

Equality Impact Assessment: REF2021 Submission Birkbeck, University of London

Introduction.

Purpose of the EIA.

The purpose of this EIA is to allow the College to reflect on its most recent REF submission, to understand the impact on equalities that the process to assemble the 2021 REF submission involved, and how equality and diversity can be better supported by the Colleges research environment as it plans for the next REF assessment.

Responsibility for the EIA.

This EIA has been drafted by the College's REF 2021 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Panel on behalf of the Research Committee. It has also been shared with the Equality and Diversity Committee.

Responsibility for delivering any actions identified in the action plan resides with the Research Committee, with day-to-day oversight devolved to the REF Working Party and the Equality and Diversity Committee. Both the Research Committee and the REF Working Party are chaired by our Pro Vice Chancellor (Research). The REF Working Party comprises all the academic and professional services leads involved in decision making for the next REF exercise.

Background.

Wider Context.

The EIA undertaken by the College as part of its REF2014 submission provided a useful opportunity for the College to reflect on equality and diversity issues in its research environment and to identify areas for improvement. For example, one of the most significant issues identified in the REF2014 EIA was that part time women were under-represented in our return (although not to a statistically significant level). As a consequence of this, the College has significantly upgraded its mentoring provision.

In drafting the College's Code of Practice for REF2021, we sought to consult widely, with open staff briefings (that junior colleagues were particularly encouraged to attend) as well as offering sessions with our various staff network. Discussion with the Staff Disability Network was particularly helpful, both in terms of understanding how to support our disabled colleagues in the REF, and how the network could best support our preparation for future REF submissions.

Ultimately, our Code of Practice ([Our research — Birkbeck, University of London \(bbk.ac.uk\)](https://www.birkbeck.ac.uk/research), see also appendix A) outlined the principles and legislative context that the College used when compiling its submission, including the output selection process, the individuals and groups involved in that process, the process followed to establish researcher independence and the appeals process for individuals who wish to challenge this decision. The Code of Practice described the arrangements made by the College to ensure that, as far as possible, the process was transparent, consistent and inclusive, including the arrangements made by the College in respect of training and equality impact assessment, including interim assessments.

It should be noted that the College is part of two joint submissions with UCL (in UoA's 5 and 7). Staff in these Units followed the UCL code of practice and are not considered in the data analysis part of this EIA.

Approaches to embed E&D in the REF 2021 selection processes.

All staff involved in decision making for REF2021 undertook bespoke REF E&D training. All UoAs were asked to complete an initial output selection and then to refine this twice as the College moved towards the final submission. The REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee monitored the output selection after the first two rounds and provided feedback where there was evidence that bias may have been a factor in the selection. In cases where evidence that bias may have been a factor in the selection was identified, the Unit or Units in question were asked to look back at their previous selection and consider if bias had been a factor and, if appropriate, to re-review the outputs selected where there were any possible concerns. If the evidence that bias may have been a factor in the selection was only available in the College level data, all Units were asked to look back at their previous selection and consider if bias had been a factor and, if appropriate, to re-review any outputs where there were any possible concerns.

The REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee was also responsible for the final EIA which was conducted on the submitted REF 2021 return.

In our REF Code of Practice the College described our approach to determine whether individuals on research-only contracts would be considered as independent researchers. The College automatically included those staff who held Fellowships which were deemed to show evidence of independence at the point of award from the list provided by REF in the additional guidance (<https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/additional-guidance/>) as eligible staff. Other people with research-only contracts were asked to apply if they believed they were independent researchers by the definition used by REF. In practice, with two of our STEM Units being part of a joint submission with UCL and following the UCL code of practice, the number of staff in this category was very small (~20 people). Three dates were given for these individuals to apply to be recognised as independent researchers and advice was offered to help individuals determine if they met the REF criterion of independence. Most either took up this advice or declined because they did not feel that they met the independence threshold without further discussion.

We had intended to undertake an equality impact assessment after the second application deadline to ascertain whether or not all groups were represented appropriately, but in practice all but one of the individuals who wished to apply decided to do so to the final deadline only so this was not needed. With one exception all staff on a research-only contract who applied to be considered as an independent researcher were successful in their application and we did not have any appeals lodged about this process.

Scope.

What is covered by this EIA?

The College returned 100% of eligible staff to REF2021; as such this EIA primarily considers the effectiveness of the Colleges REF2021 Code of Practice and our output selection process, and whether staff from specific groups are over- or under- represented in our final selection.

Why is this EIA being undertaken?

This analysis will support the College to further enhance its research environment over the next REF census period, and to put the building blocks in place to ensure that our selections for the next REF exercise are transparent and inclusive.

What is being reviewed in this EIA?

This EIA reviews how effective the approaches were that the College put in place to ensure, as far as possible, that the REF output selection process was transparent, consistent and inclusive. The following contractual elements and protected characteristics are considered in this EIA: contract type (fixed vs open ended) and mode (full time vs part time); legal sex; ethnicity; disability; religion or belief; and sexual orientation. Because each of our Units of assessment represent a relatively small headcount, the data discussed in this EIA is college level data. However, we have also looked at the Unit level data and have included reference to this in our analyses where it is appropriate to do so.

Who is affected by this EIA?

The College returned 100% of eligible staff so all REF eligible staff were affected by the Code of Practice and its implementation and thus the outcomes of this EIA.

The stages involved in building the REF submission and how these relate to this EIA

The Colleges approach to equality and diversity monitoring in assembling its REF submission are as described in our Code of Practice. Our monitoring of output selection was based on two interim assessments and then a full EIA of the submitted return.

Analyses.

The following observations apply to all three rounds of output selection analysis:

- 1) All analyses were done on a per person not FTE basis because biases in the part time group were largely responsible for differences in the per FTE group for other characteristics. These discrepancies were due to a number of senior predominantly white male part-time staff who are often over-represented in the selection.
- 2) The staff pool and data used for the analyses was kept the same throughout the interim and final EIAs to ensure that staffing changes did not skew the data.
- 3) Staff on fixed term contracts were under-represented in the analysis, but as this staff group are primarily early career researchers this under-representation effectively disappears once ECR status is factored into expectations around research output.
- 4) Part time staff were under-represented in the by person analysis, but this under-representation is heavily reversed once FTE is factored into expectations around research output.
- 5) This analysis is presented in terms of the per person mean output gap. Mean output gap = $\{[\text{mean outputs (not protected group)} - \text{mean outputs (protected group)}] / \text{mean outputs (not protected group)}\} \times 100$.

Summary of Findings.

First interim EIA: College level data.

contract type	mode (FT or PT)	legal sex	ethnicity	disability	religion or belief	sexual orientation
Mean output gap	Mean output gap	Mean output gap	Mean output gap	Mean output gap	Mean output gap	Mean output gap
4%	18%	7%	15%	26%	-1%	-8%

Under-representations were detected in the College level of analysis for ethnicity and disabled colleagues. In response, each Unit was asked to specifically consider if unconscious bias had been a factor for ethnicity and disabled staff when the next selection round was undertaken.

It was noted that under-representation for disabled colleagues may be a sign that reasonable adjustments were in place and working well, so in this case colleagues involved in selection were also asked to be mindful that reasonable adjustments can include expectations around research output.

It was also noted that in the Unit level data, the mean output gap on the basis of legal sex was potentially a point of concern. Given how small the numbers are at the level of the individual Unit this data is not robust and the aggregate data at the College level did not show this as a trend so it wasn't felt to be necessary to act at the point of the first interim EIA, other than through a general reminder to all Units to also be mindful of the potential for unconscious bias in their second selection.

Second interim EIA: College level data.

contract type	mode (FT or PT)	legal sex	ethnicity	disability	religion or belief	sexual orientation
Mean output gap	Mean output gap	Mean output gap	Mean output gap	Mean output gap	Mean output gap	Mean output gap
21%	16%	14%	-3.5%	0%	16%	0%

Pleasingly the gaps identified in the first interim EIA had narrowed and were now negligible for both ethnicity and disabled staff. The (smaller) gap for LGBT staff had also dropped from low to negligible levels.

The gap around legal sex in the College level data had widened in favour of men. In the Unit level data the mean output gap on the basis of legal sex was a point of potential concern in some Units after the first interim EIA and only approximately half of these Units had improved by the second interim EIA. However, other Units had now worsened by this measure and in one Unit the swing was 47% in favour of men. Further investigation revealed that, for this specific Unit, this was at least in part due to the new inclusion of a significant number of early career women had been determined to be independent researchers but whose full output was yet to be assessed.

In response, each Unit was asked to specifically consider if unconscious bias had been a factor for legal sex when the next selection round was undertaken, and the Unit where the

large swing was observed was asked to report back to the Colleges REF manager after the selection meeting and confirm that this had happened.

EIA of the final submission: College Level data.

contract type	mode (FT or PT)	legal sex	ethnicity	disability	religion or belief	sexual orientation
Mean output gap 17%	Mean output gap 22%	Mean output gap 9.6%	Mean output gap 9.0%	Mean output gap 4.5%	Mean output gap 20%	Mean output gap 0.5%

By the point of the final submission, at the College level, all data showed output gaps below the levels of statistical significance in all areas analysed (once expectations about research output had been factored in for part time and ECR staff) with the exception religion and belief. However, as 82% of our REF eligible staff have either not declared a religion/belief system or state that they have no religion/belief system it is questionable how robust this data is.

In the Unit level data, the mean output gap on the basis of legal sex data showed an improvement or negligible change (from an acceptable position) by this measure at the point of the final selection in all but two Units. Pleasingly, the Unit which had observed the large swing at the point of the second interim EIA now showed a mean output gap of 13% towards men on the basis of legal sex at the point of final submission.

Conclusions.

It is highly gratifying to see that, at the point of submission, the selected output pool at the College level only showed areas where the mean output gap was outside the levels of statistical significance that could be explained (for example, part time staff have a lower expectation of research output, fixed term staff are usually early career and so have a lower expectation of research output). The under-representation of staff with a declared religion/belief system is a point of concern but the proportion of staff declaring a religion or belief system is sufficiently low that this data is significantly less robust than the other datasets under analysis.

However, it is notable that in the second interim EIA, where selection panels were asked specifically to consider the question of unconscious bias in the areas of disability or ethnicity, gaps narrowed in those areas but in the final selection (where panels were not asked to think about unconscious bias in these specific areas) the gaps grew again to a discernible level, albeit not to the level where statistical significance can be assumed.

Also, whilst the College-level data about legal sex from the final selection does not raise any concerns about an over-representation of men or women, it is notable that despite Units being asked to think specifically about unconscious bias and legal sex, such clear-cut improvement was not seen in the Unit level data for all Units by this measure.

These observations highlight both the value and limitations of explicitly asking people making the selection to proactively think about the risk of unconscious bias for specific groups and the need for training to ensure those making the selection understand how to effectively assess outputs which are at the borderline of the submission. This is particularly

important because decisions on the borderline may be where panels may fall back to well known publication metrics which often entrench inequalities.

The REF-specific training given by the College to those staff involved in the selection of outputs followed the guidance given by EDAP and was defined in our Code of Practice but focussed primarily on the process for claiming reductions in the number of outputs for the Unit if an individual had experienced circumstances which adversely affected their ability to undertake research in the period. If the next REF exercise continues with the process to decouple staff from outputs, training in the effective assessment of outputs from an equality, diversity and inclusion perspective will also be required to support staff to make the correct decisions about outputs (and thus staff) on the borderline of the submission.

Action plan.

observation	actions	timeline	responsibility	outcome
can only make reasonable adjustments for disabilities if these are declared	regular reminders of the importance of declaring sent	from now	equalities cttee to monitor	equalities cttee to provide a progress report to REF WP at the point where the next CoP is drafted
low declaration of religion or belief	regular reminders of the importance of declaring sent	from now	equalities cttee to monitor	equalities cttee to provide a progress report to REF WP at the point where the next CoP is drafted
some levels of under-representation found in the various stages of our EIA	- ensure all staff responsible for selections have undertaken unconscious bias and E&D training - follow sector best practice on responsible use of metrics and develop suitable training to be taken by all staff responsible for selections	prior to any future REF selections being made	REF WP in discussion with HR	HR to provide a report on UB and E&D training prior to selections being made

Appendix A: Birkbeck, University of London Code of Practice for REF 2021

Part 1: Introduction

How the code relates to broader institutional policies/strategies that promote and support E&D

1.1 This is the Birkbeck, University of London, Code of Practice required by Research England to enable the College to submit to the 2021 Research Excellence Framework. It will outline the principles and legislative context that the College will use when compiling its submission. It will outline the output selection process, and the individuals and groups involved in that process. It will outline the process followed by the College to establish researcher independence for those researchers on an eligible contract type where this is appropriate and the appeals process for individuals who wish to challenge this decision. Finally, it will identify the arrangements made by the College to ensure, as far as possible, that the process is transparent, consistent and inclusive, including the arrangements made by the College in respect of training and equality impact assessment.

1.2 This Code of Practice applies for all units of assessment submitted by the College as a single institution. Where the College submits to any unit of assessment jointly with University College London (UCL), the UCL selection criteria and processes will apply including those processes for determining research independence and appeals against the outcome of that process. Staff employed solely by Birkbeck who wish to apply for a reduction in the number of outputs required by the Unit will follow the process described in this Code of Practice, but the allocation of any reductions and appeals process for this will follow the process defined in the UCL Code of Practice.

1.3 The Code of Practice was adopted by the Governors on 3rd July 2019. It was approved by the Academic Board Executive Committee on 30th May 2019 and staff unions were invited to formally comment on and approve the draft Code on 3rd June 2019. This followed an informal period of consultation which ran between Tuesday 5th March 2019 and Tuesday 30th April 2019 and included sending the draft code to all eligible staff with an invitation to comment, two staff briefing events (which were open to all staff), feedback from the Chair of the Equalities Committee and an offer to discuss the Code at Staff Network events and the informal monthly meetings with Union representatives.

1.4 Birkbeck is proud of its diversity and recognises the value that this brings to College life. The College embraces and celebrates the differences between people, recognising the strengths and benefits of a diverse, inclusive society, workforce and student body. The College believes that education should be available to all sections of society, providing an inclusive working and learning environment for students and staff, so that all may develop to their full potential.

1.5 The College strategic objectives make clear its commitment to equality and diversity at the highest level – providing a good working environment and promoting equality and diversity in all aspects of its activities, such as through the development of fair and equitable policies, procedures, academic programmes of study, courses, training and development programmes, which are consistently applied and regularly monitored. Birkbeck encourages and promotes an inclusive approach that treats colleagues, students and other service users with respect.

1.6 The Equality and Diversity Committee is the College's leading governance structure for championing equality and diversity. The equalities agenda is embedded in the College's decision-making structure, through the work of the Equality and Diversity Committee, which reports to the College Governors via the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The Committee has a strategic overview of Staff and Student Equality & Diversity issues, with a broad remit. The Committee supports and champions equality and diversity across the College – its members are from all Schools and include student and Trade Union representatives.

1.7 In January 2015 an Assistant Dean (Equality) post was created in the School of Science, leading on Athena SWAN and providing college-wide equality strategy and guidance. From the 2017-18 academic year, Assistant Deans (Equalities) posts were created in each academic school and one appointment was made with an oversight of Professional Services. These appointments play a crucial role in relation to mainstreaming equality and diversity. The Assistant Deans lead on equality and diversity issues in their areas, supporting the embedding of institutional equality initiatives, as well as developing and implementing local equality initiatives. They sit on the College Equality and Diversity Committee.

1.8 The College has a set of 4 Equality Objectives which relate to staff, students and the effective management of equality and diversity, to ensure the College's culture and structures are inclusive of all staff and students:

1. Building an inclusive place to work, by developing a culture in which equality, -diversity and inclusion are embedded and mainstreamed into all aspects of Birkbeck life.
2. Building Workforce Diversity, through supporting diversity and equality amongst our staff community, by identifying and investing in talent at all levels and advancing equality of opportunity in employment, retention and development.
3. To provide an inclusive educational experience and learning environment for all students. This will involve ensuring that we have a challenging and inclusive curriculum, assessment that is rigorous but attuned to the experiences and needs of our student body, and provide a learning environment and student support services which improve student retention and enhance student attainment.
4. To establish new Governance frameworks and mechanisms whereby performance against the College's agreed Equality Objectives and actions are monitored and owned (accountability). This will also enable further analysis and targeted interventions to be undertaken where sufficient progress is not being made.

1.9 An Equality Action Plan, which is owned by the Equality and Diversity Committee, has been developed as a means of progressing the delivery of the Equality Objectives.

1.10 The College works to ensure that it benchmarks its work against national schemes. The College holds a Bronze level institutional Athena SWAN award and 4 Departmental Awards at Bronze or Silver level. It is a Mindful Employer Charter signatory, a Stonewall Diversity Champion and is an active participant in the Disability Confident scheme.

1.11 As part of its commitment to equality and diversity, Birkbeck is keen to support the establishment of staff diversity networks. They provide an opportunity

for staff to support each other, share information, inspire others and can play a consultative role to help improve the workplace for everyone. Birkbeck currently has three academic staff networks: the Staff Disability Network, an LGBT+ staff network, and the BAME staff network, with others in development.

1.12 The College is committed to ensuring that its REF procedures do not discriminate unlawfully against, or otherwise have the effect of harassing or victimising individuals because of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation or because they are pregnant or have recently given birth, and makes reasonable adjustments for any member of staff as and when necessary.

1.13 The Code of Practice takes account of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, Birkbeck is required to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

1.14 The College recognises the statutory rights of employees on fixed-term contracts and employees on part-time contracts. The College's employees on fixed-term contracts are entitled to equal treatment with employees on permanent contracts and part-time workers are entitled to not be treated less favourably than comparable full-time workers in relation to the terms of their contract unless the College can justify such less favourable treatment on wholly objective grounds.

1.15 The College's Fixed-Term Contracts Policy is in line with Fixed-term contract legislation. Each appointment (or extension) is reviewed to ensure that usage can be justified. Fixed-term contract staff (FTCs) are appointed for a range of reasons, for example as researchers on grants or to "buy out" teaching for academics with research grants. FTC levels by gender are being monitored as part of Athena SWAN College and Departmental submissions. Levels of FTCs across the College are monitored and reported on in our annual Workforce Planning Metrics, at College and School levels. The majority of research-only contract type roles are fixed term. This is predominantly because they are grant funded or focussed on completion of a particular piece of research. The [Staffing Approval process](#) requires that a valid reason is given if the post is requested on a fixed-term basis.

1.16 Birkbeck recognises that many employees may have personal responsibilities and obligations in addition to their work responsibilities. As part of the College's commitment to equality, the Flexible Working Policy for College staff has been developed with the intention of helping members of staff to balance their commitments and interests outside work with their work. Flexible arrangements offered to members of staff under this policy cover a wide range of options, including part-time, job-share, homeworking, partial home working and staggered hours or flexi-time.

1.17 It is important to ensure that the REF selection processes are assessed for their impact on different protected characteristics by gathering data on staff submissions in relation to protected characteristics, and to be mindful of the duty to foster good relations when evaluating the research environment.

An update of actions taken since REF 2014.

1.18 Our equality impact assessment from the REF2014 exercise (<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/downloads/about-us/equality-analysis-ref-2014.pdf>) showed that in most areas of our submission staff with protected characteristics or circumstances which constrained their ability to undertake research were well represented (for example only 7% of BME staff were not included in the 2014 return, compared to the College average across all staff groups of 17.5% of staff who were not included). The only significant area of concern was with the under-representation in the submission of women who are employed part time, although it was noted that the numbers here were below the point where statistical significance can be reasonably assumed.

1.19 Since 2014, the College's provision of mentors for researchers has been stepped up, and on 13th September 2016 a formal review of the REF2014 Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken and this was reported via the REF WP on 4th October 2016. The question of mentorship for women who are employed part time was explicitly asked in this REF WP meeting and it was confirmed that all women who are employed part time had been allocated mentors.

1.20 The College's REF Working Party has continued to meet once or twice a term throughout the REF2021 census period to date and equality and diversity has been a standing item on the agenda. There has been regular and continuous monitoring of the developing selection process for REF 2021 by the Pro-Vice Master (Research) and the Research Strategy Group, acting as the executive for the REF Working Party. Any issues raised were addressed by the Research Strategy Group, REF Working Party, the UoA Leads and HR. REF related issues could also be raised via the College Strategic Planning, Research, HR Strategy & Policy, Equality and Diversity Committees and Academic Board if necessary. As the submission moves into its live phase, the equality impacts of the selected output pool will be monitored in real time by the REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and any concerns that they raise will be fed back to the relevant UoA lead, as described from paragraph 4.32.

How the institution is addressing the principles of Transparency, Consistency, Accountability, and Inclusivity in demonstrating fairness

1.21 The College affirms its commitment to the following principles:

- **Transparency:** All processes for the selection of outputs and identifying independent researchers for inclusion in REF submissions will be transparent, as articulated in this Code of Practice. This Code of Practice will be made available in an easily accessible format and publicised to all academic staff across the College, including on the staff intranet (My Birkbeck for Staff) and drawn to the attention of those absent from work. There will be a programme of communication activity to disseminate the Code of Practice (see paragraphs 1.3 & 1.22) and to explain the processes relating to the selection of outputs for submission prior to a formal consultation process. The Code of Practice will also be published on the College external web-site once it has been approved by EDAP (the REF Equality and Diversity Panel).
- **Consistency:** The policy in respect of output selection and researcher independence will be consistent across the institution and the Code of Practice will be implemented uniformly. The Code of Practice will set out the principles to be applied to all aspects/stages of the process at all levels within the institution where decisions will be made.

- **Accountability:** Responsibilities will be clearly defined, and individuals and bodies that are involved in selecting REF submissions will be identified by role and the name of the current incumbent. The Code will also state what training those who are involved in selection will have had. Operating criteria and terms of reference for individuals, committees, advisory groups and any other bodies concerned with output selection will be made readily available to all individuals and groups concerned as an appendix to this Code of Practice (appendices 1-7).
- **Inclusivity:** The process described in this code will promote an inclusive environment, enabling the College to identify all staff who are independent researchers and the excellent research produced both by staff across protected groups and by staff who have had their ability to undertake research constrained in some way across the census period.

How the code is being communicated to staff across the institution.

1.22 The Code of Practice has been sent to all T&R and R-Only staff via their bbk.ac.uk, dcs.bbk.ac.uk or cryst.bbk.ac.uk email address (as appropriate), and has been sent in hard copy by Royal Mail to the same staff groups where those individuals are registered as being on an extended (>4 week) leave of absence (unless this absence is research leave, where staff are expected to check their bbk.ac.uk, dcs.bbk.ac.uk or cryst.bbk.ac.uk email address). HR can also make versions of this document available in other accessible formats upon request – please email one of the HR Project and Policy Leads ([Natalie Pancheri](#) or [Anita Jermyn](#)) if you require this document in an accessible format and include the information about what format you require.

1.23 Two briefing events and drop in sessions have been arranged and advertised to all staff through their bbk.ac.uk, dcs.bbk.ac.uk or cryst.bbk.ac.uk email address (as appropriate) to explain the Code of Practice, for example by discussing definitions of complex cases or early career researchers and research independence.

1.24 The Code of Practice has been made available via the staff intranet at <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/downloads/staff-information-downloads/birkbeck-ref-code-of-practice.docx> (only accessible with a College log-in), and following approval from EDAP the Code of Practice will be placed on the College website <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/research/> and re-circulated to all staff on R only and T&R contract types via their bbk.ac.uk, dcs.bbk.ac.uk or cryst.bbk.ac.uk email address (as appropriate).

1.25 If any members of staff have any questions about the REF process they should contact their UoA/Departmental lead (see appendix 7) or the Head of Research Strategy Support (Dr Sarah Lee). If any member of staff is concerned that the REF is not being run in accordance with this Code of Practice in their area they should contact the Pro Vice Master (Research) (Professor Julian Swann) or their Executive Dean in the first instance.

Part 2: Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research

Part 2 need only be completed where the institution will not be submitting 100 per cent of Category A eligible staff in one or more UOA.

2.1 Birkbeck, University of London will submit 100% of eligible staff in all UoAs; as such part 2 has not been completed.

Part 3: Determining research independence

Policies and procedures

Criteria used for determining staff who meet the definition of an independent researcher.

3.1 The College recognises that for many early career researchers the transition to research independence takes time and often cannot be easily recognised as a single point in time. However, the College considers that all staff employed on a “teaching and research” contract type are de facto employed in that capacity as independent researchers.

3.2 The College does not consider that all staff employed on “research only” contract types are automatically independent researchers but recognises that there are situations where a researcher attains independence whilst employed on this type of contract.

3.3 The College has 4 levels of research only contract – RES1 – RES4.

3.4 The RES1 contract type is normally only used for pre-doctoral research positions so the College expects that people employed on this type of contract would not normally be independent researchers. As such, this cohort will not be sent the REF Code of Practice, nor be expected to engage further in the REF process. If anyone in receipt of the Code of Practice believes that a researcher is employed on a RES1 contract type but should be considered as an independent researcher they should contact the Head of Research Strategy Support (sarah.lee@bbk.ac.uk) in the first instance, and (once the contractual status has been confirmed) the process described below for staff on RES2, RES3 and RES4 contract types will be followed.

3.5 The RES2 contract type is typically used for postdoctoral research assistants and postdoctoral researchers who have won an individual fellowship. RES3 and RES4 contract types may be used either for senior researchers who we would normally expect to be independent (e.g. individuals holding senior fellowships) or for professional support staff who would not normally be expected to demonstrate research independence, such as lab managers or senior technicians.

3.6 Anyone on a RES2, RES3 or RES4 contract type who has secured a fellowship from the “list of independent research fellowships” provided by Research England (<https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/additional-guidance/>) will be considered to be independent by default, with the exception of those fellowships which are listed as supporting the transition to independence, where Fellows “at the start of an award are not 'independent' yet, but those well in the award may be”. These people will automatically be included in the College’s REF submission in the most appropriate UoA. This information will be provided to the relevant UoAs

by the Research Office on or before 1st December 2019, 1st April 2020 and 5th October 2020.

In the event that a researcher in this category believes they have not demonstrated research independence, they should contact the Head of Research Strategy Support (sarah.lee@bbk.ac.uk) and a process to investigate this will be followed which is analogous to that described in paragraphs 3.7-3.18 to determine whether this individual has demonstrated independence.

Any member of staff included in a joint submission with UCL should follow the process for determining researcher independence described in section 3.2 of the UCL Code of Practice. Please note, the UCL Code of Practice requires all researchers on research only contracts to apply to be recognised as independent.

3.7 All other staff employed on a RES2, RES3 or RES4 contract type will be assumed to be ineligible for the REF unless they can demonstrate how they have achieved research independence. To demonstrate this, the individual will be required to complete and return the proforma shown in appendix 9. In recognition that an individual might attain independence at any point up to the census date the final deadline for making an application to be considered independent will be after the July 31st census date for staff to be included in the REF (5th October 2020) and individuals can re-apply to any of the later application dates if they feel new evidence of their independence has emerged; however, to manage workload and allow equality impacts to be monitored (and if necessary for action to be taken, see paragraph 3.44) two earlier dates will also be set (see paragraph 3.15). There is no implied merit or demerit to any individual being considered at an earlier or later point in the cycle.

3.8 In order to demonstrate independence, the individual will need to explain how they meet the REF definition that an independent researcher is “an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual’s research programme.” (paragraph 130, Guidance on Submissions - see <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/>). As shown in appendix 9. Evidence should be constructed from a suite of indicators including:

- leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project
- Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement but where the specific fellowship does not feature on the “list of independent research fellowships” provided by Research England (<https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/additional-guidance/>)
- leading a research group or substantial or specialised work package

For main panels C and D the following criteria might also be used:

- significant input into the design, conduct *and* interpretation of the research
- acting as a co-investigator on an externally funded research project

3.9 An individual will not need to demonstrate all of these criteria in order to be considered independent, but normally the College expects that in order to show true independence a researcher will be able to demonstrate a significant contribution to *at least 2* criteria, at least one of which must be drawn from the list above, with any additional criteria defined by the researcher. For the avoidance of doubt, and in line with the REF Guidance on Submissions (paragraph 133) “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". This principle stands even if the individual is the sole author of the output.

3.10 All applications to be considered as an independent researcher must be accompanied by a supporting statement from the Principal Investigator (PI) on the grant which employs the individual (or the individual's line manager if not grant funded) and by the relevant UoA lead, as indicated in the proforma. In the event that the relevant UoA lead is also the PI/line manager then the UoA statement should be made by the deputy UoA lead. If the UoA does not have a recognised deputy UoA lead the Executive Dean can appoint one for the purposes of discharging this duty.

3.11 Decisions about whether or not an individual has attained research independence will be made by the Research Strategy Group, acting in its capacity as the executive group of the REF Working Party. Decisions will be based on a full consideration of the case and will be based on the balance of probability. A full written response will be provided to the individual concerned explaining the factors considered in reaching the decision. This will be sent to the individual concerned by the Head of Research Strategy Support, and copied to the UoA lead and the PI/line manager within two weeks of the meeting date. Cases will be considered at the next meeting of the Research Strategy Group after the application deadline. For reference the dates of the Research Strategy Group meetings are available at <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/committees/committee-information/calendar>

3.12 The Research Strategy Group will operate under these principles when considering whether or not an individual is an independent researcher:

- the transition to research independence has blurred boundaries and it can be difficult to ascertain independence until after the fact; however, there is usually a clear point at which an individual can be clearly shown as having been recognised as an independent researcher which is often tied to the criteria listed above. These criteria need to be contextualised in order to form a reliable judgement of research independence.
- there are disciplinary differences in how researcher training is considered which can lead to the assumption that an individual de facto achieves independence at an earlier stage in some disciplines than others. This does not change the principle that researchers who are employed to carry out another individual's research programme are not eligible to be returned to the REF unless, exceptionally, they demonstrate independence on or before the census date and satisfy the definition of Category A eligible staff (paragraphs 129 Guidance on Submissions).
- it is perfectly possible for a researcher at the start of their career to achieve independence but to then move to a position where they are then employed to carry out another individual's research programme. It is likely in this case that the researcher concerned will continue to demonstrate other elements of independence in this new role and as such we anticipate that researchers in this situation would normally meet the criteria for research independence but an application still needs to be made and will be considered on the basis of the evidence provided.
- the decision about whether or not an individual is an independent researcher is considered solely on its own merits; any other considerations (eg about the volume of submission or case study boundaries) will be disregarded, and discussion of these factors will not be permitted.

- the expectation in the Guidance on Submissions (paragraph 129) is that postdoctoral research assistants (sometimes also described as research associates or assistant researchers) are not eligible to be returned to the REF unless, *exceptionally*, they meet the definition of an independent researcher as described in paragraphs 131-133. The key decisions document published by the REF Steering Group to accompany the final guidance (<https://www.ref.ac.uk/about/key-decisions/>) states explicitly that “we expect that the majority of postdoctoral research assistants employed on project or programme grants will not be eligible for submission unless they have had significant input into the design of the research or lead a significant or specialised work package”.
- the equality impacts of these decisions will be monitored.
- the process will be applied consistently across all UoAs and the Research Strategy Group will strive for high standards of transparency and fairness.

How decisions are being made and communicated to staff.

3.13 As noted in the section above (paragraph 31.11), decisions will be taken by the Research Strategy Group and will be communicated to the member of staff concerned by email to their bbk.ac.uk, dcs.bbk.ac.uk or cryst.bbk.ac.uk email address (as appropriate) within 2 weeks of the meeting date.

Stages of approval.

3.14 All staff on research-only contract types RES2, RES3 and RES4 will be sent an email to their bbk.ac.uk, dcs.bbk.ac.uk or cryst.bbk.ac.uk email address (as appropriate) in early December 2019 containing the proforma and full details about how to provide evidence of research independence, with contact details for the Head of Research Strategy Support if they want additional information (see appendix 9). The proforma will include sections from both the PI of the grant that employs the individual (or their line manager if the line manager is not the PI) and the UoA lead (or deputy UoA lead in the event the UoA lead is also the PI/line manager). These statements must focus on the independence of the individual, on the basis of the criteria listed in section 3.8 above and any statements which include information about volume or case study boundaries will be returned to be re-written without this information.

3.15 There will be three deadlines (15th January, 1st May, and 5th October 2020) to return the proforma to a specified email address

3.16 Outcomes will be communicated to the individual concerned via their bbk.ac.uk, dcs.bbk.ac.uk or cryst.bbk.ac.uk email address (as appropriate) from the Head of Research Strategy Support within two weeks of the meeting date and will include information about how an informal meeting with the Pro Vice Master (Research) can be arranged if the individual wants to have the opportunity to discuss their case more fully. Full details about how to appeal against the ruling will also be provided in this communication. In the event that the Pro Vice Master (Research) is persuaded that a mistake has been made, they can refer the matter to the next Research Strategy Group meeting to be re-considered. These individuals still have the right to appeal in the event that the Research Strategy Group do not uphold the second application.

3.17 Similarly, individuals can re-apply to a later deadline if their application has been turned down but additional information about their research independence has emerged.

3.18 Appeals will be arranged as needed, as described below (paragraphs 3.35-3.43).

Staff, committees and training

Procedures for identifying designated staff and committees/panels responsible for determining research independence.

3.19 The REF 2021 Working Party (REF WP) is a working group of the College Research Committee which provides advice on the adoption of College strategies to support research, with specific reference to REF 2021.

3.20 The Working Party's terms of reference provide for it to:

- Advise the Research Committee and the Master on the adoption of College strategies to support the REF2021 submission.
- Ensure up-to-date and accurate knowledge of any developments pertaining to the REF, and disseminate these throughout the College.
- Make recommendations on the structure of the College's submission, especially in relation to decisions about selection of UoAs and make decisions about the output pool to return.
- Maintain oversight of preparations for the REF by all UoAs.
- Manage and guide UoA Leads throughout the course of their appointment, ensuring that the full resources of the College are known and made available to them.
- Facilitate continuity of oversight for each UoA in the event of a Lead transition.
- Manage College-wide preparations for the REF such as 'dry runs'.
- Support decision-making concerning inclusion of Impact cases.
- Read, comment on and where necessary actively support the writing of all aspects of the final REF submission for every UoA.
- Advise the REF Support Group or equivalent of administrative requirements for the REF.
- Work with the REF Support Group and HR to ensure that equality and diversity requirements are fully complied with.
- Advise the Strategic Planning Committee and Governors of developments in relation to the REF.

3.21 The Roles of the members of the REF Working party are as follows:

- Pro Vice Master (Research) – strategic oversight of the REF for the institution
- Assistant Deans (Research) – strategic oversight of research at the School level
- UoA Leads / Departmental REF leads – responsible for developing the REF submission for the Unit of Assessment (or for working at with the UoA

lead at the Departmental level where a Unit of Assessment comprises researchers from more than one Department)

- Head of Research Strategy Support – The Colleges REF Manager
- Impact Officers – strategic oversight of developing impact case studies

NB when the Research Strategy Group are acting as the executive for the REF Working Party the roles of the individuals involved (Pro Vice Master (Research), Assistant Deans (Research), Head of Research Strategy Support) remain the same as in the full REF Working Party.

3.22 The REF WP will review assessments of the quality of outputs and may refer submissions for independent and / or external advice. In reaching its decisions, the REF WP may request information about the output profile from the REF2014 exercise and the associated internal reading exercises in order to benchmark the findings of the reading groups as contextual information.

3.23 All recommendations relating to submission to the REF, including decisions to submit to units of assessment and the selected output pool will be subject to endorsement by the Master, who may amend, overturn or refer back any such recommendation. If necessary, the Master can seek advice from Academic Board.

3.24 The REF WP is supported to reach decisions by its executive group, the Research Strategy Group, as illustrated in appendix 6.

3.25 The REF WP is chaired by the Pro-Vice-Master for Research and consists of academic members from all the Schools of the College, plus the Head of Research Strategy Support and the School Impact Officers. The membership of the Working Party is attached as Appendix 1.

3.26 *Unit of Assessment Leads:* Executive Deans have confirmed the appointment of Unit of Assessment (and where necessary additional Departmental Leads) for each Unit of Assessment that the College intends to submit to. UoA Leads are responsible for convening Unit of Assessment Panels to consider recommendations on output inclusion to their Unit of Assessment, and for providing reports to the REF Working Party on these Units of Assessment. Where a Unit of Assessment incorporates staff from more than one Department, a lead Department is appointed and the UoA lead is drawn from that Department but has responsibility to work closely with the Departmental Lead(s) across the UoA to ensure that all the departments have a fair say in developing the submission. Unit of Assessment Leads should also lead on the drafting of environment sections of the submission to their UoA, liaising with other Departmental Leads as necessary

3.27 *Unit of Assessment Panels:* Unit of Assessment Leads will convene panels, with the agreement of the appropriate Executive Dean, to support them in their duties outlined above. The responsibilities of these Panels are to:

- Ensure that the UoA reading groups have followed the principles defined in this Code of Practice to undertake an internal assessment of individual research outputs.
- Assess to which Unit of Assessment individuals would best be submitted, and which individuals/outputs ought to be cross-referred to other sub-panels; and to refer individual cases if necessary for consideration by other Panels as described in appendix 6.

- To identify where it is appropriate to seek independent and / or external advice to assist with a judgement on the quality of individual outputs.
- To make recommendations to the REF Working Party and Master regarding the inclusion of outputs into submissions.
- To work with REF administrators and the repository manager to ensure that a) the metadata (and either the DOI or the PDF of the output) are available in our institutional repository; and b) the outputs that they are recommending for inclusion are in line with the REF open access policy and its exemptions, especially the clause that no more than 5% of outputs can be non-compliant with the REF policy.

3.28 Unit of Assessment Panels will include the School Executive Dean and School Assistant Dean (Research) or their nominees, the UoA lead and (where appointed) the deputy UoA lead as ex-officio members. Unit of Assessment Leads and Panels are identified in Appendix 7.

3.29 The group with responsibility for determining research independence is the Research Strategy Group (membership and ToRs in appendix 2), acting in its capacity as the executive group of the REF Working Party.

3.30 Normally, the Research Strategy Group meets twice per term. Across the 19/20 academic year and in the first two terms of the 20/21 academic year, in order to support the REF WP effectively the group will meet once per month in term time, and will use email to facilitate scheduled virtual meetings outside of term time should the need arise.

3.31 The Research Strategy Group is a working group for the College Research Committee and already has decision making powers to allocate internal research funding and to select applications/candidates for strategically managed calls and has established processes for recording the outcomes of these processes which will be followed when addressing this aspect of the REF. Briefly, as a formal working group of the Research Committee, minutes are recorded by the committee secretary (drawn from the College Governance Office) and made available and reported to Research Committee. For confidential discussions, the committee secretary only records the outcome of the discussion and detailed notes are taken by the Head of Research Strategy Support. These notes are held separately and confidentially. The full College Research Committee structure is included in appendix 5.

Details of training provided to individuals and committees involved in identifying staff, the timescale for delivery and content.

3.32 REF-specific training will be developed by the Organisational Development and Change team in HR and the Head of Research Strategy Support. This training will be mandatory for all groups with decision making responsibilities for REF matters and will be delivered face-to-face (i.e. UoA panels, REF Working Group, Research Strategy Group, Individual Circumstances Panel, Equality Diversity and Inclusion Panel, Appeals Panel and the Master), and a training pack which can be delivered remotely will be developed for those who act in an advisory capacity (i.e. reading groups, academic board, research committee).

3.33 This training will include the following content:

1. Birkbeck's approach to REF 2021
2. Why equality is important in the REF

3. Changes since REF 2014
4. Identifying clearly defined and complex staff circumstances and using tariffs
5. Implications for staff responsible for selecting outputs for submission to the REF
6. Handling sensitive and personal information
7. GDPR and data protection considerations
8. A panel briefing pack to be used at the start of every UoA panel session.

3.34 This training was developed by 31st May 2019 and will be delivered to all mandatory groups and made available to those who act in an advisory capacity by the end of the 2019 calendar year. In the event that any members of the UoA Panels, The REF Working Party or the Research Strategy Group change after the training has been delivered an ad hoc session for their successor(s) will be organised as soon as possible after appointment.

Appeals

Details of the process, including how cases are submitted, eligible grounds for appeal & details of those involved in hearing any appeals, timescales and how decisions are being communicated to staff.

3.35 The appeals process has been communicated to all staff as part of this Code of Practice and will be re-communicated to staff on relevant research only contracts when the information about how to seek recognition as an independent researcher is sent, via their bbk.ac.uk, dcs.bbk.ac.uk or cryst.bbk.ac.uk email address (as appropriate).

3.36 Individuals considering an appeal are encouraged to discuss their case with the Pro Vice Master (Research) in advance of submitting a formal appeal to see if it is possible to resolve the situation informally prior to the formal process.

3.37 Individuals can lodge an appeal against a decision that they are not independent researchers between 19th October 2020 and 28th October 2020. Appeals must be submitted in writing to REF2021appeals@bbk.ac.uk. This single written statement must contain all the information that the appeals panel needs to reach a decision.

3.38 Eligible grounds for appeal are solely that the Research Strategy Group failed to give appropriate consideration to the evidence presented and that *based on at least 2 suitable criteria* (as listed in paras 3.8 and 3.9) independence had been demonstrated. Appeals can only be lodged by the individual affected by the decision. New evidence of independence cannot be presented to the appeal panel. Evidence of independence must be obtained on or before the census date (31st July 2020) in order to be valid for this REF exercise, and evidence of independence achieved on or after 1st August 2020 is evidence of independence for the next REF exercise. The final date for considering whether or not an individual has attained research independence has been set to be after the 31st July census date meaning it should be possible for all evidence to be presented to that meeting rather than raised in an appeal.

3.39 The Head of Research Strategy Support will provide a written response to the statement submitted to the appeals panel which provides evidence from the notes taken at the discussion of the case at the relevant Research Strategy Group meeting.

3.40 The appeals panel will comprise the Pro Vice Master (Education) (Chair), The Director of Library Services and the Deputy Director of HR. The PA to the Director of HR will act as secretary. None of these people have any active involvement in REF planning and management other than through their role on the appeals panel (with the exception of the PA to the Director of HR who serves as secretary to various panels as described in this Code of Practice).

3.41 The panel will meet on 30th October 2020 and consider the written statement which comprises the appeal and the written response from the Head of Research Strategy Support. The appeal panel's decision is final.

3.42 The PA to the Director of HR will write by email to the individual who lodged the appeal at their bbk.ac.uk, dcs.bbk.ac.uk or cryst.bbk.ac.uk email address (as appropriate), copied to the Head of Research Strategy Support and the relevant UoA lead: if the appeal is not upheld to ensure that the individual is excluded from the submission or, if the appeal is upheld, to ensure the individual is added to the return. This communication will repeat the information about how any reduction for e.g. early career status would be applied in this case to ensure that these researchers are able to apply for any reduction they are entitled to.

Equality impact assessment

How an EIA has been used to inform the identification of staff and make final decisions.

3.43 Three dates have been given for individuals to apply to be recognised as independent researchers (15th January, 1st May, and 5th October 2020) An equality impact assessment will be undertaken after the second date to ascertain whether or not all groups are represented appropriately in the responses. Headline data from this analysis will be communicated to all staff on this contract type to encourage those from any under-represented groups in time to consider applying to the final date. (This will be done with appropriate consideration to ensure we are able to maintain the anonymity of our researchers). A final equality impact assessment will be undertaken after the final date to see if this intervention had any impact on either applications received or decisions made. This process will be overseen by the REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (see paragraph 4.30).

Part 4: Selection of outputs

4.1 Details of the staff, committees and training for the selection of outputs are as described in paragraphs 3.19-3.34 in section 3 of this Code of Practice.

Selection of Outputs

4.2 The process to select outputs will be as described in paragraphs 4.3 – 4.16 below.

4.3 The UoA lead will work with all the individual academics in the UoA to identify a suitable selection of outputs to be considered. No type of output will be prioritised over any other and only those Units where the sub panel has indicated that they will use proxy metrics will be allowed to do so, and in a manner which is consistent with how the REF sub-panel will treat such data.

4.4 All outputs under consideration for REF will be read and graded by the relevant Unit of Assessment reading group, following the panel-relevant criteria given in paragraphs 197-205, Panel Criteria and Working Methods (<https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/>). All outputs will be considered by at least two people, although with long form outputs an element of sampling may be used where appropriate. This initial ranking will follow the REF 1*-4* grading structure used by the REF panels, however for outputs in the 2* and 3* bracket a finer grading will be required and these outputs should be graded as 2/3*+, 2/3* and 2/3*- giving eight bands in total.

4.5 Drawing on this exercise, and also following the relevant criteria given in paragraphs 197-205 in the Panel Criteria and Working Methods, the UoA Panel will provide a written recommendation to the REF Working Party about the output pool to be selected for submission. The UoA panel needs to ensure that all staff are returned with at least one output, and that no member of staff will be returned with more than five outputs, and that no more than 5% of selected outputs fail to comply with the REF open access policy. The UoA panel also makes recommendations about staff members or individual outputs to be considered for cross-referral. These recommendations are considered by the Research Strategy Group. The process for selecting outputs is shown in appendix 6.

4.6 The UoA panel will select outputs as follows:

Stage 1: the highest graded output from each individual will be selected (see paragraph 4.7 for more detail about how co-authored outputs will be allocated)

Stage 2: the remaining output pool will be selected by working down the grades from 4*, ensuring no researcher has more than five outputs, and that no more than 5% of the selected outputs do not comply with the REF Open Access Policy.

Stage 3: When the lowest grade band that needs to be used is reached (see paragraph 4.4), the outputs in that band will be reviewed by the UoA panel alongside all the feedback relating to these outputs which was provided to the reading exercise. This feedback will include different scores from different reviewers, any commentary provided to justify the score, plus any other calibration work done by the reading panel such as referral to subject experts within or outside the College. The UoA panel will read these outputs and review the associated material from the perspective of the panel descriptors provided by the relevant main panel (see paragraphs 197-205, Panel Criteria and Working Methods). The UoA panel will then make the final selection from these outputs using criteria which relate solely to the quality of the output in terms of its originality, significance and rigour. In the event that the initially selected set of outputs includes more than 5% of outputs which do not comply with the open access policy, the Panel should adjust their selection so that the highest quality selection is made which does not include more than 5% of outputs which do not comply with the open access policy. The panel should work on the consensus view. In the event that a consensus fails to emerge the panel will bring in advice from additional readers who are external to the College.

The UoA panel should consider all outputs in the bottom band to be selected in this way. If most (60% or more) of the outputs from this band are to be used, two or three outputs should be selected at random to be

read from the next band down (i.e the band below the cut-off point). This is to ensure that this ranking process has been consistently applied across the two bands. Additional support from a reader external to the College may be requested at this point if necessary. For outputs in languages other than English, the UoA panel may co-opt additional members as and where necessary to read these outputs effectively.

To ensure that a consistent process is followed across the College, all meetings of UoA panels will be recorded and a random sample will be reviewed by the Research Strategy Group as part of its review of the UoA panels in January 2021, as described in paragraph 4.15. These recordings will be held by the Head of Research Strategy Support until the end of the Research England audit process and will then be destroyed.

4.7 Where outputs are co-authored by more than one individual who is included in Birkbeck's submission to a single Unit of Assessment, the outputs will be allocated to eligible authors to ensure the highest possible grade scores for the submission whilst also ensuring the minimum requirement of one output per individual has been met and that the maximum of five outputs per individual is not exceeded. If outputs have the same grade then the outputs are allocated to eligible authors in alphabetical order. In the event that this means an author would need to be returned with more than the maximum of five outputs then the 6th output onwards will be allocated to the next eligible name on the list alphabetically, and so on. Paragraphs 221-236 in the Panel Criteria and Working Methods define how each main panel considers questions of eligibility around co-authorship and should be referred to by the UoA panels when making these decisions.

4.8 When an output is recommended for double weighting a reserve output should be included where possible. The reserve output should be the highest quality output still remaining in the output pool as long as the minimum requirement of one and the maximum of five outputs per individual has still been met if the reserve output is used.

4.9 Outputs from former members of staff can be considered for inclusion in the submission when appropriate. In this case, the UoA lead should work with the UoA reading group to identify outputs that they consider to be suitable to include in the return. The UoA lead should then liaise with their HR Business Partner to confirm that the former staff member meets the all of the criteria necessary for inclusion – ie:

- the individual was either Category A eligible or on a Research-only contract type but undertook independent research.
- the individual had a minimum of a 0.2 FTE position with the College.
- meets the criteria defined in paragraphs 211-216 in the Guidance on Submissions.
- the College holds the necessary data for the mandatory data fields to be completed (as defined in paragraph 150 Guidance on Submissions).

In addition, the College undertakes not to include outputs from staff who have been made redundant unless the redundancy was either voluntary or as a consequence of the end of a fixed term contract, and HR will also be responsible for confirming this.

To ensure that no sensitive personal data is inadvertently disclosed outside HR, HR will merely confirm whether or not the individual meets the (REF and College defined) eligibility criteria.

4.10. Where UoAs are looking to include outputs from former staff members, as a matter of courtesy and where possible, the former staff member should be informed of this fact and the UoA lead should take reasonable steps to do this. Former staff members who want to discuss whether or not their outputs should be included as part of Birkbeck's return should contact the Head of Research Strategy Support in the first instance (sarah.lee@bbk.ac.uk).

4.11 All decisions to include outputs from former staff members will be made on a case by case basis.

4.12 The choice of which outputs to include is a matter of academic judgement, and as such there is no appeal for the selection of outputs; however, if an individual has concerns about how the output selection process is being run in their UoA then they should contact the Pro Vice Master (Research) for advice.

4.13 Research England will also provide a mechanism by which individuals can express concerns that the Code of Practice is not being applied correctly, and (when available) this can be accessed through the REF2021/ac/uk website. Please contact the Head of Research Strategy Support (sarah.lee@bbk.ac.uk) in the first instance if you need help accessing this information.

4.14 In order to minimise burden the College does not expect that individual academics will routinely be sent feedback about outputs which have been read, but if any individual requests feedback from the Chair of the UoA panel or the UoA lead then this should be provided.

The College notes that this type of feedback can be particularly valuable to more junior staff, especially those individuals who have not been through a REF exercise before and would encourage all staff in this group to ask for feedback.

Any feedback provided by the UoA should be constructive and should reflect the tenor of the discussions about the outputs as well as the overall score allocated by the reading group or UoA panel. It is recognised that it may be appropriate in some cases for the UoA lead or Chair of the UoA panel to use their discretion in providing this feedback (for example, by disregarding outlier reviews if the consensus was that this review was not robust).

Where possible, feedback to junior colleagues should be provided face-to-face rather than by email.

4.15 This process was discussed and agreed by UoA leads at the REF WP on 4th December 2018 and 25th February 2019 prior to an informal and formal consultation process being undertaken with all staff eligible to be included in the return. Feedback from the informal and formal consultation processes was considered by REF Working Party on 13th May 2019 and incorporated into the final draft prior to sign off by the relevant parties (as described in paragraph 1.3).

4.16 UoA panels will provide lists of outputs for inclusion to the REF WP at three points – deadlines for this information to be sent to the Committee secretary are 1st February 2020, 1st June 2020, and on or before 18th December 2020. The draft submission will be amended accordingly after each of these points. Bulk uploading

to the submission system will be used meaning all UoAs will operate to the same timescale and equality impacts can be monitored effectively.

4.17 The Research Strategy Group will review the final recommended selection of outputs against the reports from the UoA reading groups to ensure that the Code of Practice has been applied consistently across all the UoAs. This will take place at a meeting in early January 2021 to allow for changes in selection as new outputs emerge. Following this review process, confirmation of the recommended outputs submission will be made by the February 2021 REF WP meeting and then to the Master by 1st March 2021

Staff, committees and training

4.18 As described in section 3 paragraphs 3.32-3.34

Staff circumstances

4.19 The College is committed to creating safe and supportive structures to declare voluntarily any relevant individual circumstances which have constrained an individual's ability to undertake research.

4.20 The College believes that it is appropriate to recognise where an individual's ability to undertake research has been constrained and that this acts as a burden on the Unit. Given that the College is small, with most of our Units comprising ca. 25 FTE we believe that any circumstances which adversely affect an individual's ability to undertake research will have an impact at the Unit level, and that this should be reflected in the College's expectations of the Unit without any implied merit or demerit. Thus, an application for reduction in the number of outputs to be returned to a UoA will be made to EDAP where any member staff declares that have had their ability to undertake research in the period constrained, as long as the application is made in line with EDAPs qualifying criteria (as described in paragraphs 4.21-4.29). Because the College will be applying for a reduction from EDAP for all qualifying declared circumstances there is not a College-level appeal for this process.

4.21 The circumstances which constrain an individual's ability to undertake research are summarised as follows (taken from paragraphs 160-183 and 186-191, Guidance on Submissions):

- Qualifying as an Early Career Researcher (ECR) (on the basis set out in paragraphs 146 -149 and Annex L, Guidance on Submissions)
- Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector
- Qualifying periods of family-related leave
- Circumstances with an equivalent effect to absence, that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:
 - i. Disability: this is defined in the 'Guidance on codes of practice', Table 1 under 'Disability' (<https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/key-documents/>).
 - ii. Ill health, injury, or mental health conditions.
 - iii. Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of – or justify the reduction of further outputs in addition to – the allowances set out in Annex L, Guidance on Submissions.

- iv. Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member).
- v. Gender reassignment.
- vi. Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed in the 'Guidance on codes of practice', Table 1, or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

A request for an individual to be returned with zero outputs can be made when an individual's circumstances have had an exceptional effect on their ability to work productively throughout the assessment period (1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020), so that the individual has not been able to produce an eligible output. This request can be made where any of the following circumstances apply within the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020:

- i. an overall period of 46 months or more absence from research during the assessment period, due to one or more of the circumstances set out in paragraphs 160 to 163, Guidance on Submissions (such as an ECR who has only been employed as an eligible staff member for part of the assessment period)
 - ii. circumstances equivalent to 46 months or more absence from research, where circumstances set out in paragraph 160 Guidance on Submissions apply (such as mental health issues, caring responsibility, long-term health conditions)
- or
- iii. two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave, as defined in Annex L, Guidance on Submissions.

Where these precise circumstances do not apply, but the individual's circumstances are deemed to have resulted in a similar impact (including where there are a combination of circumstances that would not individually meet the thresholds set out), a request may still be made. This includes where circumstances relate to the Covid-19 pandemic.

If a staff member has secured permission to be returned with zero outputs but moves institution before or on the census date, the permission to be returned with zero outputs may be applied by the newly employing institution.

4.22 As part-time working is taken account of within the calculation for the overall number of outputs required for the Unit (which is determined by multiplying the unit's FTE by 2.5) reduction requests on the basis of part-time working hours should only be made exceptionally. For example, where the FTE of a staff member late in the assessment period does not reflect their average FTE over the period as a whole.

4.23 The Guidance on Submissions (paragraphs 186-191) describes how reductions should be applied at the Unit level if the request for a reduction is upheld; this information is also summarised in appendix L, Guidance on Submissions.

4.24 Those staff who wish to have the impact that their circumstances have had on their Unit recognised, or who have the right to be returned with zero outputs (as described in paragraphs 178-183, Guidance on Submissions) will need to complete and return the pro-forma shown in appendix 10 which should be returned to the HR Data Analytics & Information Systems Manager by 18th February 2020.

Applications for circumstances which arise after 18th February must be returned to the HR Data Analytics & Information Systems Manager by 1st November 2020 as described below and in paragraph 4.27.

All T&R and R Only Staff will be notified of the requirement to do this by email to their .bbk.ac.uk, dcs.bbk.ac.uk or cryst.bbk.ac.uk email address in October 2019, and will be reminded twice after this date – in December 2019 and late January 2020.

A final reminder for circumstances which have arisen since 18th February will be sent in September 2020.

These communications will include the relevant forms to be completed in a word document format, and the exact email address that the forms should be returned to. In clearly defined circumstances this will be used to calculate this level of reduction to be requested from EDAP.

4.25 For those staff who have complex circumstances an individual circumstances panel comprising the HR Data Analytics & Information Systems Manager, the Deputy Director of HR and the Pro Vice Master (Research) will consider the case and form a judgement based on the criteria listed in the guidance on submissions about the level of reduction it is appropriate to request from EDAP.

4.26 All information submitted to the individual circumstances panel will be retained confidentially within the panel (unless a threat to life or similar breach of Health and Safety Law was strongly indicated); however, in the event that these circumstances have not been otherwise disclosed to HR, the Deputy Director of HR will have the discretion to contact the individuals concerned to ensure that the College is providing a) appropriate support b) any necessary reasonable adjustments and c) to ensure that the individual is aware of their rights. In some circumstances the Deputy Director of HR may seek permission from the individual concerned to bring in additional support from other areas of the College.

4.27 The individual circumstances panel will meet twice, once on 20th February 2020 (to collate all available information for the March deadline for returning to EDAP) and once in the week commencing 9th November 2020 to consider any additional circumstances which have arisen since the 18th February deadline. In order to manage the REF process effectively, staff are asked to declare their circumstances as soon as possible and by the February deadline if the information is available at that point. The October deadline is intended to just address circumstances which have arisen on or after 18th February 2020.

4.28 Any information returned for REF purposes will not be used by the College outside the calculation of an appropriate reduction for the individual without the express written permission of the individual concerned other than as described in paragraph 4.26.

4.29 Following the individual circumstances panel meeting the request for reductions will be submitted to EDAP (The REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel) which will subsequently confirm any granted reductions. The HR Data Analytics & Information Systems Manager will communicate directly with the individual concerned to indicate the likely reduction that will be sought on their behalf and the aggregated information will be sent to the UoA lead with the information that a reduction of X outputs has been submitted to EDAP for their UoA. This will be done without disclosing any information about who the reductions

relate to. This provisional data will be confirmed following the formal process to confirm reductions with EDAP as described in paragraphs 198-201 in the Guidance on Submissions. Once any requested reductions are confirmed by EDAP this information will be communicated to the UoA lead, along with the identities of any staff who have been accepted to be returned without the minimum of one output. This information will be made available to the UoA lead and members of the UoA panel only and they will not be told the basis for the reduction.

If a colleague believes an error may have been made in calculating their reduction this should be resolved directly with the HR Data Analytics & Information Systems Manager at the point when the reduction is communicated to them.

Equality impact assessment

4.30 The College expectation is that all Units will return the appropriate number of outputs and that all staff will have at least one output from the census period which is of a suitable quality to be included. In certain circumstances, as discussed in paragraphs 178-183 in the Guidance on Submissions, an individual may be eligible to be returned with zero outputs, at which point the College expects that this individual may apply to be included in the return with zero outputs, and (should this application to EDAP be successful) members of the UoA panel will be notified of this fact without any detail other than that this individual should be included in the return with zero outputs.

4.31 Where an output is co-authored by more than one individual and is included in Birkbeck's submission, the College considers this as a valid output for all the individuals named on it who are employed by the College.

4.32 The College has undertaken base-line diversity report to understand its current constituency from an equality and diversity perspective (see appendix 11).

4.33 As described in paragraph 4.16 there are three points at which the College will confirm its latest output selection for the REF. After the first two of these selections, the College REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee will review the data at the UoA level about the selected outputs in comparison with the baseline diversity report data and the College expectations stated above to consider whether there are any statistically significant anomalies in terms of staff group representation. Consideration of staff group will include both those staff who have protected characteristics and those staff who have experienced circumstances which have constrained their ability to undertake research in the period as well as intersecting characteristics. (At the same meeting where the data relating to the June selection of outputs are considered, the data relating to the profile of staff who have applied to be considered as independent researchers will be considered and this data will be communicated to staff on research-only contract types as described in paragraph 3.43.)

4.34 Where significant anomalies are identified the Committee will write to the UoA lead, copied to the Head of Research Strategy Support to ensure that the UoA are able to consider this data as part of their next output selection round. In these circumstances panels will be asked to reflect on whether or not any bias has inadvertently crept into their decision making.

4.35 Once the final selection of outputs has been approved by the Master a final equality impact assessment (EIA) will be undertaken which is for publication and

considers aggregate data at the College level. Based on this EIA an action plan will be defined to try and improve the inclusiveness of the College's submission for the following REF exercise. This action plan will be written by the REF Working Party but the College's Research Committee will have responsibility for its implementation.

4.36 The College REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee will comprise the Chair of the Equalities Committee (Chair), the HR Data Analytics & Information Systems Manager, and the Head of HR Strategy, Policy and Equality & Diversity. The HR Data Analytics & Information Systems Manager oversees the process to calculate reductions for Units where staff have had their ability to undertake research constrained and is responsible for ensuring that this information feeds into these discussions. The HR Data Analytics & Information Systems Manager sits on the individual circumstances panel. The Chair of the Equalities Committee is the Executive Dean for the School of Science but sends a nominee to the one UoA panel which follows the Birkbeck process; the two other Departments in the School of Science are in joint submissions with UCL and so follow UCL's Code of Practice. None of these people are otherwise involved in the REF selection process, and the data the panel will be reviewing is fully anonymised statistical data. The PA to the Director of HR will act as secretary to this group.

Part 5: Appendices

Appendices begin on the next page

Part 5: Appendices attach any relevant appendices

Appendix 1: REF Working Party

Membership

Pro Vice Master for Research (Chair)	Professor Julian Swann
Assistant Deans for Research	Professor Mark Crinson (Arts) Professor Jen Baird (SSHP) Dr Clare Press (Science) Professor Zacharias Psaradakis (BEI) Dr Sappho Xenakis (Law)
Head of Research Strategy Support	Dr Sarah Lee
UoA Leads:	
Psychology	Professor Denis Mareschal
Biological Sciences	Professor John Christodoulou
Earth Sciences	Professor Andy Carter
Law	Dr Elena Loizidou
Economics	Professor Yunus Aksoy
Geography	Dr Becky Briant
Business and Management	Dr Federica Rossi
Computer Science and Informatics	Professor Michael Zakharyashev
Politics	Professor Deborah Mabbett

Sociology	Dr Ben Gidley
Philosophy	Dr Kristoffer Ahlstrom-Vij
History	Professor Filippo De Vivo
Modern Languages	Professor Luciana Martins
English	Dr Isabel Davies
Art and Design	Professor Steve Edwards
Departmental leads:	
Applied Linguistics and Communication	Professor Bojana Petric
Film Media and Cultural Studies	Professor Tim Markham
Impact Officers	
School of Arts	Dr David Convery
School of Business, Economics and Informatics	Dr Jessica Hinds
School of Law	Mrs Louise Ross
School of Science	Dr Sarah Evans
School of Social Science, History and Philosophy	Dr Chris Machell

In Attendance

Head of HR Strategy Policy and Equality & Diversity	Mrs Hazel Lindley Milton – <i>NB this role stands down from the committee at the end of the 18/19 academic year before any decisions about selection are made</i>
Chair of the Open Access Working Group	TBC
Committee Administrator	Casimira Headley-Walker

Terms of Reference: The REF Working Party is a party of the Research Committee.

The REF Working Party has been established to support the College in relation to its submissions to the REF2021. Specifically the Party aims to promote Birkbeck as a research intensive institution of high quality and to reflect this status through the return from the REF2021 submission.

In pursuit of its objectives the Working Party will:

- Advise the Research Committee and the Master on the adoption of College strategies to support the REF2021 submission.
- Ensure up-to-date and accurate knowledge of any developments pertaining to the REF, and disseminate these throughout the College.
- Make recommendations on the structure of the College's submission, especially in relation to decisions about selection of UoAs and the selection of the output pool.
- Maintain oversight of preparations for the REF by all UoAs.
- Manage and guide UoA Leads throughout the course of their appointment, ensuring that the full resources of the College are known and made available to them.

- Facilitate continuity of oversight for each UoA in the event of a Lead transition.
- Manage College-wide preparations for the REF such as 'dry runs'.
- Determine College policies towards criteria for inclusion of staff in the REF.
- Support decision-making concerning inclusion of Impact cases;
- Read, comment on and where necessary actively support the writing of all aspects of the final REF submission for every UoA.
- Advise the REF Support Group or equivalent of administrative requirements for the REF.
- Work with the REF Support Group and HR to ensure that equality and diversity requirements are fully complied with.
- Make termly reports to the Research Committee on pertinent aspects and/or developments on any of the above.
- Advise the Strategic Policy Committee and Governors of developments in relation to the REF.

Appendix 2: Research Strategy Group

Terms of Reference: The Research Strategy Group has been established to support the College in relation to the academic aspects of the implementation of the Research Strategy 2014-19, and any arising matters of research governance that would benefit from academic perspectives and support.

Its membership is a subgroup of the REF Working Party, and when acting as the executive of the REF Working Party the group will act under the REF Working Parties terms of Reference.

Membership 2018/19

Pro-Vice Master Research (Chair)	Professor Julian Swann
Assistant Deans Research	Professor Mark Crinson (Arts) Professor Zacharias Psaradkis (BEI) Dr Clare Press (Science) Professor Jennifer Baird (SSHP) Dr Sappho Xenakis (Law)
Assistant Deans for Postgraduate Study	Dr Joseph Brooker (Arts) Professor Jasmine Gideon (SSHP)
Head of Research Strategy Support	Dr Sarah Lee
Head of the Research Office	Ms Liz Francis
Head of Birkbeck Graduate Research School	Mr Tim Hoe

In attendance

Deputy College Secretary (Governance)	Mrs Katharine Bock
Governance Officer	Casimira Headley-Walker

Appendix 3: Individual Circumstances Panel Membership & REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Panel Membership and Roles

Individual Circumstances Panel:

- HR Data Analytics & Information Systems Manager – Ms Agata Grabowska
- Deputy Director of HR – Mrs Eileen Harvey
- Pro Vice Master (Research) (Chair) – Professor Julian Swann

The Chair's role is to provide the necessary academic understanding of the impact of the constraint on the ability to undertake research, the HR Data Analytics & Information Systems Manager brings an in-depth understanding of the REF formula and how it is calculated, the Deputy Director of HR brings a detailed understanding of equality and diversity issues.

REF Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Panel

- Chair of the Equalities Committee (Chair) - Professor Nick Keep
- HR Data Analytics & Information Systems Manager – Ms Agata Grabowska
- Head of HR Strategy, Policy and Equality & Diversity – Mrs Hazel Lindley Milton

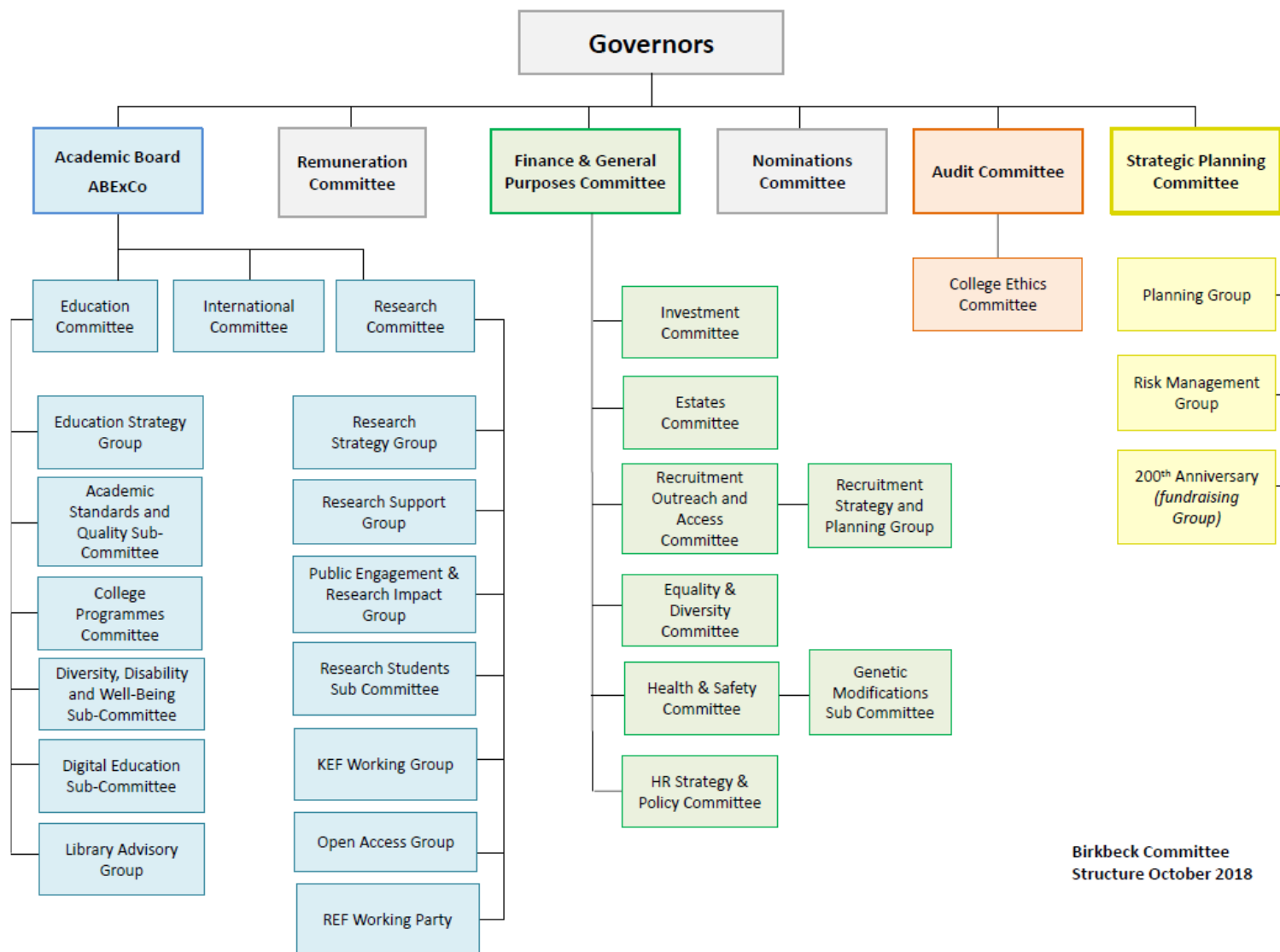
The Chair's role is to provide the necessary academic rigour to the data processing, the HR Data Analytics & Information Systems Manager brings an in-depth understanding of the REF formula and our equalities data and how the calculations were performed, the Head of HR Strategy, Policy and Equality & Diversity brings a detailed understanding of equality and diversity issues.

Appendix 4: Appeals Panel Membership and Roles

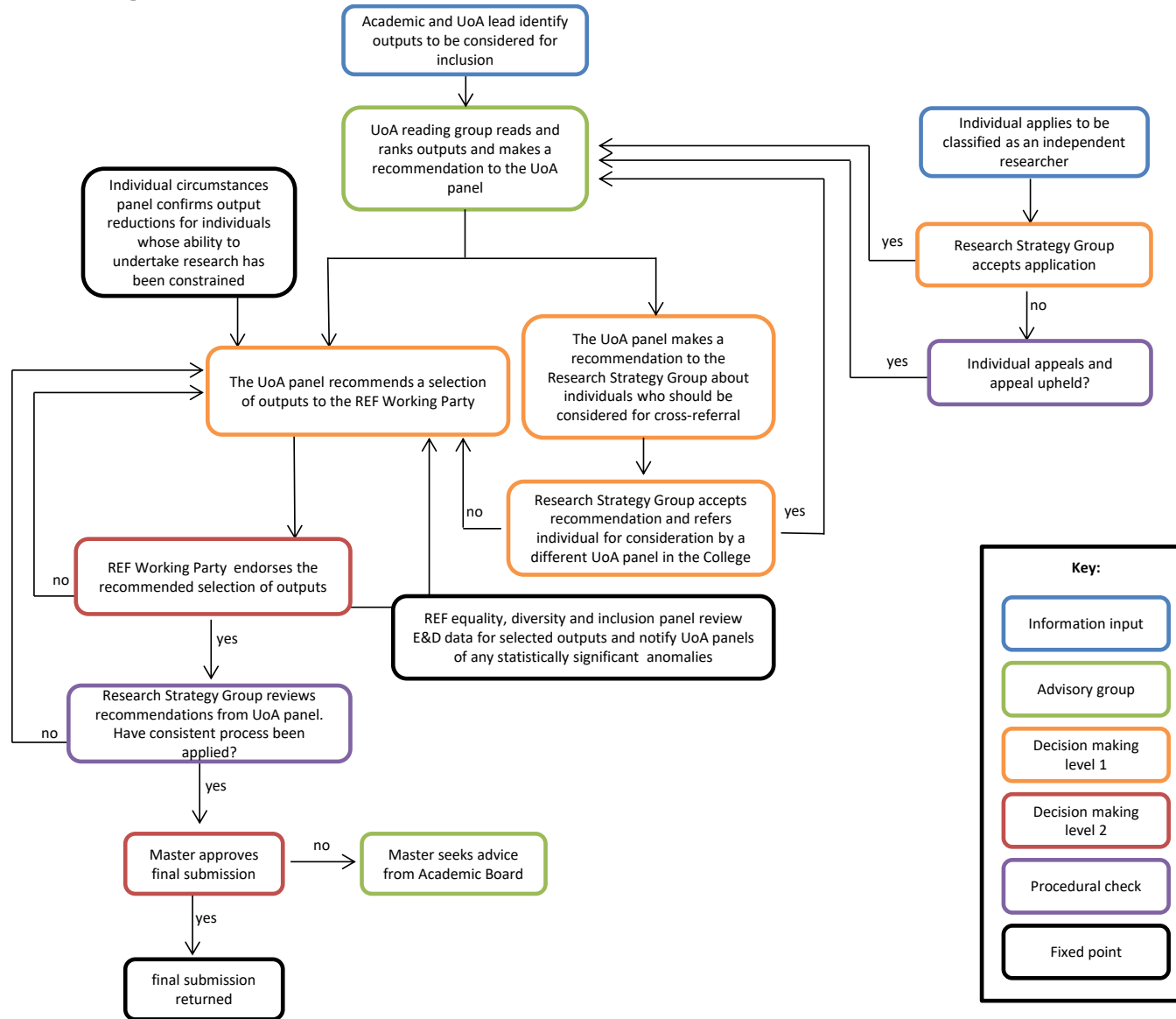
- Pro Vice Master (Education) (Chair) Professor Diane Houston
- Director of Library Services Mr Robert Atkinson
- Deputy Director of HR Mrs Eileen Harvey

The Chair's role is to provide the necessary academic understanding of research independence, the Director of Library Services brings a strong working knowledge of research and the REF, and the Deputy Director of HR brings a detailed understanding of our HR-led grievance and appeals processes and the correct conduct of panels such as this.

Appendix 5: College Committee structures



Appendix 6: decision making flow chart



Appendix 7: Unit of Assessment Panels and Reading Groups

UoA 4 Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience

Membership of reading group: Professor Mike Oaksford; Professor Jacqueline Barnes; Professor Anne Richards; Dr Clare Press; Professor Denis Mareschal (Chair); Professor Jonathan Smith; Professor Martin Eimer; Professor Mark Johnson; Professor Ulrike Hahn

How reading group was selected: This is the membership of the Departmental Strategic Planning Group

UoA Panel: Professor Mike Oaksford (Executive Dean nominee); Professor Jacqueline Barnes; Professor Anne Richards; Dr Clare Press (AD (Research)); Professor Denis Mareschal (Chair, UoA Lead); Professor Jonathan Smith; Professor Martin Eimer; Professor Ulrike Hahn

UoA 5 Biological Sciences & UoA 7 Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences

Membership of REF Review and Selection Groups:

Head of Department, Division/Institute Director, Head of Research Department or other Departmental REF lead as relevant to the UoA structure; Representatives with the relevant level of experience to make judgements about academic quality. To include wherever possible colleagues with previous experience on a REF panel, junior academics, and those who can represent groups with protected characteristics. In some instances, for example in the case of larger UoAs where the number of outputs is high, the role of the RSG may be subdivided amongst members. Thus, a larger group may undertake the review and assessment of outputs, with a sub-group of the RSG responsible for the selection of outputs to be returned in the REF submission.

UoA 11 Computer Science & Informatics

Membership of reading group: Professor Mark Levene, Professor Alex Poulouvassilis, Professor Peter Wood, Professor Michael Zakharyashev

How reading group was selected: Appointed from the professoriate by Head of Department

UoA Panel: Dr Geoff Walters (Acting Executive Dean & Chair); Professor Yunus Aksoy (REF Lead UoA 16); Professor Andrew Pettigrew, FB; Professor Zacharias Psaradakis (Assistant Dean, Research); Professor Alex Poulouvassilis (Deputy Dean, Research Enhancement); Dr Federica Rossi (REF Lead UoA 17); Professor Michael Zakharyashev (REF Lead UoA 11)

UoA 14 Geography

Membership of reading group: AD (Dr Melissa Butcher); Research Director & UoA lead (Dr Becky Briant); In addition, any Professor or Reader from the Department may be co-opted as necessary

How reading group was selected: Role-based and to be nominated by colleagues and approved by the Research Committee

UoA Panel: AD (Dr Melissa Butcher); Research Director & UoA lead (Dr Becky Briant); Professor Paul Watt, Professor Sue Brookes; Professor Matthew Davies (Executive Dean); Professor Jen Baird (AD Research)

UoA 16 Economics & Econometrics

Membership of reading group: Professor Sandeep Kapur, Dr Emanuela Sciubba, Dr Arupratan Daripa, Dr Pedro Gomes, Professor Gyfi Zoega, Professor Yunus Aksoy, Professor Maura Paterson, Professor Sarah Hart, Dr Steven Noble, Dr Brad Baxter, Dr Simon Hubbert, Professor Zacharias Psaradakis, Professor Ron Smith, Dr Walter Beckert

How reading group was selected: De facto role for the Academic Leads of the 4 research groups in the Department and recommendations from colleagues

UoA Panel: Dr Geoff Walters (Acting Executive Dean & Chair); Professor Yunus Aksoy (REF Lead UoA 16); Professor Andrew Pettigrew, FB; Professor Zacharias Psaradakis (Assistant Dean, Research); Professor Alex Poulouvassilis (Deputy Dean, Research Enhancement); Dr Federica Rossi (REF Lead UoA 17); Professor Michael Zakharyashev (REF Lead UoA 11)

UoA 17 Business and Management Studies

Membership of reading group: Dr Federica Rossi (REF lead), Professor John Kelly (REF lead in 2014), Dr Almuth McDowall (Subject AD Organizational Psychology) and Kevin Ibeh (Pro Vice Master International and former Head of Department Management Studies); Professor Andrew Pettigrew, Dr Alex Beauregard, and Professor Tom Cox

How reading group was selected: Role-based and recommendations from colleagues

UoA Panel: Dr Geoff Walters (Acting Executive Dean & Chair); Professor Yunus Aksoy (REF Lead UoA 16); Professor Andrew Pettigrew, FB; Professor Zacharias Psaradakis (Assistant Dean, Research); Professor Alex Poulouvassilis (Deputy Dean, Research Enhancement); Dr Federica Rossi (REF Lead UoA 17); Professor Michael Zakharyashev (REF Lead UoA 11)

UoA 18 Law

Membership of reading group: Dr Elena Loizidou (REF Unit Lead & moderator); Dr Nathan Moore (Deputy REF Unit Lead); Dr Sappho Xenakis (AD Research); Professor Stewart Motha (Executive Dean); Professor Michelle Everson (Moderator), Professor Les Moran (until 31st July 2019), Professor Daniel Monk, Professor Patrick Hanafin, Professor Maria Aristodemou, Dr Oscar Guardiola-Rivera, Dr Piyel Haldar, Mr Paul Turnbull, Dr Sarah Keenan; Dr Sarah Turnbull (until 31st July 2019), Dr Rachel Dobson (from 1st august 2019) Dr Craig Reeves

How reading group was selected: Some of the members are already members of the standing School REF working group but this was expanded to ensure representation reflecting different areas and approaches to our research

UoA Panel: Dr Elena Loizidou (REF Unit Lead); Dr Nathan Moore (Deputy REF Unit Lead); Dr Sappho Xenakis (AD Research); Professor Stewart Motha (Executive Dean); Professor Fiona Macmillan; Dr Jessica Jacobson; Dr Sarah Keenan; Dr Sarah Turnbull (until 31st July 2019), Dr Rachel Dobson (from 1st august 2019)

UoA 19 Politics and International Studies

Membership of reading group: Professor Deborah Mabbett (chair); Professor Eric Kaufmann; Dr Antoine Bousquet; Professor Alex Colas; Professor Sarah Childs; Professor Dermot Hodson; Professor Rob Singh.

How reading group was selected: All readers and professors are expected to contribute

UoA Panel: : Professor Deborah Mabbett (chair); Professor Eric Kaufmann; Dr Antoine Bousquet; Professor Alex Colas; Professor Sarah Childs; Professor Dermot Hodson; Professor Rob Singh; Professor Matthew Davies (Executive Dean); Professor Jen Baird (Associate Dean Research)

UoA 21 Sociology

Psychosocial Studies

Membership of reading group: Professor Lisa Baraitser; Professor Claire Callender; Professor Stephen Frosh; Professor Bruna Seu; Dr Ben Gidley

How reading group was selected: Professoriate of the Department

UoA Panel: Dr Ben Gidley; Professor Claire Callender; Professor Stephen Frosh; Professor Bruna Seu; Professor Matthew Davies (Executive Dean); Professor Jen Baird (AD Research)

UoA 26 Modern Languages and Linguistics

Membership of reading group: Professor John Kraniauskas (until 31st July 2019), Dr Akane Kawakami (until 31st July 2020) Dr Martin Shipway, Dr John Walker, Professor Luciana Martins, Dr Bojana Petric (until 31st July 2020 then Dr Lisa McEntee-Atalianis), Professor Zhu Hua; any Reader or Professor can be co-opted as necessary.

How reading group was selected: In ALC a panel of senior members of staff read outputs. They were selected to represent the three sub-disciplines within ALC which employ various methodologies. In Cultures and Languages, the Departmental Research Committee, made up of 5 people representing all languages taught, has read all outputs. Two are professors; and one is Head of Department, the other two are senior members of staff.

UoA Panel: Professor Matthew Davies (Executive Dean, SSHP), Professor Anthony Bale (Executive Dean, Arts), Professor Mark Crinson (AD Research, Arts), Professor Jen Baird (AD Research, SSHP), Professor Luciana Martins (UoA lead, Arts), Head of ALC Department SSHP (Dr Bojana Petric until 31st July 2020 then Dr Lisa McEntee-Atalianis).

UoA 27 English Language and Literature

Membership of reading group: Dr Isabel Davis, Dr Heike Bauer, Professor Sue Wiseman, Professor Hilary Fraser, Dr Richard Hamblyn, Dr Fintan Walsh, Professor Roger Luckhurst and Dr Joe Brooker.

How reading group was selected: Discussion at the Departmental research committee. They represent the different parts of the department (Creative Writing, English, Humanities, and Theatre); cover the period range of the department's work from medieval to contemporary, with an emphasis on the contemporary where there is more reading to do. They were also selected because they are senior colleagues: mostly readers or professors, with the exception of Richard Hamblyn, who is a senior lecturer. They also have strong research profiles themselves. Additionally Hilary Fraser has served on a REF panel in 2014 and Roger Luckhurst guided the REF for the department also in 2014.

UoA Panel: Professor Anthony Bale (Executive Dean), Professor Mark Crinson (AD Research), Dr Isabel Davis, Dr Heike Bauer, Dr Fintan Walsh, and Dr Richard Hamblyn.

UoA 28 History

Membership of reading group: Professor Filippo de Vivo (UoA Lead); Professor Jan Rueger (Head of Department); Professor Vanessa Harding; Professor Julia Lovell; Professor Frank Trentmann; Professor Jen Baird (AD research);

How reading group was selected: By the UOA Lead in discussion with the Head of Department with a view to representing all fields and chronological angles in the department, and to having an equal gender split.

UoA Panel: Professor Filippo de Vivo (UoA Lead); Professor Jan Rueger (Head of Department); Professor Vanessa Harding; Professor Julia Lovell; Professor Frank Trentmann; Professor Jen Baird (AD research); Professor Matthew Davies (Executive Dean)

UoA 30 Philosophy

Membership of reading group: Dr Kristoffer Ahlstrom-Vij (Research Lead) and Dr Robert Northcott (Subject AD). In addition, any Professor or Reader from the Department may be co-opted as necessary

How reading group was selected: It falls within the scope of responsibilities for the roles.

UoA Panel: Dr Kristoffer Ahlstrom-Vij (Research Lead), Dr Robert Northcott (Subject AD), Professor Matthew Davies (Executive Dean); Professor Jen Baird (AD Research)

UoA 32 Art and Design: History, Practice & Theory

Membership of reading group: Professor Mark Crinson, Professor Steve Edwards, Professor Annie Coombs, and Dr Robert Maniura, Professor Tim Markham, Professor Catherine Grant, Dr Dorota Ostrowska, Dr Simone Wesner, Dr Silke Arnold-de Simine, Dr Emma Sandon, Dr Sophie Hope, Dr Janet McCabe

How reading group was selected: Senior staff and others representing the research areas of the Department

UoA Panel: Professor Anthony Bale (Executive Dean), Professor Mark Crinson (AD Research), Professor Steve Edwards (UoA lead), Professor Annie Coombs Dr Robert Maniura, Professor Tim Markham (Departmental lead), and Professor Catherine Grant (until 31st July 2020)

Appendix 8: Timetable

RE Deadline	College Deadline	Action
	13 th & 20 th March 2019	Staff REF briefings
Spring/summer 2019		invitation to request multiple submissions, case studies requiring security clearance, and exceptions to submission for small units; beta versions of the submission system available
7th June 2019		Deadline to submit Code of Practice
	End summer 2019	UoA-level reading of available outputs complete; (NB to continue ad hoc until 11/20) Initial selection of outputs for use in the pilot First draft of impact case studies on template First draft of environment narratives and data
	Summer 2019	College review of draft impact case studies
16th August 2019		Code of Practice – accepted or resubmit
20th September 2019		Deadline to resubmit Code of Practice
Autumn 2019		Pilot of the REF submission system; survey of submissions intentions opens; proposed date for inviting reduction requests for staff circumstances (proposed deadline March 2020)
8th November 2019		Code of Practice – accepted or resubmit
	9 th November – 21 st December 2019	1 st bulk outputs upload to pilot system
15th November 2019		Deadline to resubmit Code of Practice
29th November 2019		Final outcome of Code of Practice
December 2019		Survey of submissions intentions complete; deadline for requests for multiple submissions, case studies requiring security clearance, and exceptions to submission for small units; publication of approved codes of practice
	December 2019	Check of initially selected outputs for the pilot for open access policy compliance complete
	End 2019	Mandatory selection training delivered
	end 2019-easter 2020	Individual circs process runs
Early 2020		Formal release of the submission systems and accompanying technical guidance; invitation to HEIs to make submissions; invitation to nominate panel members and assessors for the assessment phase; deadline for staff circumstances requests
	15 th January 2020	1 st deadline to apply to be considered an independent researcher
	14 th February 2020	1 st Upload of staff, outputs, environment data Checking of uploaded data begins
	15 th May 2020	2 nd deadline to apply to be considered an independent researcher
	15 th June 2020	2 nd Upload of staff, outputs, environment data Checking of uploaded data continues
Mid 2020		Appointment of additional panel members
July 31st 2020		Census date for staff; end of assessment period (for research impacts, the research environment, and data about research income and research doctoral degrees awarded)

RE Deadline	College Deadline	Action
	5 th October 2020	Final date to apply to be considered an independent researcher
	19 th October - 28 th October 2020	Window to lodge appeals against independence ruling
	30 th October 2020	Appeals heard
	December 2020	Confirmation of impact case studies to be used
	December 2020	Final versions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • impact case studies (unless amendments for Covid 19 are required) • environment statements • environment data • selection of staff and outputs (including OA eligibility check on any new outputs)
	15 th January 2021	Final Upload of staff, outputs and environment data completed Checking of uploaded data continues
	February 2021	Final submission available for College review
	1 st March 2021	Final submission available for Masters approval
	10 th March 2021	Target submission date
31st March 2020		Closing date for submissions
December 31st 2020		End of publication period (cut-off point for publication of research outputs, and for outputs underpinning impact case studies)
JUne 2021		Impact evidence returned to Research England
Throughout 2021		Panels assess submissions
April 2022		Publication of outcomes
Spring 2022		Publication of submissions, panel overview reports and sub-profiles

Appendix 9:

Application to be considered as an independent researcher

All staff employed on a RES2, RES3 or RES4 contract type will be assumed to be ineligible for the REF unless they can demonstrate how they have achieved research independence (with the exception of those individuals described in paragraph 3.6).

The College does not consider that all staff employed on “research only” contract types are automatically independent researchers but recognises that there are, occasionally and exceptionally, situations where a researcher attains independence whilst employed on this type of contract.

In order to demonstrate independence, the individual will need to explain in the proforma on the next page how they meet the REF definition that an independent researcher is “defined as an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual’s research programme.” (paragraph 130, guidance on submissions)

This form should be used to demonstrate how you meet the definition of undertaking self-directed research.

Evidence should be factual and verifiable and should be constructed from a suite of indicators including:

In order to demonstrate independence, the individual will need to explain how they meet the REF definition that an independent researcher is “an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual’s research programme.” (paragraph 130, Guidance on Submissions) Evidence should be constructed from a suite of indicators including:

- leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project
- Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement but where the specific fellowship does not feature on the “list of independent research fellowships” provided by Research England (<https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/additional-guidance/>)
- leading a research group or substantial or specialised work package

NB For main panels C and D the following criteria might also be used:

- significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research
- acting as a co-investigator on an externally funded research project

3.9 An individual will not need to demonstrate all of these criteria in order to be considered independent, but normally the College expects that in order to show true independence a researcher will be able to demonstrate a significant contribution to *at least 2* criteria, at least one of which must be drawn from the list above, with any additional criteria defined by the researcher.

For the avoidance of doubt, and in line with the REF guidance on Submissions (paragraph 133, draft guidance on submissions) “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”. This principle stands even if the individual is the sole author on the output.

If you would like more information about this process, or to obtain any informal advice please contact the College’s Head of Research Strategy Support (in her role as the Colleges REF manager), Dr Sarah Lee, sarah.lee@bbk.ac.uk.

The proforma includes sections from both the PI of the grant that employs the individual (or their line manager if the line manager is not the PI) and the UoA lead (or deputy UoA lead in the event the UoA lead is also the PI/line manager). These statements must focus on the independence of the individual, on the basis of the criteria listed in section 3.8 above and any statements which include information about volume or case study boundaries will be returned to be re-written without this information

3.15 There will be three deadlines (15th January, 1st May, and 5th October 2020) to return the proforma to a specified email address (ref2021@bbk.ac.uk)

Independent Researcher Application Proforma

Name	
Department	
Line Manager /PI	
UoA lead	
Contract end date	

Evidence from the researcher: please mark with an X those indicators of independence you fulfil and provide an explanation of how you fulfil this criterion in the box. This statement should be a maximum of 200 words per box and should be factual and verifiable – for example, if you are claiming you were named on a grant please include the unique identifier from the funder (eg AH/I 1223/456) and a link which confirms the details of the award (eg a Gateway to Research link for UK Research Council awards). Please use the box labelled “other” if there are additional criteria you would like the panel to take into account. Again, this must be factual and verifiable and each separate piece of evidence is limited to one 200 word statement.

Leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project		
Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement but where the specific fellowship does not feature on the “list of independent research fellowships” provided by Research England (https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/additional-guidance/)		
Leading a research group or substantial or specialised work package		
(main panels C&D only) Significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research		
(main panels C&D only) Acting as a co-investigator on an externally funded research project		
Other		

Statement from PI / Line manager: Please ask your grant PI or line manager to provide any additional factual and verifiable information about your research independence, and to confirm that they agree that you have attained research independence. This statement should not be any more than 200 words, and should be included in the box below.

Statement from UoA lead (In the event that the relevant UoA lead is also the PI then the UoA statement should be made by the deputy UoA lead): Please ask your grant PI or line manager to provide any additional factual and verifiable information about your research independence, and to confirm that they agree that you have attained research independence. This statement should not be any more than 200 words, and should be included in the box below.

Appendix 10: Individual circumstances disclosure process

In any census period, an individual can experience circumstances which can constrain their ability to undertake research, and this acts as a burden on their Unit.

The REF process recognises this fact and has a formula-based approach which allows institutions to apply for a proportionate reduction to be applied to the number of outputs which need to be returned by the Unit. The circumstances which constrain an individual's ability to undertake research are summarised as follows (taken from paragraphs 160-162 in the Guidance on Submissions):

- Qualifying as an ECR (on the basis set out in paragraphs 146 -149 and Annex L, Guidance on Submissions, and summarised below in the section titled **Definitions of Early Career Researchers**)
- Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector
- Qualifying periods of family-related leave
- Circumstances with an equivalent effect to absence, that require a judgement about the appropriate reduction in outputs, which are:
 - vii. Disability: this is defined in the 'Guidance on codes of practice', Table I under 'Disability' (<https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance/key-documents/>).
 - viii. Ill health, injury, or mental health conditions.
 - ix. Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption or childcare that fall outside of – or justify the reduction of further outputs in addition to – the allowances set out in Annex L, Guidance on Submissions.
 - x. Other caring responsibilities (such as caring for an elderly or disabled family member).
 - xi. Gender reassignment.
 - xii. Other circumstances relating to the protected characteristics listed in the 'Guidance on codes of practice', Table I, or relating to activities protected by employment legislation.

A request for an individual to be returned with zero outputs can be made when an individual's circumstances have had an exceptional effect on their ability to work productively throughout the assessment period (1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020), so that the individual has not been able to produce an eligible output. This request can be made where any of the following circumstances apply within the period 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020:

- i. an overall period of 46 months or more absence from research during the assessment period, due to one or more of the circumstances set out in paragraphs 160 to 163 (such as an ECR who has only been employed as an eligible staff member for part of the assessment period)
- ii. circumstances equivalent to 46 months or more absence from research, where circumstances set out in paragraph 160 apply (such as mental health issues, caring responsibility, long-term health conditions)
or
- iii. two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave.

Where these precise circumstances cases do not apply, but the individual's circumstances are deemed to have resulted in a similar impact (including where there are a combination of circumstances that would not individually meet the thresholds set out), a request may still be made.

If a staff member has secured permission to be returned with zero outputs but moves institution before or on the census date, the removal of the minimum of one requirement may be applied by the newly employing institution.

The Guidance on Submissions (paragraphs 186-191) describes the formula to calculate how to apply reductions at the unit level if the request for a reduction is upheld; this information is also summarised in appendix L, Guidance on Submissions.

Definitions of Early Career Researchers (paragraphs 146-149 Guidance on Submissions): ECRs are defined as members of staff who meet the definition of Category A eligible on the census date, **and** who started their careers as independent researchers on or after 1 August 2016. For the purposes of the REF, an individual is deemed to have started their career as an independent researcher from the point at which they held a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, which included a primary employment function of undertaking 'research' or 'teaching and research', with any HEI or other organisation, whether in the UK or overseas and they first met the definition of an independent researcher.

The following do **not** meet the definition of an ECR (this list is not exhaustive):

- a. Staff who first acted as an independent researcher while at a previous employer – whether another HEI, business or other organisation in the UK or elsewhere – before 1 August 2016, with a contract of 0.2 FTE or greater.
- b. Staff who first acted as an independent researcher before 1 August 2016 and have since had a career outside of research or an extended break from their research career, before returning to research work. Career breaks are included in the types of circumstances where requests for output reductions may be made
- c. Research assistants who would not normally meet the definition of an independent researcher, as set out in paragraph 129.

Process: Those staff who wish to have the impact that their circumstances have had on their unit recognised, or who have the right to be returned with zero outputs (as described above and in paragraphs 178-183, Guidance on Submissions) will need to complete and return the pro-forma shown in appendix 10 which should be returned to the HR Data Analytics & Information Systems Manager by 1st November 2020. All T&R and R Only Staff will be notified of the requirement to do this by email to their .bbk.ac.uk, dcs.bbk.ac.uk or cryst.bbk.ac.uk email address in September 2020. In clearly defined circumstances this will be used to calculate this level of reduction to be requested from EDAP.

Individual circumstances disclosure proforma

Name	
Department	
UoA	

Please select one of the following:

- I have clearly defined circumstances which have constrained my ability to undertake research in the period and I wish to claim a reduction for my Unit and have filled in Table I accordingly
- I have complex circumstances which have constrained my ability to undertake research in the period and I would like to apply for a reduction for my UoA and have filled in Table I accordingly

Table I

Circumstance	Dates affected	Evidence

Please select as appropriate:

- I confirm that the information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances.
- I recognise that the information provided will be used for REF purposes and will be seen by the HR Data Analytics & Information Systems Manager and I understand that members of the Individual Circumstances Panel will see an anonymised version of this form.
- I realise that it will be necessary to share this information with the Secretariat to the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel for the purpose of evidencing any reduction in the number of research outputs and that the REF Equality and Diversity Panel will see an anonymised version of this information.
- I recognise that if a joint submission is made, information will be shared with another institution.
- Where these permissions are not provided the College will be limited in the action it can take, potentially meaning that my UoA does not receive a reduction for my circumstances.

Signature:

Date:

I prefer to be contacted by phone on:

I prefer to be contacted by email on:

Appendix I I: baseline diversity report

Gender:	Female	53.5%
	Male	46.5%

Ethnicity:	Asian	6.9%
	Black	2.3%
	Chinese	2.4%
	Mixed	1.1%
	Other	5.3%
	White	82.0%

Age	<25	3.1%
	25-29	8.4%
	30-34	17.4%
	35-39	16.4%
	40-44	13.0%
	45-49	10.5%
	50-54	11.1%
	55-59	8.0%
	60-64	6.6%
	65-69	3.5%
	70+	2.0%

Disability	Disability	3.6%
	No known disability	96.4%

Sexuality	Heterosexual	91.0%
	Gay man	2.8%
	Gay woman / Lesbian	3.1%
	Bisexual	2.3%
	Other	0.8%

Religion	Buddhist	1.3%
	Christian	23.9%
	Hindu	2.1%
	Jewish	4.0%
	Muslim	2.9%
	No religion	63.6%
	Some other religion/belief	1.0%
	Spiritual	1.3%

Marital Status	Married or in a civil partnership	56.8%
	Not married or in a civil partnership	43.2%