancing EDI at the University, encompassing all of the protected characteristics covered by legislation.

2.7 In addition, groups and networks provide a mechanism for sharing information, discussion and support:

- Staff Pride LGBTQIA+ Network
- University Global Ethnic Member Network
- Disability and Equality Interest Group
- Women's Network Group
- Working Parents and Carers Group

2.8 Equalities Impact Analysis:

2.9 Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) and actions arising from their outcomes ensure an inclusive approach to all aspects of REF2029. Representatives from the groups and networks listed above will be involved in consultations on the EIAs for REF, across all elements of this CoP, as detailed in Part 2.

2.10 In the wider institutional context, EIAs are undertaken in relation to all policies and to the WAM.

2.11 People, Culture and Environment

2.12 The University is proud to be a Disability Confident Employer and we have pledged to uphold the principles of AdvanceHE's Race Equality Charter. We also hold a Silver Award as part of the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme. Through our policies, processes, and practice we uphold our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination, creation of equality of opportunity, and fostering of good relations.

2.13 We monitor and support staff in underrepresented groups to ensure that opportunities are

inclusive and we produce an annual EDI Report. The EDI Report 2023-24, for example, presents data on staff and identifies action plans for Gender Pay Equality and Race Equality, both of which are monitored by the EDI Committee. The Report also identifies objectives for the following year. For 24-25 these are:

- Facilitate a network group for women, drawing on learning from the University's alumni from the AdvanceHE Aurora initiative.
- Create and embed a Staff Reasonable Adjustments Policy and related training programme for staff, to increase the visibility, consistency and professionalism around the support available for staff with disabilities
- Create a new policy and a scaffold of support around the issues of harassment and sexual misconduct to comply with new legislative and sector regulatory obligations.
- Continue working around part time staff in a longitudinal study over 2024-2026, for EDI reporting.
- Continue work relating to neurodivergent staff and staff with disabilities, including exploring external standards of excellence, for EDI reporting.

2.14 Training

2.15 All staff are required to undertake online training in EDI. In addition, training videos relating to all protected characteristics are available on the EDI intranet page. All staff involved in making decisions in relation to REF2029 are required to undertake bespoke training in conscious and unconscious bias, led by the Director of Equalities, as detailed in Part 2.

2.16 Managers have access to a Management Curriculum, to support with day-to-day management and leadership duties.

2.17 Part-time Staff

2.18 The University is proud to have a high proportion of staff who work part-time and/or flexibly.

2.19 The University is committed to supporting its part-time staff in relation to EDI. All staff, including part-time, can apply for a bespoke working pattern through the Flexible Working Policy whilst support with balancing work and family life is set out in the Paternity, Maternity, Parents and Carers Policy.

2.20 Fixed-term Staff

2.21 The University has a small proportion of fixed-term staff who meet the criteria for research independence or SRR. No institutional distinctions are made between staff on fixed-term and indefinite contracts who meet these criteria.

3. Update on Actions Since REF 2021:

3.1 The REF2021 EIA report (**Appendix 5**) details the EIAs and their stages conducted as part of REF2021 on:

- the overall comparison of REF2021 entrants with REF2014 by age, gender and ethnicity (the three Protected Characteristics included in the REF2014 EIA)

- the determination of independent researchers (for those on research-only contracts) in REF2021
- the overall profile of staff submitted to REF2021 including: the selection of outputs in relation to the number of outputs per person by Protected Characteristic and by UoA.

3.2 Summary of Outcomes and Recommendations

3.3 As summarised in section 4 of the REF2021 final EIA report, the outcomes of the EIAs conducted provided the University with confidence in its progress with regards to gender since REF2014. However, wider actions were identified to ensure that progress continues to be made. The results also highlighted areas for action particularly in working with BAME colleagues and those who take periods of maternity leave, paternity leave and shared parental leave.

3.4 It was noted that University policies beyond REF-focused documents and their alignment with regard to researchers and research careers will be key to ongoing work on EDI.

3.5 Key Actions

3.6 The REF2021 EIA Report includes an Action Plan identifying key short and longer-term intended actions taken or planned to prevent discrimination or advance equality.

3.7 The first action identified was to review and retain the REF EIA Group for preparations for the next REF. The EIA Group will monitor the progress of the Action Plan and make recommendations to URMG.

3.8 In addition, the key actions completed have been:

- The implementation of new grade descriptors for staff on research-only contracts, from grades 6-8 which provide a clear career progression route
- University approval of a Gender Equality and Pay Gap Action Plan which includes reference to researchers
- The establishment of a University Global Ethnic Member network, as a space to explore issues, including those relevant to BAME researchers
- Development of Individual Research Support Plans for staff taking maternity/paternity/shared parental leave to facilitate the planning of pre- and post-leave research activity, supported by a mentor.

Part 2: Identifying Staff Contracts with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR)

4. Policies and Procedures:

4.1 Criteria for SRR

4.2 Staff on Teaching and Research (T&R) contracts (ACEMPFUN 3) as defined by HESA will be reviewed for SRR status annually based on the allocation of research hours in the current and previous year.

4.1 In determining SRR, the University has adopted an approach that reflects its institutional structure and commitment to clarity in role expectations. SRR is determined through the University's READ/REA governance framework, which constitutes the institution's REF-aligned process for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research.

4.2 The READ/REA governance framework consists of the READ peer review process and panel, supported by an Equality Impact Assessment, Special Review process and appeals mechanism and is overseen by URMG. Together, these elements constitute the University's REF-aligned process for determining significant responsibility for research (SRR), ensuring decisions are transparent, consistent, and equitable.

4.3 Staff may request reassessment of their eligibility to participate in the REA stream through the Special Review process. This provides flexibility in cases of role change, return from leave, or other exceptional circumstances. Not all T&R staff automatically have SRR; hence a clear mechanism is necessary.

4.4 The REA stream is part of a layered approach, which has been adopted due to the University's single academic contract, integrated workload model, and small scale. While REF2029 guidance discourages the use of competitive schemes as the sole determinant of SRR,

participation in the REA stream confirms defined contractual expectations and the provision of explicit time and resources for research.

4.5 This allocation provides necessary evidence of performance and/or determination of SRR through the University's READ/REA governance framework, ensuring SRR is based on role expectation rather than past performance, and aligning with HESA and REF guidance when interpreted in the institutional context.

4.6 Participation in the REA stream operationalises and confirms the staff member's responsibility to undertake independent research, as defined by institutional role expectations and the WAM.

4.7 This approach is grounded in REF2029 guidance, which notes that contracts with SRR are those where "*explicit time and resources are made available*" for research. In the University of Winchester context, this is evidenced by a specific and consistently applied allocation of research hours via the REA stream.

4.8 The model ensures that SRR is determined based on clearly defined institutional expectations embedded in role descriptors and workload allocation. It reflects the University's integrated academic contract structure and focused research environment, providing a transparent and consistent method for determining SRR across units.

4.9 While REA participation is the only institutional route for confirming SRR, this mechanism does not assess past performance but serves to confirm defined expectations. This approach reflects the institutional need for a transparent, consistently applied method that embeds research expectation through the workload model.

4.10 Mechanism for Identification

4.11 Due to institutional resource constraints, REA is the only route used to allocate protected research hours and to identify staff with SRR. However, in line with REF2029 guidance, which advises against reliance on selective schemes alone, the University implements a layered approach to ensure fairness and inclusivity. This includes:

4.12 Annual review of research hours determining SRR status through appraisal

4.13 A formal Special Review process for staff unable to engage with REA due to exceptional circumstances e.g. new appointments; return from leave.

4.14 Integration of EIAs and Narrative CVs to capture broader contributions and research expectations.

4.15 This combined process ensures that SRR identification reflects contractual expectations.

4.16 The READ scheme is divided into two streams:

- Research Excellence Acceleration (REA) Stream: This stream provides dedicated research workload allocation for a period of up to two years. It supports staff to undertake independent research activity where explicit research time is allocated within the Workload Allocation Model. Eligibility is determined through a structured peer-review process that considers readiness to undertake independent research within allocated workload, alignment with institutional research priorities, and the feasibility of the proposed research plan.
- Research Excellence Development (RED) Stream: Staff in the RED stream are not automatically deemed to have SRR and do not receive explicit research workload allocation. The RED stream supports research development, skills building and

preparation for future progression. Engagement with RED activities may support progression to the REA stream and a subsequent change in contractual role expectations.

4.17 Rationale for using Research Hours to Determine SRR

4.18 Contracts with significant responsibility for research are those for whom explicit time and resources are made available to engage actively in independent research. Staff with responsibility for research have these expectations indicated in the role descriptor and in annual appraisals with their line manager. Staff on HESA-defined T&R contracts (including Heads of Department) are expected to apply for and hold REA status to access explicit research workload allocation, which is a necessary condition for SRR eligibility. Holding the T&R role profile alone does not confirm SRR unless explicit research workload allocation is allocated through the REA process.

4.19 As described above, the University has developed processes and procedures as part of the READ Programme in order to allocate a specific proportion of time for research (under the REA stream), applied in a consistent way. The key REF2029 criterion for SRR is whether an individual has an expectation to engage in independent research as part of their employment. The allocation of research hours within the University's workload model is a clear, objective indicator of this expectation.

4.20 Staff with research hours have a formally recognised institutional commitment to research as part of their job role, which directly reflects the REF definition of SRR.

4.21 Staff without research hours do not have this expectation and therefore do not meet the definition of having SRR, regardless of voluntary or ad hoc engagement in research.

4.22 This approach ensures objectivity, fairness, and consistency across units, avoiding subjective judgements about the quality or volume of outputs. It also provides a transparent basis for mapping SRR status in the HESA Staff Record.

4.23 SRR is reviewed annually, with status determined by whether a staff member has been afforded explicit time for research based on the current and previous year's workload allocation. The continued provision of research hours reflects the institution's ongoing expectation that the individual will engage in independent research.

4.24 The READ scheme is embedded within the University's annual research planning and workload allocation cycle. Participation in the REA stream results in a formal allocation of up to 150 hours (pro rata) of research workload allocation per academic year.

4.25 SRR is confirmed where research hours are explicitly allocated through participation in the REA stream. This allocation confirms that independent research is an expected part of the staff member's role. Staff in the RED stream or T&R staff without research workload allocated do not carry SRR. While staff may engage in research outside their contracted duties, only those with research hours allocated through the REA process meet the REF definition of SRR.

4.26 Decision-Making and Communication

4.27 The decision to allocate research hours through the REA stream provides evidence of an explicit institutional expectation to undertake independent research. This is a structured, peer-reviewed process administered annually or, in exceptional circumstances, Special Review. Eligibility is based on employment on a T&R (ACEMPFUN 3) contract at 0.2 FTE or above.

4.28 The REA stream supports staff with demonstrated research trajectory capability by allocating explicit research time in their workload. Applicants must submit a narrative CV and research plan, approved by their Line Manager, detailing how up to 150 hours (pro-rata) of workload will be used to deliver agreed research activity and outputs.

4.29 Applications are peer-reviewed against three core criteria:

- Research Experience & Evidence of Readiness
- Fit with Institutional Strategy & Support Capacity
- Contribution to Research Excellence.

Scores determine whether the applicant is ready to hold contractual responsibility for independent research through allocation of research workload, through which SRR status is confirmed.

4.30 Outcomes are communicated to applicants and their managers no later than 20th June each year, to inform workload planning and SRR mapping in the HESA return (via REFQUALCON).

4.31 Panel Composition and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Head of Research Environment and Impact	Chairs panel, ensures decisions align with strategy and REF requirements
Head of Researcher Development & Operations	Oversees process management and fairness. ensures decisions align with strategy and REF requirements
Faculty Deans (or nominees)	Provide academic assessment across disciplines
Senior People and Culture Representative	Ensures decisions are equitable and support inclusive research culture

4.32 The panel is responsible for fair, transparent, and rigorous assessment of all REA applications against the three criteria mentioned in 4.28.

4.33 The READ process, by design, does not permit institutional support to be granted solely based upon the quality of past outputs. The READ Panel is reminded that REA confirmation status must not be based on a qualitative assessment of past performance, but on their capability and readiness to deliver high-quality research within the period of allocated research time.

4.34 Each panel member scores applications individually using a 6-point scale, guided by a structured matrix.

4.35 Reviewer scores are calibrated and moderated by the Panel to ensure consistency across disciplines and assessors.

4.36 All applicants receive clear, constructive written feedback linked to the assessment criteria to support future development.

4.37 Members of the panel are also responsible for reviewing and assessing applications submitted outside the main cycle due to exceptional circumstances.

4.38 Special Review Process

4.39 In exceptional circumstances where a staff member was unable to apply for REA through the standard process, the University provides a Special Review mechanism. This process enables individuals to apply for REA outside the usual cycle and, if successful, be considered for SRR through the subsequent allocation of research hours. This special review route ensures fairness and inclusivity, accommodating a diversity of research trajectories and personal circumstances. When special review applies:

- Staff returning from extended leave (e.g. armed forces deployment, maternity, paternity, long-term sick leave, or secondment)
- Staff appointed in-year, following the launch of REA.

4.40 Applications will only proceed to be reviewed if they meet the above criteria in section 4.28.

4.41 The process is triggered by the individual staff member. However, the University takes proactive steps to ensure that eligible staff are made aware of this route, including quarterly communications to Heads of Department and line managers regarding eligibility criteria, timing, and circumstances in which a Special Review may be appropriate.

- 4.42** Applications should normally be submitted within one month of completing one month of full-time equivalent work following return or start. For those on a phased return, this period will begin once full contractual hours are resumed. Where an individual was not reasonably able to submit within this timeframe due to lack of awareness or exceptional circumstances, this will be considered as part of the Special Review assessment.
- 4.43** The individual must submit a full REA application and include a written case (maximum 500 words) in 'Section 7: Additions of the Narrative CV' template. The case should outline why the standard REA process was inaccessible and why inclusion in the REA stream is justified. Applicants will be notified of a decision within one month of receipt of the application.
- 4.44** This process does not constitute an appeal against SRR designation but provides an alternative mechanism to access the REA process in cases where the standard REA application process could not be accessed due to exceptional circumstances.
- 4.45** Cases will normally be reviewed by the members of the most recently constituted READ panel.
- 4.46** The panel will assess whether the individual meets the criteria for inclusion in the REA stream based on research trajectory and potential. If approved, research workload allocation will be allocated, and SRR status will be recorded in REFQUALCON and monitored via appraisal.
- 4.47** Staff may appeal decisions related to REA eligibility to the Director of R&I (URMG Chair), following the READ appeals procedure.

4.48 Recording and Monitoring Outcomes

4.49 Participation in REA will be recorded centrally by the R&I Directorate and communicated to HR and Planning.

4.50 SRR status will be reported by Planning in the HESA Staff Record under REFQUALCON including those confirmed through the Special Review process, in alignment with REF2029 volume measure requirements.

4.51 Outcomes of the annual appraisal process will inform continued SRR eligibility.

4.52 All criteria and processes are published and available to all staff. Training and support for Heads of Department and applicants are available through the R&I Directorate.

4.53 Indicative Annual Timeline for READ and SSR Identification (except cycle 1)

Action	Timeframe	Activity
Programme Launch	December	READ Programme launched by R&I Directorate; updated guidance and application materials published
Departmental Discussions	January	Applicants consult with Line Managers to discuss workload and research plans
Application Deadline	February	Deadline for REA and RED applications, including narrative CVs

Panel Review	March	Peer reviewers assess and score applications using inclusive assessment criteria
Panel Meeting	April	Panel convenes to confirm allocation and record rationale
Decisions Released	Early May	Applicants, Deans, and Heads of Department notified of outcomes to inform WAM planning. Appeal process 10 day window commences.
WAM Allocation and SRR Confirmation	May	REA research hours are formally allocated in the workload model; SRR status is confirmed and documented (note: for Heads of Department, allocation of time is nominal)
SRR Recorded (REFQUALCON)	By October	Confirmed SRR status submitted via HESA Staff Return using REFQUALCON field

5. Staff, Committees, and Training- Roles and Responsibilities:

5.1 Unit of Assessment Leads

5.2 Each REF UoA has a UoA Lead (or co-leads), who represents the staff within that UoA and Chairs the UoA's Working Group. Co-leadership is permissible where it is appropriate to share

expertise and workload and/or to provide a professional development opportunity for an Early Career Researcher to gain leadership experience.

5.3 The main responsibilities of the role, as detailed in the UoA Lead Role Descriptor (**Appendix 4**) include: being the primary point of contact for researchers in the UoA; working with the Head of Research Environment and Impact (HREI), other UoA Leads (as a member of URG) and reporting to their Faculty management team; chairing the UoA Working Group in accordance with the Terms of Reference; providing leadership in preparing the REF submission and in developing the UoA and its researchers, both individually and collectively, and developing and implementing, with the UoA as a whole, the UoA's Research Strategy.

5.4 UoA Leads are appointed through a transparent Call for Expressions of Interest and Interview involving the Director of R&I, HREI, and the Dean and/or Head of Department. The period of appointment is 3 years, with optional renewal of the appointment through application.

5.5 UoA Working Groups

5.6 Each UoA has a UoA Working Group, chaired by the UoA Lead, with a constitution and Terms of Reference (**Appendix 1**) reviewed annually. The membership comprises staff members of the UoA representing the subject expertise within the UoA. As such, members may be drawn from across Departments and/or Faculties. UoA Working Groups include representation from ICS Leads, Research Centre Leads (where a Centre is aligned with the UoA), and ECRs.

5.7 The main responsibilities of the UoA Working Group are to: develop the UoA's submission for the REF in accordance with the strategic objectives and actions in the UoA's Research Strategy and Business Case; manage the UoA's annual budget in accordance with the principles of transparency and fairness; manage the external review of outputs process;

communicate with the UoA as a whole; keep a written record of decisions relating to staff, outputs and other aspects of the UoA submission, and advise URMG of any issues arising. UoA Working Groups meet 4 times a year and notes of meetings are sent to URMG

5.8 University Research Group

5.9 URG is a University-level group comprising the UoA Leads, the Director of R&I (ex-officio) and chaired by the HREI. The HREI, based in central R&I, is the main point of contact for UoA Leads and is responsible for overseeing strategy and working with UoA Leads to enhance the research environment and culture, develop and support researchers, and manage all aspects of preparing the REF submission. URG meets 4 times a year and acts in an advisory capacity to URMG.

5.10 The main responsibilities of URG are set out in the membership and Terms of Reference (**Appendix 2**) which are annually approved by URMG. They are: to discuss REF policy developments, internal policies and practices relating to REF preparation and UoA strategic development; to act as a forum for sharing of best practice, and to inform URMG of issues and matters arising relating to REF processes and procedures. Notes from URG meetings are received at URMG.

5.11 University Research Management Group

5.12 URMG is a university-level group, chaired by the Director of R&I. It meets 4 times a year with membership comprising the Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellors and the Director of People & Culture. Its main responsibilities, as detailed in the Terms of Reference (**Appendix 3**) include:

agreeing strategic decisions relating to the REF 2029 submission, including UoAs, SRR, related income generation, internal policies, and management of related activities across Faculties and Professional Services. It monitors the activity of URG and UoA Working Groups through the provision of notes of meetings of those groups and makes strategic decisions on the processes relating to UoA QR funding. Strategic decisions made by URMG are forwarded as required to the Chair of ELT (Executive Leadership Team) for final approval and notes of URMG meetings are received at ELT.

5.13 The groups, roles and responsibilities described above are shared across the CoP sections. Membership, Terms of Reference, role and job descriptions are included in the Appendices.

5.14 Training:

5.15 All staff making decisions in relation to processes and procedures for REF2029 are required to undertake EDI training. The training focuses on conscious and unconscious biases as applicable in particular to the REF and is led by the Director of Equalities. Separate training sessions are provided for: the membership of URMG; the membership of URG; the membership of UoA Working Groups, and the membership of the READ Programme panel.

6. Appeals:

6.1 Applicants to the REA stream of the READ Programme may appeal the outcome of their application if they believe that the decision was affected by a procedural irregularity, bias, or failure to fairly consider the evidence provided. Appeals cannot be made on the basis of disagreement with the academic judgement of the panel alone.

6.2 Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Chair of URMG within 10 working days of

receiving the REA outcome. The appeal should clearly state which of the eligible grounds of appeal apply and provide supporting evidence.

6.3 Appeals will be reviewed by a URMG Panel comprising senior academic staff (2x PVC

Faculties and Director of R&I) who were not involved in the original decision-making process.

The Panel will consider the appeal within 20 working days of submission and may:

- Uphold the original decision
- Request a reconsideration by the original panel with additional clarification
- Overturn the decision where a material procedural failing is found.

6.4 All appeal outcomes will be communicated in writing. There is no further route of appeal. The

process is designed to uphold transparency, objectivity, and fairness and is separate from the Special Review process, which provides an equity safeguard enabling access to the REA process outside the standard cycle in the case of career interruption and new staff appointments in year.

6.5 Research progress is reviewed through the staff appraisal process. SRR is confirmed annually

based on whether research remains a defined part of the role within their workload allocation.

REA workload hours may be adjusted for planning purposes, but SRR status only changes where contracted role expectations substantively change e.g., role/WAM revision, not on the basis of output performance.

7. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA):

7.1 The University recognises that REF2029 guidance advises against using selective schemes as the sole determinant of SRR. However, in the University of Winchester's institutional context with an integrated academic contract and a unified workload model, participation in the REA stream is the only available mechanism that reliably confirms a defined expectation to conduct independent research where explicit time and resources are made available for staff on T&R contracts. The EIA process has been designed to monitor the inclusivity and fairness of this model and to provide alternative routes (e.g. Special Review) to mitigate any unintended barriers created by the standard cycle.

7.2 The process of identifying staff with SRR through the REA stream is subject to a formal Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). The University has established a unified governance structure, the REF EIA Group (**Appendix 6**), to oversee and implement EIAs across all relevant elements of the REF2029 CoP, including;

- SRR identification (via REA and Special Review)
- Research independence determinations
- Output selection processes.

7.3 REF EIA Group Structure and Function

7.4 The REF EIA Group is chaired by the Director of Equalities and includes:

- Head of Research Environment and Impact
- Head of Research and Innovation Operations

- HR representatives
- Representatives from University equality networks.

7.5 This group is responsible for:

- Collecting, managing, and analysing disaggregated staff data across all REF-related processes, including SRR status, READ/REA participation and Special Review outcomes, research independence determinations and output selection processes.
- Interpreting EIA data and identifying trends, disparities, or barriers across protected characteristics
- Consulting on fairness, inclusion, and accessibility in REF procedures
- Making recommendations to URMG for adjustments (eg to process design, communications or policy) where disparities or access barriers are identified.

7.6 Timing and Integration of EIAs

7.7 EIAs are embedded across the REF2029 CoP and are undertaken at key points:

- Prior to and after REA allocation decisions and SRR designation
- Following Special Review assessments
- During the process of identifying independent researchers
- Ahead of final output selection.

7.8 The REF EIA Group ensures that decisions are made fairly, consistently, and transparently.

Where disproportionality or access barriers are identified, the Group recommends adjustments to URMG.

7.9 These recommendations are reviewed and implemented as necessary by URMG.

7.10 The READ Programme incorporates a range of inclusive and bias-mitigating measures to ensure equitable access and fair evaluation of staff. These include:

- Inclusive assessment criteria that recognise diverse and non-linear research trajectories, including those affected by career breaks, caregiving, or part-time roles.
- Flexible access mechanisms, such as extended deadlines for those returning from parental or long-term medical leave.
- Accessible formats and support, including neurodiverse-friendly tools (e.g. checklists, guidance videos, alternative formats)
- A Special Review process for individuals unable to apply through the standard route due to exceptional personal or professional circumstances.

7.11 Planned Monitoring and Evaluation

7.12 Full review of REA outcomes will annually occur from 2024–25. The following data will be collected and analysed:

- Applications, allocations, and research hour allocations by protected characteristic and eligible non applicants (where possible).

- Participation and success rates across gender, ethnicity, disability, age, and other demographics (compared with overall University demographics).

This will help identify any barriers or inequalities in access to REA and SRR recognition.

7.13 Where disparities are identified, these will be reported to URMG and URG. Actions may include:

- Targeted communication or guidance to underrepresented or identified groups
- Adjustments to process timelines or criteria
- Enhanced training or support for applicants.

7.14 The results of these actions will be incorporated into the annual EIA report and used to inform improvements to the READ process.

7.15 Indicative Planned Annual EIA Timeline for SRR Identification via READ

Action	Date
Initial EIA on 2024–25 READ/REA SRR cycle (including participation and outcomes)	October 2025
EIA on annual READ/REA SRR cycle and special review (including participation and outcomes)	June
Consult with the REF EIA Group and members on the READ/SRR and special review EIA outcomes.	Early September

URMG to review EIA and recommendations from the REF EIA Group review and implement any changes as required.	September
Final cumulative EIA review across all SRR/REA cycles (multi-year)	July 2027
7.16 Governance and Accountability 7.17 The EIA is owned by the Director of R&I and overseen by URMG. 7.18 All reviewers and panel members must complete EDI and bias awareness training. 7.19 Any revisions to processes or outcomes will be documented and evaluated as part of the University's ongoing REF2029 equality assurance framework. 7.20 The Role of the Narrative CV in Holistic Assessment 7.21 At the heart of the REA process is the Narrative CV, which enables a holistic appraisal of each applicant's contribution to research. The Narrative CV allows individuals to describe and reflect on: • The breadth and depth of their research contributions, including leadership, impact, collaboration, and cultural enrichment • Their role in supporting inclusive and open research cultures • Any challenges or structural barriers encountered, such as periods of absence, non-continuous research engagement, or underrepresented career pathways • Alignment with the University's research strategy and REF objectives.	

7.22 This format moves beyond a narrow focus on outputs and funding, enabling reviewers to assess the net contribution to research in context. All panel members are trained to assess Narrative CVs fairly, using consistent criteria that reflect both achievement and opportunity.

7.23 The Narrative CV supports contextual and inclusive assessment of research responsibility, rather than research performance.

Part 3: Determining Research Independence

8. Policies and Procedures:

8.1. Criteria and Evidence

8.2. Under REF2029, only independent researchers are eligible for submission if employed on research-only contracts. This section outlines how the University of Winchester identifies independent researchers based on REF definitions and institutional values of fairness and transparency.

8.3. At any time, the University employs a small number of staff on research-only contracts (approximately 5). Given the bespoke nature of these roles and the University's research funding profile, job descriptions are tailored to the specific needs of each post. To ensure a fair, equitable, and transparent approach, the University has developed a structured process.

8.4. Definition of Research Independence

8.5. In line with REF2029 guidance on submissions, an independent researcher is defined as an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme.

8.6. Indicators of Research Independence

8.7. The following indicators, based on the REF2029 criteria and internal practices, may be used to determine independence. These indicators will be considered holistically and in combination:

- Acting as Principal Investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project

- Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where independence is a requirement
- Leading a research group
- Being named as a Co-Investigator on an externally funded research grant or award (Panels C and D)
- Making significant contributions to the design, conduct, and interpretation of research (Panels C and D).

8.8. Job description includes expectations to:

- Contribute to the preparation of a REF submission, where relevant to the role.
- Be a Principal Investigator on external grant applications
- Lead on a research/evaluation project funded by the University.

8.9. Indicators that do not Demonstrate Research Independence

A staff member would not be deemed independent if:

- Their job description states they assist or contribute to another person's research
- Their role is limited to compiling or describing data for another project
- They are completing a PhD or Professional Doctorate
- They only oversee part of a project without research leadership
- They are named as an author on an output without having independent responsibility (authorship alone is not sufficient).

8.10. Decision-Making and Communication:

8.11. To ensure consistency and transparency, the University has developed the following structured approach for confirming research independence:

- Research-only staff (ACEMPFUN 2) will be flagged through People and Culture and R&I records.
- Provisional decisions for each staff member are made by URMG, based on the agreed criteria and documented evidence (including job descriptions, leadership roles, grant applications and research responsibilities as described in appraisal or workload documents).
- URMG convenes a group meeting with line managers of research-only staff to explain the process and provisional decisions.
- The R&I Directorate prepares individualised letters to research-only staff, setting out the context, indicators, and provisional decisions.
- Staff on research-only contracts who are on leave of absence will receive a copy in their preferred method of communication, post or email.
- Line managers meet each staff member to deliver the letter and discuss the rationale. Staff confirm receipt by emailing the Director of R&I.
- Staff are informed of the appeal process, panel membership, and timelines (see 'Appeals' section).
- Where a staff member believes their job description is significantly outdated or inaccurate, they may request revision through discussion with their line manager (for example, during 1:1s or the annual appraisal process).

- Independent researchers will be flagged in the HESA Staff Return using the REFIND field.

8.12. Timetable for Research Independence Process

Action	Date
URMG approves research independence criteria/process	September 2025
Senate and VC approve CoP with independence criteria	October 2025
URMG make provisional decisions on research independence staff	February 2026
Briefing meeting: URMG meet with line managers	March 2026
Line managers meet with research-only staff to convey and discuss decision and inform staff of appeals process.	May 2026

9. Staff, Committees, and Training: This section is the same as that of Part 2.

10. Appeals:

10.1. Appeals Process for Research Independence for Staff on Research-only Contracts

10.2. The appeals process for staff on research-only contracts who wish to challenge their research independence decision will be clearly communicated to all relevant individuals:

- A copy of the appeals process will be emailed to all research-only staff.
- Details will also be included in the letter outlining the initial decision.
- Staff on long-term leave will receive this information via their preferred communication method.

10.3. Appeal Submission and Grounds

10.4. Appeals must be submitted in writing to People and Culture.

10.5. Appeals must clearly state the grounds and provide supporting evidence..

10.6. Acceptable grounds include:

- Presentation of new evidence of research independence not previously considered.
- Demonstration that their role has evolved beyond the original job description and now regularly meets the independence criteria.
- Allegation of procedural error.

10.7. Where point (3) is cited, People and Culture will work with the line manager to review and, if necessary, update the job description via HERA. Following review, People and Culture will present the findings to the Chair of URMG for reassessment.

10.8. Appeals Panel Membership

10.9. To ensure fairness, the appeals panel will be independent of prior decision-makers and comprise:

- Head of Research Environment and Impact
- Senior HR Representative
- Two UoA Leads for UoAs to which the staff member is not aligned, nominated by the Director of Equalities.

10.10. Appeal Timescales

10.11. Two formal rounds of appeal for research Independence for staff on research-only contracts will be scheduled:

Round 1: For staff employed on research-only contracts in post

Action	Date
Appeal deadline	June 2026
Panel meets	September 2026
Outcome communicated:	October 2026

Round 2: For new appointments or those with recently revised job descriptions

Action	Date
Appeal deadline	June 2027

Panel meets	September 2027
Outcome communicated:	October 2027
10.12. Ad hoc appeals will be permitted outside this timeline in exceptional circumstances, provided they are submitted no later than one month after the individual's return from leave or significant role change. 10.13. Equality Impact Assessment 10.14. EIA Integration: 10.15. The University is committed to ensuring that the process of identifying independent researchers is equitable and does not disproportionately affect individuals based on protected characteristics. An EIA is integrated into this process and will inform any necessary revisions. 10.16. A first EIA will be conducted on the research independence process. 10.17. A second EIA will be conducted on the process and appeals. 10.18. The EIAs will be received by URMG. 10.19. Data on protected characteristics will be reviewed in comparison with a reference group (e.g. ECRs on T&R contracts). 10.20. A final cumulative EIA will be conducted on research independence.	

10.21. EIA Timeline

Action	Date
Round 1: EIA conducted on research independence process and appeals process for in-post research-only contracts	November 2026
Round 1: Consult with the REF EIA Group and members on the research independence process, appeals process and EIA outcomes for in-post research-only contracts.	November 2026
Round 1: URMG to review EIA and recommendations from the REF EIA Group review and implement any changes as required.	December 2026
Round 2: EIA conducted on research independence appeals process for new appointments or those with recently revised job descriptions.	November 2027
Round 2: Consult with the REF EIA Group and members on the appeals process and EIA outcomes for new appointments or those with recently revised job descriptions	November 2027
Round 2: URMG to review EIA and recommendations from the REF EIA Group review and implement any changes as required.	December 2027
Final cumulative EIA on research independence	July 2028

10.22. Any amendments resulting from EIA findings will be made before final communication of decisions to affected staff. This ensures that fairness and inclusion remain central to all REF2029 preparations.

10.23. Transparency and Equality Considerations

10.24. All research-only staff will be informed of this process.

10.25. Criteria and procedures will be published and explained in accessible formats.

10.26. This process ensures that the identification of research independence is both rigorous and responsive to the diversity of academic roles at Winchester. It aligns with national expectations while recognising our institutional context and values.

Part 4: Allocating Contracts to UoAs

11. Policies and Procedures:

11.1. Criteria and Evidence:

- 11.2. UoA allocations for staff with SRR are informed by successful REA applications (see Part 2).
- 11.3. REA applications require applicants to self-identify the UoA with which they should be associated.
- 11.4. Self-identified UoA allocations are reviewed for appropriateness and consistency by the Head of Research Environment and Impact in consultation with UoA Leads, with reference to the staff member's role, research focus and, where applicable, substantive link.
- 11.5. Research only staff and staff who will not count towards volume measure but will be required to demonstrate substantive link will also self-identify their UoA,
- 11.6. Staff base their self-identification on the University's list of supported UoAs.
- 11.7. Where any staff are unsure of the most appropriate self-identification, they can seek guidance from the Head of Research Environment and Impact and the UoA Leads.

11.8. Decision-Making and Communication:

- 11.9. The process and timeline for staff with SRR is entirely aligned with that described for recognition of SRR, described in Part 2.
- 11.10. Research only staff and staff who will not count towards volume measure but will be required to demonstrate substantive link will receive a request to confirm their UoA association following confirmation of research independence and/or substantive link.

11.11. Confirmation of substantive link for staff not contributing to the volume measure is undertaken in accordance with the processes set out in Part 5 of this Code of Practice and informs final UoA allocation.

12. Staff, Committees and Training: This section is the same as that of Part 2.

13. Equality Impact Assessment

13.1. Allocation of contracts to UoAs is based on staff self-identification aligned with the processes for identifying SRR, research independence and/or substantive link, and therefore falls under the scope of those EIAs.

Part 5: Selecting Outputs

14. Policies and Procedures

14.1. This section outlines the University's policies and procedures for the fair and transparent selection of outputs for submission to the REF. It sets out how decisions on the selection of outputs will be made, taking into account the REF guidance on Contributions to Knowledge and Understanding (CKU). It also takes into account policies and procedures for:

- identifying substantive link to outputs
- selecting outputs where the substantive link is via former staff
- assigning outputs to UoAs
- supporting diversity of research outputs
- ensuring submissions are representative of the research undertaken within the submitting UoA during the REF period, and in relation to responsible research assessment practice.
- ensuring that outputs in British Sign Language (BSL) and Welsh are not treated less favourably than those in English, and that recognised languages (Scottish Gaelic, Scots, Ulster Scots, Irish, and Irish Sign Language) are treated in accordance with their legal status as official languages where required by the institution-specific legal context or where relevant to research produced in collaboration with jurisdictions where such languages have protected status. The procedures detailed below at 14.7 and in appendices 9 and 10 are applicable, to ensure parity of treatment.

14.2. Identifying Substantive Link to Outputs

14.3. Substantive link to any submitted output within the REF period is identified through employment relationships that occur before the point at which an output was first made publicly available and where:

- Employment of the author is on a research-only (ACEMPFUN 2) contract of a minimum of 0.2FTE and determined to be research independent (outlined in Part 3 of this CoP).
- Employment of the author is on a T&R (ACEMPFUN 3) contract of a minimum of 0.2 FTE and demonstrating SRR (outlined in Parts 1 and 2 of this CoP). Prior to the implementation of the READ Programme staff on HESA-defined research contracts were allocated hours in workloads and funds for research and therefore had SRR according to their contract/role profile,
- Employment of the author is on an academic management contract of a minimum of 0.2FTE, normally defined as Deans and Academic Directors, who do not contribute to volume measure but hold a role descriptor which includes an explicit expectation of research activity within the role. Academic managers meeting this description are not in the WAM and manage their own workloads. Outputs from these individuals will be subject to the same peer review and CKU alignment process as all other submitted outputs, and their inclusion will be recorded separately by URMG for transparency and audit purposes.
- Substantive link is therefore evidenced through an eligible employment relationship with the output author. This link ensures that only research enabled and supported by the University is eligible for submission.

14.4. UoA Working Groups supported by R&I will check HR records and workload allocation data to confirm that the employment relationship existed during the period the research was carried out. For most outputs this will mean research undertaken between January 2021 and December 2028, with the following exceptions:

- Where longform or diverse outputs (e.g. monographs, practice-based portfolios) require earlier evidence, the UoA Lead will submit a short justification, and R&I will record the evidence used.
- Outputs authored solely by PGR students (including doctoral theses), visiting or honorary staff, staff on teaching-only contracts or individuals in post with no research expectations or REA

status will not be eligible.

14.5. Fair and Transparent Selection of Outputs

14.6. The commitment to fair and transparent selection of outputs is embedded in the following processes.

14.7. The external peer review of outputs as part of the Preparatory REF Exercise undertaken by the University which also involves external peer review of draft Engagement and Impact, and Strategy, People, and Research Environment (SPRE) elements of the submission, including Unit-level Statements of Representation.). Subject specialists familiar with the REF are asked to provide feedback against the criteria of originality, significance and rigour. The process is as follows:

- Academic staff are invited to submit outputs eligible for review to the relevant UoA Lead within a specified timeframe.
- Decisions as to whether or not an output meets the published definition of research for the purposes of the REF, is aligned with the UoA descriptor, and is potentially eligible for submission, are made collectively by the UoA Working Group (chaired by the UoA Lead) as referred to in the Terms of Reference (**Appendix 1**) and communicated to the academic by the UoA Lead in writing. Where there is no unanimous decision, the output is sent for assessment. Where output authors are members of working groups, they may not contribute to this working group decision for their outputs.
- The UoA Lead sends each output to two assessors. Where an output is to be considered for alignment with two UoAs preparing for REF submission, it is sent to two assessors for each of the respective UoAs/disciplines. The UoA Lead notifies the HREI of this and liaises with the UoA Lead of the UoA concerned to coordinate the review process.

- Outputs in BSL, Welsh and other officially-recognised languages are sent to assessors who use BSL or speak the language.
- For transparency and consistency, in light of the subjectivity of peer review, where assessors' responses to and scoring of the same output are markedly different the output is sent to a third external assessor for consideration.
- For interdisciplinary work, two assessors are selected who have expertise in the UoA to which the work is likely to be submitted. The UoA Lead indicates that the output will be flagged as interdisciplinary if submitted.
- All external reviews are sent to R&I for filing and to the academic concerned, with the name of the reviewer removed.
- Each UoA Lead collates the reviewers' scores on the UoA REF Outputs Spreadsheet (a template provided by R&I to ensure consistency), adding contextual notes as appropriate. The UoA Lead also records on the spreadsheet information in the categories of: output details; output type; whether sent for review under another UoA; double-weighting potential; link to ICS, and REF open access compliance.
- The UoA Working Group collectively identifies outputs most appropriate for submission in relation to REF requirements and taking into consideration the diversity of outputs, the range of research activity, and that the outputs are representative of the research undertaken within the submitting UoA during the REF period. The expectation is that submissions include the highest quality research across all the disciplines in which the University is submitting.
- The REF EIA Working Group conducts EIAs (for phases 1 and 2 of the Preparatory Exercise) on the process of selecting outputs and reports to UoA Leads and URMG.
- Each UoA Working Group then collectively selects outputs to ensure that the UoA has the requisite number for submission and submits data for URMG approval (as referred to in the Working

Group Terms of Reference).

14.8. Guidelines to Ensure Consistency and Transparency in Selection of Outputs

14.9. Guidelines for the external review of outputs and the selection of outputs were drawn up collaboratively with URG, which advises URMG, in order to engender consistency across all UoAs.

14.10. The guidelines (**Appendix 9**) were developed based on the expert peer review process upon which REF2029 is predicated. However, recognising that REF sub-panels make decisions based on discussion rather than blind and independent reviews of an output, the guidelines make provision for outputs to be sent to a third external reviewer in some cases, for equity and fairness.

14.11. The guidelines are annually reviewed by URG and approved by URMG. For transparency, the guidelines are circulated to academic staff and are accessible to all staff on the REF2029 intranet page. They include a statement about facilitating adjustments and provision of alternative methods of supplying the information.

14.12. Selecting Outputs where the Substantive Link is via Former Staff

14.13. Outputs authored by staff who have retired or resigned are sent to reviewers following the process outlined above. The University recognises that submitting such outputs may support former colleagues' careers and reflects investment made in their research during their employment.

14.14. Outputs authored by staff who have been made redundant, that meet all other eligibility criteria, are also eligible for inclusion, based on the following: the University, acting in accordance with its values, avoids redundancies wherever possible; staff on T&R academic con-

tracts have received time allocation and resource to conduct research; the University recognises that submitting their work, post-employment may benefit their career. Finally, the University, on ethical grounds, has never employed research active staff on short term contracts purely for the benefit of a REF entry.

14.15. Assigning Outputs to UoAs

14.16. The following principles and practices govern the allocation of outputs to UoAs:

- Outputs are facilitated through the R&I directorate for all institutional UoAs. Each output is necessarily aligned with a UoA to facilitate its review in the context of that UoA.
- UoA Working Groups, through their UoA Research Strategy and the output review process outlined above, consider an output's subject matter, the REF sub-panel UoA descriptor and the institutional R&I Strategy.
- Interdisciplinary research is encouraged and supported through strategic objectives in the UoA Research Strategy and the output review process outlined above. This allows flexibility in assigning outputs to UoAs.
- Diversity of outputs is encouraged and promoted through the UoA Research Strategy, the guidelines for the review and selection of outputs, and through REF-focused training and development in multiple forms (face-to-face and online workshops; video recordings; Power-Point presentations).

14.17. Procedures for Ensuring Submissions are Representative of the Research Undertaken Within the Submitting Unit during the REF Period

14.18. The expectation is that submissions include the highest quality research within and across all

UoAs while also reflecting the full diversity of research undertaken during the REF period, including longform, practiced-based, interdisciplinary and applied outputs and outputs in BSL, Welsh and officially-recognised languages.

14.19. UoA Research Strategies, developed collectively within each UoA and approved annually by URMG, set out how outputs will be contextualised in relation to internal structures, disciplinary strengths, interdisciplinary activity, multidisciplinary collaborations, networks, national or global initiatives, and inclusivity (including EDI and open research practices).

14.20. To ensure representativeness, each UoA Working Group will complete an internal output mapping exercise showing how selected outputs reflect the range and diversity of research activity and output types produced in the UoA over the REF assessment period. This exercise and the processes described in Part 5 of this CoP set out how the Unit-level Statement of Representation element of the SPRE statement will be developed for submission. Notes of Working Group meetings will record discussion of output diversity and representativeness alongside quality.

14.21. External reviewers will be instructed to apply the REF criteria of originality, significance, and rigour consistently across all forms of output. Where reviews diverge or evidence potential bias, a third external assessor will be used.

14.22. EIAs will test whether any group of staff or type of output is disproportionately excluded. Outcomes are reported to URMG. If inequality is identified, future support will be directed to underrepresented groups.

14.23. Through these processes the University will ensure that submissions are representative, inclusive, and aligned with REF2029 expectations of responsible research assessment.

14.24. Policies, Procedures and Responsible Research Assessment Practice

14.25. The commitment to responsible research assessment practices in the selection of outputs

for submission is demonstrated through:

14.26. The process outlined above under Fair and Transparent Selection of Outputs, reflecting the principles of equality, fairness and transparency.

14.27. Integration of the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers* in UoA Research Strategies. UoA strategies incorporate actions to:

- Encourage researchers to actively contribute to the development and maintenance of a supportive, fair and inclusive research culture and be a supportive colleague, particularly to newer researchers.
- Ensure researchers and their managers are aware of, and act in accordance with, the highest standards of research integrity and professional conduct.
- Demonstrate how plans for use of resource (allocated UoA budget) annually realise the UoA's strategic objectives and adhere to principles of equality, fairness and inclusivity.
- Furthermore, any quantitative indicators as an outcome of the external
- review of outputs (in diverse forms) are contextualised in relation to broader
- assessment values. The narrative CV, which forms an integral part of the READ
- Programme, allows applications to be assessed in terms of the breadth and depth
- of the applicant's research contributions; their role in supporting inclusive and open
- research cultures, and their alignment with the UoA and University research
- strategies and REF objectives.

15. Staff, Committees, and Training: This section is the same as that of Part 2.

16. Equality Impact Assessment

16.1. EIA Integration: All forms of research output and research practice will be assessed on a fair and equal basis.

16.2. As referred to in Part 2 under EIA, the University has established a unified governance structure, the REF EIA Group, to oversee and implement EIAs across all relevant elements of the REF2029 CoP, including the output selection process.

16.3. The assessment will consider data on the distribution of selected outputs across staff, by protected characteristics, in the context of the characteristics of the submitted staff pool.

16.4. EIAs are undertaken at key points ahead of the final selection of outputs for submission and will be integrated into the two phases of the University's REF Preparatory Exercise as outlined in the table below.

16.5. Timeline for Selection of Outputs Process and Integration of EIAs

Action	Date
Conduct external review of outputs process	April 2026
Preparatory REF Exercise Phase 1: UoAs prepare first draft selection of outputs	October 2026
Preparatory REF Exercise Phase 1: EIA conducted on selection of outputs process	December 2026

REF 2029

Research Excellence Framework

Preparatory REF Exercise Phase 1: Consult with the REF EIA Group on EIA findings on the process of selecting outputs	February 2027
Preparatory REF Exercise Phase 1: URMG to review EIA outcomes and ratify decisions on the process of selecting outputs	February 2027
Preparatory REF Exercise Phase 2: UoAs prepare second draft selection of outputs	October 2027
Preparatory REF Exercise Phase 2: EIA conducted on selection of outputs process	December 2027
Preparatory REF Exercise Phase 2: Consult with the REF EIA Group on EIA findings on the process of selecting outputs	February 2028
Preparatory REF Exercise Phase 2: URMG to review EIA outcomes and ratify decisions on the process of selecting outputs	February 2028
URMG approves any final changes to selection of outputs	May 2028
The full process for the selection of outputs outlined in Part 5 of this CoP document is in Appendix 10 .	

Part 6: Appendices

- 1. Equality Impact Assessment**
- 2. Referenced material in the CoP**

Appendix 1: Unit of Assessment Working Group – Constitution and Membership

Appendix 2: University Research Group – Constitution and Membership

Appendix 3: University Research Management Group – Constitution and Membership

Appendix 4: Role Descriptor – REF Unit of Assessment Lead

Appendix 5: REF 2021 Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 6: REF EIA Group – Constitution and Membership

Appendix 7: READ Programme Documentation

Appendix 8: Research Independence Process

Appendix 9: Guidance on the External Review of Outputs for REF Preparation

Appendix 10: Selection of Outputs for REF Submission Process

Appendix 1 UoA Working Group Constitution and Membership



Terms of Reference and Membership for a Unit of Assessment (UoA) Working Group

REF UoA *[number and subject]*

CONSTITUTION *[insert academic year]*

1. Membership (see Appendix 1)

UoA Lead(s) (Chair)

Members: academic staff members of the UoA (minimum of 3 and maximum of 9)

Secretary: Faculty R&I Co-ordinator, administrator or equivalent where available, or members on rotation

Names of members:

UoA Lead(s):

Other members:

Secretary: *[or state members on rotation]*

2. Terms of Reference

The UoA Working Group will:

- a) write, and revise as required, the UoA's Research Strategy and Business Case, critically reflecting on the outcomes of REF 2021 as appropriate and setting strategic objectives
- b) develop the UoA's submission for REF 2029 in accordance with the strategic objectives and actions in the UoA's Research Strategy and Business Case
- c) collectively select outputs for submission to external assessors, ensuring that they meet REF eligibility and open access requirements
- d) consult externally on developments towards REF 2029 and be familiar with REF policy developments and publications as they are made available
- e) strategise for and develop potential impact case studies for REF 2029
- f) strategise to implement and sustain a strong UoA research environment.
- g) develop and monitor external funding bids from the UoA/Department and research student recruitment and completions

- h) undertake equality and diversity training as outlined by the University Research Management Group (URMG)
- i) undertake other training as outlined by Research and Innovation (R&I) and URMG
- j) co-ordinate with the Head of Research Environment and Impact, R&I, the Faculty management team and URMG
- k) via the Chair/UoA Lead, communicate with the UoA membership as a whole
- l) co-ordinate approval of internal funding bids where applicable and in accordance with the UoA Research Strategy and Business Case and available funds
- m) liaise with the Faculty R&I Co-ordinator and maintain oversight of the use of internal funds
- n) adhere to the University's Code of Practice for Research and the REF Code of Practice
- o) adhere to the University's Code of Practice for Equality and Diversity
- p) keep a written record of decisions relating to staff, outputs and other aspects of the UoA submission (see below)
- q) advise URMG, R&I and the Head of Research Environment and Impact of progress and issues arising pertinent to the UoA submission
- r) receive updates from Research Centres aligned with the UoA on Centre activities, income, impact, partnerships and outputs and send these to University Research Group (URG)

3. Meetings

Meetings will be held 4 times per academic year

4. Quorum

There shall be a quorum when half the members plus one are present

5. Agenda

(a) The agenda shall normally be circulated to members at least one week prior to meetings, except in the case of emergency meetings

(b) Members shall be entitled to submit relevant agenda items to the Chair for inclusion in the agenda

6. Notes of meetings

Notes shall be kept of the proceedings of all meetings of the Working Group, and a copy sent to the URMG secretary

APPENDIX 1: Notes on membership

1. Membership

UoA Lead(s) (Chair)

- The UoA Lead will be nominated through a transparent process of call for Expressions of Interest and interview, involving the Director of Research and Innovation, Head of Research Environment and Impact, and the Dean and/or Head of Department
- The UoA Lead will normally be an established researcher in the field (for example, have been submitted to previous Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercises; may hold Reader or Professorial title) but must have strong research leadership skills and a strong alignment with the relevant UoA descriptor
- Co-leadership is permissible where it is appropriate to share expertise and workload and/or to provide a professional/career development opportunity for an Early Career Researcher/emerging researcher to gain leadership experience.

Members: academic staff members of the UoA (minimum of 3 and maximum of 9)

- The number of members will partly depend upon the range of experience available and likely size of the FTE to be entered
- The members should be active researchers and be representative of the subject areas in the UoA
- The members should include an Impact Case Study Lead(s)
- The members should normally include a Research Centre Lead, where the Centre is aligned with the UoA
- The members should normally include, where present in the UoA, an Early Career Researcher

Secretary: Faculty R&I Co-ordinator, subject administrator or equivalent where available, or members on rotation

2. Appointment process

- The period of membership is normally 3 years
- Where it becomes necessary to appoint a new working group member – for example, due to changes to the subject/disciplinary composition of the UoA and to ensure appropriate representation of subject areas – Expressions of Interest will be invited.

3. Changes in membership:

- The UoA Lead may step down from the role by offering 6 weeks' notice in writing to the Director of Research and Innovation, Head of Research Environment and Impact, Dean and Head of Department
- Where a member is unable to attend meetings on a regular basis, the UoA Lead (in consultation with the Director of Research and Innovation and Head of Research Environment and Impact) may ask them to step down by offering 6 weeks' notice in writing
- Where concerns are raised about the level of progress being made by a UoA Working Group, including concerns that the Terms of Reference are not being complied with, the Director of Research and Innovation (and Dean and/or Head of

Department)) may investigate accordingly and implement an agreed action plan with the UoA Lead

Appendix 2 University Research Group Constitution and Membership



UNIVERSITY RESEARCH GROUP CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP 2025-26

1. Membership:

Chair:

Head of Research Environment and Impact

Ex Officio:

Director of Research and Innovation

REF Unit of Assessment Leads

Head of Research and Innovation Operations

Secretary:

PA to the Director of Research and Innovation

2. Terms of Reference:

- (a) The University Research Group will consist of leaders of each Unit of Assessment, the Director of Research and Innovation, the Head of Research Environment and Impact, and the Head of Research and Innovation Operations
- (b) The Terms of Reference and membership will be approved by the University Research Management Group and circulated to all research staff
- (c) To act in an advisory capacity, informing the University Research Management Group of issues and matters for discussion relating to REF processes and procedures;
- (d) To monitor and discuss REF 2029 policy developments;
- (e) To act as a forum for updates from and for Units of Assessment, including sharing of best practice and updates on the activities of Research Centres aligned with UoAs
- (f) To discuss internal policies and practices relating to REF preparation and Unit of Assessment strategic development
- (g) To oversee institutional progress in embedding a positive and inclusive research culture, including alignment with the principles of the Researcher Development Concordat and the People, Culture and Environment (PCE) framework of REF 2029

3. Meetings

Meetings will be held four times per academic year; additional meetings will be convened as required.

4. Quorum

There shall be a quorum when half the members plus one are present, with membership counted as one Unit of Assessment Lead per Unit of Assessment, for quoracy purposes.

5. Agenda

The agenda shall be circulated to members at least one week prior to meetings, except in the case of emergency meetings.

6. Substitution of Members

If any member of this Group is unable to attend a meeting it is permissible for that member to send a substitute to the meeting provided such substitution meets with the approval of the Chair.

7. Notes

Minutes shall be kept of the proceedings of all meetings of the Group, including virtual meetings, and these will be sent to University Research Management Group.

8. Advisors

The Chair may invite to a meeting a person or persons to act in an advisory capacity.

9. University Officers

The Chair may invite other members of staff to attend from time to time, in relation to specific issues, as appropriate.

10. Amendments to the Constitution

Amendments to the Constitution may be made at a duly constituted meeting of University Research Management Group.



UNIVERSITY RESEARCH MANAGEMENT GROUP CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP 2025-26

1. Membership

Chair: Director of Research & Innovation

Ex-Officio:

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (EDA, HSS)
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (BDT, HWB, LCJ)
Director of People & Culture

Secretary: PA to the Director of Research & Innovation

2. Terms of Reference

The Group will:

- (a) Consist of the Director of Research & Innovation (Chair), Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Director of People & Culture and PA to the Director of Research & Innovation (Secretary).
- (b) Forward strategic decisions as required to the Chair of ELT for final approval.
- (c) Agree strategic decisions relating to the REF2029 submission, including Units of Assessment, Significant Responsibility for Research, related income generation, internal policies, and management of related activities across Faculties and Professional Services.
- (d) Review applications and make strategic decisions relating to Research Centres and Research Groups and oversee activity through Centre annual reports
- (e) Review and approve Visiting Fellowship applications and oversee Visiting Fellows activity through the provision of annual reports
- (f) Monitor activity in University Research Group and UoA Working Groups through the provision of minutes and make strategic decisions on the processes relating to UoA QR funding.
- (g) Agree strategic decisions relating to the KEF, related external partnerships, income generation, internal policies, and management of related activities across Faculties and Professional Services.

3. Meetings

Meetings will be held four times per academic year; additional meetings will be convened as required.

4. Quorum

There shall be a quorum when half the members plus one are present.

Appendix 3 University Research Management Group Constitution and Membership

5. Agenda

- (a) The agenda shall be circulated to members at least one week prior to meetings, except in the case of emergency meetings.
- (b) Members shall be entitled to submit relevant agenda items to the Chair for inclusion in the agenda provided notice is given by 2pm on the previous Thursday.

6. Notes

Notes shall be kept of the proceedings of all meetings of the Group, and a copy sent to ELT for noting.

7. Attendance of Advisors

The Chair may invite to a meeting a person or persons to act in an advisory capacity.

8. University Officers

The Chair may invite other members of staff to attend from time to time, in relation to specific issues, as appropriate.

9. Amendments to the Constitution

Amendments to the Constitution may be made at a duly constituted meeting of this Group.

Appendix 4 UoA Lead Role Descriptor



Role Descriptor

REF Unit of Assessment (UoA) Lead

Summary

1. A UoA Lead represents the staff within that particular REF UoA and should be familiar with:
 - a) the REF UoA 'descriptor' (ie the subject areas and practices which are included in the UoA for the purposes of the REF)*
 - b) the research expertise, activities and plans of the members of the UoA
 - c) REF guidance, publications and procedures, including sector developments concerning REF 2029
 - d) the University's research processes
2. The UoA Lead will normally be an established researcher in the field (for example, have been submitted to previous REF exercises; may hold Reader or Professorial title) but must have strong research leadership skills and a strong alignment with the UoA descriptor.
3. It is expected that the UoA Lead will attend external workshops, symposia, subject network or other fora organised within the relevant subject area, to maintain expertise in how submissions to the next REF are likely to be interpreted within the UoA nationally.
4. UoA Leads are members of the University Research Group and work closely with the Head of Research Environment and Impact (who acts as a direct point of contact and is a member of Senate R&I Committee).
5. Co-leadership is permissible where it is appropriate to share expertise and workload and/or to provide a professional development opportunity for an Early Career Researcher/emerging researcher to gain leadership experience.
6. The period of appointment is for 3 years. Optional renewal of the appointment is by application. The UoA Lead may step down from the role by offering 6 weeks' notice in writing to the Director of Research and Innovation, Head of Research Environment and Impact, Dean and Head of Department. Where concerns are raised about a UoA Lead carrying out their role, the Director of Research and Innovation may investigate accordingly and, with the Head of Research Environment and Impact, implement an agreed action plan with the UoA Lead. If there is no evidence of the action plan being fulfilled, the Director of Research and Innovation may ask the UoA Lead to step down from the role, by offering 6 weeks' notice in writing.

Appointment Process

UoA Leads are appointed through a transparent process of Call for Expressions of Interest and Interview involving the Director of Research and Innovation, Head of Research Environment and Impact, and the Dean and/or Head of Department.

Main Responsibilities of the Role

- a) Being the primary point of contact for researchers in the UoA, working with the Head of Research Environment and Impact, the Head of External Funding and providing information for R&I as requested
- b) Chairing the UoA's Working Group in accordance with the University UoA Working Group Terms of Reference** and liaising with the Faculty R&I Co-ordinator
- c) Communicating with the UoA membership*** to provide updates and advice, share information and to arrange meetings of the UoA
- d) Communicating with the relevant Dean(s)/Faculty management team(s) to provide updates
- e) Developing the UoA and its researchers, for example through facilitating mentoring, peer review of outputs, training, and events which contribute to the research environment and enhance the research culture (liaising with other UoA Leads and with convenors of Research Centres aligned with the UoA, as appropriate)
- f) Developing and implementing, with the UoA as a whole, the *UoA's Research Strategy and Business Case* (relating to outputs, impact and research environment)**** in preparation for the next REF
- g) Managing, with the UoA Working Group, Faculty R&I Co-ordinator and R&I, internal research budgets allocated to the UoA and the funding application process
- h) Facilitating peer review of draft external funding bids and supporting UoA researchers in applying for external funding
- i) Facilitating and overseeing the UoA's REF preparatory exercise (including the external review of outputs, draft impact case studies and draft PCE (people, culture and environment) statements)
- j) Leading on preparation of the UoA's submission to the next REF in accordance with the University's REF Code of Practice

NOTES

* The UoA descriptor can be found in the publication *Panel Criteria and Working Methods*: [Panel criteria and working methods \(2019/02\) - REF 2021](#), pp.34-35

** Notes from UoA Working Group meetings are received at the University Research Management Group

*** Recognising that staff within some UoAs may be drawn from a number of Departments and/or Faculties

**** Ensuring that the draft and approved versions of the document are also shared with the relevant Heads of Department and Deans of the Faculties where members of the UoA are based.

The elements for assessment in REF 2029 are:

Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding; Engagement and Impact; People,
Culture and Environment: <https://www.ref.ac.uk>



REF 2021 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

a) Introduction

As detailed in our [REF 2021 Code of Practice](#), the University submitted all staff on a Teaching and Research Role Profile, Teaching with Enhanced Responsibility for Research Role Profile and those on research-only contracts who met the criteria for independent researchers. It was essential that a collaborative approach to conducting the EIA was taken because different skill sets were required.

Two groups were created to facilitate the EIA, drawing on those various skill sets:

1. **REF EIA Data Team.** This comprised the Director of RKE, the Director of Equalities and Staff Development and colleagues from HR. The remit was to create and analyse data sets and prepare reports for the REF EIA Working Group
2. **REF EIA Working Group.** This comprised the Director of RKE (Chair), the Director of Equalities and Staff Development and volunteer representatives from the Carers and Parents, Spectrum LGBTQ+, Race and Ethnic Diversity and Disability groups. The remit was to consult on analyses of data prepared by the REF EIA Data Team and make recommendations for actions to REF Management Group

REF Management Group retained responsibility and oversight of the full process and of this final report.

b) Background

The University of Winchester is a values-driven institution, with an Anglican foundation, with three core values: compassion; individuals matter; and spirituality. As stated in our 2030 Vision, [A Beacon for Educational Excellence, Sustainability and Social Justice](#), 'we seek to provide a challenging and supportive environment that... nurtures the embrace of equality, diversity and inclusivity' (p.10). This is underpinned by a range of strategies and groups, listed in our [REF 2021 Code of Practice](#).

Embedding equality and diversity into the REF processes was essential from the outset. The Director of Equalities and Staff Development provided mandatory training to all staff making decisions in REF. This took the form of face-to-face bespoke REF training in conscious and unconscious bias, which was in addition to mandatory online training in Equality and Diversity (E&D) which all members of staff undertake.

Additional actions to embed E&D in REF processes were implemented to improve practice since REF 2014. These included:

- revised Terms of Reference for the UoA Working Groups to ensure consistency of process across UoAs and ensure fairness in relation to the relative sizes of UoA groups
- a more comprehensive intranet page on REF 2021 which contains all internal documents used by the UoA Working Groups as well as external links to Research

England's website to

- increase openness and transparency
- detailed guidance notes for UoA Leads to further ensure consistency and transparency of process
- revised processes for distribution of internal funding to empower UoA Working Groups to fulfil their respective UoA Strategies

c. Scope of this report

This report details the EIAs and their stages conducted as part of REF 2021 on the:

- overall comparison of REF 2021 entrants with REF 2014 by **age, gender and ethnicity** – the three Protected Characteristics included in the REF 2014 EIA
- determination of independent researchers (for those on research-only contracts) in REF 2021
- overall profile of staff submitted to REF 2021 including:
 - the selection of outputs in relation to the number of outputs per person by Protected Characteristic and by UoA
 - any issues for concern arising for specific UoAs
- In addition, this report includes an Action Plan (section 5) to improve our equality and diversity processes and practices in research arising from the analyses

For the EIAs on independent researchers and selection of outputs, data were analysed for the following Protected Characteristics:

- **Age**
- **Gender**
- **Ethnicity**
- **Disability**
- **Maternity Leave**

However, in line with Research England guidance, data cannot be published in several instances as categories included less than 5 people, leading to potential identification. The same applies particularly to our analysis of UoAs, which ranged from 3 to 30 members.

The REF EIA Data Team scrutinised data on **Religion** but did not include them in discussions or reports, again because of identification of individuals, but also because meaningful conclusions were impossible as:

- a) 35.2% of staff (n=63) have not declared their status
- b) of staff with 5 outputs, 45.5% did not declare their status

The REF EIA Data Team scrutinised data on **Sexual Orientation** but did not include them in discussions or reports, again because of identification of individuals, but also because meaningful conclusions were impossible as:

- a) 35.2% of staff (n=63) have not declared their status
- b) of staff with 5 outputs submitted, 63.6% did not declare their orientation

d) Analyses

1. Overall comparison of REF 2021 entrants with REF 2014 by age, gender and ethnicity

FINDINGS

1.1 Age: Data cannot be presented here because one age group contained less than 5 people in REF 2014, making them potentially identifiable. In REF 2014, the percentage of staff in one age group was higher than the general age profile, but in REF 2021 that age group had doubled in size from 4 to

8. In REF 2021, other percentages remained relatively static given the small numbers involved.

The REF 2014 EIA identified no areas of concern in relation to the age distribution. For REF 2021, the shifts in terms of percentages are relatively minor across all groups, although the small increase in the youngest age group is seen as a positive affirmation of our support for early career researchers.

1.2 Gender: The overall trend for gender is a positive one, with a clear narrowing of the gap between males and females over this cycle:

Table 1: Comparison of submitted staff to REF 2014 and REF 2021 by gender

	REF 2014	REF 2021
	<i>Submitted staff</i>	<i>Submitted staff</i>
Male	48 (59.3%)	77 (52.7%)
Female	33 (40.7%)	69 (47.3%)
Total	81	146

1.3 Ethnicity: The REF 2014 EIA identified no imbalances in relation to declared ethnic groupings. Since 2014, the University has increased its overall percentage of BAME staff by 1% and its percentage of REF submitted staff by 3%. However, these numbers and increases are relatively small, particularly in the number of staff as a whole, highlighting the need for further analysis and scrutiny, as well as wider University actions to increase its recruitment of BAME staff.

Table 2: Comparison of submitted staff to REF 2014 and REF 2021 by ethnicity

	REF 2014	REF 2021
	<i>Submitted staff</i>	<i>Submitted staff</i>
White	72 (89.3%)	127 (87%)
Unknown	5 (6.2%)	8 (5.5%)
BAME	4 (4.5%)	11 (7.5%)
Total	81	146

2. EIA for the determination of independent researchers (for those on research-only contracts) in REF 2021

2.1 Process

Decisions about research independence were based on the agreed process detailed in the University's REF 2021 Code of Practice (pp. 6-7), which involved mapping each person's job descriptions against a set of approved criteria.

Staff on research-only contracts (n=13) were advised of the decision as to whether they had been designated independent (n=6) or non-independent researchers (n=7).

Staff were able to appeal the decision through a clearly defined process. No appeals were received.

The process was as follows:

1. The REF Data Analysis Team scrutinised the data by Protected Characteristics
2. The REF EIA Working Group discussed the findings and made recommendations to the REF Management Group
3. The REF EIA Working Group and REF Management Group agreed on required actions (see Action Plan)
4. The REF EIA Working Group and REF Management Group agreed that no changes were needed in the process, thereby negating the need for a second EIA on this group as initially identified in the Code of Practice
5. There were no appeals on decisions, thereby negating the need for an EIA on the appeals process, as initially identified in the REF 2021 Code of Practice

2.2 Findings

The REF EIA Data Team agreed that publication of details would potentially identify staff, given the small sample size (n=13) and its breakdown of 6 independent researchers and 7 non-independent researchers. Furthermore, in all cases there was at least one category containing less than 5 people.

2.2.1 Age: The age bands in this small group were generally reflective of the overall staff distribution shown in Figure 1 below.

Proposals for action on age

No specific actions were recommended for REF 2021, although trends will be monitored across the upcoming REF cycle.

2.2.2 Gender: Whilst generalised conclusions cannot be drawn from a sample of 13 staff, the gender breakdown was similar in the independent and non-independent researcher groups. However, the overall gender breakdown for staff on research-only contracts, and independent researchers as a whole is significantly more oriented towards females than the comparator pool of academic staff.

Proposals for action on gender

Recommendations were made to REF Management Group to address gender imbalances in staff on research-only contracts. See Action Plan (point 3)

2.2.3 Ethnicity: The overall rate of BAME in the University is 5.5% (and a further 7% 'ethnicity unknown'). The figures for staff on research-only contracts are lower than the University rate, although the sample is too small to draw meaningful conclusions from. This is further compounded by one person of the 13 being listed as 'ethnicity unknown'. This person comprised 7.7% of all staff on research-only contracts and 16.7% of independent researchers.

Proposals for action on ethnicity

Recommendations were made to REF Management Group to address BAME imbalances in staff on research-only contracts. These are specified in the Action Plan (points 8, 9, 10)

2.2.4 Disability: The overall rate of staff declaring disability in the University as a whole is 10.5% (with a further 8.2% listed as 'disability unknown'). The figures for staff on research-only contracts are lower than the University rate, although the sample is too small to draw meaningful conclusions from.

Proposals for action on disability

Recommendations were made to REF Management Group to address imbalances in staff with disabilities on research-only contracts. See Action Plan (point 17)

2.2.5 Maternity Leave: The distribution was proportionate although again, the sample is too small to draw meaningful conclusions from.

Proposals for action on Maternity Leave

No specific actions were recommended for REF 2021, although trends will be monitored across the upcoming REF cycle.

3. EIA on the selection of outputs for all staff entered into REF 2021

3.1 Process

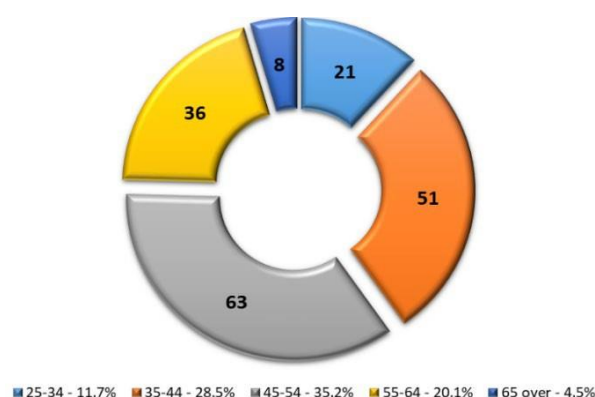
As identified in our REF 2021 Code of Practice, we conducted a two-stage EIA process:

1. The REF Data Analysis Team scrutinised the data on a preliminary planned submission of outputs, by Protected Characteristics and by UoA
2. The REF EIA Working Group discussed the findings and made recommendations to the REF Management Group
3. REF Management Group discussed the outcomes by UoA and made requests to UoA Leads (where applicable) for justifications on how decisions had been made on the selection of outputs for all staff who were planned to have one output entered, rather than two or more, without identifying which Protected Characteristic(s) were being scrutinised
4. UoA Leads submitted responses to REF Management Group. REF Management Group was satisfied that all decisions had been made objectively, in accordance with the Code of Practice, and there was no evidence of discrimination or unconscious bias
5. The REF Data Analysis Team scrutinised the data on the final submission of outputs, by Protected Characteristics and by UoA
6. The REF EIA Working Group discussed the findings and made recommendations to the REF Management Group
7. REF Management Group approved the outputs for the final submission for all UoAs and agreed on required actions post-REF submission (see Action Plan)

3.2 Findings

3.2.1. Age

Figure 1: Age breakdown for all staff submitted



Data on age breakdown were proportionate. Analysis of age categories by the number of outputs cannot be published due to one or more categories including less than 5 people. However, the figures showed no issues for concern: the EIA Data Team noted that in this university, early career

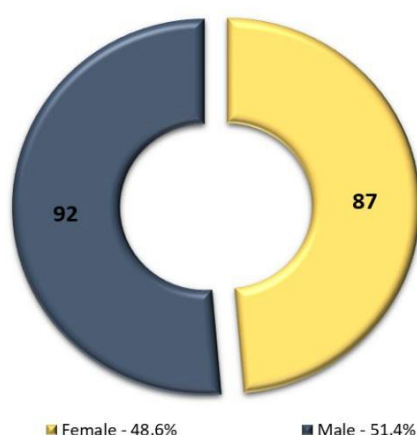
researchers are not necessarily equated with being young, because the University recruits considerable numbers of academic staff aged 35+ who join from professions such as teaching, social work, nursing and physiotherapy.

Proposal for actions on age

No specific actions were recommended for REF 2021, although trends will be monitored across the upcoming REF cycle.

3.2.2 Gender

Figure 2: Gender breakdown for all staff submitted



Data on overall gender breakdown were proportionate, and as noted in 1.1, represented a narrowing of the gender gap compared to REF 2014.

Analysis of gender categories by the number of outputs cannot be published due to one or more categories including less than 5 people. The first EIA raised potential issues around males being more likely to submit 4 or 5 outputs than females. The final EIA showed a reduction of the imbalances in both the 4 and 5 output categories but remained in favour of males, hence requiring further exploration to identify the reasons for this.

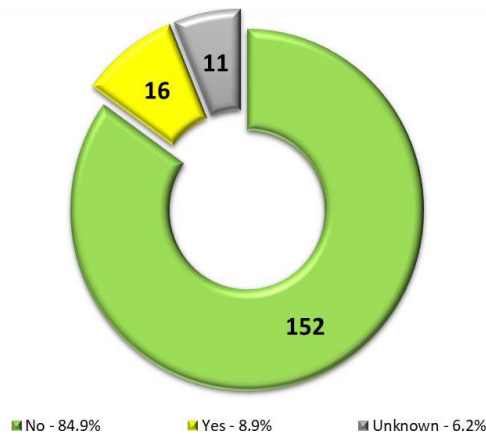
Analysis of UoAs showed that one of the largest UoAs (n=30) comprised 73% female and 27% male staff. The female statistic is higher than for the same UoA in 2014 (67%) and higher than the norm for this subject area across the sector as indicated by HESA data (62%).

Proposal for actions on gender

Recommendations were made to REF Management Group to consider wider reasons for why males tend to have more high-quality research outputs than females. See Action Plan (point 6) Recommendations were also made for UoAs which show a disproportionate ratio of entrants by gender relative to the discipline to consider the wider reasons for this and address it. See Action Plan (point 7)

3.2.3 Disability

Figure 3: Disability breakdown for all staff submitted



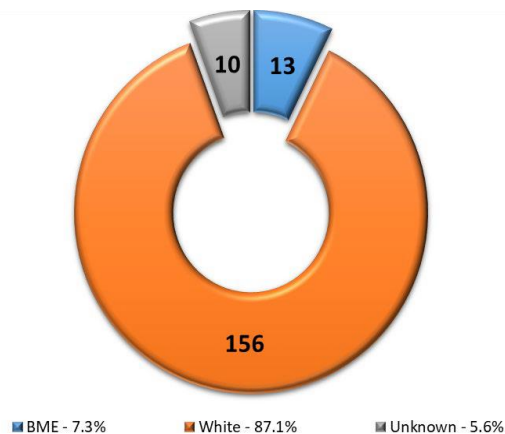
Of staff with a declared disability (n=16), 6 have one output and 5 have four outputs. The 6 with one output are distributed across 5 separate UoAs.

Proposal for actions on disability

No specific actions were recommended for REF 2021, although trends will be monitored across the upcoming REF cycle.

3.2.4 Ethnicity

Figure 4: Ethnicity breakdown for all staff submitted



The percentage of staff from BAME backgrounds entered (7.3%) was comparable to/slightly higher than the overall percentage of staff across the University (5.5%), although the University aims to increase the numbers overall. However, analysis by number of outputs showed that BAME colleagues were more likely to have one output entered than 2-5 outputs. As a response to this finding in the first EIA, REF Management Group made requests to the relevant UoA Leads for justifications on how decisions had been made on the selection of outputs for all staff who were planned to have one output entered, rather than two or more, without identifying which Protected Characteristic was being scrutinised. There was no evidence of discrimination or unconscious bias,

which led to questions around why BAME colleagues were not better represented in the categories for the higher number of outputs being entered.

Analysis of UoAs showed that one of the largest UoAs (n=25) was 100% white in terms of ethnicity.

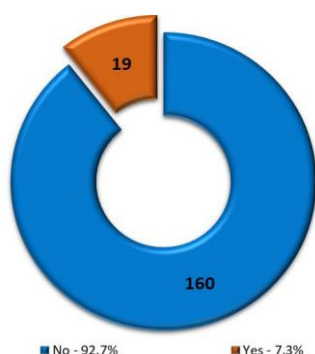
Proposal for actions on ethnicity

Recommendations were made to REF Management Group to consider actions for recruitment and ways to support colleagues from BAME communities in producing higher numbers of good quality REF-eligible outputs. See Action Plan (points 10, 12, 13, 14, 16)

Another recommendation was made that the UoA with 100% white ethnicity would work with the Faculty/University on improving diversity through appointment processes. See Action Plan (point 16)

3.2.4 Maternity Leave

Figure 5: Maternity Leave breakdown for all staff submitted



When broken down by the number of outputs submitted, of the 19 taking maternity leave, 74% (n=14) have one output submitted. Following the first EIA, REF Management Group made requests to the relevant UoA Leads for justifications on how decisions had been made on the selection of outputs for all staff who were planned to have one output entered, rather than two or more, without identifying which Protected Characteristic was being scrutinised. There was no evidence of discrimination or unconscious bias. Whilst potentially long periods of time taken out of work are likely to lead to reduced productivity, the statistics raise questions about how the University can further support colleagues with mitigating actions.

In the accompanying process for the declarations of staff circumstances, no males declared family related leave; REF Management Group recognises that some males may also have experienced loss of productivity due to taking paternity or shared parental leave but not felt comfortable in reporting it.

Proposal for actions on Maternity Leave

Recommendations were made to REF Management Group to consider mitigating actions for those taking time away from work for maternity, paternity and shared parental leave to support the production of higher numbers of good quality REF-eligible outputs. See Action Plan (points 19 and 20).

4. Conclusions

Setting out observations and lessons learned.

The results of the EIAs gave the University confidence in its progress in gender since REF 2014. However, these results do not in any way give us a sense of complacency and wider actions, detailed below, will ensure that progress continues to be made.

The results also highlighted important areas for action, particularly in working with BAME colleagues and those who take periods of maternity leave, paternity leave and shared parental leave. Prior to undertaking the EIAs, the University did not have adequate monitoring processes in place to identify these issues, and it was only the EIAs which illuminated them. Their value could be enhanced by conducting them at an earlier stage of the REF Preparatory Phase as this would also enable actions to be taken at an earlier stage. However, it is equally important to embed equality and diversity issues into research more broadly, particularly to support those colleagues currently on Teaching and Scholarship Role Profiles who are interested in changing career track onto a research role profile.

The alignment of policies beyond REF-focused documents will also be an essential part of our work moving forwards. For example, the Gender Equality Action Plan and the Gender Pay Gap Action Plan will include actions relating to research careers. This broader embedding of equality and diversity into research, beyond the REF, reflects our holistic approaches more appropriately and will also benefit a wider range of staff who may not yet be on defined research career trajectories.

5. Action plan *Setting out short and longer-term intended actions taken or planned to prevent discrimination or advance equality.*

Action point	Protected Characteristic	Source / reference	Action	Person(s) responsible	Time frame
1	All	All EIAs	Retain the REF EIA Working Group to review the progress of this Action Plan, making recommendations to REF Management Group	Director of RKE and Director of Equalities and Staff Development	2021 and ongoing
2	All	EIA for independent researchers	The University has, in negotiation with UCU, prepared and implemented new grade descriptors for staff on research-only contracts, from grades 6-8 which provide a clear career progression route	Director of HR with Director of RKE	Completed
3	Gender	EIA for independent researchers	Future job adverts for staff on research-only contracts will note that applications from men are welcomed as they are under-represented on these contracts	Director of HR	March 2021 onwards
4		University	University approval of a Gender Equality Action Plan which includes reference to researchers	Director of Equalities and Staff Development, Director of HR, with Director of RKE	June 2021
5		University	University approval of a Gender Pay Gap Action Plan which includes reference to actions for female career development through research	Director of Equalities and Staff Development, Director of HR, with Director of RKE	June 2021
6		Overall EIA discussions	Re-run research workshops open to all staff specifically for women to provide a safe space in which to raise any gender-related issues	Director of RKE	Semester 1, 2021-22 onwards
7		EIA for outputs	Where a UoA has a significant imbalance in its gender make up, to incorporate actions into their UoA Strategic Plan	Director of RKE / Faculty Head of Research / UoA Lead	Semester 1, 2021-22

8	Ethnicity	EIA for independent researchers	Unconscious bias training rolled out for all members of recruitment panels	Director of HR and Director of Equalities and Staff Development	2021 and ongoing
9		EIA for independent researchers	Future job adverts for staff on research-only contracts will note that applications from BAME groups are welcomed as they are under-represented on these contracts	Director of HR	March 2021 onwards

10	Ethnicity	EIA for independent researchers	Race awareness training required for all recruitment panel members	Director of HR and Director of Equalities and Staff Development	2021 and ongoing
11		EIA for outputs	To explore with BAME colleagues whether there is a desire to set up a focus group to explore issues	Director of Equalities and Staff Development with Director of RKE	Semester 1, 2021-22 onwards
12		EIA for outputs	To provide mentorship for researchers from BAME backgrounds	Director of Equalities and Staff Development with Director of RKE	Semester 1, 2021-22 onwards
13		EIA for outputs	To provide workshops for researchers from BAME backgrounds	Director of Equalities and Staff Development with Director of RKE	2021-22 onwards
14		EIA for independent researchers	Consideration of wording of specific academic job descriptions which may relate to teaching in areas related to race, to attract more applicants from researchers from BAME backgrounds	Director of HR with relevant Faculty Head of Research	2021 and ongoing
15		Overall EIA discussions	Re-run research workshops open to all staff specifically for colleagues from BAME backgrounds to provide a safe space in which to raise any ethnicity-related issues	Director of RKE	Semester 1, 2021-22 onwards
16		EIA for outputs	Where a UoA has an imbalance in its ethnicity make up relative to the HEI's overall statistics, to work with the Faculty/University to improve diversity through the appointment process	Director of RKE / Faculty Head of Research / UoA Lead	Semester 1, 2021-22
17	Disability	EIA for independent researchers	Future job adverts for staff on research-only contracts will note that applications from staff with disabilities are welcomed as they are under-represented on these contracts	Director of HR and Director of Equalities and Staff Development	September 2021 and ongoing
18		EIA for independent researchers	Unconscious bias training rolled out for all members of recruitment panels	Director of HR and Director of Equalities and Staff	2021 and ongoing

				Development	g
19	Maternity	EIA for outputs / REF MG	To roll out the development of Individual Research Support Plans for staff taking maternity / paternity / shared parental leave to facilitate the planning of pre- and post-leave research activity, supported by a mentor	Director of RKE / Faculty Heads of Research	Semester 1, 2021-22 onwards
20		EIA for outputs	The possibility of a reduced teaching load for colleagues returning from maternity / paternity / shared parental leave to be discussed as part of the Workload Allocation Model Review	Director of RKE / Deputy Vice Chancellor	2021-22

Appendix 6 University REF Equality Impact Assessment Group Constitution



UNIVERSITY REF EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT GROUP CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership:

Chair:

Director of Equalities

Ex Officio:

Head of Research Environment and Impact

Head of Research and Innovation Operations

HR Representative

Representatives from University equality networks

Secretary:

2. Terms of Reference:

The Group will:

- (a) Consist of the Director of Equalities, the Head of Research Environment and Impact, the Head of Research and Innovation Operations, and representatives from HR and from equality networks at the University
- (b) Collect, manage and analyse disaggregated staff data across all REF-related processes, including SRR status, READ/REA participation and Special Review outcomes, research independence determinations and output selection processes
- (c) Interpret EIA data and identify trends, disparities, or barriers across protected characteristics
- (d) Consult on fairness, inclusion and accessibility in REF procedures
- (e) Make recommendations to the University Research Management Group for adjustments (eg to process design, communications or policy) where disparities or access barriers are identified

3. Meetings

Meetings will be held in accordance with the timeline in the University REF Code of Practice and in relation to each of the REF-related processes in (b) above.

4. Quorum

There shall be a quorum when half the members plus one are present.

5. Agenda

The agenda shall be circulated to members at least one week prior to meetings, except in the case of emergency meetings.

6. Substitution of Members

If any member of this Group is unable to attend a meeting it is permissible for that member to send a substitute to the meeting provided such substitution meets with the approval of the Chair.

7. Notes

Minutes shall be kept of the proceedings of all meetings of the Group, including virtual meetings, and these will be sent to the University Research Management Group.

8. Advisors

The Chair may invite to a meeting a person or persons to act in an advisory capacity.

9. University Officers

The Chair may invite other members of staff to attend from time to time, in relation to specific issues, as appropriate.

10. Amendments to the Constitution

Amendments to the Constitution may be made at a duly constituted meeting of the University Research Management Group.

APPENDIX 7 READ Programme Documentation

Research Excellence Acceleration and Development Programme (READ)

Contents

Purpose of Programme	3
Research Excellence Development Stream	4
Aim.....	4
Who is eligible?.....	4
Investment and Expectation	4
Award Period and Award Value	5
Monitoring and Reporting.....	5
Indicators of Sufficient Progress	5
Eligible costs and guidance	6
Research Excellence Acceleration Stream	8
Aim.....	8
Who is eligible?.....	8
Investment and Expectation	8
Allocation Period and Research Hours	8
Purpose of Assessment within the REA Stream	9
Monitoring and Reporting.....	9
Indicators of Sufficient Progress	10
All streams application and submission details.....	11
Approvals prior to submission	11
Application Timeline	11
At a glance checklist by stream	13
Assessment Process	14
Panel Membership	16
Notification of Decisions.....	16

Appeals Process	16
Appendix 1: Guidance notes.....	18
Narrative CV:.....	18
Application form	21
Appendix 2: Application Form and Narrative CV Template – REA Stream	23
Appendix 3: Application Form – RED Stream	26
Appendix 4: Equality Impact Assessment	29

Purpose of Programme

At the University of Winchester, we prioritise delivering a transformational educational experience. Central to this mission is our commitment to supporting the generation of impactful research outcomes and fostering collective development within our university community. The programme is designed to be transparent and inclusive, with assessments calibrated to career stage and circumstances.

The set of measures within the Research Excellence Acceleration and Development (READ) Programme aim to create a dynamic and supportive environment that shares ownership of responsibility for our endeavour.

The Research Excellence Acceleration and Development (READ) Programme supports research development and progression and provides a transparent institutional mechanism for allocating explicit research time where applicable. The Programme comprises two streams:

- Research Excellence Development (RED), which supports research development, skills-building and preparation for future progression but does not allocate explicit research workload or confer Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR);
- Research Excellence Acceleration (REA), which allocates explicit research workload within the Workload Allocation Model (WAM) and, through this allocation, confirms contractual responsibility for independent research (SRR). Assessment within READ supports transparent and equitable decisions about development support and workload allocation and is not designed to rank staff by research performance or output quality.

To help applicants determine which stream aligns best with their goals, consider the following distinctions:

Stream	Target Audience	Key Activities	Expected Outcomes
RED	T&S staff or early-stage T&R staff	Research skill development, network building, initial publications	Initial research outputs, transition to T&R
REA	Experienced T&R staff and TERR staff	Publishing high-quality outputs, securing external funding, leading impactful research	REF2029-aligned outputs, career acceleration

Applicants are encouraged to consult their Head of Department or mentors to ensure their application aligns with their career stage and research goals.

The following sections describe each stream in detail, followed by application guidance, assessment criteria and the appeals process.

Research Excellence Development Stream

Aim

The aim of the Research Excellence Development (RED) Stream is to support activities that aid in the development of researchers with a Teaching and Scholarship (T&S) role profile and those on a Teaching and Research (T&R) role profile who choose not to apply for the Research Excellence Acceleration Stream in 26/27. The stream will assist those who are developing their research profile or building an evidence base of their research trajectory. Successful applicants receive a project fund to support this development work. Assessment focuses on developmental potential, feasibility, and alignment with support capacity rather than comparative ranking.

Who is eligible?

Contracted academic staff on 0.2FTE and above who are currently employed on a **Teaching and Scholarship (T&S) role profile and those on Teaching and Research Role (T&R) role profiles who are not eligible for the Research Excellence Acceleration Stream or have chosen not to apply in AY26/27.**

Applicants to the RED Stream may not also apply to the REA Stream. The application process is set out in detail in the following section, titled 'All Streams and Applications Submission Details.'

Investment and Expectation

Eligible activities for this fund should present a clear rationale leading towards a high-quality output aligning with the REF2021 definition of research excellence¹. Applications may indicate near term or longer term outputs; assessors will consider feasibility and proportionality to the planned timeline. However, applications are accepted for activities that support a more holistic development of the individual and therefore activities that may support outputs further into the future.

Successful applicants will be expected to demonstrate good management of the fund and the project, as well as identify methods for dissemination of the outcomes across the University. If applying for a second (+) year, applicants will be expected to evidence the impact of previous award(s).

The fund prioritises the following:

¹ The research excellence of each university's REF submission is assessed through a process of peer review which is carried out by the expert. The quality of each output (those that make up the institutional submission from the University) is graded as follows:

4* Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour.

3* Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence.

2* Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.

1* Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour

Unclassified Quality that falls below the standard of nationally recognised work. Or work which does not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of this assessment.

- Activities that support the evidence base of research trajectory in an individual or research area.
- Activities that lead to tangible research outputs as well as those that reasonably develop the individual to achieve these in the future.
- Activities that directly or indirectly develop core skills in research such as bid writing, budget management or project management.
- To support activities that contribute to professional development and successful future applications to the Research Excellence Acceleration Stream.

Award Period and Award Value

A total project fund will be created by R&I with awards made in discrete packages until the full amount is allocated. Where demand exceeds the available fund, applications will be prioritised against the published criteria and available budget, with brief reasons recorded.

Applications have a limit of **£600 per project or activity per academic year**. The University has discretion to limit the total amount of internal funding secured by one individual across different streams and over multiple years.

If funding is awarded, the amount will be transferred from R&I to the faculty, with the individual expected to engage with the University processes for budget management.

All funding awarded must be spent by the end of June for that academic year. Ordinarily, no carry-over into the next financial year will be permitted, except in cases of parental leave or long-term absence. Any unspent funds will be returned to the University via R&I. If it becomes clear in advance that some or all of the funds will remain unspent, this should be declared to the Head of Researcher Development and Operations at the earliest convenience.

For RED applications, HoDs signature confirms that the timeline proposed for activity does not conflict with other departmental priorities, such as teaching, assessment and open days.

Monitoring and Reporting

Award recipients in the Research Excellence Development (RED) stream are required to report progress during the annual appraisal process (currently IRDS). These reviews will assess alignment with the original project timeline, appropriate use of funds, and progress toward deliverables. Discussions with line managers will identify achievements, address challenges, and determine whether sufficient progress has been made to justify continued support.

Where sufficient progress cannot be demonstrated, line managers should seek the advice of the relevant Dean and report insufficient progress to the Head of Researcher Development and Operations to note for Research England reporting.

Indicators of Sufficient Progress

Progress in the RED stream is focused on foundational development and capacity building. During annual appraisals (currently IRDS) and final assessments, the following indicators can be used to evaluate progress:

Deliverables:

- Completion of a draft journal article, book chapter, or other research output intended for REF-eligible purposes.

- Submission or preparation of initial research outputs, even if not yet published/in the public domain.
- Preparation of a funding proposal or participation in grant-writing activities.
- Delivery of an internal seminar or workshop to develop a research network.

Milestones:

- Establishing a clear research trajectory, including a personal research development plan.
- Securing ethical approval for planned research activities.
- Completion of data collection or a pilot study.
- Confirmation of attendance or participation in relevant professional development events.
- Progress in transitioning to a Teaching and Research (T&R) role profile where applicable.

Engagement in Development Activities:

- Participation in research skills training (e.g., bid writing, research ethics, or project management).
- Attendance at relevant conferences or networking events.
- Evidence of interdisciplinary collaboration or contributions to a departmental research group.
- Demonstrable progress in transitioning to a Teaching and Research (T&R) role profile.

Application in Reviews:

Annual reviews should focus on assessing foundational progress toward building research capacity. Line managers and applicants should discuss:

- Achievements aligned with the timeline proposed in the application.
- Barriers encountered and steps taken to address them.
- Readiness for further development, including eligibility for the REA stream in the future.

Eligible costs and guidance

Conference funding:

- Where an applicant is requesting conference participation but has not yet had their abstract/paper/output accepted, they can still apply and potentially be awarded funds 'subject to acceptance by the conference organisers'.
- The application should include a weblink to the conference programme and an abstract of the paper being presented/details of the participation.
- The applicant must be presenting at/participating in the conference and this must be linked to the production of a high-quality output² or outcome (e.g. convening external collaborators or creating a network) following the conference.³ Sufficient detail about the related REF-eligible output/outcome should be included in the application.

² Outputs can be Books, Monographs, Chapters in books, Journal articles, Performances, Exhibitions, Other practice research outputs, Software

³ Definitions of the starred levels for outputs in REF 2021 are in Annex A of the Guidance on Submissions.

- Applications may be declined if outputs are not in line with REF2021 definition⁴ of research excellence or have not been forthcoming from previous conference participation supported by the University.
- The fund **does not** support additional hours or buyout.

Travel:

- Overseas travel is currently not eligible for internal funding.
- The current Travel Policy is being updated, so please consult the Dean of the faculty to approve proposed travel plans .

IT equipment and software:

- IT equipment and software is not eligible for funding.

Open access:

- The University of Winchester strongly encourages the Green Open Access route as per the University's policy: [Open Access Policy \(winchester.ac.uk\)](https://winchester.ac.uk/open-access-policy/) . For Gold Open Access the applicant should present a strong rationale and include full details of the output.

<https://archive.ref.ac.uk/publications-and-reports/guidance-on-submissions-201901/>

⁴ Definitions of the starred levels for outputs in REF 2021 are in Annex A of the Guidance on Submissions:

⁴ Definitions of the starred levels for outputs in REF 2021 are in Annex A of the Guidance on Submissions:

<https://archive.ref.ac.uk/publications-and-reports/guidance-on-submissions-201901/>

Research Excellence Acceleration Stream

Aim

The aim of the Research Excellence Acceleration (REA) Stream is to allocate protected research time within the Workload Allocation Model to staff who are ready to hold contractual responsibility for independent research. Through this allocation of explicit time and resources, the REA stream confirms Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) in line with the University's REF 2029 Code of Practice.

The REA stream supports the delivery of agreed research activity within allocated workload and ensures that research role expectations are applied transparently and consistently across eligible staff.

Who is eligible?

Contracted academic staff on 0.2FTE and above who are currently employed on a **Teaching and Research (T&R) and Teaching and Enhanced Research role (TERR) profile**. Applicants to the REA Stream may not also apply to the RED Stream at the same time. However, applicants who are unsuccessful in the REA stream will have the opportunity to apply for the RED stream, provided they meet the eligibility criteria. Further information will be provided after the from May of every academic year , if unsuccessful.

The application process is set out in detail in the following section, titled '[All Streams and Applications Submission](#).'

Under the University's REF 2029 Code of Practice, Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) is confirmed only where a staff member is formally expected to undertake independent research as part of their role and is allocated explicit time and resources to do so.

Within Winchester, REA allocation are the mechanism by which SRR is confirmed, as they provide both the expectation and explicit protected time required by REF for SRR designation. Staff who are not allocated REA will not be recorded as holding SRR.

Investment and Expectation

Successful applicants will be allocated explicit research time within their overall workload to undertake agreed independent research activity. This allocation reflects a contractual expectation to engage in research and, through the provision of explicit time and resources, confirms SRR.

The use of allocated research time is reviewed through annual appraisal to confirm that workload allocation and role expectations remain appropriate, rather than to assess research performance or output quality.

Goals focussed on producing research outputs that achieve REF-aligned outcomes and meet current REF2029 quality expectations, with a view to contributing to impact through practical and societal benefits.

Allocation Period and Research Hours

Applications should assume that up to 150 hours (pro rata) per year will be allocated for a period of up to two years. However, the exact number of hours will be defined on

an annual basis by the Workload Allocation Model. As such, individual research plans may have to be adapted to accommodate this.

Applicants must discuss with HoDs what the plan would be for their workload allocation if they were to be successful in their applications. The outcomes of this discussion should be reflected in the box on the application form for ‘provisional plan for accommodation of research hours within workload’. Capacity should not be drawn from teaching commitments where possible.

Progress will be reviewed at 12 and 24 months against the agreed research plan and milestones set out in the application.

Colleagues holding research workload allocation are expected, as part of their role, to engage with opportunities to secure external funding to support their research activity and are also eligible to bid for Unit of Assessment funding (teaching buy-out excluded).

Applications to the READ streams will be evaluated using published criteria, with emphasis on the clarity and feasibility of the proposed research plan and the level of detail provided in response to the outlined guidance. Evidence of prior research activity and trajectory, including engagement with previous plans where applicable, will inform decisions about the allocation of research workload.

Purpose of Assessment within the REA Stream

The assessment process for REA applications does not operate as a competitive ranking of research excellence. It is designed to determine whether an applicant is ready to hold contractual responsibility for independent research within allocated workload, such that explicit research time can be provided and SRR confirmed, meaning they have:

- A coherent and feasible research plan that can be delivered with protected time;
- A track record or foundation that evidences reliability and consistency, appropriate to their career stage; and
- A clear alignment with role expectations and institutional capacity to support delivery.

Scoring should therefore reflect readiness and feasibility, not comparative excellence.

Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring within the REA stream is designed to confirm that allocated research time continues to align with the staff member’s contractual role expectations and agreed workload plan. Progress against agreed research activities is discussed routinely with line managers and is reviewed through annual appraisal (currently IRDS) as part of normal workload management and role oversight.

REA allocations are normally made over two academic years in recognition that some research activity requires sustained investigation. Continuation of allocated research hours into the second year is normally confirmed through appraisal, based on evidence of engagement with the agreed research plan and appropriate use of allocated time, rather than on judgements of research quality or output success. Where a staff member is unable to demonstrate engagement with the agreed research plan or appropriate use of allocated research time, line managers will normally seek advice from the relevant Dean and Unit of

Assessment Lead. In such cases, research workload allocation for the subsequent year may be revised as part of workload planning. Any adjustment to research hours reflects a change in workload allocation and role expectations, rather than a judgement of research performance.

At the conclusion of the two-year REA period, outputs and other research activities may be reviewed for planning and development purposes, including to inform future workload allocation and support needs. This review does not constitute an assessment of SRR status, which remains determined by the allocation of explicit research time within the workload model.

Indicators of Sufficient Progress

Progress in the REA stream focuses on producing high-quality outputs and advancing established research trajectories. The following indicators should be used during annual appraisals (currently IRDS) and final assessments:

Deliverables:

- Submission of peer-reviewed outputs aligned with REF quality expectations
- Completion of a major funding application or securing external funding as a principal investigator.
- Development of impactful research outputs, such as tools, datasets, or methodologies with practical applications.

Milestones:

- Progress toward delivery of outputs within agreed timelines, with an indication of REF relevance.
- Completion of significant stages of data collection or analysis for large scale research projects.
- Leadership in collaborative research activities or interdisciplinary projects.
- Evidence of engagement with peer review or stakeholder processes e.g. submission, revisions in progress e.g. funding bodies or journal editors.
- Where appropriate to discipline alongside the above, delivering invited keynotes and/or presentations at key conferences where relevant and available

Engagement in Development Activities:

- Participation in advanced professional development, such as leadership training or impact-oriented workshops.
- Contribution to the research culture through mentoring, leading research groups, or organising collaborative events.
- Evidence of activities likely to contribute to future impact e.g. stakeholder engagement, policy dialogue, community collaboration.
- Engagement with Open Research initiatives/principles.
- Engagement in the Research and Innovation Academy

Application in Reviews

Progress reviews for the REA stream should emphasise achieving REF-aligned outputs and impactful results. Discussions should include:

- Alignment of deliverables with the objectives set out in the application.
- Any deviations from the timeline and justifications for these changes.
- Recommendations for maximising research impact and outputs in the second year of funding.

All streams application and submission details

Applications should be submitted to researchinitiatives@winchester.ac.uk by (Date updated annually). All applicants should use the provided application form for the specific stream.

Further guidance on the application and narrative CV can be found in [Appendix 1](#)

Research Excellence Acceleration application form can be found in [Appendix 2](#) in addition the [Narrative CV](#) needs to be completed, which can also be found in [Appendix 2](#). Research Excellent Development application can be found in [Appendix 3](#)

Important note: Regarding the application deadline, flexibility will be provided for those on long term absence (e.g. Maternity, Paternity and illness leave). If currently (at launch) on the aforementioned form of leave, applications can be made within one month of return to work, at any point of the year. Applicants will be notified of a decision with one month of receipt of the application.

Approvals prior to submission

RED Stream: For RED applications, the Head of Department's (HoD) signature confirms that the timeline proposed for the activity does not conflict with other departmental priorities, such as teaching, assessment and open days.

REA Stream: Applicants must meet with their Head of Department (HoD) to discuss the plan for accommodating their research hours within their workload. The outcomes of this discussion must be documented in the section of the application form titled '[Provisional Plan for Accommodation of Research Hours within Workload](#)'. Applications will not be submitted for peer review without documented discussion and a signature of their Head of Department (HoD).

For questions on the stream and support with the application please contact the Head of Researcher Development and Operations at researchinitiatives@winchester.ac.uk.

Application Timeline

Activity	Date	Additional Information
Programme launches	Dates updated annually	
Applicants consult with HoD to discuss workload and research plans		This earlier deadline for submission to the HoD allows for feedback from the HoD prior to approval and submission, as well as time for referral of applications to the Dean and Director of Equalities, if necessary.
Final application deadline:		

Peer reviewers assess and score applications		
Panel Meeting:		
Applicants, Deans and Heads of Department notified of decision		

Equality

The University of Winchester values diversity and is committed to ensuring that we treat all individuals fairly and with dignity and respect, and no person experiences less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic. If you require any adjustments or alternative methods of application, please contact the Head of Researcher Development and Operations at researchininitives@winchester.ac.uk. We are open to video applications and other formats that may be more suitable for neurodiverse applicants. We want to ensure that you have the best possible experience.

At a glance checklist by stream

Research Excellence Acceleration Stream:

- ✓ Read the guidelines -can be found from page 9
- ✓ Watched the training on how to complete the narrative CV found on page 18
- ✓ Completed the application in [Appendix 2](#) on page 23.
- ✓ Completed the Narrative CV which can be found in [Appendix 2](#) on page 23
- ✓ Gain the approval from your Head of Department and plan to accommodate hours.
- ✓ Submitted application and Narrative CV to researchinitiatives@winchester.ac.uk by (Date updated annually).

Research Excellence Development Stream:

- ✓ Read the guidelines- can be found from page 5
- ✓ Completed the application in [Appendix 3](#) on page 27.
- ✓ Gain the approval from your Head of Department and obtain their signature confirming oversight.
- ✓ Submitted application to researchinitiatives@winchester.ac.uk by (Date updated annually)

Assessment Process

Applications for the RED and REA streams will go through a two-stage process, peer reviewed by two reviewers, followed by a panel meeting, with the same reviewers involved in both stages (Prior to the panel meeting, an assessment will be carried out independently of other assessors. Each will score the application against the core criteria out of 18, following the scoring scales:

6	Exceptional	The application fully demonstrates readiness to deliver the proposed research activity within allocated time, with a clear and feasible plan, strong supporting evidence of reliability and follow through and minimal uncertainty regarding delivery.
5	Excellent	The application demonstrates strong readiness with only minor areas requiring clarification or support, and is highly likely to deliver planned outcomes with allocated time.
4	Very Good	The application meets most readiness expectations, but would benefit from clearer planning, support, or development in defined areas to ensure full feasibility.
3	Good	The application shows partial readiness, with potential to deliver but not yet consistently evidenced across all required aspects (e.g. planning, trajectory, or alignment with workload).
2	Weak	The application presents developing research trajectory but lacks sufficient clarity or evidence to justify allocation of protected research time at this stage.
1	Poor	The application does not currently demonstrate readiness to deliver proposed activity or lacks a viable research plan.

Applications will be assessed and scored by the Research Excellence Acceleration and Development (READ) programme panel peer reviewers. Each application will receive a score out of 18 based on how well it meets the criteria outlined below. The criteria carry equal weight, with a total possible score of 6 for each criterion. The scores will be standardised to produce an average score. Applications receiving an average reviewer score of below 10 will be declined and not be put forward to the panel. All applications with an average score of 10 or above will be taken to the panel for consideration.

For REA: The assessment criteria below are applied to support decisions about the allocation of protected research time and confirmation of SRR. They are used to assess readiness, feasibility and alignment with role expectations, rather than to rank applicants by research quality or past performance.

The core criteria for all applications are as follows:

In assessing the below criteria, the peer reviewer will carefully consider the diverse set of metrics and factors to gauge the net contribution of the applicant. This evaluation will examine the barriers overcome by the applicant, an assessment of how they maximised opportunities afforded to them, and a reflection on non-research-related endeavours or life experiences, and the activities relevant to FTE number of hours. The aim is to provide a holistic appraisal of the applicant's overall achievements and contributions in the context of the applicant career journey.

I. Research Experience & Evidence of Readiness (REA) / Research Experience & Developmental Potential (RED) (Scored out of 6):

- a. Evaluate the track record of the applicants or individuals involved in the proposed activities, considering their past contributions to research, innovation, and professional development covering the latest REF period⁵
- b. Assess the quality of previous outputs, achievements, and any demonstrated impact resulting from their research activities over the past five years.
- c. Consider any relevant experience or achievements that demonstrate the capacity of the applicants to successfully execute the proposed initiatives covering the latest REF period⁶

The above measures should include both quantitative and qualitative outputs such as, but not restricted to:

- Publications (lead author and co-authored)
- Conference papers
- Funding bids applied for and obtained.
- Learning and teaching collaborations (including PGR supervision to completion, summer schools, CPD, e-learning initiatives, shared resources)
- Product development and patents (where an intellectual property agreement is in place)
- Demonstrable impact such as, an impact case, or an emerging impact case
- Changes to policy or the creation of new policies
- Enhancing the research environment on campus and for the wider community
- Initiating a long-term collaboration
- Furthering a significant area of their discipline or interdisciplinary research
- Contributing to the professional development of the individuals

II. Fit with Institutional Strategy & Support Capacity (Scored out of 6):

- a. Evaluate the degree to which the proposed activities align with and contribute to the strategic goals outlined in the University's Research and Innovation Enabling Strategy and UoA Plans.
- b. Consider the overall coherence of the activities with the institution's commitment to achieving and sustaining excellence in research and innovation.

III. Contribution to Research Excellence (Scored out of 6):

- a. Evaluate the potential impact of the proposed activities on advancing research excellence, as outlined in each stream's objectives and relevant to role profile.
- b. Evaluate the likelihood of the activities leading to high-quality outputs in alignment with REF2021 criteria based on the information presented.
- c. Consider the extent to which the proposed initiatives contribute to the development of a healthy research culture within the University of Winchester.

The review panel will give allowance for time spent outside an active research or innovation environment, whether through career breaks, parental leave, maternity leave, flexible working or as a consequence of working in other roles, e.g. academic administrative roles, working in industry etc.

⁵ REF2029 Assessment period run from January 2021 onwards.

⁶ REF2029 Assessment period run from January 2021 onwards.

All applicants will receive written feedback to either help them to improve their application if unsuccessful, and to help them plan their future research and knowledge exchange activities.

Panel Membership

The panel comprises the Head of Research Environment and Impact, Head of Researcher Development and Operations, a Senior People and Culture representative. and all Deans of Faculty,

Notification of Decisions

Applicants, Deans, and Heads of Department will be notified of the panel's decision by the April of that Academic year to assist with workload planning.

Staff who are allocated research workload through the REA stream will be recorded as holding Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR). Their SRR status will be reflected within workload planning and HESA reporting.

Applicants who are not allocated research workload through the REA stream will not be recorded as holding SRR.

Appeals Process

If an application is not successful, the applicant has the right to appeal to the Director of Research and Innovation or a designated independent appeals reviewer. Appeals must be submitted to Head of Researcher Development and Operations at researchinitiatives@winchester.ac.uk within ten working days of the original decision email.

The appeal must include a concise written statement (no more than 300 words) clearly outlining the grounds for appeal. Appeals will only be accepted if they meet the following criteria:

1. The statement identifies flaws in the review process for the application.
2. The appeal is based on one or more of the following grounds:
 - a. Procedural error. A mistake in the process that affected the outcome.
 - b. Evidence of bias. Demonstrated partiality by one or more reviewers.
 - c. Conflict of interest. A conflict of interest on the part of a reviewer.
 - d. Factual error(s). Errors made by reviewers that could have significantly altered the decision.
 - e. **For REA Only:** As REA outcomes determine SRR status under the institutional REF Code of Practice, appeals may be made where the applicant believes their SRR readiness has not been fairly or consistently assessed.

Appeals based solely on academic judgment will not be permitted.

If you require an alternative format for submitting your appeal (e.g., recorded video), please contact the Head of Researcher Development and Operations at researchinitiatives@winchester.ac.uk to discuss accommodations.

The appeal will be reviewed by the Director of Research and Innovation or a designated independent reviewer. A written response to the appeal, outlining the decision and next steps (if applicable), will be provided within ten working days.

If an appeal is upheld, the application will undergo further review, which may involve reassessment by an independent panel.

Findings from appeals will also be reviewed to improve future processes.

Appendix 1: Guidance notes

Narrative CV:

The Narrative CV⁷ is based on the “Resume for Researchers” which was implemented by the Royal Society, UKRI and **should be attached to the Research Excellence Acceleration stream only**. The CV should not exceed 4 pages, (the additions section is not counted in this page limit.)

As well as the below guidance, the University of Glasgow⁸ and Royal Society have created a short (12 min) [training workshop](#) and [materials](#) to support researchers making a narrative CV format application. As well as the following resources:

Narrative CV Webinar August 2021 - a webinar by Dr Elizabeth Adams and Dr Tanita Casci sharing the findings of Glasgow's narrative CV project	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZ1g3Mlcum8
Royal Society Résumé for Researchers Guidance - an overview and guidance on the Royal Society's narrative CV format	https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/projects/research-culture/tools-for-support/resume-for-researchers/
Developing a narrative CV: guidance for researchers - the University of Oxford's guidance pages for narrative CVs	https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/learn-more-about-developing-a-narrative-cv
Making Narrative CVs work for your researchers - a blog by Dr Rachel Herries, Research Culture Manager at the University of Glasgow	Making Narrative CVs work for your researchers – The Auditorium: a research culture and researcher development blog
The Times Higher Education: Why researchers should consider a narrative CV The narrative CV moves away from the usual academic metrics of publications and grants and allows university researchers to tell the story of their journey and impact. This guide offers practical tips for writing one	Why researchers should consider a narrative CV THE Campus Learn, Share, Connect

⁷ [Résumé for Researchers | Royal Society](#)

⁸ *Myglasgow News University of Glasgow:*
https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/news/newsarchive/2020/14december2020/headline_766813_en.htm
(Accessed: 29 January 2024).

How to write a narrative CV for funding applications Oxford University	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKk8oKM_kec

Section 1 - Personal details.

Provide your personal details, your education, key qualifications, and relevant positions you have held.

Section 2 - How have you contributed to the generation and flow of new ideas, hypotheses, tools or knowledge?

This section can be used to explain how you have contributed to the generation of new ideas and hypotheses and which key skills you have used to develop ideas and test hypotheses. It can be used to highlight how you have communicated on your ideas and research results, both written and verbally, the funding you have won and any awards that you have received. It can include a small selection of outputs, with a description of why they are of relevance and why they are considered in the context of knowledge generation. Outputs can include open data sets, software, publications, commercial, entrepreneurial or industrial products, clinical practice developments, educational products, policy publications, evidence synthesis pieces and conference publications that you have generated. Where outputs have a DOI please only include this.

Section 3 - How have you contributed to research teams & the development of others?

This section can be used to highlight expertise you provided which was critical to the success of a team or team members including project management, collaborative contributions, and team support. It can include your teaching activities, workshops or summer schools in which you were involved (for undergrads, grads and post-grads as well as early career colleagues), and the supervision of students and colleagues. It can be used to mention mentoring of members in your field and support you provided to the advancement of colleagues, be it junior or senior. It can be used to highlight the establishment of collaborations, from institutional (maybe interdisciplinary) to international. It can be used to describe where you exerted strategic leadership, how you shaped the direction of a team, organisation, company, or institution.

Section 4 - How have you contributed to the wider research and innovation community?

This section can include various activities you have engaged in to progress the research community. It can be used to mention commitments including editing, reviewing, refereeing, committee work and your contributions to the evaluation of researchers and research projects. It can be used to mention the organisation of events that have benefited your research community. It can highlight contributions to increasing research integrity, and improving research culture (gender equality, diversity, mobility of researchers, reward, and recognition of researchers' various activities). It can be used to mention appointments to positions of responsibility such as committee membership and corporate roles within your department, institution or organisation, and recognition by invitation within your sector.

Section 5 - How have you exploited your research?

This section can include examples of societal engagement and knowledge exchange. It can include engagement with industry and the private sector. It can be used to mention engagement with the public sector, clients and the broader public. It can be used to highlight positive stakeholder feedback, inclusion of patients in processes and clinical trials, and other impacts across research, policy, practice and business. It can be used to mention efforts to collaborate with particular societal or patient groups. It can be used to highlight efforts to advise policymakers at local, national or international level and provide information through the press and on social media.

Additions

Mention career breaks, secondments, volunteering, part-time work, and other relevant experience (including in time spent in different sectors) that might have affected your progression as a researcher.

This section was developed using information from the following sources:

- The Royal Society Résumé for Research guidance: [Résumé for Researchers | Royal Society](#)
- UKRI Résumé for Research and Innovation guidance: [Résumé for Research and Innovation \(R4RI\): guidance – UKRI](#)
- The metric tide: review of metrics in research assessment: [The metric tide: review of metrics in research assessment – UKRI](#)

Application form

Personal Statement (Max 500 words)

Provide a personal statement that reflects on your overarching goals and motivation for the activities.

For RED applicants use this section to demonstrate how your proposal meets Assessment Criterion I -. Research Experience & Developmental Potential.

Proposed programme/plan of action (max 1000 words).

Your proposal should serve as a well-structured roadmap, guiding the reader through the context, objectives, and a practical plan that enables high quality research and/or career progression.

Streamline your approach using the following key points:

- Clearly detail how the resource (either funds or hours) will be used, aligning activities with the overarching research objectives.
- Establish a direct link between planned activities and specific outcomes or targets, emphasising their contribution to the research goals. Present an outcome-oriented approach, outlining the specific achievements expected from each activity in alignment with broader project goals.
- Explicitly explain how activities, especially those related to mentoring and professional development, contribute to sustainability and resourcing e.g., external bids, CPD, partnerships where appropriate
- Provide a detailed breakdown of planned activities, including research, output preparation, grant application, commercialisation, conference participation, and other relevant professional development efforts for income generation, as an illustration for example:

Plan of Action

November 2024- January 2025:

Applicant to present X project to key stakeholders X, Y, Z

Applicant to obtain Ethical Approval.

January 2025-May 2026:

Run focus group with end users.

Analysis focus group transcript

Or

Applicant to submit academic article to the X Journal of X.

- Highlight how each activity contributes to income generation and/or professional development, emphasising skill acquisition, network expansion, and expertise enhancement.
- If a mentor is included, clearly outline objectives, expected outcomes, and the role of mentorship.

Guidance notes for section-Planned research outputs (Max 500 words)

Provide a succinct list of the intended outputs, such as but not limited to, research grant, publications, reports, datasets, or prototypes, creation of a CPD short course, consultancy etc.

Detail your plans for publication, providing detailed insights into potential publishers and dissemination strategies. Specify the target journals, conferences, or outlets where you intend to publish your research. Highlight any collaborations with specific publishers or journals that align with the nature and focus of your work.

Expand on your plans for submitting an external grant such as details on the funder, call, funding amount sought, the deadline, or for creating a CPD course, give the title for the CPD course and intended audience etc. Mention any planned collaborations with industry partners, stakeholders, or other researchers that could enhance the visibility and reach of your project, or your career trajectory.



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Research Excellence Acceleration and Development Programme (READ)

Research Excellence Acceleration Stream (REA Stream)

Please read guidance notes carefully for further information on how to complete this form.

Name:
Department:
Unit of Assessment (current or prospective):
FTE:
Specify Stream Applying for:
Research Excellence and Acceleration (REA) ☐
Role Profile:
Teaching and Research ☐
Teaching with Enhanced Responsibility for Research ☐
I confirm that I have consulted the <i>Guidelines</i> 26-27 in the preparation of this application ☐
I am applying for the Research Excellence Acceleration stream and have attached the Narrative CV ☐
Career Break and Leave Declaration <i>If you have taken a period of disability leave, maternity/paternity leave, long-term illness-related leave, or a career break within the past five years, please provide the details below. This information is optional and will be considered in context with your application.</i>
Leave Type: (e.g., Maternity Leave, Disability Leave, Career Break, etc.) Start Date: (DD/MM/YYYY)

The CV should not exceed 4 pages, (the additions section is not counted in this page limit.)

Section 1: Personal Details
Section 2: How have you contributed to the generation and flow of new ideas, hypotheses, tools or knowledge?
Section 3: How have you contributed to research teams & the development of others?
Section 4: How have you contributed to the wider research and innovation community?
Section 5 - How have you exploited your research?
Section 6: Personal Statement

Section 7: Additions
<i>Provide any further details relevant to your application. This section does not count towards the page limit, and must not be used to describe additional skills, experiences or outputs.</i>

Applicants should submit their completed forms to researchinitiatives@winchester.ac.uk.

Appendix 3: Application Form – RED Stream



Application Form

Please read guidance notes carefully for further information on how to complete this form.

Name:
Department:

Unit of Assessment (current or prospective):
FTE:
Amount Requested (Max £600.00)
Role Profile:
Teaching and Research ☐
Teaching and Scholarship ☐
I confirm that I have consulted the <i>Guidelines</i> 26-27 in the preparation of this application ☐
Career Break and Leave Declaration If you have taken a period of disability leave, maternity/paternity leave, long-term illness-related leave, or a career break within the past five years, please provide the details below. This information is optional and will be considered in context with your application.
Leave Type: (e.g., <i>Maternity Leave, Disability Leave, Career Break, etc.</i>) Start Date: (DD/MM/YYYY) End Date: (DD/MM/YYYY) Additional Information (if applicable): (Optional – any relevant context regarding the leave period)
Personal Statement (Max. 500 words):
Proposed Programme/Plan of Action (Max. 1000 words):
Planned Outputs (Max. 500 words):

Head of Department Sign-Off

This section should be completed by the relevant Head of Department, to confirm oversight.

Head of Department Signature:

Name:	Date:
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Applicants should submit their completed forms to researchinitiatives@winchester.ac.uk.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Appendix 4: Equality Impact Assessment

Name of Policy/Process and business reason/main aims

Research Excellence Acceleration and Development Programme (READ) towards the generation of impactful research outcomes.

If policy/process is revised only – note reasons for revisions

New

Consultation process and name of Committee where equality impact discussed (may be committee of approval or another

Consultation across ELT and ULT and specific equalities consideration with the Director of Equalities

committee)

IMPACT ON COLLEAGUES AND STUDENTS

Protected Characteristic	Positive and negative Impact and possible mitigation [Provide evidence where relevant]
Age	No bias against any group as based on application cognisant of roles and based on clear and diverse criteria relevant to purpose of READ. Positive support for early-careers T&R
Disability	No bias against any group as based on application cognisant of roles and based on clear and diverse criteria relevant to purpose of READ. Positive measures include recognition of variety in application formats, point-of-contact if further reasonable adjustments requested, and adjustment in timelines for return from long-term illness related leave. Helpful checklists for neurodiverse colleagues
Gender Identity	No bias against any group as based on application cognisant of roles and based on clear and diverse criteria relevant to purpose of READ.
Marriage/Civil Partnership	No bias against any group as based on application cognisant of roles and based on clear and diverse criteria relevant to purpose of READ.
Pregnancy and Maternity	No bias against any group as based on application cognisant of roles and based on clear and diverse criteria relevant to purpose of READ. Positive measures include point-of-contact if further adjustments requested and adjustment in timelines for return from maternity/paternity and related leave. Review Panel to be cognisant of time spent outside academic research environment because of career breaks and/or Mat/Pat leave.
Race (incl. nationality)	No bias against any group as based on application cognisant of roles and based on clear and diverse criteria relevant to purpose of READ.

Religion and Belief	No bias against any group as based on application cognisant of roles and based on clear and diverse criteria relevant to purpose of READ.
Sex	No bias against any group as based on application cognisant of roles and based on clear and diverse criteria relevant to purpose of READ. Review Panel to be cognisant of time spent outside academic research environment because of flexible working and/or career breaks (which can statistically disproportionately affect female colleagues).
Sexual Orientation	No bias against any group as based on application cognisant of roles and based on clear and diverse criteria relevant to purpose of READ.

Owner of Policy (name & Role Title)	Director of Research and Innovation
Date of final committee where equality impact discussed, and policy/process justified to proceed	17 th December 2024
Name & Title of committee chair	Senate
Date for committee review of impact and role responsible to deliver review	Annually and align with the REF code of Practice EIA timelines.



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REF 2029 Research Independence Operational Process

Document Title:	Research Independence Operational Manual
Responsible Role and Department:	URMG Chair Research and Innovation Directorate
Approving Body:	Senate
Date of Approval:	September 2025 via the REF CoP
Date Effective From:	15/10/2025
Review Date:	01/12/2028
Indicate whether the document is for public access or internal access only Indicate whether the document applies to collaborative provision? <i>(Strikethrough text, as appropriate)</i>	Internal Access Only
Summary: This document sets out the University of Winchester's operational manual for determining research independence under REF2029, with clear responsibilities assigned to each step. It also includes the URMG proforma checklist as an appendix to ensure consistent application and audit readiness.	

Table of Contents

1. Purpose and Scope	4
2. Definitions	4
3. Key groups and roles:	4
4. Indicators of Research Independence	4
5. Decision making process	5
6. Appeals Procedure	6
Acceptable Grounds for Appeal	6
Submission Process	6
Timeline for Appeals	7
Appeals Process	7
Panel Composition	7
Decision making principles	7
Final Decision	8
Confidentiality and Record-Keeping	8
Appendix One: URMG Individual Staff Review	9

1. Purpose and Scope

This procedure applies to staff employed on research-only contracts (ACEMPFUN 2), including casual and fractional staff. It details the process for determining research independence and the responsibilities of each party involved. It is designed for use by the University Research Management Group (URMG), People and Culture (P&C), line managers, and the Research and Innovation Directorate (R&I).

2. Definitions

In line with REF2029 guidance on submissions, an independent researcher is defined as an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme.

Research-only contract (ACEMPFUN 2) staff whose primary employment function is research and who are not employed on teaching-and-research contracts.

3. Key groups and roles:

- URMG: Oversees REF preparation, including decisions on research independence. Chaired by Director of Research & Innovation.
- People and Culture (P&C): Maintains HR records, provides verified staff lists, supports appeals, ensures job descriptions are up to date.
- R&I Directorate: Coordinates the process, requests data, supports appeals, prepares letters, maintains evidence and records, flags REFIND field.
- Line Managers: Meet with staff, communicate provisional decisions and support staff through appeals.
- UoA Leads: Provide disciplinary expertise, may serve on Appeals Panels.
- Appeals Panel: Independent decision-making group for appeals (Head of Research Environment and Impact, Senior HR Member; two UoA Leads; URMG secretariat)

4. Indicators of Research Independence¹

In line with REF2029 guidance on submissions, an independent researcher is defined as an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme.

The following indicators, based on the REF2029 criteria and internal practices, may be used to determine independence. These indicators will be considered holistically and in combination:

- Act as lead applicant on externally funded research projects
- Hold an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship requiring research

¹ [Section 3 - Volume Measure guidance - REF 2029](#)

independence. [This is the list of eligible research fellowships.](#)

- Lead a research group or a substantial/specialised work package
- Where research independence is an inherent expectation of a contract
- For UoAs 13-34 this may also include:
 - being named as a co-applicant on an externally funded research grant/award
 - having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research

5. Decision making process

Step	Task	Responsibility	Notes
1	R&I Directorate is responsible for requesting from P&C the current list of staff on research-only contracts (including casual/fractional) and relevant evidence including job descriptions, grants, roles, outputs, workload records. P&C is responsible for supplying verified information and lists based on HR records.	R&I Director	
2	P&C is responsible for flagging research-only staff and confirming alignment with HR records.	Head of People and Culture	
3	R&I Directorate is responsible for cross-checking grants and project records.	R&I Director	
4	URMG is responsible for reviewing each staff member against independence indicators. Evidence includes job descriptions, grants, roles, outputs, and workload records.	URMG	
5	URMG Chair is responsible for signing off of provisional decisions. URMG Secretariat records outcomes.	R&I Director/ URMG Secretariat	
6	As members of URMG, Faculty PVCs and DRI are each responsible for communication for briefing line managers of affected staff that fall under their own direct or indirect management . Line managers are responsible for attending and confirming understanding.	URMG/Line Managers	
7	R&I Directorate drafts personalised letters. URMG Chair approves letters. R&I Directorate ensures timely delivery by email/post. R&I Directorate is responsible for ensuring appeals information is included.	R&I Director	
8	The line manager is responsible for arranging	Line Manager	

	and conducting meetings with staff. Staff are responsible for confirming receipt by emailing the Director of R&I.		
9	Staff are responsible for submitting appeals. R&I Directorate is responsible for logging and coordinating appeals.	R&I Director/ URMG Secretariat	
10	R&I Directorate is responsible for maintaining records, confirming the Independence Researcher self-identified UoA membership. flagging REFIND field in HESA Staff Return and updating appeals outcomes.	R&I Director/ URMG Secretariat	

6. Appeals Procedure

Eligibility to appeal is for members of staff who:

- Hold a research-only contract (ACEMPFUN 2) and
- Have received a written provisional decision regarding research independence may submit an appeal.

Acceptable Grounds for Appeal

Appeals must be based on one or more of the following grounds:

Eligible Ground:	Definition
1. New evidence	The staff members can provide new, substantive evidence of independence that was not available during the initial assessment.
2. Role evolution	The individual's role has changed since the decision, and they now meet the independence criteria on an ongoing basis.
3. Procedural error	The staff members believe the correct process was not followed, or their job description was outdated or inaccurately applied.

Submission Process

Step	Action	Responsible
1	Submit written appeal to R&I Director via email	Staff Member

2	Include statement of grounds and supporting evidence	Staff Member
3	Acknowledge receipt and log case	R&I Director

Timeline for Appeals

Round	Action	Date	Responsible
Round 1 (existing staff)	Appeal deadline	Jun-26	Staff
	Panel meets	Sep-26	Appeals Panel
	Outcome communicated	Oct-26	R&I
Round 2 (new/revised roles)	Appeal deadline	Jun-27	Staff
	Panel meets	Sep-27	Appeals Panel
	Outcome communicated	Oct-27	R&I

Note: Specific dates will be confirmed in the outcome letters.

Appeals Process

Stage	Action	Responsible
Initial Review	R&I Directorate verifies eligibility and checks for procedural error claims	R&I Director
If procedural error is claimed	R&I Directorate liaises with P&C and line manager to review job description via HERA	R&I Director & Line Manager
Referral to Panel	Case forwarded to Appeals Panel with summary	R&I Director

Panel Composition

The panel will be independent of the original decision-makers and comprise:

- Head of Research Environment and Impact (*Chair*)
- URMG Secretariat
- Senior HR Member
- Two Unit of Assessment leads not aligned with the appellant's UoA.

Decision making principles

The panel will assess:

- Whether the appellant now meets REF2029 indicators of independence

- Whether evidence of autonomy, leadership, or research direction-setting is sufficiently demonstrated
- Whether procedural fairness was upheld

Final Decision

Appeal decisions are final and may not be appealed further internally. External recourse is limited to legal or HR grievance routes where applicable.

Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

- All appeal documentation will be stored securely by R&I Directorate.
- Anonymised appeal statistics may be used for Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) monitoring.

Appendix One: URMG Individual Staff Review

Staff Name	Job Description Reviewed (Y/N)	PI/Fellowship Evidence	Co-I/Contribution Evidence	Negative Indicators (Y/N)	Provisional Decision	Responsible	Notes

Appendix 9 Guidance on External Review of Outputs



If you require any adjustments or alternative methods of supplying this information, please let us know. We are open to video submissions and other formats that may be more suitable for neurodiverse applicants. We want to ensure that you have the best possible experience.

Guidelines on the External Assessment of Outputs for REF Preparation 2025-26

PURPOSE

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the system for assessing the quality of research in Higher Education. Its outcomes inform the allocation of around £2 billion per year of public funding for universities' research. The REF is a process of expert review, carried out by sub-panels focused on subject-based Units of Assessment (UoAs), under the guidance of overarching main panels and advisory panels. REF 2029 will assess research outputs under 'Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding', currently weighted at 50%.

A key strategic objective for the University is to 'build on the successful outcome of the REF 2021 [...focusing] on developing and investing in existing areas of research excellence [...to] ensure the submission of the highest possible scoring research outputs and impact case studies to the next REF.' The external assessment of research outputs process, as part of the University's preparation for its submission to REF 2029, assists in gauging and improving research quality. Subject specialists in the relevant UoA and familiar with the REF are asked to provide feedback against the criteria of 'originality, significance and rigour' used in REF 2021.

PROCESS

Outputs to be Assessed

1. Staff in Faculties will be invited by R&I to submit outputs eligible for review to the relevant UoA Lead by **1 December 2025**, allowing time for the review process to take place before the **3 April 2026** deadline for return of reviews from the external assessors.

2. Outputs to be assessed externally should meet the published definition of research for the purposes of the REF: 'a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared' ([REF 2029](#)).
3. Outputs will be assessed in terms of 'originality, significance and rigour'. For information on how the starred levels (4*-unclassified) denote quality for outputs submitted to the REF please see: [Guidance on REF 2021 results - REF 2021](#)
4. Where an output (eg a professional article for practitioners) does not meet these criteria it should not be submitted for external assessment.
5. The decision as to whether or not an output is potentially eligible for submission to the REF should be made collectively by the UoA Working Group (Terms of Reference c)) and communicated to the academic by the UoA Lead in writing. The Working Group should also ensure that the output meets/will meet open access requirements. Where there is no unanimous decision, the output should be sent for assessment. Where output authors are members of working groups, they may not contribute to this working group decision for their outputs.
6. Outputs to be assessed should be either published, accepted for publication, or in the process of minor revisions being undertaken.

Role of the External Assessor

1. UoA Leads should source external assessors from any HEI who have research expertise in the discipline relevant to the UoA sub-panel descriptor and, where possible, experience of REF 2021.
2. For continuity, comparability and efficiency outputs from the UoA collectively should normally be sent to the minimum number of assessors as possible/the same pool of assessors, whilst ensuring appropriate subject expertise, fit and familiarity with the UoA sub-panel descriptor.
3. The UoA Lead should invite the external assessor to undertake the work, sending them:
 - a) A proforma letter of invitation (this includes details of the outputs to be assessed; the fee to be paid per output and in total; the date for return of the reviews and invoice). Information can be added where indicated/as appropriate.
 - b) The outputs assessment form the assessor should use for their feedback, per output
 - c) An invoice template (reviewers are welcome to use their own template if they prefer, providing it includes all the relevant details)

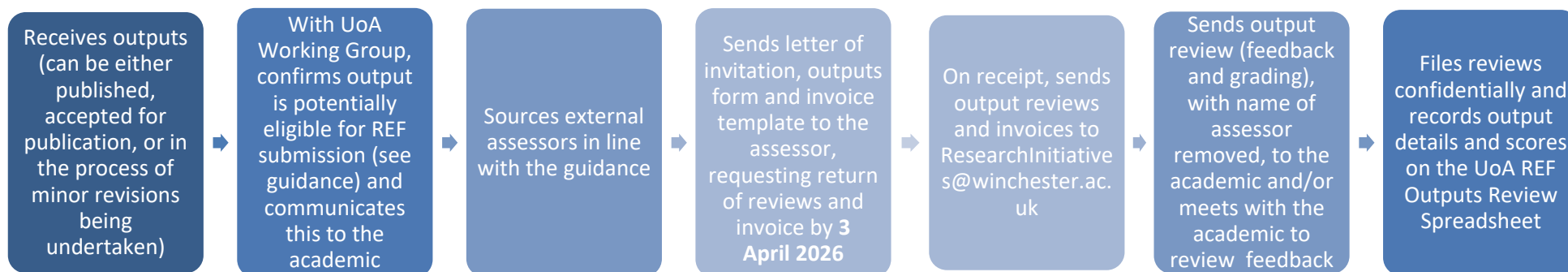
- d) The fee rates are: £50/article or book chapter (or practice-as-research equivalent)
£200/monograph (or practice-as-research equivalent)
- 4. The UoA Lead should use the templates (a) – c) above) provided by R&I and available on the intranet page: [REF 2029 | Winchester](#)
- 5. The external assessor should be asked to send their output review(s) and an invoice to the UoA Lead by **3 April 2026**: this should be the deadline specified in the letter of invitation and email.
- 6. If this is the first time that the external has assessed outputs for the University, they are asked in the letter of invitation to contact Research and Innovation (R&I) by emailing ResearchInitiatives@winchester.ac.uk so that an account can be set up and they can be paid, following receipt of an invoice and output reviews.
- 7. Each output is to be reviewed by two assessors. If an output is to be considered for different UoAs preparing for REF submission, it may need to be sent to two assessors for each of the different disciplines/UoAs concerned. The UoA Lead should notify the Head of Research Environment and Impact and liaise with the UoA Lead of the UoA concerned to coordinate the review process.
- 8. For transparency and consistency, in light of the subjectivity of peer review, where assessors' responses to the same output are markedly different (e.g. 1* and 4*) the output can be sent to a third external assessor for consideration. Assessors are asked in the letter of invitation to indicate the most likely *single rating* an output will achieve.
- 9. For interdisciplinary work, two assessors should be selected who have expertise in the UoA to which the work is likely to be submitted. The UoA Lead should indicate that the output will be flagged as interdisciplinary if submitted.
- 10. The **maximum number** of outputs per person to be externally reviewed within the designated timeframe in 2025-26 is **2**. Where academics have more than 2 REF-eligible outputs available, the UoA Working Group will determine which outputs are sent for external assessment. If the Working Group cannot make this decision, the individual may determine the outputs themselves.

Return of Output Reviews to UoA Lead

- 1. The external assessor sends their output review(s) together with an invoice to the UoA Lead by **3 April 2026**, the date specified in the letter of invitation and email.

2. On receipt of the output reviews and invoices, the UoA Lead:
 - a) Sends these to R&I using the email address ResearchInitiatives@winchester.ac.uk, for filing and processing of payment.
 - b) Sends the external's review (feedback and grading) to the academic concerned, with the name of the assessor removed and/or meets with the member of staff individually to review feedback
 - c) Files the reviews confidentially and records details of the outputs and the scores on the UoA's **REF Outputs Review Spreadsheet** (template provided by R&I), adding notes as appropriate.
3. If the UoA Lead becomes aware of circumstances likely to cause a delay to the return of the reviews and invoice (and therefore processing of payment) they should bring this to the attention of R&I using the email address ResearchInitiatives@winchester.ac.uk

PROCESS SUMMARY FOR UoA LEADS



RESOURCES/SUPPORT

For further information and updates on REF 2029 please refer to: <https://www.ref.ac.uk/> and to the REF intranet page: [REF 2029 | Winchester](#) for information and documents pertaining to UoAs at the University.

The R&I Academy offers sessions to support researcher development, including workshops related to elements of the REF. To enrol in the R&I Academy and to find out about all the courses, [follow this link](#).

There are various ways in which a UoA Working Group/UoA can enhance research quality as detailed in their UoA Research Strategies; eg through individual mentoring; advice on publication plans, proposals and pre-publication drafts; writing retreats; training on writing for publication, and informal peer reviewing of outputs (for example, shared between members of the Working Group).



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**REF 2029 Selection of Outputs
Operational Process**

Document Title:	REF2029 Selection of Outputs Operational Process
Responsible Role and Department:	URMG Chair, Research and Innovation Directorate
Approving Body:	
Date of Approval:	
Date Effective From:	01/01/2026
Review Date:	01/12/2028
Indicate whether the document is for public access or internal access only Indicate whether the document applies to collaborative provision? <i>(Strikethrough text, as appropriate)</i>	Internal Access Only
Summary: This document sets out the University of Winchester's process for selecting research outputs for submission to REF2029, with clear responsibilities assigned to each step.	

Table of Contents

Purpose and scope 4

Definitions 4

Key groups and roles 4

Decision-making process and timeline 5

Purpose and scope

This document outlines the University's procedure for the fair and transparent selection of outputs for submission to REF2029, setting out how decisions are made and where responsibility lies for each stage of the process. It is informed by the REF Contributions to Knowledge and Understanding (CKU) guidance and relates to part 5 of the University's REF2029 Code of Practice – Selecting Outputs. It is designed for use by University Research Management Group (URMG), REF Unit of Assessment (UoA) Leads and Working Groups, the Research and Innovation Directorate (R&I) and People and Culture (P&C).

Definitions

Substantive link to any submitted output within the REF period is identified through an eligible employment relationship with the output author that occurs before the point at which an output was first made publicly available and where: employment of the author is on a (minimum 0.2FTE) research-only, teaching and research, or academic management contract (where the role descriptor includes explicit expectation of research activity).

Outputs from academic managers who do not contribute to volume measure but hold a role descriptor which includes explicit expectation of research activity will be subject to the same peer review and CKU alignment process as all other submitted outputs, and their inclusion will be recorded separately by URMG for transparency and audit purposes.

Key groups and roles

- **People and Culture (P&C):** Maintains HR records, provides verified staff lists, ensures job descriptions are up to date
- **R&I Directorate:** Coordinates the process, requests data, provides guidance and supports UoAs, maintains evidence and records,
- **REF Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Group:** Manages and analyses disaggregated staff data across REF-related processes, including output selection. Makes recommendations to URMG. Chaired by Director of Equalities.
- **University Research Group (URG):** Discusses REF policy developments, internal policies and practices relating to REF preparation, acts as forum for sharing of best practice, advises URMG. Chaired by Head of Research Environment and Impact.
- **URMG:** Oversees REF preparation, including decisions on selection of outputs for REF submission. Chaired by Director of Research & Innovation.
- **UoA Working Group:** Develops the UoA's submission for the REF, manages the external review of outputs process, keeps a written record of decisions relating to staff, outputs and other aspects of the UoA submission. Chaired by UoA Lead.

Allocation of contracts to UoAs

UoA allocations for staff with SRR are informed by successful REA applications, requiring self-identification with a University-supported UoA and aligned with the process and timeline for recognition of SRR described in Part 2 of the CoP. Research-only staff and staff who will not count towards volume measure, but will be required to demonstrate substantive link, will also self-identify their UoA, . Self-identified UoA allocations are reviewed for appropriateness and consistency by the HREI in consultation with UoA Leads, with reference to the staff member's role, research focus and, where applicable, substantive link.

Decision-making process and timeline

Step	Date	Task	Responsibility	Notes
1.	May 2026	Research-only staff and staff who will not count towards volume measure but will be required to demonstrate substantive link receive a request to confirm their UoA association following confirmation of research independence and/or substantive link.	R&I Directorate is responsible for sending individual requests and maintaining records, confirming the self-identified UoA membership for research independence and/or substantive link – and confirming this with the relevant UoA Leads	
2.	October 2026	Preparatory REF Exercise Phase 1: UoAs prepare first draft selection of outputs		
3.		HR records and workload allocation data checked to confirm that the employment relationship (former and current staff) existed during the period the research was carried out (for most eligible outputs, 1 Jan 2021-31 Dec 2028)	P&C supplies data to R&I. R&I supports UoA Working Groups to check data. Where longform or diverse outputs require earlier evidence, the UoA Lead will submit a short justification and R&I will record evidence used	

4.		Internal output mapping exercise completed to ensure representativeness (how selected outputs reflect range and diversity of research activity and output types produced in the UoA over the REF assessment period)	R&I provides guidance and template. UoA Working Groups undertake mapping exercise.	Informs Unit-level Statement of Representation element of the SPRE statement
5.		Notes of Working Group meetings (sent to URMG) record discussion of diversity and representativeness alongside output quality.	UoA Working Group secretaries	
6.		Fully updated UoA Outputs Review Spreadsheet received at UoA Working Group meetings. Spreadsheet includes data on all REF-eligible outputs in the categories: output reviewer scores; output details; output type; whether sent for review under another UoA; double-weighting potential; link to ICS, and REF open access compliance.) Data is considered in relation to/context of: a) UoA Research Strategy b) REF UoA sub=panel descriptor c) Output subject matter (from mapping exercise)	R&I provides updated spreadsheet template. UoA Lead collates data, records on spreadsheet, adding contextual notes	Informs Unit-level Statement of Representation element of the SPRE statement

7.		Collective identification of outputs most appropriate for submission in relation to REF requirements, taking into consideration the diversity of outputs, the range of research activity, and that the outputs are representative of the research undertaken within the submitting UoA during the REF period.	UoA Working Groups	
8.		Collective draft selection of outputs to ensure that the UoA has the requisite number for submission on current volume measure.	UoA Working Groups	
9.		Data submitted to R&I for going to URMG	UoA Lead	
10.	December 2026	EIA is conducted on selection of outputs process	Director of Equalities/REF EIA Group	
11.	February 2027	Analysis of EIA findings on the process of selecting outputs. Reports to URMG.	REF EIA Group	
12.	Feb 2027	Review of EIA outcomes and ratification of decisions on the process of selecting outputs (Phase 1). Inclusion of outputs by academic managers recorded for transparency and audit purposes. i.	URMG	

13.	October 2027	Preparatory REF Exercise Phase 2: UoAs prepare second draft selection of outputs		
14.		Repetition of steps 3-9	P&C/R&I/UoA Lead/UoA Working Groups	
15,	December 2027	EIA conducted on selection of outputs process	Director of Equalities/REF EIA Group	
16,	February 2028	Analysis of EIA findings on the process of selecting outputs. Reports to URMG.	REF EIA Group	
17.	February 2028	Review of EIA outcomes and ratification of decisions on the process of selecting outputs (Phase 2). Inclusion of outputs by academic managers recorded for transparency and audit purposes.	URMG	
18.	May 2028	Approval of final changes to selection of outputs.	URMG	



Equality Impact Assessment REF Code of Practice

30.10.2025

Outline

The University of Winchester's Research Excellence Framework 2029 Code of Practice sets out this institution's approach and processes around the identification of staff with responsibility for research in line with HESA definitions aligned with defined role expectations.

The University utilises an objective approach to confirm individual research expectations through the Workload Allocation Model and the Research Excellence Acceleration and Development (READ) Programme. This programme, which has two streams, utilises indicators aligned with REF 2029 Guidance on Submissions to determine.

Governance and oversight structures are structured and at an appropriate level, and equality related training programmes are comprehensive.

Final decision-making and confirmation of SSR status for research-only contract-holders is through a transparent process which includes appeal opportunities

The Code of Practice appropriately outlines the University support around EDI for all staff, and the oversight structures that directly relate to our research environment, the identification of SRR staff, outputs and Unit of Assessment.

Equalities Impacts

Data related Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) will commence from November 2025 under the REF EIA Group. Impacts more generally in relation to the Code of Practice are considered in terms of the fairness, transparency and objectiveness of the processes undertaken to date and those planned. Additionally, equality related considerations have been embedded throughout the process with EIAs to date. These actions are outlined below. No negative impacts have been identified.

Equality related actions and mitigations to date

The Code of Practice clearly and comprehensively outlines the mitigations and processes that are in place to ensure that no protected characteristic is treated disproportionately, and to provide a consistent and objective approach throughout the process, as follows:

- READ scheme: transparent process with guidance documents, research funding guidelines, and processes for resource allocation are published on a dedicated resource

pages available for staff on the intranet and externally for staff without access to the intranet and training support for applicants and Heads of Department.

- Consultation with the recognised Trade Union (UCU) in formation of the READ scheme.
- Direct sharing of application process and annual opening dates with all eligible staff (and line managers) of READ scheme.
- READ scheme: flexibility around application deadlines to facilitate maternity/paternity/long term sickness leave/in-year appointments and armed forces service. The time allowed for these applications after return is reasonable.
- READ scheme: flexibility around modes of application (staff can ask for alternative formats to apply e.g. video responses).
- V: a narrative CV allows any applicant to outline challenges or structural barriers they may have faced. Panel training encourages careful engagement with all aspects of the narrative CV as part of the overall application.
- All submissions for READ are evaluated objectively by through a common set of objectives by two panellists independent of each other and then peer-reviewed through the wider panel system. A senior People and Culture Representative is a panel member to ensure consideration of equalities issues within the decision-making process.
- Written feedback is provided automatically to READ applicants after decisions are made and an appeal process is embedded for unsuccessful applicants.
- Additional review through the annual appraisal scheme ensures a multi-level approach in addition to the READ scheme.
- Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken at all relevant points in the process, from formulation of the READ scheme to evaluation of panel outcomes and the CoP outlines the points within which these take place in detail.
- Unit of Assessment Lead roles are by competitive application and interview process.
- There is a comprehensive training programme specific to all layers of the research oversight structure from UoA working groups to URMG.
- There is a formal REF EIA Group that will undertake analysis of data across all REF-related processes, and which will make recommendations for changes where needed to ensure fairness and inclusion.
- Determination of research-only contract holders is based on REF 2029 criteria which the University must apply to determine SSR. The process is open and engages directly with the staff identified to explain decisions and has a built-in appeal process including provision to update job descriptors that may be out-of-date.