THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

REF 2021 CODE OF PRACTICE

APPROVED, NOVEMBER 2019

REF2021 Research Excellence Framework

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Part 1: Introduction

GSA has a distinctive, specialist, often practice-led research culture rooted in our core disciplines of Art, Design, Architecture, Design Innovation and Digital Visualisation. As we seek to build our reputation as a research leader in these fields, we welcome the Research Excellence Framework (REF) as an opportunity to celebrate our achievements, share the outstanding work of our researchers with a wider audience, and evaluate progress towards our strategic objectives for research, which include:

- Establishing GSA as one of the top 5 UK Art and Design institutions for research and enterprise
- Producing research in our disciplines that is regarded as internationally significant by our peers, that makes an important contribution to knowledge and which has impact
- Maintaining a positive and productive research environment in which researchers have the time and resources to undertake excellent research, and the next generation of researchers can develop the skills and experience to become independent
- Working to create a culture of equality for all researchers, in which REF2021 preparations are rigorous, transparent, inclusive and fair.

REF is the national system for assessing research in UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The next assessment will be undertaken in 2021, based on information that all HEIs will submit by 27 November 2020. The outcomes of the REF serve a number of purposes for the national academic funding bodies, including:

- informing the allocation of core research funding to institutions
- providing accountability for public investment
- enabling HEIs to compare their characteristics with others in the sector
- informing national strategic research priorities.

REF2021 is governed by the principles of Equity, Equality and Transparency. As a participating institution, The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) had developed this Code of Practice defining how relevant staff and research outputs will be identified for submission to REF. We will ensure that our REF procedures do not discriminate unlawfully against individuals, or otherwise have the effect of harassing or victimising them, on the basis of protected characteristics, and a number of other factors (such as part-time working or having caring responsibilities). The Code of Practice will also help us to ensure that in preparing for REF, we continue to comply with our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty, and the requirements placed on HEIs as public sector organisations and employers by The Equality Act 2010, and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

This document sets out our GSA's Code of Practice for REF2021[1]. It explains how staff and outputs will be identified for submission to REF2021 (transparency), confirms that relevant processes will be applied in the same way across the institution (consistency), defines who will be responsible for undertaking procedures and making decisions (accountability) and sets out how our approach will ensure that all eligible staff have a fair and equal opportunity to participate, across all protected groups, and are supported to do so (inclusivity).

[1] Note that this document follows the format and structure specified in the REF2021 Guidance on Codes of Practice. Because we are a small institution, and will rely on central teams to manage the development of our submission, a number of processes are common to different stages of our REF preparations (as indicated by cross referencing between relevant sections).

On making our submission to REF in November 2020, the Director of GSA will be required to confirm adherence to this Code of Practice.

Our Code complements existing institutional policies, plans and duties, including our Equality Outcomes 2017-21, Activity Planning Policy and Procedures, and Research and Enterprise Strategy (copies of which are provided in the Appendices).

Scope of REF 2021

REF is a periodic assessment of the quality of research undertaken in UK Higher Education institutions. It is administered by the UK's HE funding bodies: Research England, Scottish Funding Council, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and the Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland. The REF is a process of expert review, carried out (mainly) by academics who are seconded to undertake peer review on REF's 34 discipline-specific Units of Assessment. GSA's focus is on Unit 32, Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory.

REF 2021 will assess three distinct elements: outputs (e.g. publications, exhibitions), their impact beyond academia, and the environment that supports research. The period under review is broadly 2014 to 2020, or more specifically:

- research outputs produced and made publicly available between 1st January 2014 and 31 December 2020
- research impact achieved during the period 1st August 2013 to 31 July 2020 (and underpinned by research carried out between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2020)
- the research environment during the period 1 August 2013 and 31 July 2020
- eligible staff who are employed at GSA on the census date, 31 July 2020.

For more information, please see *What the REF means for me: key questions for academics and researchers*, in the Appendices, and the REF2021 website (www.ref.ac.uk).

1.1 Actions Taken Since REF 2014

The Equality Impact Assessment undertaken following GSA's REF2014 submission found that, in general, the research environment did not unfairly discriminate against or privilege any of the characteristics defined as protected in the Equality Act 2010, when considering:

- eligibility for participation
- submission of outputs for assessment
- or selection of outputs for submission.

This was a positive outcome that demonstrated equality of opportunity and fair processes. The review did, however, identify issues of underrepresentation of some protected groups. For instance: female staff were less likely to put themselves forward for consideration (although those who did were about as likely to be selected as male colleagues, and female staff who were selected made a proportionally larger contribution to the final submission); and no member of staff who had chosen to disclose a disability put themselves forward for consideration (although the potential cohort was small). Institutional review of the REF2014 process also drew attention to the need for a more structured approach to the management of research time within contracted hours, in part to address challenges faced by those such as part-time staff and people with caring responsibilities.

That evidence directly influenced the post-REF2014 development of GSA's current Activity Planning Policy, which was introduced in 2016. Activity Planning is intended to make the distribution of activities, duties, support and time for academic staff research more transparent and equitable. A key component was the establishment of Annual Research Plans (ARPs – also from 2016) resulting in defined and protected research time through the activity planning system for those demonstrating appropriate research objectives, progress and capability. ARPs are assessed through a peer review process, independent of management structures, to encourage equivalence of treatment and opportunity. Any member of academic staff, including those on fixed term and part time (0.2FTE or greater) contracts, can submit an ARP for consideration. As we prepare for REF2021, we are in the process of establishing an ARP pathway to support emerging and early career researchers, with dedicated training, guidance, mentoring and resources provided to a cohort who we regard as the next generation of researchers at GSA. This development provides a supportive route to research responsibility for colleagues from a range of backgrounds, including those with experience in professional practice, as is the case for many at GSA.

In 2016, GSA also gained Vitae HR Excellence in Research status, a process which identified a range of measures to improve researcher career development, research support and conditions for carrying out research, as well as more equal access to them. These measures included an enhanced programme of in-house researcher development activities (such as Sharing Knowledge and Insight events), access to external resources (such as the Vitae Researcher Development Framework) and the introduction of a cross-institutional researcher mentoring scheme, in collaboration with the Universities of St Andrews, Dundee, Abertay and the James Hutton Institute.

1.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Table 1 below provides details of those with primary responsibility for managing and coordinating REF2021 processes and procedures at GSA.

GSA's status as a small specialist institution entails advantages and disadvantages when developing our approach to REF2021. Our modest size, and the fact that we will only submit to one Unit of Assessment (32: Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory), brings benefits in terms of reducing the complexity of our processes, allowing for one centralised approach (applied equally to all) and providing good advance visibility of the work of our entire research community, which is of a relatively manageable size. The role of senior researchers and the Research and Enterprise department in coordinating Annual Research Plans every year means that they already have a comprehensive understanding of the breadth and depth of research activity being undertaken at GSA, greatly reducing the risk of the institution failing to engage with any group of researchers during the development of our REF submission.

Among the challenges posed by our size is the fact that we have a limited pool of staff with the capacity and experience to perform the key advisory and decision-making functions set out in this Code of Practice. As a result, we are reliant on some of the same individuals performing multiple roles, as indicated in Table 1 below. We are conscious of potential risks of bias in this respect, and address these in section 2.5.

TABLE 1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Individual/Group	Role	Membership
Director of GSA	Ultimate responsibility for submission to REF2021	
REF Planning Group	Responsible for: - Identification of eligible outputs. - Peer review, assessment and selection of outputs on the basis of quality. - Overseeing and contributing to development of impact case studies. - Input into the preparation of outputs for submission. - Input into relevant stages of assessment of research independence. - Input into relevant stages of assessment of significant responsibility for research. - Review of GSA REF submission, including Environment statement. - Recommending REF submission to GSA Director and Senior Leadership Group. Decision-making role	- Head of Research and Enterprise - Director of REF Development - Institutional Records and Repository Manager Senior Researcher / Convenor of local Research and Enterprise Sub-committee from each School: - School of Design - Innovation School - School of Fine Art - Mackintosh School of Architecture - School of Simulation and Visualisation Option to second additional GSA peer reviewers to assist during periods of peak workload. Supported by other members of Research and Enterprise Department as required.
Director of REF Development	- Key role in developing the research content of sections Outputs, Environment and Impact for the submission - Advising staff on the preparation of detailed research portfolios, in particular for practice-based outputs. - Providing guidance and coaching to members of staff on the preparation of outputs for submission. - Providing information and guidance to the REFPG on the REF2021 regulations, and alignment of GSA's policies and protocols.	Director of REF Development (internal secondment)
REF Operations Team	Responsible for: - Planning, project-managing and coordinating GSA's REF preparations and submission.	From the Research and Enterprise Department: - Head of R&E - Institutional Records and Repository Manager

	- Communicating REF actions to staff. - Preparing and organising guidance and training as required. - Collating and managing REF data. - Production of REF submission. - Identifying CAT A eligible staff. - REF-related records and data management.	- Reseach and Impact Development Officer - Research Information Coordinator - Other Reseach and Enterprise team members as required.
HR REF Lead	- Working closely with REF Operations Team to coordinate and manage HR input into REF processes. - Key role in coordinating and assessing declarations of staff circumstances. - Collating data to support identification of CAT A eligible staff. - Collating data to support submission of former staff. - Providing evidence to support assessment of independence. - Preparing relevant HESA data. - Managing the appropriate use of data relating to staff circumstances. - Receiving requests for appeals. - Participating in REF Equality Group.	- Member of HR team with regular REF-related duties during the development of GSA's REF submission. - Aspects of role may be shared with HR colleagues.
REF Equality Group	Responsible for: - Advising on safe and supportive structures to enable staff to declare voluntarily any staff circumstances affecting outputs, including sensitive issues and those requiring evaluation. - As required, assessment of declarations of staff circumstances referred by HR REF Lead, e.g. those with complex circumstances - Liaising with REFPG about impact of staff	- Head of R&E - HR REF Lead - Input from GSA Equality Lead as required - Input from Director of REF Development as required

	circumstances on REF output pool - Overseeing interim and final EIA of REF 2021. Advisory role	
REF Appeals Panel	Responsible for: - Considering and adjudicating formal (stage 2) appeals relating to decisions on research independence and significant responsibility for research. Decision-making role	- Oversight from Deputy Director (Academic). - Senior HR representative. - Experienced research academic. (note that those adjudicating appeals should not have been involved in earlier review or decision making)
Local Research and Enterprise Subcommittees in each School	Responsible within each School for: - Supporting the dissemination of information and guidance about GSA's REF procedures to staff - Ensuring that staff in each School participate in REF processes and comply with deadlines - Facilitating local peer support for research colleagues. Advisory role	- As appointed by relevant Heads of School.
External REF Assessors	- Commissioned by GSA to provide independent and objective assessment of samples of GSA outputs following internal output reviews. Advisory role.	- Nominated by REFPG members, for expertise in relevant fields, as needs dictate and capacity allows.
External REF Coach(es)	- External academic(s) with significant REF experience to provide guidance and coaching to members of staff on the preparation of outputs for submission. Advisory role	- Nominated by REFPG and Schools, as needs dictate and capacity allows.
External training providers	- Commissioned to provide relevant equalities and diversity training to those undertaking REF procedures. Advisory role.	- AdvanceHE - Others potentially TBC - (Training and guidance will also be delivered by in-house staff.)

Staff members have been nominated for individual and group roles by the Deputy Director (Academic), and approved by GSA Research and Enterprise Committee, on the basis of their professional knowledge and experience to prepare, implement and oversee aspects of GSA's submission to REF2021. Members of the Department of Research and Enterprise will undertake key organisational and coordination roles, which form part of their standard duties. The REFPG is a working group of Research and Enterprise Committee, with core roles for the convenors of the local Research and Enterprise Committees in each of GSA's five Schools. Input from HR and GSA's Equalities Lead is with the approval of the Registrar and Secretary. The roles and responsibilities outlined above were reviewed and approval by Academic Council, the Senior Leadership Group and the Planning and Management Group of senior staff.

The roles outlined above will be performed during the preparation of GSA's REF submission from summer/autumn 2019, and throughout 2020. The REF Planning Group, Operations Team, Equalities Group, Appeals panel and the HR REF lead role will function until early 2021, following final submission of supporting data to the REF2021 assessors, and completion of the EIA on our submission (some roles may be temporarily reinstated to respond to subsequent audit requests).

Part 2: Identifying teaching and research staff with significant responsibility for research

In REF2021, all staff in teaching and research roles who meet the definition of 'Category A eligible' (see 2.1.1 and Figure 1) and who have significant responsibility for research should be included in our final submission. This differs from REF2014, in which institutions could choose to select staff on the basis of the quality of their research outputs and other considerations.

2.1 Policies and Procedures

2.1.1 Category A Eligibility

Only 'Category A eligible' staff may be submitted to REF2021. Category A eligible academic staff are those:

- with a contract of employment of at least 0.2FTE
- who are employed on the census date (July 2020)
- with a substantive research connection to the institution
- whose primary employment function is to undertake teaching and research, or research only
- and who also meet the definition of an 'independent researcher' (see Part 3).

Figure 1 indicates how eligibility for submission to REF2021 is determined.

2.1.2 Process for Identifying Potentially Category A Eligible Staff

In order to identify Category A eligible staff, we will ask relevant GSA staff to complete a REF Eligibility Form (included in the Appendices; see also Figure 2), in which they will indicate whether they are in a 'teaching and research' or 'research only' role[2]. The REF Eligibility Form will be sent to all academic staff on HE2000 contracts (or older forms of academic contract), whose roles are at least 0.2FTE (permanent or fixed term), as identified from HR records.

The REF Operations Team, with input from the HR REF Lead, will coordinate the promotion, distribution, monitoring and collection of the form, and will analyse responses against institutional records to determine whether respondents are either:

- Category A Eligible in a Teaching and Research role, in which case the process described in 2.1.3 applies;
- in a Research Only role, in which case the process described in 3.1 applies;
- in another role.

The REF Eligibility Form will also be used to gather evidence for 2.1.3 and Part 3, below.

The information you provide will be stored securely and confidentially on a password protected network drive by the Research and Enterprise department. All data will be managed in

[2] Staff may also indicate if they are in an 'other' role, such as teaching only or management only.

compliance with GSA Data Protection Policies, and we will work with the Data Protection Officer to ensure that relevant Privacy Notices are in place in advance for all REF processes.

Note that we have determined that staff based at GSA Singapore will not be eligible for submission to REF, and so they will not be required to complete a REF Eligibility Form.

2.1.3 Significant Responsibility for Research

Category A eligible staff on teaching and research contracts must have 'significant responsibility for research' in order to be submitted to REF2021. Staff with significant responsibility for research are those for whom **explicit time and resources are made available to engage actively in independent research, and that is an expectation of their job role**.

At GSA, it is not possible to use employment contracts and job descriptions alone to identify those on teaching and research contracts who have 'significant responsibility for research'. The majority of our academic staff have a standard version of an 'HE2000' employment contract, which makes provision for an 'appropriate balance of duties' including 'research, consultancy and other forms of income generation' – but without specifying what the appropriate balance should be for individual job roles. In many cases, job descriptions do not reliably define expectations for research either, particularly for staff in primarily teaching oriented roles, or those who have been employed for a number of years, and whose roles may have evolved over time.

This section of the Code of Practice therefore defines the process by which staff with significant responsibility for research will be identified. (See also Figure 3.)

The REF2021 Guidance on Submissions (paragraph 140[3]) suggests an approach whereby individuals are assessed in relation to a range of indicators of significant responsibility for research, and deemed to be eligible if they meet a sufficient number of them. It also recommends that one good indicator of whether explicit time and resources are made available for research would be if time was allocated for research as determined in the institution's practices and applied in a consistent way, through a workload model or equivalent. At GSA, explicit time is made available for research through the Annual Research Plans (ARPs) process, as an element of our Activity Planning Policy and Procedures. This is also the way in which research becomes part of an 'appropriate balance' of duties, through an activity plan approved by the member of staff's academic manager.

The first stage of identifying significant responsibility for research is therefore to determine whether research time has been allocated through the ARPs process. The REF Operations Team will verify the research time allocations of staff using the electronic ARPs system; line managers are required to confirm on the REF Eligibility Form that research time resulting from ARPs has indeed been included in the member of staff's activity plans.

For teaching and research staff, research time arising from an ARP corresponds to significant responsibility for research as indicated in Table 2 below:

[3] https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/key-documents/

TABLE 2 ANNUAL RESEARCH PLANS AND SIGNIFICANT RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESEARCH

ARP Outcome	Relationship to Significant Responsibility for Research
No research time allocated	If you have not submitted an ARP, or not been awarded time in response to your ARP, we do not consider it to be an expectation of your job role that you undertake research, and you do not have significant responsibility for research.
Normative: Emergent (scholarship and practice to research trajectory)	If you were awarded normative research time but identified in your ARP feedback as an Emergent Researcher, you do not yet have significant responsibility for research. You represent the next generation of researchers, who we anticipate will have significant responsibility for research during the REF cycle after 2021. You may be a recent post-doc in the early stages of developing your research career; or, as is common at GSA, you may be a more established member of staff (perhaps with significant experience of teaching, scholarship or creative practice), but you are still at an early stage of making the transition into academic research, and may not have entered the profession via a conventional academic career pathway. Staff identified as Emergent Researchers qualify for access to additional guidance, mentoring, researcher development events and online resources, and benefit from membership of a cohort of peers at the same stage.
Normative	Teaching and research staff who have been awarded normative research time through the ARPs process are expected to spend around 20% of their time undertaking research activities. Most staff in this category will have significant responsibility for research, but a minority may be contributing to another individual's research programme rather than undertaking self-directed research; and others will have significant responsibility for activities such as knowledge exchange, consultancy, professional practice and advanced scholarship rather than research per se. Therefore, staff on normative research time are subject to the Code of Practice processes to determine significant responsibility for research, as set out below.
Enhanced	Teaching and research staff who are awarded enhanced research time are expected to spend around 40% of their time undertaking research, having demonstrated a range of accomplished prior research achievements, and ambitious, credible plans for high quality future outputs and projects, exceeding GSA norms. Staff who have been awarded enhanced research time through the ARPs process are automatically considered to have significant responsibility for research.

If a member of staff has not submitted an ARP in the most recent year due to parental leave, ill health or other circumstances, then the research time status from the most recent prior year for which an ARP is available will be used in the assessment of significant responsibility for research, on condition that an ARP mitigation form was submitted at the appropriate time, and approved by HR (as confirmed by HR records).

Teaching and research staff who have been allocated normative research time through the ARPs process should use the REF Eligibility Form to demonstrate how they meet the indicators of significant responsibility for research defined in Table 3 below (see also Figure 3). If at least two indicators apply, the member of staff will be confirmed as having significant responsibility for research. In exceptional cases, a member of teaching and research staff on normative time may be confirmed as having significant responsibility for research despite fulfilling only one of the indicators, if either (a) they are on a part-time contract, and meeting one indicator is considered to be proportionate to the amount of time they are allocated in which to undertake research, and/or (b) they can demonstrate that they have done so to a degree considered equivalent to

having met more than one indicator (e.g. has acted as Co-I on multiple funded research projects). Exceptions can only be approved following review by REFPG.

Note that inclusion or exclusion of teaching and research staff in REF2021 is determined by whether or not they are identified as having significant responsibility for research, as defined in this Code of Practice, and that is the only purpose of the exercise. In the event that GSA undertakes any subsequent evaluation of your role, duties or performance, for whatever reason, it would be governed by the appropriate, approved institutional processes, and your inclusion or otherwise in REF2021 will not be taken into account.

TABLE 3 INDICATORS OF SIGNIFICANT RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESEARCH

Indicators of SRR	Rationale and Additional Information	Evidence (some or all to be fulfilled)
Awarded internal GSA research development funding (RDF): Research Leave, Research Development or Research Leadership (excluding awards for conference attendance)	Allocation of GSA resources (in addition to time) to support research development, leadership or research leave during the REF eligibility period, through a process of internal peer review, demonstrates significant responsibility for research. RDF awards for conference attendance are not regarded as an indicator, since they are also awarded to researchers who are not yet independent researchers.	• GSA electronic records of RDF applications, review, approval and grant claims. To be assessed by REF Operations Team.
Applied for external research funding as lead or co-applicant during REF eligibility period, with evidence of institutional approval.	The REF2021 Guidance on Submissions suggests eligibility to apply for research funding as lead or co-applicant as an indicator of significant responsibility. At GSA, such eligibility is not a defined element of job roles or Grade, but an academic member of staff must demonstrate their ability and capacity to develop an application at the appropriate standard in order to obtain institutional sign off (including confirmation that time and resources will be made available). Evidence that staff member has submitted such a proposal with institutional support or endorsement (even if the proposal was not funded) will therefore demonstrate eligibility. Prospective funders should be demonstrable funders of research.	• Proposals and associated documents recorded in GSA research pipeline database • Proposals recorded in the minutes of Schools' Research and Enterprise Committees • Proposals submitted to funders' electronic submission systems, e.g. Je-S. To be assessed by REF Operations Team.
Named as PI or Co-I on externally funded/endorsed research project during REF eligibility period.	Receipt of a research grant as PI or Co-I demonstrates research independence and eligibility to have applied to undertake a research project.	• Proposals and associated documents recorded in GSA research pipeline database • Letters of award and post-award documentation, e.g. research collaboration agreements. To be assessed by REF Operations Team

Having significant input in the design, conduct and interpretation of an externally funded/enabled research project during the REF eligibility period, e.g. leading a specialised work package in a multi-partner project.	Demonstrates research independence.	• Named as a researcher co-investigator or equivalent in research project documentation. • Confirmed as working in that capacity by PI or Co-I on project, using REF Eligibility Form (if at GSA) or through correspondence (if external). To be assessed by REF Operations Team and verified by REFPG.
Role receives funding from the Scottish Funding Council Research Excellence Grant.	Investment by GSA of core SFC research grant to support specific academic roles indicates significant responsibility for research.	• GSA financial and payroll records. To be assessed by Head of Research and Enterprise and Management Accountant.

Following receipt of completed REF Eligibility Forms, the REF Operations Group will assess the evidence that indicators have been met, and present the provisional findings to REFPG. If necessary, further information will be sought from individuals who have completed the form. REFPG will peer-review the recommendation and evidence, and collectively evaluate any aspects deemed to require a qualitative judgement, before confirming the outcome. A summary of the decision-making process will be documented and kept on record for reference. At the start of each panel meeting, the REFPG will review our checklist of principles to minimise bias and promote equity, equality and transparency. The Head of Research and Enterprise will communicate the outcome to the member of staff in writing, together with information about the appeals process (if the outcome is negative), and details of how to declare whether individual circumstances have impaired the individual's ability to produce research (see 4.3).

2.1.4 Substantive Research Connection

For staff who will be submitted to REF and are on fractional contracts between 0.2FTE and 0.29FTE on the census date (July 2020), we must provide a 200-word statement to explain their substantive research connection to GSA. Such individuals will be identified by the HR REF Lead from HR records, and supporting statements will be produced by the REF Operations Team, in consultation with the member of staff. This process will apply to both teaching and research and research-only staff who are included in GSA's REF submission.

2.2 Development of processes

2.2.1 Communication of Final Agreed Processes to Staff

Communicating with Staff About the Code of Practice

The communication plan to promote and explain the Code of Practice will include the following elements:

- A printed letter announcing the launch of the approved Code of Practice to all academic staff from the Head of Research and Enterprise, circulated through the internal mail system;
- The HR Ref Lead will identify any staff on secondment or extended leave of absence and ensure that a letter is supplied to the current home or contact address;
- Code of Practice and associated documents will be available on the GSA website, and the new intranet (and/or virtual learning environment);
- Regular email bulletins will be sent to promote the launch of the Code of Practice and its application to our REF Preparations in 2019 and 2020;
- An institutional launch event will be scheduled following approval of the Code, plus dedicated information sessions in each of our five Schools and Forres campus, to coincide with exercises to identify eligible staff in 2019. Further information sessions will be scheduled in spring 2020, as of the final stages of the process to confirm Category A Submitted staff and our output pool gets under way.
- Regular updates on REF preparations and the application of the Code of Practice will be presented to Research and Enterprise Committee, local Research and Enterprise Subcommittees, Academic Council, Senior Leadership Group and Planning and Management Group.

An advantage of GSA's status as a small specialist institution is that our HR department and centralised research support team has comprehensive knowledge about our research community, and we can be confident that potential Category A Eligible staff will receive the information and support they need to help them understand and prepare for REF.

Consultation with Staff on the Development of the Code of Practice

This Code of Practice has been developed iteratively over a period of more than a year, over the course of which there have been regular formal and informal consultation with academic research and professional support staff, representative staff bodies, formal committees and peers in other institutions and sector organisations. Key milestones included:

- Consultation of Code of Practice with Trade Unions, particularly those representing academic staff (UCU and EIS), which formally confirmed their approval of this draft for submission in June 2019. Further approval was confirmed following electronic review of amendments to the indicators of Significant Responsibility for Research in September 2019.
- Review and discussion through relevant institutional committees, including the Research and Enterprise Committee (on 6 February and 18 April 2019), and Academic Council on 1 May 2019.
- Consultation with researchers, members of the REF Equality Group and colleagues in HR to inform Equalities Impact Assessment.
- Review with institutional managers, including Heads of School, through senior Planning and Management group, including additional review of the amended indicators of Significant Responsibility for Research on 17 September 2019.

- Extensive discussion with members of the REF Planning Group, and Annual Research Plan peer reviewers.

2.3 Staff, committees and training

For details of relevant staff responsibilities and committees, please refer to section 1.1.

The training priorities for those involved in preparing our REF submission have been identified as:

- REF-specific Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training
- GSA-specific peer-review training, to ensure that assessment of outputs is equitable across our specialist subject areas.

Key members of staff responsible for GSA's REF submission have attended external workshops organised by AdvanceHE on Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and REF2021, and have scheduled a date (October 2019) when AdvanceHE will deliver related training at GSA to our REFPG, appeal panellists and others who will be involved in any form of review and assessment including identification of staff eligible for submission, the selection of outputs or dealing with processes relating to staff circumstances. Participation for these groups will be mandatory. AdvanceHE has also shared relevant materials with Scottish HEIs, and the REF Equalities Group and Operations Team plans to use these in-house to deliver additional workshops for any individual who becomes involved in REF preparation at a later date. Key issues include understanding and mitigating against the risk of bias, including unconscious bias. Further guidance will be made available on the intranet, enhanced by access to GSA's existing online modules on Equality and Diversity in the Workplace.

Prior to review of Outputs (see Part 4), representatives from each of our Schools will also provide guidance to colleagues involved in REF review, to ensure that we develop the best collective understanding of how to assess outputs from each of our specialist subject areas. This will build on good existing knowledge, generated through the yearly process of ARP review.

2.4 Appeals

An appeals process is available for teaching and research staff who are identified as not having significant responsibility for research, if they believe that they were not treated fairly and in accordance with processes set out in this Code of Practice. The same process applies to research-only staff in relation to assessment of research independence (see Part 3). Potential grounds for appeal include:

1) Suspected inappropriate application of the processes set out in this Code of Practice, resulting in a disputed decision about a member of staff's responsibility for research or research independence.

2) Suspected unlawful discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or because the individual concerned is pregnant or has recently given birth.

Any decision relating to the selection of a researcher's outputs based on quality is not subject to appeal, in accordance with the requirements of the REF2021 Guidance on Submissions.

The appeals process consists of an informal stage and a formal stage (see Figure 5).

Stage 1: Informal

At Stage 1, we will attempt to resolve any relevant concerns through informal discussion. A member of staff may raise an informal appeal by completing the REF Appeals Form (See Appendices) and submitting it to HR. Any appeal should be made within 28 days of receiving formal notification of whether they are due to be submitted to REF 2021. The HR REF lead will liaise with the Head of Research and Enterprise and REF Equalities Group (as appropriate), before an advisory meeting is arranged between the member of staff and Head of Research and Enterprise to review the case informally, within 21 days of receipt of the appeal. A work colleague or trade union representative may accompany the member of staff to the meeting. We will maintain a record of all such stage 1 appeal requests, and the Head of Research and Enterprise will provide the member of staff with a written summary of the outcome of the advisory meeting (within 7 days of the meeting date), and the right to respond. At that point, the member of staff may either withdraw the appeal (if it is agreed that the appeal should not be upheld) or progress to stage 2.

Stage 2: Formal Appeal

When an appeal request cannot be resolved through informal discussion, the formal appeals process comes into effect. The member of staff making the appeal should inform HR in writing that they wish to escalate their appeal to Stage 2, within 21 days of receiving the outcome of stage 1. The case will then be considered at a formal REF Appeals Panel, which will be convened for that purpose. The Appeals Panel will meet under the oversight of the Deputy Director Academic, and will comprise a senior representative from HR and a senior research academic who has not been involved in any prior stage of decision making, or review of the appeal. A work colleague or trade union representative may accompany the member of staff to the meeting. The panel will consider the appeal on the basis of whether due process, as set out in this Code of Practice, was followed correctly. Evidence will be sought from those responsible for the relevant stage of decision making. The Appeal Panel's role is to determine whether the appeal should either be upheld or dismissed. If the panel concludes that there are legitimate grounds for the appeal, then the decision on Significant Responsibility for Research and/or Research Independence (as applicable) will be re-assessed by the Appeals Panel, which will then communicate the outcome to the staff member. All decisions of the Stage 2 Appeals Panel will be final.

Appeals Relating to Special Circumstances and Sensitive Personal Information

If the substance of an appeal relates to sensitive personal information or special circumstances that the member of staff making the appeal does not wish to share directly with the Head of Research and Enterprise or Appeals panel, then in the first instance the stage 1 request for appeal should be made to the HR REF lead, who will then liaise with the member of staff and the REF Equalities Group about the most appropriate way to conduct the informal stage of review.

2.5 Equality impact assessment

Equalities Impact Assessment of the draft Code of Practice focused on identifying potential differential impacts on particular groups resulting from GSA's REF2021 processes and policies (see Appendices for summary report). At the time of writing, no provisional identification of staff or selection of outputs has been completed, because the Code is a precursor to those actions; we are therefore not yet able to evaluate REF processes in practice. Our main emphasis at this stage has instead been on developing clearly defined and understood criteria and processes that are fair, transparent, consistent and accessible.

A review of the evidence suggests that we have reasonably good foundations on which to build a REF2021 submission that promotes equality and diversity, complies with legislation and avoids discrimination. As an institution, we are committed to mainstreaming equality as an integral element to our strategic aims and across all activities and functions, in line with our duties as a public sector body in Scotland. Equalities outcome goals (those not exclusively student-related) include:

- An organisational culture in which respect for self and others is understood and practised; where identity-based ignorance or prejudice is challenged and confidence promoted.
- An increased number of people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds contributing to learning, teaching and research at GSA and engaging with diverse local communities.
- A fair pay and career progression framework which underpins equality of opportunity for all, actively works towards reducing the gender pay gap and addresses occupational segregation. As this relates to our research environment and activities, further actions include:
    - An objective to increase the proportion of female staff submitting research for audit and inclusion in REF2021
    - Achieving Equality Impact Assessment Actions with respect to REF2021
    - Working to ensure equality of opportunity for all staff in respect of participation in Research and Enterprise activities as relevant to role profiles.

As stated in 1.1, we performed relatively well in REF2014 in terms of eligibility, consideration of outputs for assessment, and selection of outputs for REF; our REF2014 EIA found that those elements were non-discriminatory, operated independently of individual identity, and offered equality of access. However, we did find that women were less likely to submit their work for consideration for REF in the first place, and that no colleagues with a disclosed disability submitted their work for consideration.

In conducting EIAs for REF2021, we are seeking evidence that developments in the research environment including the introduction of the Activity Planning Policy and ARPs since 2016 have reduced known disparities. Our analysis to date provides some grounds for optimism. In REF2014, only 40% of women who had been identified as potentially eligible nominated themselves for inclusion, compared to 60% of men. The eligible cohort of men was also 30% larger than that of women. If we take 2018 ARPs as a rough proxy for REF nominations (although it is not a direct comparison), 52% of eligible women submitted an ARP (or 59% by FTE), compared to 47% of men (or 54% by FTE). The eligible cohort of men and women was also almost equal (51% to 49% by FTE).

Similarly, in REF 2014, only 40% of women who put themselves forward for inclusion were submitted, compared to 60% of men. In the 2018 ARPs, the proportion of men and women who submitted an ARP and were then allocated research time was almost exactly the same (a difference of <1% by headcount or FTE). A higher proportion of women also achieved positive ARP outcomes, with twice as many women awarded enhanced time than men, and fewer women than men receiving no research time, based on an equivalent sized cohort. Other elements of

GSA's research environment also point towards higher levels of participation and success by women. In the five years following the last REF, more than twice as many women as men were awarded research leave, and nearly twice as many women as men were recipients of internal RDF research development or research leadership awards (again, from a similar sized cohort of potential applicants). We will be watching closely to see if these apparent improvements translate into higher rates of participation in REF2021.

We have not yet been able to analyse ARPs data against all of the protected characteristics evaluated in our REF2014 EIA, as the datasets are not fully integrated. For those that we have been able to measure, however, there are other positive signs. In REF2014, no members of staff who had disclosed a disability submitted their work for selection. In the 2018 ARPs, 40% of those who had disclosed a disability (by FTE - based on a small potential cohort) applied for and were allocated research time. It should be noted, however, that the vast majority of eligible staff (>70%) do not declare whether or not they have a disability. In terms of race and ethnicity, we found no evidence that those in BME or mixed heritage groups were under-represented in the 2014 REF submission, compared to the eligible cohort (although representation in the cohort itself was low). That pattern is consistent with research time allocations from 2018 ARPs.

One finding that will require attention as we prepare for REF2021 is equality of opportunity for part time staff. Around 60% of the eligible cohort at GSA (by headcount, or around 40% by FTE) work part-time, ranging from 0.2 to 0.9fte. Yet only 45% (headcount) of those awarded research time from 2018 ARPs were part-time staff, indicating that full-time staff may have an advantage in terms of ability to participate in research.

Table 4 below summarises a number of potential risks of discrimination or inequitable practices, identified through our initial EIA, that we will seek to mitigate as we prepare our submission:

TABLE 4 ADJUSTMENTS TO CODE OF PRACTICE IN RESPONSE TO EIA

Potential issue	Justification and/or Mitigation
1.) Reliance on limited pool of staff for elements of review and decision making at stages 2, 3 and 4 of Code of Practice	- As a small specialist institution, we have a limited number of staff with the experience and current capacity to support the REF submission. Those staff do include colleagues who have been involved in previous research assessment exercises, at GSA and elsewhere, which have been shown to have been conducted fairly and equitably. - All staff involved in the REF exercise will receive dedicated training on peer review for REF, bias and EDI. We will produce a checklist of principles to minimise bias and promote equity, equality and transparency, which will be referred to prior to each review panel meeting. - All decisions will be fully documented to provide transparency.
2.) Composition of REFPG may not be optimally representative of research community	- The REFPG does comprise a mix of ages, genders, nationalities and disciplines, but is not entirely representative of the research staff body. - In mitigation, we will take representation into account when commissioning external providers to advise on REF processes, such as output review. - We will also consider enhancing (advisory) review capacity during the output review stage, by drawing on the institutional pool of

	ARP peer reviewers, which is gender balanced, and represents a broader mix of ages, nationalities, senior and earlier career researchers. - We will undertake an interim EIA following of the first stage our REF preparations, and assess the impact of panel composition on provisional identification of staff and selection of outputs; if equality issues are identified, we will consider revising the composition of REFPG.
3.) Feedback from staff indicates that the new features of REF2021 have added complexity and are not yet well understood by many.	- Completion of Code of Practice and dissemination through communications programme will build awareness and understanding.
4) Information sessions, guidance and mentoring could be less accessible to staff at Forres campus.	- Information session(s) will take place at Forres. All relevant materials will be available online. Key Glasgow based sessions will be recorded for remote access.
5) Some eligible staff may require more accessible guidance and support materials	- Through the Code of Practice communication programme, we will encourage staff to provide details of accessibility requirements, and address them to the best of our ability. - REF Eligibility form will capture details of any accessibility needs.
6) Risk of disadvantage to part-time staff seeking to participate in process	- Guidance and support activities will be scheduled at varied times and locations to increase the chances of part-time staff being available to participate. - Clarity on expectations for level of participation by part-time staff (e.g. number of outputs contributed).

We will conduct an interim EIA early in 2020, following the first stage of our REF preparations, and the provisional identification of eligible staff and initial selection of outputs. If we identify any differential impacts on particular groups at that stage, we will take steps to modify processes and procedures to reduce negative effects (to the extent permitted following formal approval of our Code of Practice). In 2021, we will prepare a post-submission EIA, to evaluate in detail the constituent elements of all aspects of the approved submission in respect of staff participation and inclusion.

Part 3: Determining research independence

Staff employed on 'research only' contracts must be identified as 'independent researchers' in order to be eligible to be included in REF. In most cases, those employed as research assistants to carry out another individual's research programme are not considered to be independent. For the purposes of REF, an independent researcher is defined as an individual who undertakes self-directed research. A member of staff is not deemed to have undertaken independent research purely on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs. (REF presumes that in most cases, people in 'teaching and research' roles are likely to be independent researchers, but recognises that in some cases it may be necessary to determine whether those in such roles

meet the criteria for research independence; the indicators outlined in 2.1.3 do make provision for assessing the independence of those in teaching and research roles.)

3.1 Policies and procedures

Staff identified as potentially Category A Eligible should complete the REF Eligibility Form (see 2.1.2 and Figure 2) and return it to the REF Operations Team. When such staff are considered to be 'research only' staff, they will only be confirmed as Category A Eligible (and thus submitted to REF2021) if proven to be an independent researcher (see Figure 1). A member of staff is 'research only' when their duties and responsibilities relate exclusively to research and associated activities, and not to academic teaching. In addition to those that are directly related to research projects, associated activities may involve administrative, strategic and managerial tasks, such as participation in committees and working groups, research project management, representing GSA on external bodies, peer review, mentoring, PhD supervision, staff recruitment and appraisal. (A member of staff may be research only and still also make occasional contributions to taught programmes in the form of guest lectures and similar activities.)

Staff who indicate on the REF Eligibility Form that they are in a research only role must obtain confirmation from their line manager or head of department, based on relevant records (such as activity plans, career review and development forms or job descriptions). Having confirmed their research-only status, it is the researcher's responsibility to demonstrate that they are also an independent researcher (see Figure 4), by indicating on the REF Eligibility Form how they fulfil at least two of the GSA Indicators of Research Independence. If stating that they have had significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of a research project (without being identifiable in project documentation), they should provide written confirmation from the relevant PI or Co-I on the project.

Following receipt of completed REF Eligibility Forms, the REF Operations Group will assess the evidence that indicators have been met, and present the provisional findings to REFPG. REFPG will peer review the recommendation and evidence, and collectively evaluate any aspects deemed to require a qualitative judgement, before confirming the outcome. A summary of the decision process will be documented and kept on record for reference. At the start of each panel meeting, the REFPG will review our checklist of principles to minimise bias and promote equity, equality and transparency. The Head of Research and Enterprise will communicate the outcome to the member of staff in writing, together with information about the appeals process (if the outcome is negative), and details of how to declare whether individual circumstances have impaired the individual's ability to produce research (see 4.3).

Note that inclusion or exclusion of research only staff in REF2021 is determined by whether or not they are identified as being an independent researcher, as defined in this Code of Practice, and that is the only purpose of the exercise. In the event that GSA undertakes any subsequent evaluation of your role, duties or performance, for whatever reason, it would be governed by the appropriate, approved institutional processes, and your inclusion or otherwise in REF2021 will not be taken into account.

TABLE 5 INDICATORS OF RESEARCH INDEPENDENCE

Two or more of the following should apply.

Indicators of Research Independence	Rationale and Additional Information	Evidence Required
Research time through ARP.	Research only staff who are independent researchers are expected to submit an Annual Research Plan, including details of their projects, outcomes and forthcoming research objectives. Research Assistants and those in equivalent roles are not.	• ARP system • Confirmation by line manager that ARP recommendation implemented through activity planning processes. To be assessed and verified by REF Operations Team.
Job role is 'senior researcher'.	Senior Researcher roles at GSA denote experienced, active researchers with significant formal responsibilities for developing the research culture and staff in each of our Schools, and for undertaking their own research programme. Where these formal titles are held by staff in research only roles, the position is by default an indicator of research independence.	• HR records To be confirmed by HR REF lead.
Holds an independently won, competitively awarded Fellowship, where research independence is a requirement, such as AHRC Leadership Fellow, Leverhulme Research Fellow or equivalent.	Corresponding to the REF2021 Guidance on Submissions, an independently won, competitively awarded, externally funded Fellowship is an indicator of research independence. Eligible Fellowships include those included on REF2021's List of Independent Fellowships, or equivalent.	• Notification of award from funder of Fellowship, and supporting documents, such as Fellowship Propoosal To be confirmed by REF Operations Team
Leading or acting as Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator on externally funded research project during REF period.	Research independence is necessary in order to have developed or co-developed a successful proposal for research funding, and to have undertaken (or be undertaking) that role.	• Research proposal, letter of award and associated documentation, as held in GSA's Research Pipeline database and • Proposal and post-award documentation on funding submission systems, such as Je-S. To be confirmed by REF Operations Team

Having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of an externally funded research project during REF period, e.g. leading a specialised work package in a multi-partner project.	Acting in a research co-investigator or equivalent role to lead a significant element of a funded research project, such that research independence is a requirement. In situations where documentary evidence does not identify the researcher, they should seek written confirmation of the nature of their role from the PI or Co-I.	• Research proposal, letter of award and associated documentation where the researcher and their role as an independent researcher can be identified. • Written confirmation from PI or Co-I on relevant project, attesting to researcher's independent role (via REF eligibility form if PI or Co-I is a GSA colleague) Researcher to provide evidence on REF Eligibility Form. REF Operations Group to verify based on project documentation. REFPG to confirm outcome based on assessment of evidence.
Awarded internal GSA Research Development Funding: Research Leave, Research Development or Research Leadership, during REF 2021 eligibility period (excluding awards for conference attendance)	Allocation of GSA resources, through internal peer review, to support research development and leadership, or research leave, indicates research independence. RDF awards for conference attendance are not regarded as an indicator, since they are also awarded to researchers who are not yet independent.	• GSA electronic records of RDF applications, review, approval and grant claims. To be assessed by REF Operations Team.
Independently produced significant research output(s) as a lead or sole author/researcher on a scale equivalent to a Fellowship or role as PI/Co-I on an externally funded research project, while in a research-only role. For example, has written an Authored Book (or received a confirmed publishing contract for an authored book) as a lead author during the REF Eligibility period, where publication involves external quality control and validation by a recognised academic publisher.	Research-only staff at GSA who are independent researchers may undertake self-directed research that is not dependent on roles in externally funded research projects or Fellowships, depending on their discipline and field of study. This indicator aims to identify research undertaken at an equivalent level. For example, research independence is considered to be necessary in order to produce, as a lead author, work on the scale of an academic Authored Book about the staff member's original research. The emphasis should be on works of that scale and significance rather than those of more	If an authored book: • Published Authored Book that meets the criteria • Written evidence of publishing contract and/or confirmed commission to write an Authored Book that meets the criteria. To be assessed by REF Operations Team If a research output other than an authored book is proposed as an equivalent alternative, it must be evaluated by REFPG, which may seek additional details and justification from the researcher concerned.

	modest scope, in acknowledgement of the REF2021 Guidance (para 133) that being named on one or more research outputs is not a sufficient indicator of independence.	

3.2 Staff, committees and training

For details of relevant staff responsibilities and committees, please refer to section 1.1.

For details of relevant training activities, please see section 2.3.

3.3 Appeals

Please refer to section 2.4.

3.4 Equality impact assessment

Please refer to section 2.5.

Part 4: Selection of outputs

Research outputs will be selected for REF2021 on the basis of quality, as defined in the REF2021 criteria and level definitions (originality, significance and rigour). Review and selection of outputs will be the principal responsibility of the REFPG; the REF Operations Group and Director of REF Development will provide guidance on the preparation of outputs for submission.

A minimum of 1 output is required per eligible member of staff[4], and a maximum of 5 outputs. Overall, an average of 2.5 outputs will be required per 1FTE researcher included in GSA's REF submission. It is a principle of REF that all forms of research output will be assessed on a fair and equal basis: any particular form of output should not be regarded as of greater or lesser quality than another per se. All research outputs must, however, meet the definition of research, or they are ineligible. Research is defined for REF as 'a process of investigation, leading to new insights, effectively shared'.

4.1 Policies and procedures

The process for the identification and selection of outputs will be as follows (see also Figure 6).

Identification of Outputs

Members of staff will be notified by the Head of Research and Enterprise if they have been identified as having significant responsibility for research and/or being an independent researcher (see Part 2 and Part 3).

The REF Operations Team will provide guidance on how to nominate outputs and prepare contextual information for the output selection process. The guidance will be available on the GSA intranet, and disseminated via email updates, information sessions and through relevant committees. With the assistance of HR, members of staff who are on secondment or an extended leave of absence will receive the notification by letter.

Eligible researchers will be asked to nominate and rank what they consider to be their best eligible research outputs, using an electronic form provided by the REF Operations Team. They will also be asked to provide contextual information about each output, based on a standard set of questions – information that will inform the review process, help the REF Operations Team to manage factors such as joint-authorship and double-weighting, and provide the basis for any additional statements that are required for outputs selected for submission. The researcher should also provide an additional list of 'reserve' items, which may be considered if an insufficient number of 'first choice' outputs are selected for submission; and an indication of forthcoming outputs that they are confident will be published or made publicly available within the REF submission period. REFPG and other colleagues who are experienced peer reviewers will be available to support staff in the identification and nomination of suitable outputs.

Note that there are a range of factors that will affect how many outputs a researcher will be able to contribute to REF, including the nature of the outputs, their FTE status, how long they have been working in a research role, their research time allocation, other conditions of their employment and their personal circumstances. GSA has not stipulated a target number of outputs for REF (other than the minimum of one), and in the event that GSA undertakes any subsequent evaluation of a member of staff's role, duties or performance, for whatever reason, it

[4] Except where exceptional staff circumstances apply, see 4.3.

would be governed by the appropriate, approved institutional processes; the outputs they contribute to REF2021 will not be taken into account.

If an electronic, open access version of the output is not available on RADAR, then researchers should be prepared to help the REF Operations Team to obtain a copy of the output or relevant associated records (electronic or physical, e.g. published book).

In the first stage of our REF preparations, this process will be aligned with Annual Research Plans (ARPs) for 2020/21, to minimise potential duplication of effort. Most staff will have undertaken a similar process when producing their ARPs, and will be able to draw on their previous work to prepare for the REF output review. The 2020/21 ARPs timetable will be brought forward to commence in the autumn of 2019, to complement REF preparations.

The REF Operations Team will manage records of all nominated outputs using an electronic system, either a RADAR Eprints REF module or an in-house solution (to be determined following tests in 2019). The system will be secure and password-protected to comply with GSA Data Protection Policies, and (because it may contain personal data) access to the system will be restricted to those involved in assessment of outputs (principally, REFPG).

Output Selection

Two members of REFPG will independently review each output, before discussing their assessments with the rest of the group at scheduled Panel meetings. At the start of each panel meeting, the REFPG will review our checklist of principles to promote equity, equality and transparency, and minimise bias. Peer reviewers must first determine whether outputs meet the definition or research. If confirmed, quality will be assessed with reference to the REF criteria. Additional staff drawn from GSA's cohort of experienced reviewers will be invited by REFPG to assist in this task if necessary, to increase capacity and address any relevant equality and subject-specialism considerations. Following review by REFPG, outputs will be given the status of 'for inclusion', 'not for inclusion' or 'for further consideration'. Results and comments will be recorded in a standard format on the appropriate system, including documentation of the assessment process, in order to demonstrate compliance with the Code of Practice.

Outputs by staff who have left GSA will be reviewed in the same manner, after the REF Operations Team and HR REF Lead have first assessed and documented the eligibility of both staff and outputs (see 4.1.1). Permission will be sought from former staff if their outputs are under consideration for inclusion.

A sample of outputs will be reviewed by external assessors (as well as REFPG), to provide independent and objective assessment for comparison. REFPG review criteria will be adjusted accordingly should any systemic variations in review standards be identified by external reviewers; any outputs affected will be re-assessed as required.

Each researcher's best output (as ranked by REFPG) will be selected, ensuring that the minimum threshold of one output per Category A Submitted staff is met. All remaining outputs will be ranked and selected collectively on the basis of quality, until the target number of outputs for the unit submission is reached. REFPG's remit is to identify a range of outputs of the highest possible quality for our REF submission; they will not select outputs based on output metrics or factors such as the author's identity or job role.

If an insufficient number of outputs is initially identified for the submission, further review of items that were not initially identified as 'for inclusion' may be necessary, including those flagged as 'for further consideration', and any reserve items.

During this process, necessary adjustments will be made to take account of any jointly authored outputs, potentially double-weighted items or outputs that do not comply with Open Access requirements. Reserve outputs will also be identified for double-weighted items, and outputs that are still awaiting publication or are not yet publicly available.

Adjustments will also be made by REFPG, in liaison with the REF Equalities Group, in response to the disclosure by staff of circumstances that have had an impact on their ability to produce research (see 4.3).

The first stage of output review and selection will take place from Autumn/Winter 2019. A second round of output nominations will be sought in Spring 2020, to take account of outputs that are first made publicly available after the first phase of REF preparations. Thereafter, CAT A Submitted staff will be expected to notify the REF Operations Team of any new outputs that are made publicly available during 2020. The publication of new outputs may result in other outputs in the submission pool being deselected for REF.

Preparation of Outputs for Submission to REF

Researchers will be notified by the REF Operations Team about outputs that have been selected for inclusion, or 'for further consideration'. When an output is selected for GSA's REF submission, its author will be expected to work with REFPG and the REF Operations Team to prepare any necessary additional information required for the submission. Depending on the nature of the output, this may include:

- a 300-word additional statement;
- a coherent presentation of the research, which articulates the research process, research insights, and time and manner of dissemination (likely to be in PDF form);
- a statement justifying a request to double-weight an item;
- an abstract for outputs in languages other than English;
- statements on the author's contribution to certain kinds of joint outputs (e.g. curatorial projects);
- rationales for grouping short items as single outputs;
- and in some cases, audio-visual content.

Creators of practice-based research outputs should assume they will be required to use the GSA portfolio template[5] to present their work (although there may be exceptions).

Further guidance will be provided by the REF Operations Team to help researchers to prepare outputs for submission. The Director of REF Development, members of the REF Operations Team, and members of REFPG will also be able to provide advice and support to colleagues as they undertake these tasks, but they will not have the capacity to prepare the materials for researchers. We also aim to invite external coaches with expertise in specific fields to assist researchers with output preparation, although such input will not be extensive.

The REF Operations Team will coordinate the process of editing, review and presentational enhancement (of electronic and physical items) in order to prepare the submission to REF2021.

[5] http://radar.gsa.ac.uk/5649/

4.1.1 Former Staff

Under some circumstances, research outputs generated by former staff who were employed as academic researchers may be considered for inclusion in REF. Outputs are eligible if they were first made publicly available when the individual was employed as a Category A Eligible member of staff at GSA. Where applicable, such outputs will be identified by the REF Operations team based on items submitted to RADAR (the GSA research repository). They will be reviewed and selected for submission by REFPG on the same basis as those of current staff. The REF Operations Team and HR REF Lead will assess the Category A eligibility of former staff based on institutional records, including Annual Research Plans where applicable (from 2016 onwards).

GSA will not submit outputs generated by former members of staff without first obtaining their explicit written permission for us to do so. Former members of staff will be contacted by HR on behalf of REFPG at least three months before the REF 2021 submission date in November 2020 (and in most cases much earlier than that) to seek their permission. Any REF-eligible member of staff who leaves GSA during the preparation of our REF2021 submission will be asked for permission, if possible, before they depart. Before making any such requests, the REFPG will carefully consider whether it would be appropriate to do so, given the condition proposed in the REF2021 Draft Guidance on Submissions (July 2018) that outputs by former staff who have been made redundant should not be eligible.

Staff who remain at GSA but are no longer Category A Eligible (e.g. those who have moved into a senior management or administrative role) may be treated as former staff, and any outputs that they first made available when in an eligible role may be considered for inclusion. (This does not apply to staff who remain in a Catgory A Eligible role, but who no longer have significant responsibility for research.)

4.2 Staff, committees and training

For details of relevant staff responsibilities and committees, please refer to section 1.1.

For details of relevant training activities, please see section 2.3.

4.3 Disclosure of circumstances that have affected research productivity

GSA is committed to mainstreaming equality as an integral element to our strategic aims and across all activities and functions, including research careers. As part of that commitment, we have put in place measures to ensure that if an individual researcher's circumstances have affected their productivity, this will be taken into account during the preparation of our REF submission.

In REF2021, there is a degree of flexibility about how many outputs each eligible individual should contribute (between 1 and 5), as long as we meet the collective target of an average of 2.5 outputs per 1FTE. This 'decoupling' of staff and outputs will allow us to adjust the number of items that we ask a researcher to submit, particularly if there are legitimate reasons why that member of staff does not have multiple research outputs to contribute. For example, if a researcher has taken a period of parental leave, we might expect them to have produced fewer

outputs than a colleague in a similar role who has not. Decoupling means that we can make any necessary adjustments ourselves, through our internal output review and selection processes, and will be able reassure staff directly, and without delay, about the impact on the number of outputs that they might reasonably be expected to contribute.

In order to ensure that we can consider any such adjustments fairly, GSA has established a safe, robust and confidential process to allow staff to voluntarily declare whether their individual circumstances have had an impact on their ability to produce research outputs.

When certain circumstances apply to individual members of staff, and we believe that the cumulative effect has had a disproportionate impact, GSA may apply for a reduction in the total number of outputs that we are required to submit to REF2021. In exceptional circumstances, we may also ask that specific individuals are exempt from the 'minimum of one output' requirement.

The REF2021 Guidance on Submissions identifies the following equality-related circumstances that may have an impact on the ability of staff to produce outputs productively:

- Qualifying as an early career researcher (ECR). An ECR is defined as having started their career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016.
- Periods of family related leave (periods of statutory maternity or adoption leave, of whatever length; also additional periods of paternity or adoption leave, or shared parental leave, lasting four months or more)
- Circumstances with an equivalent effect to absence, including:
    - Disability
    - Ill health, injury or mental health conditions
    - Constraints relating to maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare other than qualifying periods of 'standard' parental leave
    - Other caring responsibilities
    - Gender reassignment
- Other exceptional circumstances, to be assessed on a case-by-case basis (e.g. bereavement).

Some of the circumstances listed above correspond to formulaic reductions in the overall number of outputs that GSA will be required to submit (if we submit an official request for them). For example, the required output pool would be reduced by 0.5 for each period of family-related leave taken by a member of staff, and by between 0.5 and 1.5 for each ECR in our cohort, depending on how recently the ECRs began their careers as independent researchers. If combined circumstances apply, the maximum reduction would normally be 1.5 outputs, due to the requirement that everyone submits a minimum of 1 output, other than in exceptional cases. Full details are provided in Annex L of the Guidance on Submissions[6]. Note that there are no formulaic reductions for part-time working in this REF, as the decoupling of staff from outputs will enable GSA to make any necessary adjustments ourselves.

Our process for the Disclosure of Circumstances is outlined in Figure 7. If your ability to research productively during the assessment period has been constrained due to one or more of the above circumstances[7], we request that you complete a Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances Form (see Appendices) before the end of January 2020. Completion and return of the form is voluntary, and you may choose not to return it – even if there are relevant circumstances that do apply to you. This form is the only means by which GSA will be gathering this information for REF, as we will not be consulting HR records, contract start dates etc. in order to ***identify*** staff to whom circumstances apply. (Institutional records will, however, be

[6] See Annex L, p114, p40, of the Guidance on Submissions (REF 2019/01), https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1092/ref-2019_01-guidance-on-submissions.pdf

[7] See paragraph 160, p of the Guidance on Submissions (REF 2019/01)

consulted by HR when your completed form is assessed.) You should therefore complete and return the form only if any of the above circumstances apply *and* you are willing to provide the associated information. If you do not return the form, we will assume that your research has not been affected by circumstances, or that you do not wish any circumstances to be disclosed or taken into account. No pressure will be placed on anyone to declare circumstances if they do not want to.

The Declaration of Staff Circumstances Form is very closely based on the template form issued by REF2021, which was developed under the guidance of the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel. During phase 1 of the preparation of GSA's REF submission (autumn 2019), the Form and related guidance will be issued to all staff who are identified as eligible for submission to REF2021. The form and guidance will also be available on the REF section of the intranet.

The form should be returned confidentially to the GSA HR Ref Lead, who will undertake initial review of the declarations, and assess the information provided against institutional records where applicable (e.g. periods of parental leave, mitigation forms submitted in relation to ARPs). The HR Ref Lead will also be able to provide advice prior to the submission of the Declaration Form.

The information you provide will be stored securely and confidentially by HR. All data will be managed in compliance with GSA Data Protection Policies, and we will work with the Data Protection Officer to ensure that relevant Privacy Notices are in place in advance for all REF processes.

The REF Equalities Group will review provisional findings, and collectively evaluate any case deemed to require qualitative judgement (such as situations in which an individual has experienced a complex combination of circumstances), before confirming outcomes to the REFPG and REF Operations Team, so that they can adjust expectations about the number of outputs an individual is expected to contribute. The HR REF Lead will inform the individuals concerned about the outcome.

REFPG will also assess whether the cumulative effect of the impacts of staff circumstances will require GSA to request a reduction in the overall institutional output pool, despite the flexibility afforded by the de-coupling of staff and outputs. They will liaise with the REF Equalities Group to assess whether there is sufficient justification for such a request, when balanced against potential risks to individuals with circumstances (for instance, from the transfer of their confidential data to REF2021/EDAP).

If we conclude that it is necessary to submit an application for a reduction in the required number of institutional outputs, the REF Operations Team will prepare the submission with input from the REF Equalities Group between January and March 2020.

4.4 Equality impact assessment

Please refer to section 2.5.

Figure 1: CAT A Eligible Staff

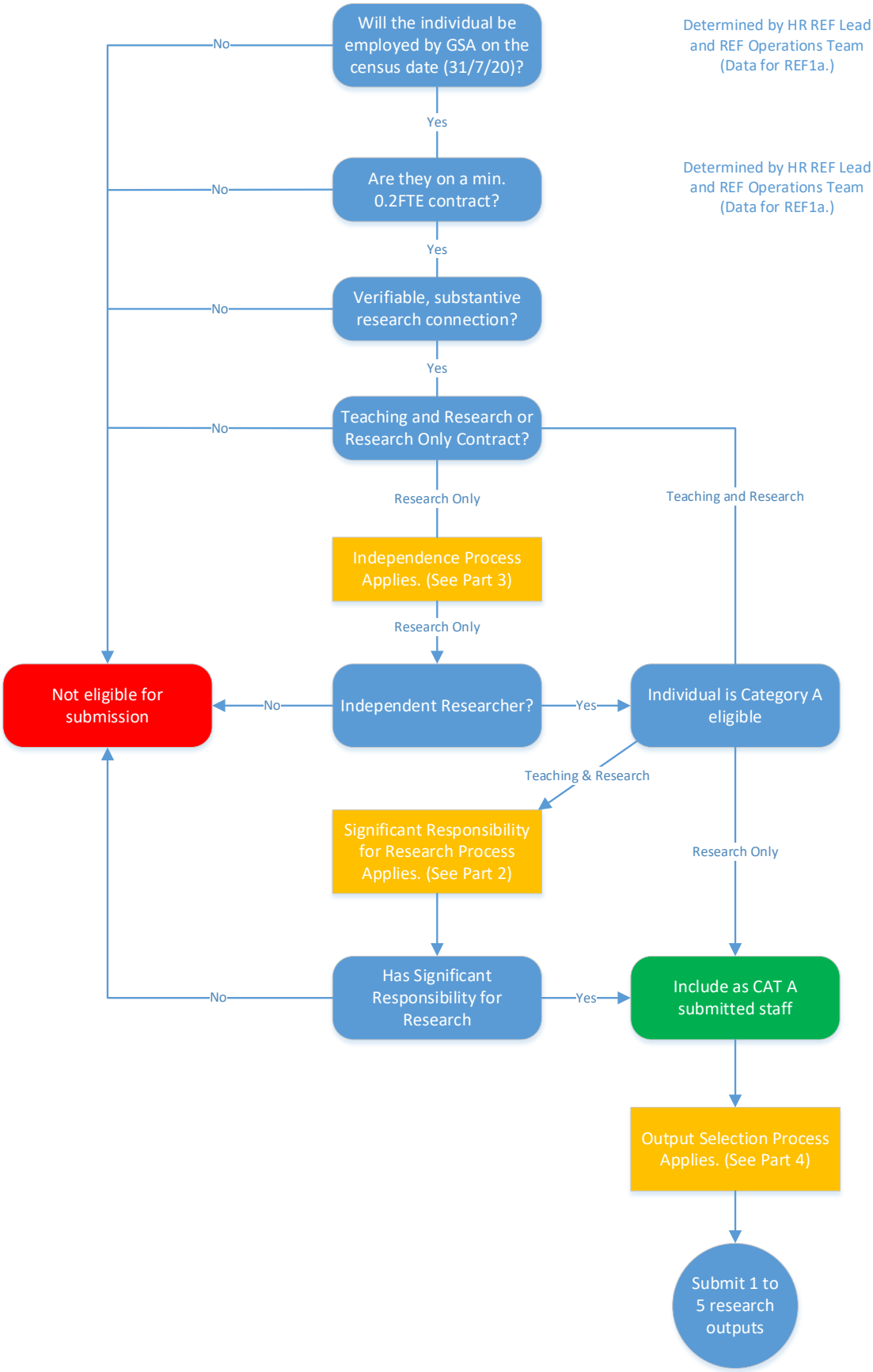


Figure 2: Identifying Potentially Eligible Staff

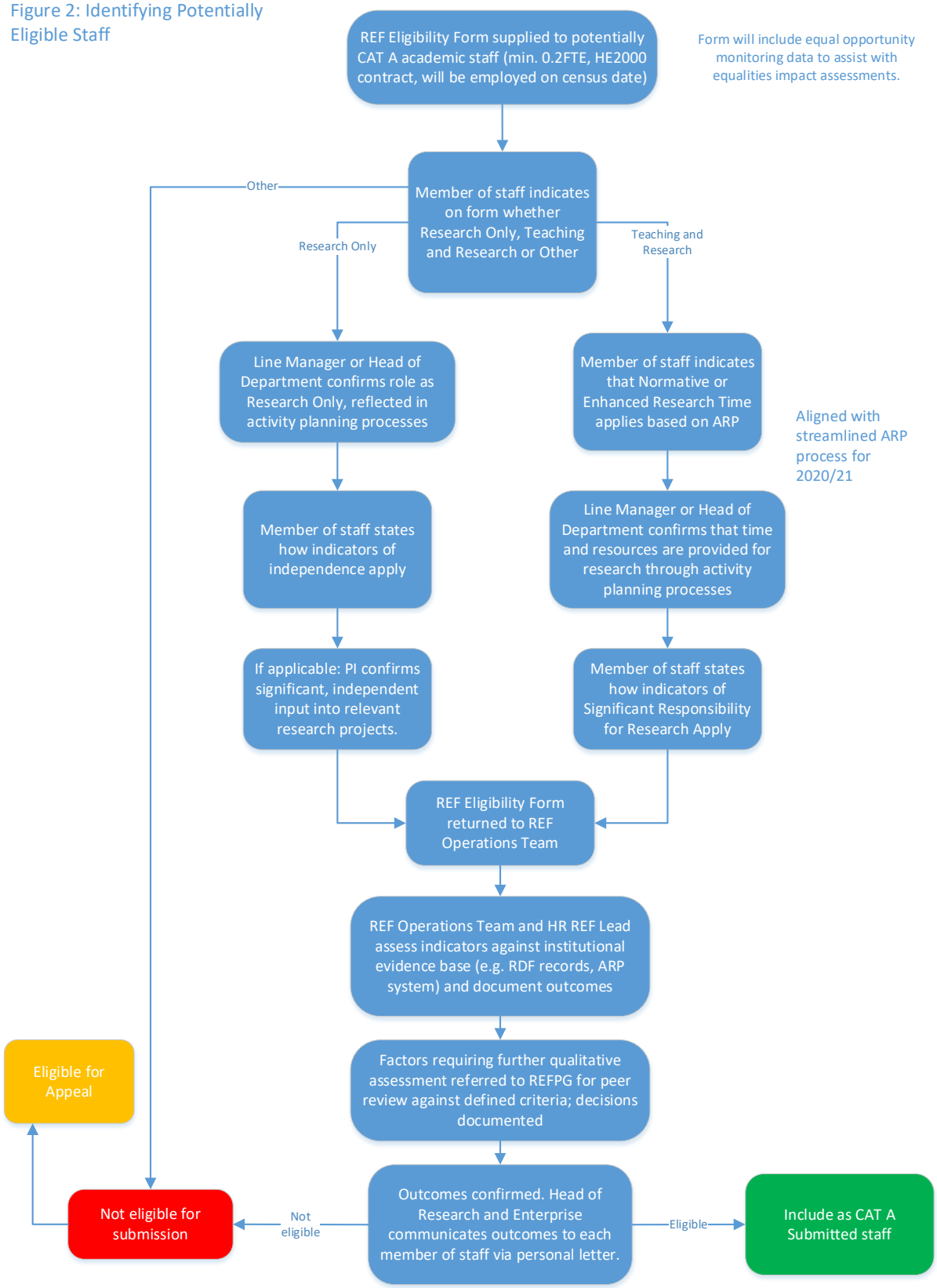
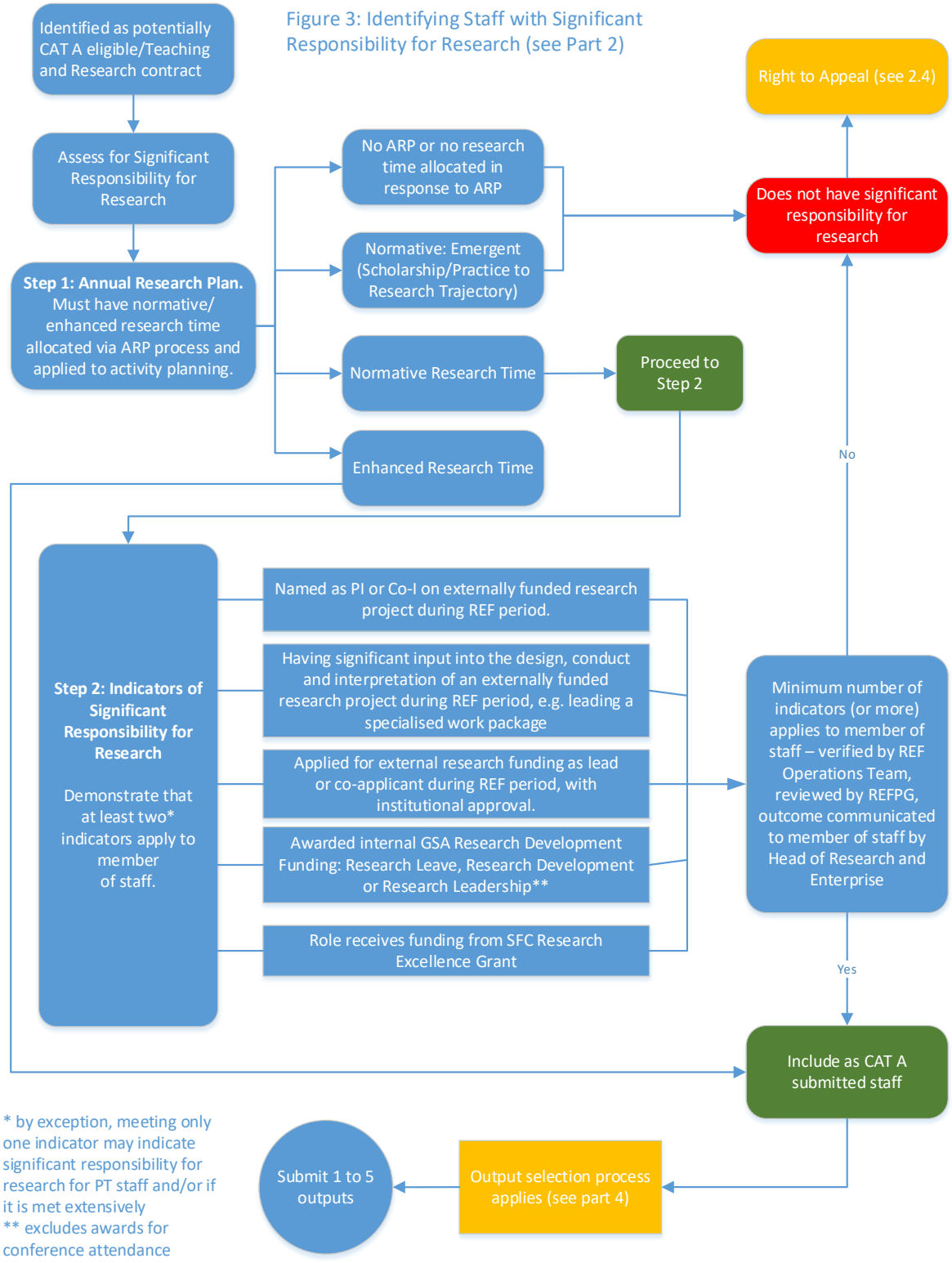


Figure 3: Identifying Staff with Significant Responsibility for Research (see Part 2)



* by exception, meeting only one indicator may indicate significant responsibility for research for PT staff and/or if it is met extensively
** excludes awards for conference attendance

Figure 4: Determining Research Independence (see Part 3)

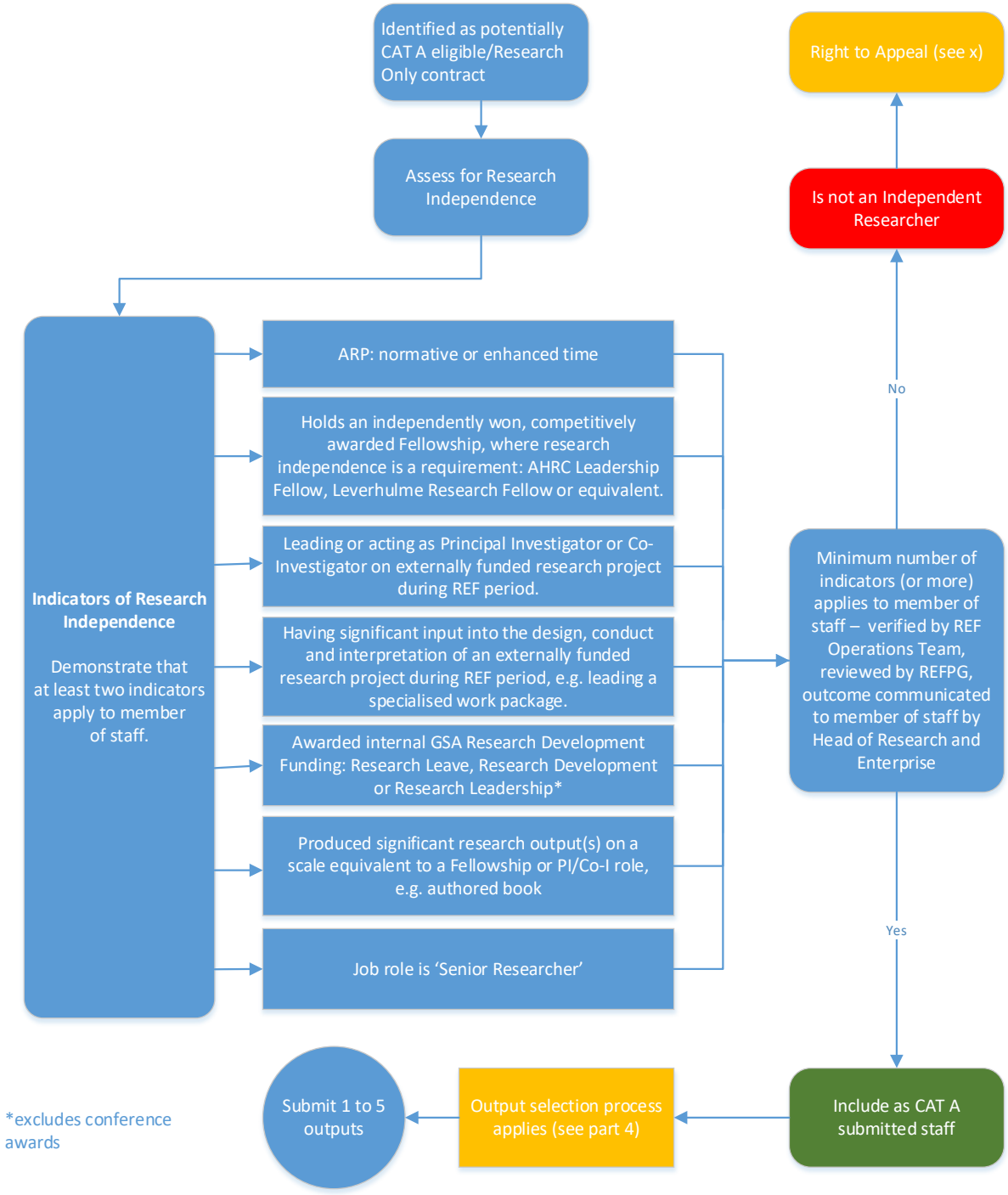


Figure 5: Appeals Process (see 2.4)

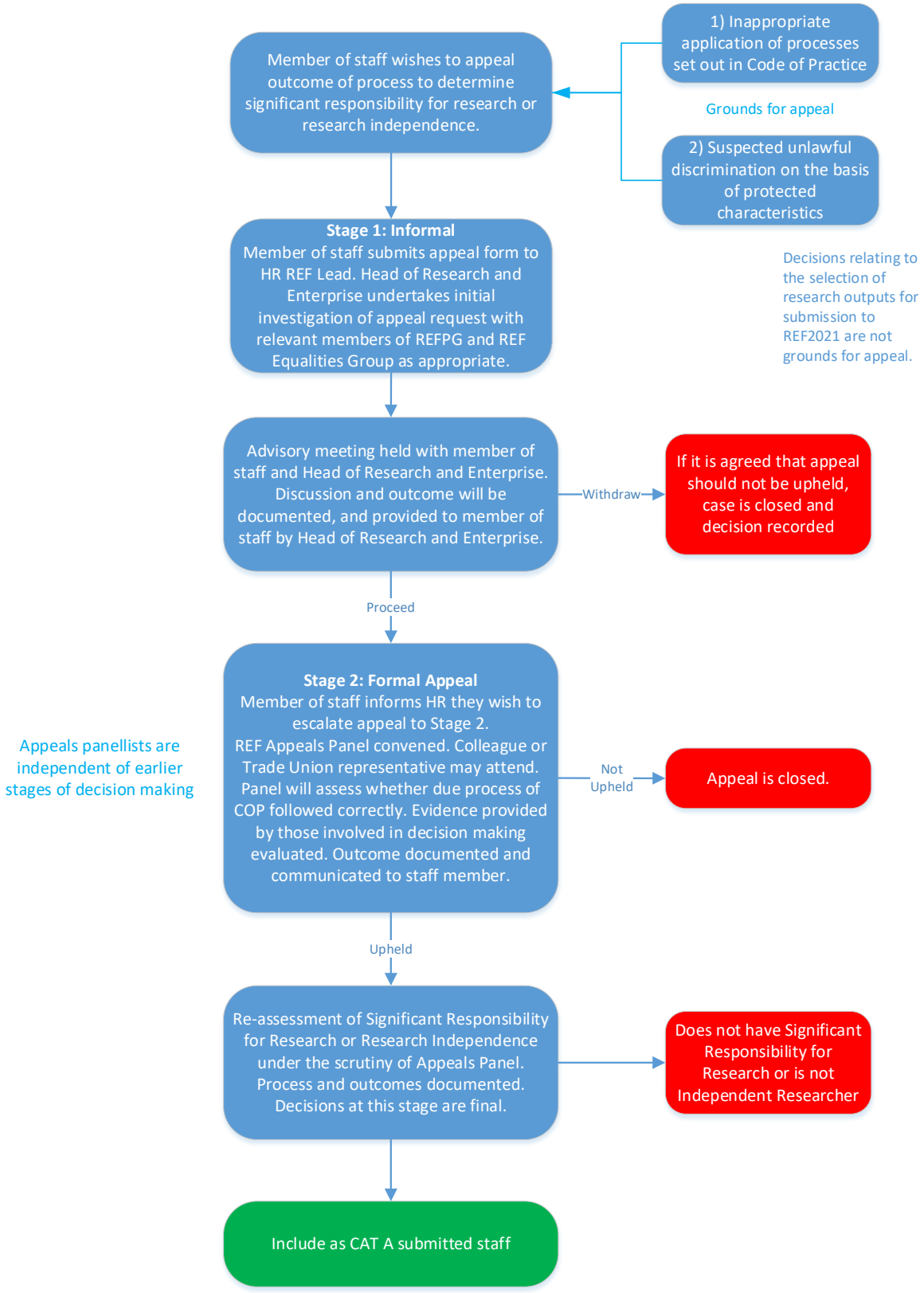


Figure 6: Selection of Outputs (see Part 4)

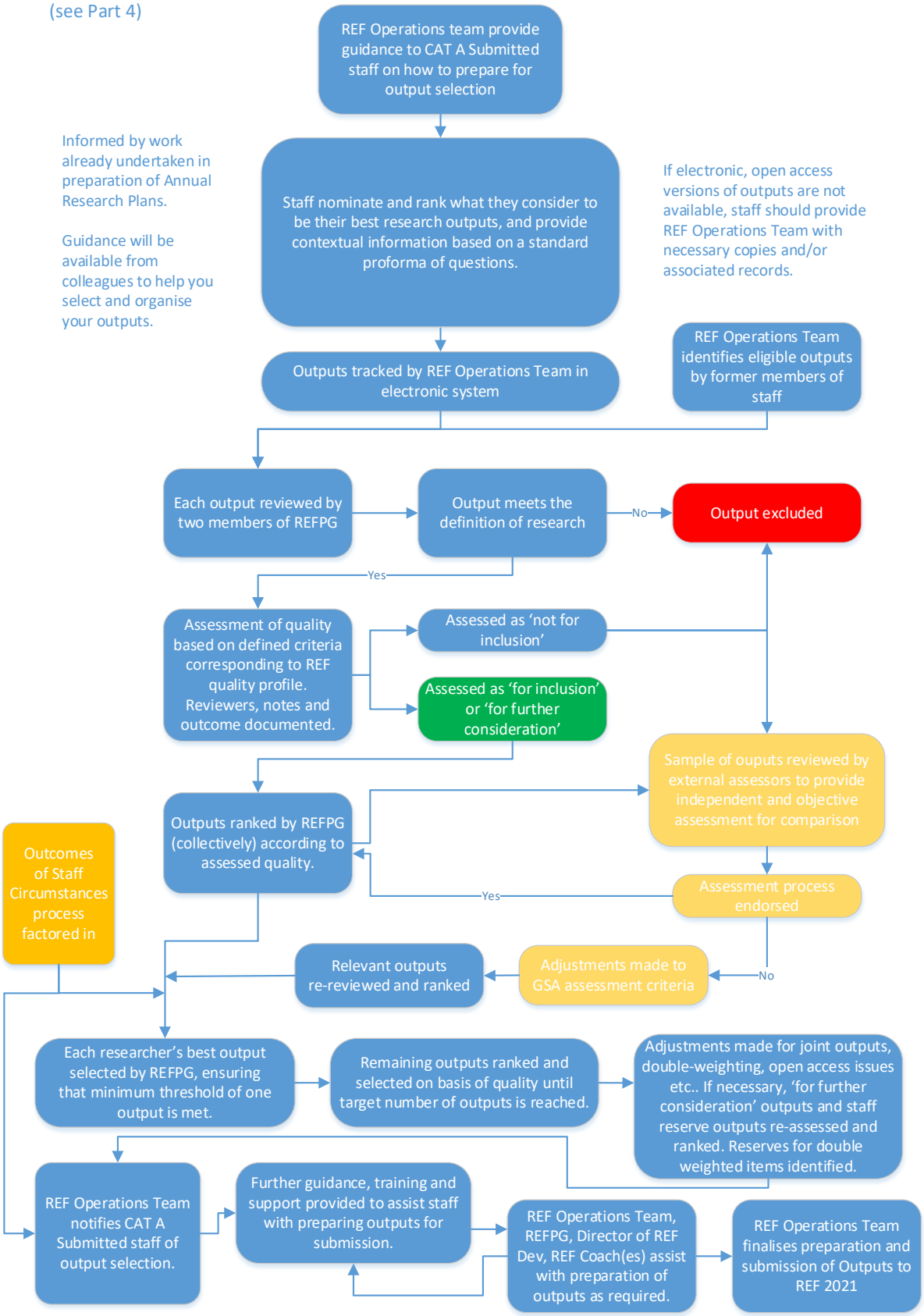
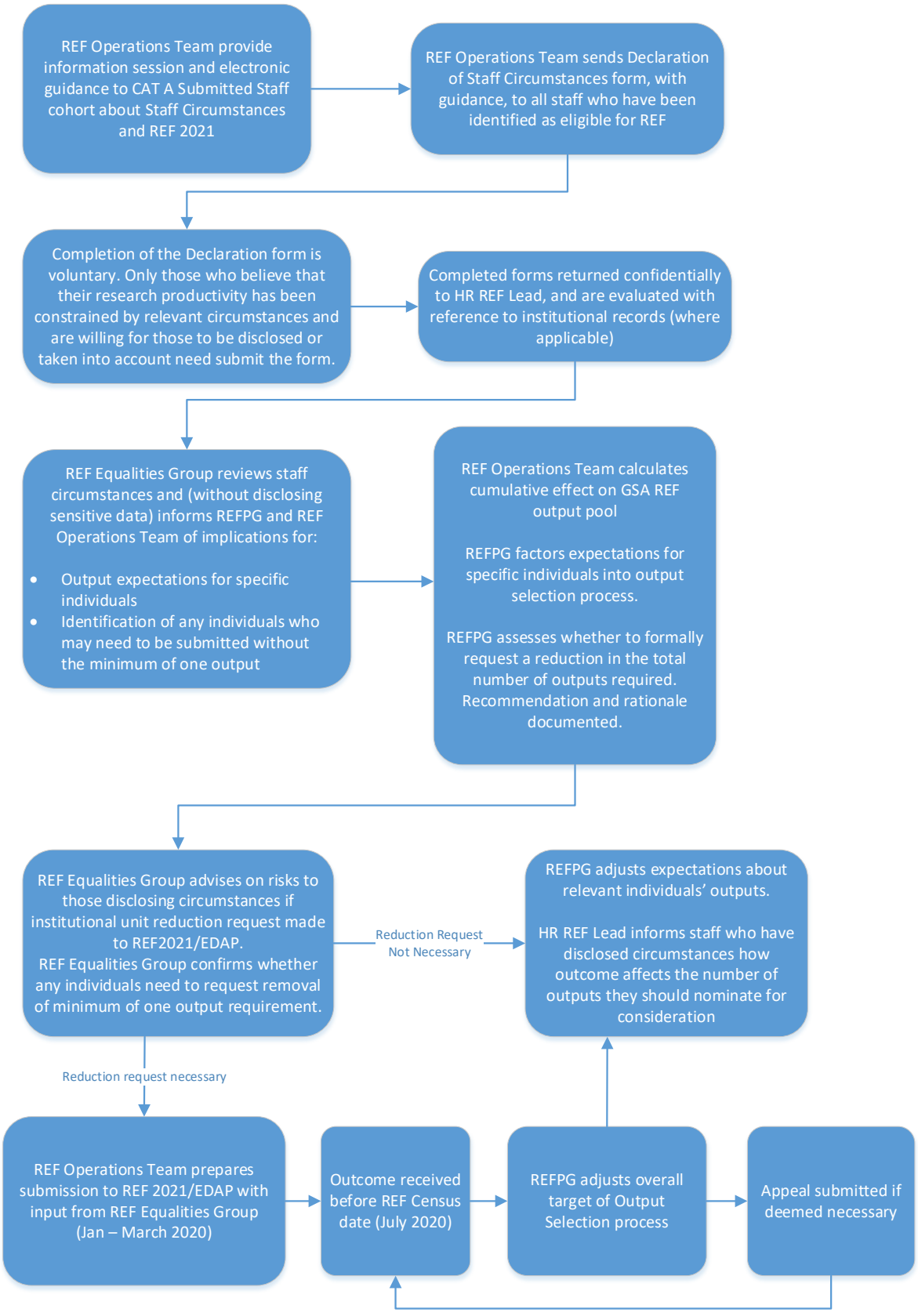


Figure 7: Declaration of Staff Circumstances



Appendices

- Declaration of Staff Circumstances Form
- REF Eligibility Form
- REF Appeals Form
- What the REF Means for Me: Key Questions for Academics and Researchers

These documents are also available separately from the GSA intranet, or on request from research@gsa.ac.uk.

Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances

This document is being sent to all 'Category A submitted[8]' staff whose outputs are anticipated to be eligible for submission to REF2021. As part of GSA's commitment to supporting equality and diversity in REF, we have put in place safe and supportive structures for staff to declare information about any equality-related circumstances that may have affected their ability to research productively during the assessment period (1 January 2014 – 31 July 2020), and particularly their ability to produce research outputs at the same rate as staff not affected by circumstances (see section 4.3 of the GSA REF 2021 Code of Practice). The purpose of collecting this information is:

- To recognise the effect that equality-related circumstances can have on an individual's ability to research productively, and to adjust expectations in terms of expected workload / production of research outputs.
- To enable staff who have not been able to produce a REF-eligible output during the assessment period to be submitted to REF without the minimum requirement of one output where they have:
    - circumstances that have resulted in an overall period of 46 months or more absence from research during the assessment period, due to equality-related circumstances (see below);
    - circumstances *equivalent* to 46 months or more absence from research due to equality-related circumstances;
    - two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave.

Applicable circumstances

- Qualifying as an early career researcher (ECR -- started career as an independent researcher at GSA on or after 1 August 2016)
- Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector
- Qualifying periods of family-related leave
- Disability (including chronic conditions)
- Ill heath, injury or mental health conditions
- Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of the standard allowances
- Caring responsibilities
- Gender reassignment.

If your ability to research productively during the assessment period has been constrained due to one or more of the following circumstances[9], we request that you complete the attached form. Completion and return of the form is voluntary, and if you choose not to return it – even when circumstances apply to you – you will not be put under any pressure to declare information if you do not want to. This form is the only means by which GSA will be gathering this information for REF, as we will not be consulting HR records, contract start dates, etc. *in order to identify staff* to whom circumstances apply. (Institutional records will, however, be consulted when your

[8] Those academic staff who have been identified as having significant responsibility for research and being an independent researcher, through the processes defined in the GSA REF2021 Code of Practice. The Code of Practice is available from the research section of the GSA website, and the Research and Enterprise section of the GSA Intranet. You should also have been sent a copy directly. Additional copies can be requested from research@gsa.ac.uk

[9] Further information can be found paragraph 160 of the Guidance on Submissions (REF 2019/01), see https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/key-documents/

completed form is assessed.) You should therefore complete and return the form only if any of the above circumstances apply *and* you are willing to provide the associated information. If you do not return the form, we will assume that your research has not been affected by circumstances, or that you do not wish any circumstances to be disclosed or taken into account.

Ensuring Confidentiality

If you choose to complete this form, you should return it only to the HR REF lead in GSA's human resources department, by emailing it to w.brown@gsa.ac.uk, with 'Confidential: REF Declaration of Circumstances' in the subject line. The HR REF lead will be responsible for conducting initial review and assessment of your information and for storing your confidential information securely. Such data will be destroyed following the REF submission and any subsequent audit period.

The HR REF lead will discuss declarations of staff circumstances with the REF Equalities Group, disclosing only such information as is necessary to determine whether reductions in outputs may apply. The REF Equalities Group will inform the REF Planning Group when they should adjust their expectations about the number of outputs that you can provide for REF. The HR REF lead will contact you directly to confirm how this will affect your REF preparations. Please see section 4.3 and Figure 7 of the GSA REF 2021 Code of Practice.

If GSA decides to apply to the funding bodies to request a reduction in the number of outputs we must submit overall, or to remove the 'minimum of one' requirement for specific individuals, we will need to provide UKRI with data that you have disclosed about your individual circumstances, to show that the criteria have been met for reducing the number of outputs. Please see the funding bodies' Guidance on submissions document (paragraphs 151-201) for more detail about reductions in outputs and what information needs to be submitted.

Submitted data will be kept confidential to the funding bodies' REF team, their REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs. All these bodies are subject to confidentiality arrangements. The funding bodies' REF team will destroy the submitted data about individuals' circumstances on completion of the assessment phase.

Changes in circumstances

GSA recognises that staff circumstances may change between completion of the declaration form and the census date (31 July 2020). If this is the case, then staff should contact the HR REF lead to provide the updated information.

To submit this form you should email it to the HR REF lead at w.brown@gsa.a.uk with 'Confidential: REF Declaration of Circumstances' in the subject line.

Name: Click here to insert text.

Department: Click here to insert text.

Do you believe that you have at least one REF-eligible output published (or first made publicly available) between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2020?

Yes ☐

No ☐

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

Circumstance	Time period affected
Early Career Researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016)[10]. *Date you became an early career researcher.*	Click here to enter a date.
Career break or secondment outside of the HE sector. *Dates and durations in months.*	Click here to enter dates and durations.
Family-related leave; • statutory maternity leave • statutory adoption leave • Additional paternity or adoption leave or shared parental leave lasting for four months or more. *For each period of leave, state the nature of the leave taken and the dates and durations in months.*	Click here to enter dates and durations.
Disability (including chronic conditions) *To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.*	Click here to enter text.

[10] For REF2021, and Early Career Researcher is a member of staff who started their career as an independent researcher on or after 1st August 2016. To qualify, they should have held a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, with a primary employment function of undertaking research or teaching and research, and first met the definition of an independent researcher.

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

Please confirm, by ticking the box provided below, that:

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

I agree ☐

Name: Print name here

Signed: Sign or initial here

Date: Insert date here

☐ I give my permission for the HR REF Lead to contact me to discuss my circumstances, and my requirements in relation to the information provided in this form.

☐ I give my permission for the details of this form to be passed on, in confidence, to the relevant contact within GSA's REF Planning Group and REF Operations Team. (Please note, if you do not give permission, it may be more difficult to adjust expectations and put in place appropriate support for you).

I would like to be contacted by:

Email ☐ Insert email address

Phone ☐ Insert contact telephone number

==========

For office use:

Two or more circumstances (or instances of a specific circumstance) declared:

Yes ☐

No ☐

Details of GSA's approach to identifying eligible staff and outputs for REF2021 are provided in our Code of Practice, which is available from the GSA intranet (see section 2.1.2). Please contact research@gsa.ac.uk if you require further information, or would like to discuss any aspect of REF with a member of the REF operations team.

REF Eligibility Form

Please obtain a copy of this form from the intranet, then complete and return it to research@gsa.ac.uk.

Section 1

1) Full name and title:

2) Staff ID number:

3) Orcid ID (if you have one):

4) FTE or contracted weekly hours:

5) Email address:

6) My academic role at GSA can best be described as (please tick):

- ☐ Teaching and Research (go to section 2)
- ☐ Research only (go to section 3)
- ☐ Other (go to section 4, question 11)

Section 2: Significant Responsibility for Research for Staff on Teaching and Research Contracts

7) I have submitted an Annual Research Plan (ARP) within the last year, and received the following research time allocation (please tick):

- ☐ Enhanced research time (go to section 4)
- ☐ Normative research time (go to question 8)
- ☐ Normative research time – and identified as an Emergent Researcher and/or as on a trajectory from advanced practice and scholarship to academic research (go to section 4)
- ☐ No research time (go to section 4)

If you did not submit an ARP within the last year please indicate the year in which you last submitted an ARP:

If you did not submit an ARP within the last year, did you submit a Mitigation form to HR providing details of why you were unable to?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

8) The process for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research applies to you. Please read section 2.1.3 of the GSA REF2021 Code of Practice, and then complete the section below, indicating how any of the indicators listed applies to your role, including details of relevant projects and activities in each case.

Note: you only need to provide sufficient information to demonstrate how you meet the criterion, and it is not necessary to provide exhaustive details of multiple examples. If you only meet one indicator in this section 8, please provide a justification for why that might be sufficient to indicate significant responsibility for research, if applicable, at 8e (see p10 of the Code of Practice).

8a) I have been awarded internal GSA research development funding (RDF): Research Leave, Research Development or Research Leadership (excluding awards for conference attendance) since 1 January 2014.

Please provide details

8b) I have applied for external research funding as lead or co-applicant during the REF eligibility period, with evidence that GSA approved the submission of my application (e.g. received support from Research Office, proposal logged in Research Pipeline).

Please provide details

8c) I have been named as Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator on an externally funded/endorsed research project during REF eligibility period.

Please provide details

8d) I have had significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of an externally funded/enabled research project during the REF eligibility period, e.g. leading a specialised work package in a multi-partner project.

Please provide details – and ensure that question 13 is completed.

8e) If you can only demonstrate that you meet one of the criteria listed in 8a to 8d above, please provide a justification for why you believe that indicates that you have significant responsibility for research (for instance, you work on a small fractional contract, or have met that one indicator repeatedly).

Please provide details, in 300 words or fewer.

Now go to section 4.

FOR OFFICE USE:

8f) Role is fully or part-funded on an ongoing basis from the Scottish Funding Council Research Excellence Grant.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No Commments:

Section 3 – Research-Only Staff

9) The process for determining research independence applies to you. Please read section 3.1 of the GSA REF2021 Code of Practice, and then complete the section below, indicating how any of the indicators listed applies to you, including details of relevant projects, activities and circumstances in each case. (Note: you only need to provide sufficient information to demonstrate that you meet the criterion, and it is not necessary to provide exhaustive details of multiple examples.)

9a) I have submitted an Annual Research Plan (ARP) within the last year, and was awarded normative or enhanced research time.

- ☐ Normative
- ☐ Enhanced
- ☐ Other (please provide details – go to question 11)

If you did not submit an ARP within the last year please indicate the year in which you last submitted an ARP:

If you did not submit an ARP within the last year, did you submit a Mitigation form to HR providing details of why you were unable to?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

9b) My job title is 'Senior Researcher'.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

9c) I hold an independently won, competitively awarded Fellowship, where research independence is a requirement, such as an AHRC Leadership Fellowship, Leverhulme Research Fellowship or equivalent.

Please provide details

9d) I have been a Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator on an externally funded research project during the REF period.

Please provide details

9e) I have had significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of an externally funded research project during the REF period, e.g. leading a specialised work package in a multi-partner project.

Please provide details – and ensure that question 13 is also completed. If you are identified as a named researcher in project proposals or post-award documentation, please provide details.

9f) I have been awarded internal GSA research development funding (RDF) since 1 January 2014: Research Leave, Research Development or Research Leadership (excluding awards for conference attendance)

Please provide details

9g) I have produced one or more significant research output(s) as a lead or sole author/researcher on a scale broadly equivalent to undertaking a Fellowship or a role as PI/Co-I on an externally funded research project, while in a research-only role.

Please provide details

Now go to Section 4

Section 4

10) Please provide details of any assistance you need to support your engagement with REF2021 at GSA, including (for example) documents and information in accessible formats.

Please provide details, if applicable

11) If you answered 'Other' in response to Question 6 or 9a, please provide details below, including any research responsibilities:

Please provide details

12) I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the information I have provided is accurate and up-to-date:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

This section must be completed by the **Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator of any project referred to in 8d or 9e**:

13) I, _____ confirm that I performed a research leadership role on the project

_____, and that the subject of this REF Eligibility Form had significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of that project.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please provide relevant details of the role undertaken by the member of staff, indicating how they had significant responsibility for undertaking self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme.

If the PI or Co-I on the project is not a member of staff at GSA, then confirmation can be supplied in writing (including by email) and returned with this completed form.

To be completed by Line Manager

14) I confirm that the information provided in response to questions 6 and 7 or 9a is accurate, and has been reflected in departmental activity planning and time allocations for research for this member of staff.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name and title: _____

GSA REF2021 Appeals Form

Please refer to section 2.4 of the GSA REF2021 Code of Practice for Details of the Appeals Process. You should submit the Request for Appeal within 28 days of receiving notification of the outcome of the process to determine significant responsibility for research or research independence. To request an appeal, the completed form should be sent to the HR REF Lead at w.brown@gsa.ac.uk. The HR REF Lead will advise you of next steps for either Stage 1 or Stage 2 of the appeals process.

1) Name and title:

2) School and Department:

3) Grounds for Appeal

- ☐ Inappropriate application of the processes set out in the GSA REF2021 Code of Practice.
- ☐ Suspected unlawful discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or because you are pregnant or have recently given birth.

(Note that decisions relating to the review and selection of outputs for submission to REF are not subject to appeal.)

4) Case for Appeal

Please provide details (up to 300 words)

5) I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the information I have provided is accurate and up-to-date:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

For Office Use

Received (date): By (initials):

Follow up action and date confirmed (provide details):

REF2021 Research Excellence Framework

What the REF means for me

Key questions for academics and researchers

How many outputs do I need to submit?

Short answer: *minimum of one output, unless you have exceptional circumstances.*

Unlike REF 2014, the number of outputs required is calculated at the level of the submitting unit, rather than linked to an individual. Whereas staff returned to REF 2014 had to submit four outputs, each individual returned to REF 2021 has to have a minimum of one output attributed to them, unless they have experienced circumstances that mean that they do not have an eligible output (see below). A maximum of five outputs can be attributed to an individual. Overall, a unit has to submit outputs equal to 2.5 times the full-time equivalent (FTE) of submitted staff e.g. a unit with 14 members of staff with a combined FTE of 10 would need 25 outputs. This flexibility is often referred to as 'decoupling' as the output requirement is no longer fully tied to individuals, allowing UOAs to choose which outputs to submit from the pool of outputs produced by their staff.

Can I take my impact case study with me if I move institutions?

Short answer: *No.*

REF assesses the impact of a unit not the impact of individuals. As in REF 2014, impact case studies therefore can only be submitted by the unit where the underpinning research was carried out.

Can I take my outputs with me if I move institutions?

Short answer: *Yes.*

If you change institution during the REF cycle, your new institution can submit your outputs, provided they employ you on an eligible contract on the census date (31 July 2020). This is the same as in REF 2014. In addition, your former institution can submit outputs that you produced while under their employment.

I have experienced circumstances that have affected my ability to produce outputs. Can this be taken into account?

Short answer: *Yes.*

Institutions are required to enable their staff to declare any circumstances that might have affected their ability to research and must make appropriate adjustments to their expectations of your contribution to the output pool. Depending on the cumulative effect of circumstances on your unit, it may decide to use the flexibility offered by decoupling to shape the output pool (i.e. where some staff submit more and some submit fewer than the 2.5 outputs average, ensuring everyone has at least one and no more than five outputs attributed to them) OR may request a reduction in the total number of outputs required from the unit. In addition, if you do not have a REF-eligible output, your unit may request that you be submitted with zero outputs instead of the minimum of one.

Are institutions able to select which staff they submit to REF 2021?

Short answer: *No.*

Participating institutions are required to submit all eligible staff with significant responsibility for research. Where this does not include ALL members of staff on teaching and research or research only contracts, institutions may develop a process for identifying those with significant responsibility. This process must be agreed by staff representative groups and be documented in the institution's code of practice.

How does REF 2021 use citation data and journal impact factors?

Short answer: *some sub-panels use citation data as part of their assessment of outputs. REF 2021 does* ***not*** *use journal impact factors.*

The following sub-panels will consider the number of times a journal article or conference proceeding (if it has an ISSN) has been cited as additional information about its significance:

1 (Clinical Medicine), **2** (Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care), **3** (Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy), **4** (Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience), **5** (Biological Sciences), **6** (Agriculture, Food and Veterinary Sciences), **7** (Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences), **8** (Chemistry), **9** (Physics), **11** (Computer Science and Informatics) and **16** (Economics and Econometrics).

These panels will continue to rely on expert review as the primary means of assessing all outputs; citation data forms only one element of the assessment. All citation data will be provided to the sub-panels by the REF team. The panels are aware that citation data is not always a reliable indicator of an output's significance. REF 2021 will not use journal impact factors or any other hierarchy of journals in their assessment of outputs.

Does everyone need to have an impact case study?

Short answer: *No.*

The focus of the assessment of impact is on the impact of the submitted unit's research, not the impact of individuals' research. The impact of a unit's research is assessed through specific examples i.e. impact case studies. The number of case studies required in each submission will be determined by the number (FTE) of Category A submitted staff returned in the submission, starting at a minimum of 2 case studies per unit and rising to 10 plus one extra case study for every 50 FTE staff for units with more than 160 staff.

Will the scores given to my outputs be made publicly available?

Short answer: *No.*

All individual scores are destroyed as soon as the sub-profiles for each submission (i.e. the overall score for outputs, impact and environment for each UOA) are agreed. Individual output scores will not be published but a list of submitted outputs will be published after completion of REF 2021. These outputs will not be attributed to staff and staff names will not be published.

Who should I contact for more information about the REF?

Each university has its own REF institutional and technical contacts. You can find the details for all institutions here: www.ref.ac.uk/contact/