

# Code of Practice

## Part 1: Introduction

University of Suffolk is the newest University in the UK, having achieved University status on 1st August 2016. The University of Suffolk is a distinctive, thriving, cohesive, self-critical and student-centred academic community which makes a clear and immediate impact. At the University of Suffolk engagement is about communicating and sharing knowledge, consulting and collaborating with the local community, enriching cultural life and providing a service to our communities. This is integral to our duty to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people. Students are at the centre of our mission and ethos. We are proud of our tradition of attracting a diverse student body and producing high-quality graduates.

As a new University, we believe that a strong, high performing University requires a rich research culture generating high quality outputs and intellectual capital. Since our independence in 2016 the development of a strong HE culture, and the support of staff in the development of their research profiles has been an institutional priority. The 2020 Vision outlines the intention that by 2020 learning and teaching at the University will be underpinned by applied, professional and practice-based research and scholarship that has national and international recognition and demonstrable impact. The University of Suffolk aim will be to create career-ready graduates that are global citizens and life- long learners.

Approximately 7,500 students are studying at the University of Suffolk. As a relatively small university, University of Suffolk employs 506 staff. 224 members are academic staff (143 of whom have permanent, full time, contracts, 59 have permanent, part time contracts-based on 2018 data). 12% of the academic staff currently are eligible as Category A staff (Suffolk Academic Model-Excellence in Research and Scholarly Activity, Learning and Teaching, Knowledge Exchange).

Our research strategy sets out our aims for research to increase the numbers and proportion of staff actively engaged in research. Our strategy states that we will provide a strong and vibrant trans-disciplinary research environment for staff and students; recognising and reward staff accomplishments in research through recognised promotion schemes; further develop the early career researcher scheme enabling all staff to realise their full potential and ensuring sustainability of research and support staff to apply for targeted sources of funding and developing strategic research partnerships.

University of Suffolk has a diverse academic profile, largely vocational in nature, delivered by a mixture of academic staff, hourly paid/guest lecturers, technical demonstrators and colleagues supporting academic skills development. The University of Suffolk's academic activities, like many other Universities in the sector, can be broadly defined into three categories: providing education and associated administrative duties, undertaking research and performing business/community engagement and commercial/knowledge-transfer activity. It is also clear that in all three categories there is a strong element of citizenship contribution which is associated directly with teaching, research and enterprise/outreach activities.

The University of Suffolk is committed to an inclusive approach to the delivery of Higher Education. We continually strive to ensure that the University of Suffolk is open and accessible to all those wishing to participate in and capable of benefiting from Higher Education. Our inclusive ethos also underpins our Code of Practice for our REF 2021 submission in that we are wholly committed to people with protected characteristics including age; disability; gender; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race and ethnicity; religion or belief and sexual orientation.

In addition to promoting equality of opportunity and equality of access in our Code of Practice, we are committed to ensuring that all members of our community are treated, and treat each other, with respect and dignity in all our activities. We aim to foster a secure and caring environment, which is welcoming to all and free from prejudice and discrimination. We ensure that the principles of respect and dignity of the individual, and of equality of opportunity for all, are incorporated in the policies, and in the organization and management of all activities of the institution's community.

Managers have a duty to act as role models with regard to our commitment to equality and diversity and to this Code of Practice, and to ensure staff adhere to the Code of Practice and are given the opportunity to develop the necessary skills and understanding to implement it.

The University of Suffolk Executive has a duty to monitor equality of opportunity among its workforce and in the application of all relevant policies and practices. In relation to research, the Executive is supported in this work by the REF 2021 Implementation Group; the Research and Enterprise Committee, the Research Management Group and the University's Equality and Diversity Committee.

The Code of Practice developed by the University of Suffolk is in line with our institutional policies and strategies that promote and support equality and diversity across the institution. It places the principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity at the centre of the processes designed for preparation of the University's first REF submission to REF2021. This is reflected, for example in the following: Equality and Diversity Policy; Flexible Working Policy; policies for Maternity Leave; Paternity Leave; Adoption Leave; Shared Parental Leave; Parental Leave; Time off for dependents; Dignity and Respect at Work and Dignity at Study Policies. Furthermore, the University of Suffolk is fully committed to the social model of disability. The University of Suffolk will ensure that the selection of staff for the REF 2021 will meet the requirements of the REF2021 Guidance on Submissions and meet the standards of the Equality legislation.

The Director of Research and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor have overall responsibility for the implementation of the university's research strategy which includes consideration and potential submission of to REF2021. This Code of Practice has been developed in consultation with staff and it relates to the following University of Suffolk policies and strategies that specifically promote and support Equality and Diversity:

- Equality and Diversity policy
- Research Strategy
- University Strategic Plan

#### **An update of actions taken since REF 2014**

The University of Suffolk, previously University Campus Suffolk - a collaboration between the universities of Essex and East Anglia since 2007 – achieved its independence and TDAP awarding powers on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016. As such we were not eligible to submit an entry to REF 2014. Since achieving independence in 2016 we have begun to develop our research in a few distinct areas, for example health and wellbeing; creative digital; sustainability, crime and social justice.

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

The University monitors the diversity of its student body and its workforce, as well as the effects of its policies and processes (such as recruitment, progression). To do this we collect personal data (treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act) Such data is carefully reported in a way that protects people's right to confidentiality. Information collected in this way informs our Equality Objectives and is reported annually to the Equality and Diversity Committee, School Executives and the University Executive, as well as to the University of Suffolk Board. Equality data is published annually on our website <https://www.uos.ac.uk/content/equality-and-diversity>.

As a university actively promote an inclusive culture and strive to ensure that all opportunities for staff development and progression are available to full-time and part-time staff and those who job share. This extends to those staff who also are on fixed-term contracts, early career and established staff. The following policies support this inclusive culture:

- [Adoption Policy](#)
- [Maternity Leave & Benefits](#)
- [Paternity Leave](#)
- [Parental Leave](#)
- [Shared Parental Leave](#)
- [Time Off for Dependants](#)
- [Flexible Working Policy](#)
- [Flexi-time Scheme Arrangements](#)

In order to monitor inclusion and fairness of the REF2021 process, the University of Suffolk will be required to gather and share some personal data. This information will include details of individual staff that they wish to provide in relation to their circumstances and equality monitoring across protected characteristics. Staff will be assured that the gathered data they provide will only be used for the purposes of the REF. Personal data will be protected and managed in line with the University's [data protection policy](#).

Those staff with significant responsibility for research will be encouraged to complete the equality monitoring element for submission in order to allow the University to analyze inclusion throughout the process.

Through working with the Equality and Diversity committee and following our Equality and Diversity Policy, the University of Suffolk will ensure that their REF2021 procedures do not discriminate 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. Fixed-term and part-time employees will be treated equally with comparable employees on permanent contracts or full-time contracts.

### Transparency

All criteria and procedures applied in the assessment process have been and will continue to be explained openly and in an accessible way. The communications plan includes multiple formats for ensuring staff have an opportunity to contribute to the consultation and to remain informed throughout the University's preparation of the REF2021 submission.

The University is ensuring transparency by:

- Creating an open access REF information portal;
- Making the Code of Practice available in different formats on request;
- Providing information by direct mailing and remote access for staff absent from work;
- Ensuring that there is a REF equality agenda item for all appropriate committee meetings;
- Communicating regular updates through pan university committees and each School committee;
- Information and regular updates on the staff intranet;
- Providing informal confidential REF related "drop in sessions" for staff on a regular basis.

### Accountability

Responsibilities for all staff are clearly defined, and the individuals and groups involved in the selection of staff and outputs for the REF submissions are identified by name and role. The membership, operating criteria and terms of reference for individual committees, advisory groups and any other bodies concerned with staff selection are readily available. The University requires all staff to have completed the University's equality e-learning training package and understand the REF principles of equality and diversity.

### Inclusivity

Using the guidance provided by REF, the University of Suffolk promotes an inclusive environment in which staff have been able to engage in the REF process and will enable the University to identify staff eligible for submission. The Code of Practice promotes an inclusive environment by establishing, maintaining and updating an Equality Impact Assessment at all key stages of the process.

The University will meet this principle by:

- Providing opportunities for staff to feedback about REF throughout the preparation period;
- Facilitating regular REF staff workshops/presentations;
- Providing information and FAQs on process and REF through email and drop in sessions.

A programme of communication and consultation with staff includes:

- A dedicated email address for responses to the consultation and for any queries related to the REF at the University of Suffolk;
- information and regular updates on the staff intranet;
- The Code of Practice will be published on the University's website;
- A continuing programme of consultation and awareness raising to be undertaken through staff emails, internal news items and through academic school communications;
- HR will further support the communications plan in providing information to staff who are absent from work and in all necessary formats.

The University operates a range of policies and procedures that underpin our commitment to equality and diversity and our Code of Practice. All our policies and procedures are consulted on with all staff. Key policies and procedures are published on our intranet site and this will include the Code of Practice once agreed by REF. All decisions relating to REF, eligibility and the selection of outputs are documented in the minutes of committees and additionally communicated through all staff events, all staff emails, and through the School Deans and School Research Leads for each academic School to School executives and other school meetings.

The composition of the REF 2021 Implementation Group ensures representatives from all academic Schools is included. The membership of the REF Appeals Panel and REF Individual Circumstances Panel will be given careful consideration to ensure confidentiality, independence and impartiality.

## 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.

**Policies and procedures** – where not submitting 100 per cent of eligible staff.

- **Criteria used for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research, including information about how the criteria are being applied, and grounds for decisions taken.**

Academic staff at the University of Suffolk with a significant responsibility for research from all levels - Lecturers, Research Fellows, Senior Lecturers, Associate Professors and Professors - are identified through being actively engaged in research in their discipline as defined as Category A Eligible staff in the guidance document for REF2021<sup>1</sup>.

As such they are defined as academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater whose primary employment function is to undertake either teaching and research<sup>2</sup> or research only whereby research, is understood as a 'process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared'<sup>3</sup>.

It should be noted that, whilst 'Scholarship may include conventional research (discovery of new knowledge), innovative application or integration of existing knowledge, for example, professional practice, or the study of learning and teaching practices'<sup>4</sup>, staff engaged exclusively in scholarship are not considered to have a significant responsibility for research.

The University of Suffolk has introduced a workload allocation academic model (WAM), which identifies the time allocated to individuals on a range of activities, including research. Staff with a significant responsibility for research are allocated an enhanced workload allocation for research above that give for normal scholarly activity to all staff. A range of staff participated in the discussions that contributed to the selection of units of assessments for submission to REF 2021. We asked all academic Schools Executives to consult with their staff to consider the relevant UoAs. These UoAs were then further considered by the REF2021 Implementation Group and by the Vice Chancellor, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, School Deans and the Director of Research and School Research leads.

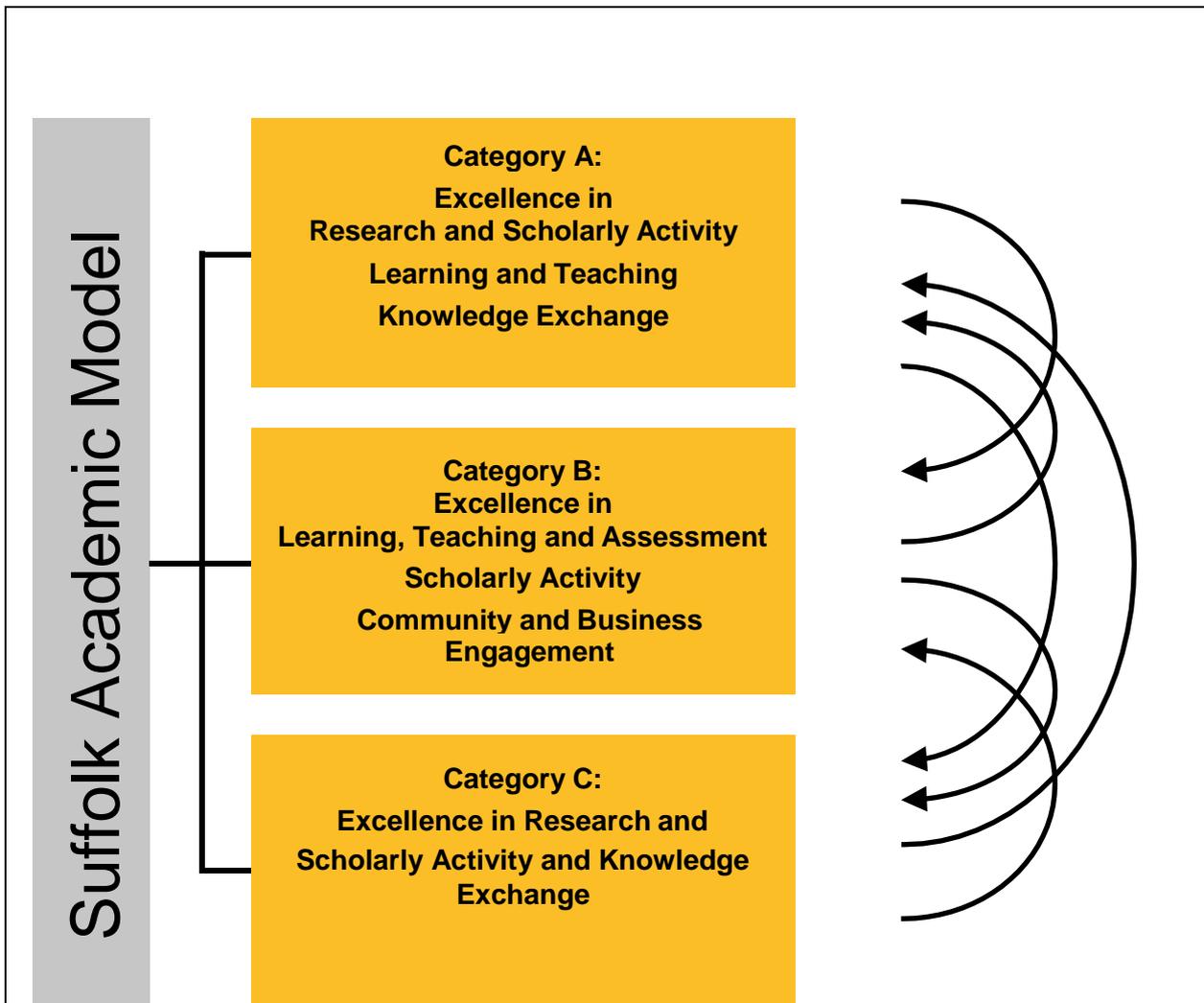
At the University of Suffolk, we introduced new 'academic career pathways' in which colleagues will be able to indicate a specialism in teaching or teaching and research within a standard academic contract, and enable parity of esteem. These pathways incorporate the components essential for identifying REF 2021 Category A- eligible staff.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/draft-guidance-on-submissions-201801/>

<sup>2</sup> These staff will be returned to the Higher Education Statistics Agency Staff Collection (HESA) as 'teaching and research' - code 3 in the ACEMPFUN field.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/draft-guidance-on-submissions-201801/> page 3

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/quality-code-overview-2015.pdf?sfvrsn=d309f781\\_6](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/quality-code-overview-2015.pdf?sfvrsn=d309f781_6) Page 17



The aim of this initiative is to ensure every aspect of the academic role is recognised and valued, to enable better quality discussions at appraisal and to support and facilitate career development at every academic level, which reflects the strategies and priorities of our four academic Schools.

As a University we are committed to ensuring that the management of these academic roles is supportive and collaborative and to facilitating staff progression through the grading structure regardless of the Academic category.

As our existing role descriptors – Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor and Professor all acknowledge the different aspects of the academic role. It is envisaged that both the staff appraisal and promotion processes will provide clear, supportive and straight-forward mechanisms for progression between categories as appropriate for the individual academic staff member’s strengths and desired career trajectory.

The academic promotion and career development procedure identifies the following pathways to promotion through academic grades including Category A: Excellence in Research and Scholarly Activity Learning and Teaching Knowledge Exchange Category B: Excellence in

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Scholarly Activity Community and Business Engagement  
Category C: Excellence in Research and Scholarly Activity and Knowledge Exchange.

The criteria we used for staff to self-select were the same as set out in the REF 2021  
Guidance in that:

Staff with significant responsibility for research are those for whom:

- a. 'Explicit time and resources are made available' with a specific proportion of time allocated for research, and research allocation in their workload.
- b. 'To be engaged actively in independent research'; eligible to apply for research funding as the lead or co-applicant and membership of research centres and research institutes.
- c. 'And that is an expectation of their job role' and this is reflected in their career pathway and stated objectives and appraisals.

Performance is reviewed annually via their personal development review and the plan and resource requirements are updated and staff can move. We believe this model provides a comprehensive supportive environment to help our researchers become more successful whilst valuing all staff career pathways and choice. Initially, in line with the academic promotion and career development procedure, all academic staff were asked to self-select one of the pathways they have been and are focusing their efforts on, feels best fit their contribution and that they believe their achievements can be evidenced against to be able to demonstrate a sustained/significant level of achievement in future years.

Academic staff that self-select the research pathway will be identified for REF purposes as having a significant responsibility for research. All academic staff have time allocated in workloads for research and scholarly activity. There is no expectation that the initial self-selection by staff is fixed permanently; as roles and responsibilities, the external environment and the strategic research plan of the University adjusts so to, will responsibilities of staff.

There is a career development route through the grades to professorship for all pathways since all aspects play a critical role to the success of University of Suffolk as a learning community centred on student success. All processes have been consulted on and agreed with staff representative groups in a clear and transparent way. The academic promotion and career development procedure was consulted on open staff briefings, School Executive meetings, individual meetings with the School Deans.

The principles of the code of practice were discussed at the REF Working Group meetings and a consultation and communication plan agreed with the School Deans and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

A code of practice consultation plan was made available to the School Deans along with the draft code of practice.

Our Consultation process includes:

- Staff briefings, News and emails to all staff
- Open workshops led by the Director of Research

- Consultations with UCU

The draft Code of Practice was sent to School Deans for comments and further circulation to staff with a deadline for approval of 23 April 2019.

The University of Suffolk has published the draft Code of Practice, which will be revised once the points of clarification will be accepted by Research England.

#### **How decisions are being made and communicated to staff, including timescale.**

All staff are asked to complete an academic CV and to consider and self-evaluate whether they consider themselves to be an independent researcher and have a significant responsibility for research. Subsequently each member of staff is invited to have a one-to-one discussion with their line manager who has a sound understanding of their discipline area to discuss their roles and responsibilities for learning and teaching, research and scholarly activity and business engagement. This is periodically reviewed (at least annually) in order to allow staff to move from one academic category to another as appropriate as professional trajectories develop and priorities for individual careers change.

#### **Stages of approval:**

<b>Phase 1</b>	
1 August 2018	Paper shared with Staff and union representatives for consultation
3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2018	Initial draft paper presented and shared at all staff away day.
1 August – 24 October 2018	School wide consultations
September to November 2018.	Consultation with unions and all staff workshops.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2018	End of consultation/feedback period
Week beginning 5 November 2018	Meet with union representatives to review feedback from consultation and finalise
Week beginning 12 November 2018	Proposed changes confirmed to union and staff
End November 2018.	Second draft of Suffolk Academic paper circulated.
<b>Phase 2</b>	
November/December 2018	Academic staff to complete and submit CVs and self-review eligibility and responsibility for research.
January 2019	REF2021 Implementation Group review and identify potential UoA for REF2021 across Academic Schools.

January 2019	Individual discussions with Deans and agree provision category to identify eligibility and significant responsibility for research.
February 2019	Deans recommend staff edibility per School with REF2021 Implementation Group and discuss outcomes.
27 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	Review and confirmation by Deans to edibility group – Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Director of Research.
<b>Phase 3</b>	
April 2019	Categories confirmed to staff by School Deans
April/May 2019	Feedback/potential appeals questions with Director of Research
31 May 2019	Senate approval received
June 2019	Annual review 1 at annual appraisals by School Deans; approved by DoR and DVC.
June 2020	Annual review 2 by School Deans at annual appraisal; approved by DoR and DVC.

### **Development of processes.**

- **How processes to be followed have been consulted on and agreed with staff representative groups.**

#### **How processes to be followed have been consulted on and agreed with staff representative groups.**

Initial draft proposals for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research presented at the all staff away day on 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2018 with 174 members of staff (70 Academics and 104 Professional Services) attending.

Proposals were submitted to REF2021 Implementation Group on 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2018 where the Director of Research presented the Stern review which detailed all the requirements to the Deans.

Consultations were undertaken via Schools led by School Deans and by School Research Leads. Revised proposals were recirculated to all staff on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018 via email and a further consultation to staff took place on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2018. 23 staff members confirmed their attendance in advance. However, many more attended on the day.

The proposals were submitted to the following committees on:

University of Suffolk Executive 10 July 2018

The Senior Leadership team on 18 July 2018

Comments and suggestions fed in from both and revisions made accordingly.

Additionally to the academic schools:

Suffolk Business School: 1 November 2018

Law and Social Sciences: 12 September 2018; 18 October 2018 & 23 January 2019.

Psychology and Education: 30 October 2018; information was circulated in November 2018

School of Health Sciences: 3<sup>rd</sup> October and 7<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

School of Science, Computing and Engineering: 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019 & 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019.

School of Arts, Design and Humanities: 10 October 2019

- **How the final agreed processes have been/are being communicated to staff, if different to that described in Part 1: Introduction.**

As described in Part 1

### **Staff, committees and training**

- **Procedures for appointing designated staff and committees/panels responsible for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research (distinguishing between those with advisory and those with decision-making roles).**

The University provides a range of training opportunities and courses in support of its Equality and Diversity Policy which are mandatory for staff, including the designated members of staff with responsibility in relation to REF 2021.

The University will provide staff awareness sessions on the REF 2021 Code of Practice. These sessions will ensure that the principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity have supported the development of the Code. The sessions also provide an opportunity for staff to understand the Code of Practice, eligibility and the guidance on submissions in terms of complex circumstance.

- **Information provided should include role descriptions for individuals and terms of reference for committees/panels, modes of operation, and record-keeping procedures, as well as information about where these roles/committees/panels fit into the wider institutional management structure.**

The Director of for Research has a substantive role which currently includes leadership for REF2021 and of the University Research Directorate. The University Research Development Manager has a responsibility to facilitate and support preparation for REF2021 and is line managed by the Director of Research.

The Appeal group (AG) is chaired by the DVC and also comprises the Director of Research (advisory capacity), the Director of HR and a Dean of School not involved in other REF decisions relating to the relevant staff member.

The REF2021 Implementation Group is chaired by the DVC and comprises Director of Research and School Deans from all Academic Schools.

Refer to Appendix 2 for:

1. Role descriptor for Director of Research
2. Role descriptor for Research Development Manager
3. Role descriptor for School Research Leads

The terms of reference for the following committees and groups are also provided in the appendices as outlined below:

- The REF2021 Implementation group (Formed specifically for REF2021, record keeping performed by the PA to the DVC.
  - Research and Enterprise Committee (record keeping performed by Admin Support from the University Research Directorate)
  - Research Management Group (record keeping performed by the PA to the Director of Research.
  - The Appeals group (Formed specifically for REF2021, record keeping performed by Executive Admin Support)
  - Equality and Diversity Committee, part of the deliberative structure of the University, with record keeping in the form of minutes provided by the PA to the Director of Human Resources.
  - Senate, part of the deliberative structure, with record keeping in the form of minutes provided by the Quality Office admin support.
- 
- **Details of training provided to individuals and committees involved in identifying staff, the timescale for delivery and content (including how it has been tailored to the REF).**

The University of Suffolk has an established Staff Academic Study and Continuing Professional Development Policy and we are committed to providing training and development opportunities for all staff. The training provided for individuals and committees involved in identifying staff was identified and discussed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor; the REF2021 Implementation Group; the Director of Research and the Research Development Manager in consultation with the Vice Chancellor. This training relating to the individual's current or future job requirements at the University was developed as part of individual development plans through the usual appraisal process captured on ACTUS and in line with the Research and Scholarly Activity Strategy; School and University wide objectives.

The training has included both external and internal training opportunities incorporating:

- Key Issues in Research for Small and Specialist Institutions: Exploring Impact and the Implications of the REF Consultation Outcomes - 17th October 2018 attended by DVC and DoR.
- The turning tide: A new culture of responsible metrics for research 8th February 2018 (RDM)
- REF workshop on Codes of Practice on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2019 attended by DoR. Continuing Professional Development for Research Impact Framework for Excellence on 4th October 2018 provided by Open Forum Events Limited
- REF meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> October for HEIs new to REF 2021.
- Leading Major Organizational Change in Higher Education 27th April 2018
- AdvanceHE Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and the Research Excellence Framework 2021: A workshop for practitioners – April 2019.
- CREST workshops: 23 October 2018, 22 January 2019, 05 March 2019

## Appeals

Staff who are concerned that they may be the subject of discrimination, or who are uncertain about their obligations in this respect, are encouraged to discuss their concerns as soon as possible with their line manager, the Director of Research or with a member of the HR Department.

The time line for the appeals process would normally be within 10 working days.

Comments or complaints about the arrangements can be addressed in writing to the Director of Human Resources, Sara Corcoran. Staff wishing to raise a concern about matters concerning the Code of Practice or their inclusion in the REF2021 submission can follow the appeals process and are encouraged to speak to their line manager, or to a member of the HR team. Details of our grievance procedure can be found here: <https://www.uos.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Grievance%20Procedure.pdf>

- **How the appeals process has been communicated to staff.**

The appeals process is part of the Code of Practice and has been communicated electronically to all staff via the staff intranet and email, and via staff briefings prior to submission for approval in June 2019.

In addition, the appeals process will be communicated as an attachment to the email to all staff when they receive decisions in March 2020 (after approval of the submitted Code of Practice).

- **Details of the process, including how cases are submitted, eligible grounds for appeal.**

Applications for appeal should be made by email to the Director of Human Resources by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. This allows at least 20 days after the final decisions have been communicated by email to staff and time before the census date in June 2020. Staff can appeal if they feel that the criteria for determining independence in research or significant responsibility have not been correctly applied or if the evidence for determining the criteria was incomplete.

- **Details of those involved in hearing any appeals (demonstrating their independence from earlier decision processes), timescales and how decisions are being communicated to staff.**

The University has instituted a robust process of external review of the quality of all research outputs that are put forward by staff for consideration for REF2021. External reviewers have been selected based on their scholarly standing, familiarity with the REF evaluation scale, and are independent from the University. It is therefore not considered appropriate that the academic judgement of external reviewers should be subject to appeal. As such appeals cannot be made based on the quality evaluation process for selection of research outputs by identified REF2021 submitted staff.

Appeals must be made in writing and include all relevant supporting evidence. Appeals cannot be made by a third party except in cases of incapacity where evidence is provided. In accordance with data protection legislation written authorisation to correspond with a third party from the individual must be submitted.

The REF Appeals Panel comprises:

- The HR Director
- Deputy Vice Chancellor
- DoR
- Dean of School (not from same school as staff member)

The composition of the REF Appeals Panel is wholly independent from REF Implementation Group membership ensuring impartiality. The review panel will investigate and forward a written response within normally 28 days. The decision of the appeal panel is final.

### Equality impact assessment

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

The University of Suffolk promotes the use of Equality Impact Assessment to highlight potential issues and ensure that our policies and practices are fair and do not discriminate against individuals in any way. The Equality and Diversity Committee independent from the REF2021 Implementation Group, will be responsible for supporting the Equality Impact Assessment. The committee will provide an evaluation of the University's processes for identifying staff, determining research independence and output selection may have a potential impact on any particular groups. As the University of Suffolk will be make a very small submission to REF2021, the evaluation will reflect an approach which reflects the fact that in reporting on very small numbers percentages can be heavily influenced by statistical data. Although a REF2021 specific EIA has not been undertaken to date, the Equality and Diversity Committee regularly monitors and reviews of the policies and procedures which underpin the Code of Practice. The EIA evaluates protected characteristics when identifying staff with significant responsibility for research and determining research independence; in selecting outputs for submission; considering appeals against identification of staff who do not have significant responsibility for research and in preparation of the final submission.

All staff involved in the REF2021 selection process understand the Equality Act and the implications for the University. This requirement will be met by ensuring all those involved have completed the University's Equality e-learning and the REF equality training.

The EIA will consider:

- The categorisation of staff
- Research independence
- How staff with a protected characteristic are represented
- Appeals process
- The selection of outputs - quality and quantity
- How personal information is disclosed

### Part 3: Determining research independence

#### Policies and procedures

- **Criteria used for determining staff who meet the definition of an independent researcher, including information about how the criteria are being applied.**

Similar to the process outlined in part 2, identifying staff with significant responsibility for research, staff were asked to review and self-evaluate whether they considered themselves to be an independent researcher using the possible indicators provided in the REF guidance document<sup>5</sup> listed below.

- Leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project;

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1092/ref-2019\\_01-guidance-on-submissions.pdf](https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1092/ref-2019_01-guidance-on-submissions.pdf)

- Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement. An illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of independent fellowships can be found at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk), under Guidance
- Leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package.

Academic staff at the University of Suffolk with research independence are identified through being actively engaged in research in their discipline as defined as Category A Eligible staff in the guidance document for REF2021<sup>6</sup>.

As such they are defined as academic staff with a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater whose primary employment function is to undertake either teaching and research<sup>7</sup> or research only whereby research, is understood as a 'process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared'<sup>8</sup> and who consider themselves to fulfil some of the criteria for research independence outlines above.

A range of staff participated in the discussions that contributed to the selection of units of assessments for submission to REF 2021. These included the Vice Chancellor, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, School Deans and the Director of Research and School Research Leads.

- **How decisions are being made and communicated to staff, including timescale.**

All staff are asked to complete an academic CV on an annual basis and to consider and self-select whether they consider themselves to be an independent researcher and have a significant responsibility for research. Subsequently each member of staff is invited to have a one-to-one discussion with their line manager who has a sound understanding of their discipline area to discuss their roles and responsibilities for learning and teaching, research and scholarly activity and business engagement. This is periodically reviewed (at least annually) in order to allow staff to move from one academic category to another as appropriate as professional trajectories develop and priorities for individual careers change.

Please see diagram in Part 2 above.

### **Staff, committees and training.**

*(Where such staff and committees are the same as those outlined in Part 2, institutions can cross-refer to that section)*

Please Part 2 above.

### **Appeals**

*(Where the process follows that outlined in Part 2, institutions can cross-refer to that section)*

Please Part 2 above.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/draft-guidance-on-submissions-201801/>

<sup>7</sup> These staff will be returned to the Higher Education Statistics Agency Staff Collection (HESA) as 'teaching and research' - code 3 in the ACEMPFUN field.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/draft-guidance-on-submissions-201801/> page 3

### Equality impact assessment

Please see Part 2 above.

The Equality Impact Assessment will be completed as per University of Suffolk Policy.

[https://mysuffolk.uos.ac.uk/system/files/equality\\_impact\\_assessment\\_procedure.pdf](https://mysuffolk.uos.ac.uk/system/files/equality_impact_assessment_procedure.pdf)

### Part 4: Selection of outputs

#### Policies and procedures.

- **Details of procedures that have been developed to ensure the fair and transparent selection of outputs, including the HEI's approach to submitting outputs by former staff, including those made redundant.**
- **Information should be provided about how processes for selecting outputs have been developed and the rationale for adopted methods.**
- **Codes of practice should describe stages of approval (diagrams, schematics and timelines might be included as an aid).**

In order to ensure a fair and transparent approach to selecting outputs and fulfil the REF 2021 requirement that all submitted staff provide a minimum of one and a maximum of five research outputs for assessment, the University of Suffolk has a clear and consistent protocol for deciding which outputs to submit which are based upon the quality of research alone, as defined by REF criteria and subject to the minimum/maximum requirements.

Individual academic staff researchers are asked to submit their research outputs for consideration on an annual basis in November each year. Following this activity the outputs were carefully considered and a brief descriptions of their research merit provided. Any item which has potential for double weighting is also identified. As part of the annual activity, the REF2021 Implementation Group consider the potential list of outputs, including the possibility for double weighted items and interdisciplinary research examples. This list is then considered independently by external reviewers and from this process one potential UoA incorporating staff from three different Schools across the University was identified in February 2019 – Social Work and Social Policy (UoA 20).

Only 12% of the academic staff currently are eligible as Category A staff (Suffolk Academic Model-Excellence in Research and Scholarly Activity, Learning and Teaching, Knowledge Exchange). Former staff were not eligible for Category A Staff and did not have a significant responsibility for research as such our approach to outputs of former staff, including staff who have been made redundant, is that we will not be submitting outputs from former staff.

The lists of staff are discussed with submitting unit in the regular Research Management Group meetings led by the Director of Research, the DVC and the School Research Leads. This also provides an opportunity for concerns to be raised and progress to be reviewed periodically.

The final list of eligible staff will be identified in June 2020 and a draft list of research outputs by those staff compiled for review. Each staff member will have a minimum of one research output selected for submission. The remaining outputs required for the 2.5 total number of outputs will be finalised by the subject specific University of Suffolk selection panel for UoA 20.

Final decisions on submission will be made by the REF2021 Implementation Group with the DoR and the DVC based on the recommendations of the committee for the submitting unit and the Research Management Group. The REF2021 Implementation Group began regular meetings in 2018, chaired by the DVC and consists of the DoR and the Deans of all the Academic schools.

The Vice-Chancellor and the executive will approve the Code of Practice and the University's REF Units of Assessment (UoA) for final submission.

### **Staff, committees and training**

*(Where such staff and committees are the same as those outlined in Parts 2 or 3, institutions can cross-refer to that section)*

- **Procedures for identifying designated staff and committees/panels responsible for selecting outputs (distinguishing between those with advisory and those with decision-making roles).**

Please see Part 2 above.

The University of Suffolk attended external consultation events provided by REF; CREST and AdvanceHE and provided internal training and consultation workshops across all Schools and training to all units in assessing REF outputs, and the Research Monitoring Team will continue to offer support when requested.

### **Staff circumstances**

Staff who will be returned in the REF will be given the opportunity to volunteer information regarding any personal circumstances that have affected their ability to research productively throughout the REF period via email to their HR link. Staff will be able to declare their circumstances voluntarily in a confidential manner. It would be discussed and agreed with whom the information will be shared with.

Decisions on adjustment of expectations and the need to apply for an exemption due to exceptional circumstances that mean the staff member does not have the required minimum of one output will be made accordingly and shared by email with the member of staff. Any actions or communications that need to happen as a result of the decisions of the appeal group will be discussed and agreed with the member of staff prior to any

communication to other staff that need to understand the requirement for any adjustment or the decision to apply for exemption. HR hold confidential electronic records on all protected characteristics from staff who voluntarily report these via the recruitment process and the on-line HR system, so it is logical that confidential disclosure of circumstances related to REF 2021 are made directly to the HR representative that is part of the REF group. The detail of the personal circumstances will remain confidential and it will be discussed and agreed with whom the information will be shared with.

#### **Equality impact assessment**

- **How an EIA on the spread of outputs across staff (in relation to their protected characteristics) has been used to inform the final selection of outputs to be submitted.**

Please see part 2 above for an outline of the initial EIA which will be used as a framework for analysis to consider equality and diversity across the outputs selected for submission. Once we have a clear idea of the range of research outputs across the eligible staff pool, we will use the framework to ensure that the submission accurately reflects staff characteristics but also ensure that there has been a fair and equal process.

#### **Part 5: Appendices**

Enclosed to the Application.