Research Excellence Framework (REF)
Code of Practice

Part 1: Introduction

This is the University of Lincoln's Code of Practice for the fair and transparent identification of staff with significant responsibility for research support and decision-making processes of REF2021. Underlying it is a fundamental commitment to the development of the research careers of staff.

The Code of Practice should allow the understanding of:

i. The procedures to determine those with significant responsibility for research;
ii. The processes to establish REF research independence;
iii.

The University of Lincoln also implemented Individual Research Plans for all academic staff with responsibility for research from the academic year 2016-17. The Individual Research Planning process serves two purposes:

- Developmental – it provides researchers a structured opportunity to annually review research attainments, set research goals and plans with the advice and critique of an experienced reviewer, and to set a strategy for attaining research objectives.

- Research planning – data from Individual Research Planning feeds into the University of Lincoln's overall planning processes for research, including for the development of a REF entry, and it is therefore used as part of the process to identify individual contributions to the REF.

Our Final REF2014 Equality Impact Assessment also referred to plans to continue conducting mock REF exercises in the lead-up to REF2021. 'Light-touch' mock exercises took place in 2015 and 2016. Significant changes were introduced for the mock REF2018 and mock REF2019 to bring the governance of the exercise entirely under the responsibility of the central administrative REF Team. This was as a result of lessons learnt in the previous years exercises and with the principles of consistency, transparency and accountability as the main drivers.

An Equality Impact Assessment is being conducted on the results of the mock REF2018. This living document will be updated once the institution is in a position to conduct the EIA on the mock REF2019 (expected in Summer 2019) and it will become the backbone of the final EIA, which the institution will undertake prior to submission in November 2020. The final REF2021 EIA will be made public on the University of Lincoln's website. See Appendix E for an

VI. This Code of Practice aligns with other institutional policies and helps the institution to create an environment where people feel they are respected and valued;

It is the responsibility of the University to ensure:

i. That the identification of staff with significant responsibility for research, the identification of REF Researcher Independence status and the selection of outputs for submission adhere to all current equality, diversity and inclusion legislation and to the guidance given in the REF2021 documentation.

ii. That all processes to achieve this are demonstrably fair and transparent;

iii. That the REF-related processes 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.

iv. That fixed-term and part-time staff are not treated any less favourably than comparable employees on open contracts or working full time;

v. That everyone involved with the University's REF2021 submissions understands the University's criteria and procedures for the selection process and have been

feedback has been incorporated to the final version of the Code.

To date, the Code of Practice programme of communication has followed several strands. Information-sharing meetings with representatives of the representative trade union for academics, the Universities and College Union (UCU), open sessions with all members of

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Senior Research Fellows and Principal Research Fellows are usually independent researchers.

'Research-Only' staff identified as independent researchers will meet the definition of 'Category A eligible' staff.

Criteria

The University of Lincoln will establish a process to determine REF research independence applying the indicators recommended (REF P.3 1(c(l)7.2 sn-TJ (t)4.9 (ll)7.2 s

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out from the first stage of the process to determine REF Research Independence and it will be updated at different checking points (desk-based exercise; 'self-nominations' phase, provisional decisions; appeals, and final decisions. If necessary, any corrective action will be taken by the REF Research Independence Panel before making any final decisions on REF Research Independence. This corrective action could take the form of a revised process to determine research independence for the following year of the exercise.

The REF Oversight Group will also receive the Equality Impact Assessment resulting from the process. The REF Oversight Group may decide to take corrective action, which might take the form of reviewed processes and procedures following the results of the Equality Impact Assessment.

The exercise to determine REF Research Independence will be repeated in May-July 2020 for any new members of staff on 'Research-Only' contracts.

For more detail on EIAs, please see Appendix E.

Staff, committees and training

The University of Lincoln will hold two open sessions for staff with 'Research-Only' contracts to explain the processes and procedures to determine REF research independence prior to undertaking the process to determine REF research independence. The Central Administrative REF Team will deliver these sessions.

Staff on 'Research-Only' contracts will also be able to contact a member of the Central Administrative REF Team for a one-to-one discussion about the process to determine REF research independence if they are unable to attend the open sessions or they feel that a conversation fits better with their needs. This initiative responds to the principles of transparency and inclusivity, which govern this Code. For more information about these sessions, please see Appendix A.

All the members of the REF Research Independence Panel have been chosen for their understanding of the research environment at their respective Colleges and their knowledge of the research environment and research career paths at University level.

All the members of the REF Appeals Panel have been chosen for their in-depth knowledge of matters to do with equality, diversity and inclusion and the research environment at the University of Lincoln and, more importantly, for their independence from all the other processes that govern preparations for submission to REF2021.

For more information about the composition of the panels, please see Appendix B.

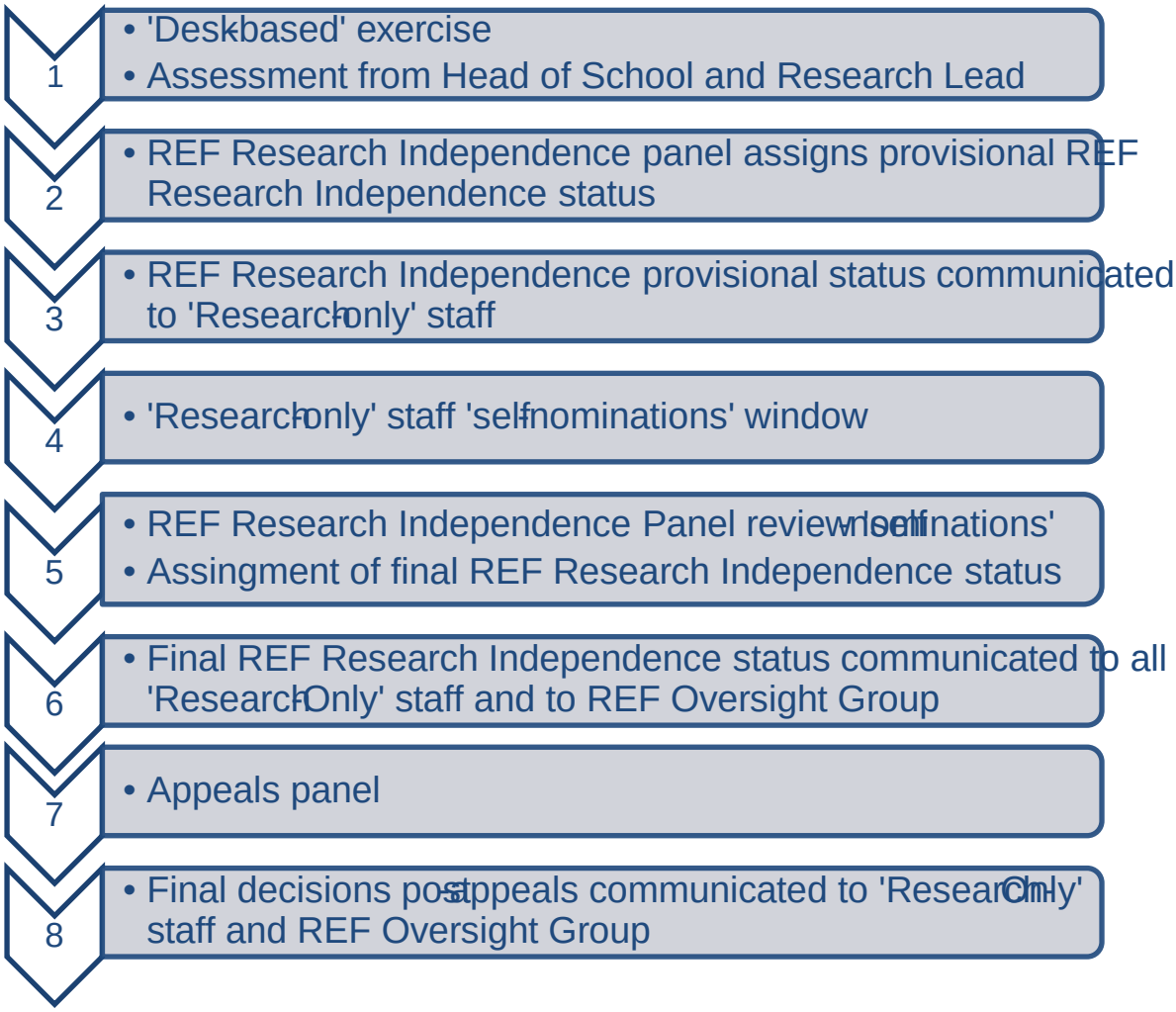
All members of the REF Research Independence Panel and the Central Administrative REF

- Training on the criteria and processes and procedures, to determine REF Research Independence at the University of Lincoln. The training will be delivered by the REF Team in June 2019 and June 2020.
- Training on equality, diversity and inclusion matters in relation to REF processes and procedures. The training will be delivered by the Equality, Engagement and Development Team, Human Resources, University of Lincoln

These training sessions have been put in place in line with the principles of consistency and transparency that governs this Code.

For detail on the Training content, target audience and timeline, please see Appendix C

Process to determine Research Independence Status



Appeals .REF

All appeals against the preliminary REF independence status will be considered by a University REF Appeals Panel (see Appendix C), which is independent of the University's REF decision-making body, the REF Oversight Group. All members of the REF Appeals Panel will have received equality, diversity and inclusion training relevant to the REF decision-making processes, including training on REF researcher independence status.

iv. if the appeal is upheld, the Chair of the University REF Appeals Panel will inform the appellant, in writing, and request that the REF Research Independence Panel reconsiders its decision;

v. if the appeal is not upheld, the Chair will inform the appellant, in writing, and report the outcome to the appropriate panels, with the recommendation that the decision of the University REF Appeals Panel is final.

Final decisions will be taken by the REF Research Independence Panel by the end of August 2019. Final decisions will be communicated to the REF Oversight Group.

An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out on the final list and provided to the REF Oversight Group. If necessary, any corrective action will be taken by the Research Independence Panel before making final decisions.

If appropriate, the REF Research Independence Status process will be repeated between May and August 2020 in order to establish the Research Independence status of any new staff recruited on the 'Research Only' category in the last year before submission to REF2021.

The membership of the University REF Appeals Panel will be separate to the Research Independence Panel. Please see Appendix E for membership and terms of reference.

Part 4: Selection of outputs

Policies and procedures

The University of Lincoln's procedure for REF output selection has three components:

i. Rating of outputs;
ii. Identification of potential requests for reductions of total outputs submitted and potential requests for the elimination of the minimum of one output. These processes are driven by the voluntary declaration of staff circumstances;
iii. Selection of outputs.

The overriding principle for the process of selecting outputs for submission is academic judgement. The University of Lincoln has put in place the following processes and procedures in order to ensure that at all junctures where academic judgement is invoked, there is also full adherence to the principles of Transparency, Consistency, Accountability and Inclusion.

i. Rating of outputs

Assigning provisional output ratings

For selection purposes, the University of Lincoln will assign each output

potential for a request for double-weighting

REF quality ratings. The role of the assessors is to judge the academic quality of the work; they do not take individual staff circumstances or unit's circumstances into account.

In the case of UoAs in which REF-panels will consider extra information about outputs, UoA Outputs Assessment Panels are also able to consider such extra information. The UoA Outputs Assessment Panels, however, will still continue to rely on peer review as the primary means for assessing outputs.

The result of this expert review exercise is a series of ratings. Ratings of external assessors are not the sole determinant of whether an output is submitted to the REF and it may be necessary to consult more than one external assessor to help determine the estimated quality of an individual's output.

Internal assesso

Output Assessment Panel notes and the REF Oversight Group notes regarding their individual outputs.

This process is designed to ensure that all outputs are fairly and equally rated for potential REF quality, and that there is sufficient granularity to distinguish levels of certainty about the projected REF rating to aid the decision-making bodies when preparing final submission to

by the Central Administrative REF Team. A paper copy of the form will be sent to the postal address of any staff with significant responsibility for research on leave of absence at the time.

All members of staff with significant responsibility for research will be signposted to the Senior REF Manager (Strategy and Delivery) if they wish to have a confidential conversation about their personal circumstances in relation to REF at any point in the process.

In line with the principles of transparency, consistency and inclusivity, there will be two calls to disclose staff circumstances at different times in the REF preparation stages. The calls will clearly state that this is a voluntary process, that the potential disclosure of staff circumstances is a personal decision and that the disclosure or non-disclosure of staff circumstances has no bearing on any other REF-related process.

The full details regarding disclosed staff circumstances will only be available to the Central Administrative REF team. Assessors and members of the different committees involved in the assessing of outputs will not have access to this confidential information. In this way, the University of Lincoln ensures that there will be no difference in the assessment of the quality of publications of staff with staff circumstances from that of staff without these circumstances. To this end, the process to assign provisional output ratings is completely independent from the processes to determine potential output reductions due to staff circumstances.

Mechanisms in place to support staff with circumstances

The Individual Research Planning cycle sits at the centre of research planning activity at the University of Lincoln. With its dual planning and developmental purposes, this is the time for academics with significant responsibility for research to have a supportive conversation with their reviewers about yearly delivery and realistic plans for the future.

It is in the context of this supportive conversation that adjustment of expectations takes place and reviewers have an opportunity to put in place any supportive measures, such as mentoring or coaching.

Academic colleagues on leave at the time of the Individual Research Planning (November - December) (e.g. family leave or sickness leave) are not required to complete their plans unless they wish to do so. The researcher has absolute control over the process in these circumstances.

It is important to note that the reviewer for an Individual Research Plan is a senior research colleague in the field of expertise of the researcher. This is to provide the researcher with the appropriate setting in which to make the best individual choices in their research plans as well as to be able to have a protected conversation about adjustment of expectations. Reviewer and reviewee agree the research plans as well as any supportive measures for the year ahead.

In cases in which additional support is needed, this will be highlighted by the reviewer, who has the ability to raise the case with the College Directors of Research. Additional support

can take the form of additional mentoring opportunities and/or invitation to apply for research leave in appropriate cases.

The University of Lincoln does not wish to be prescriptive about the degree of adjustment needed in cases in which research expectations are adjusted due to staff circumstances. Each case is assessed individually by the reviewer, who has the appropriate depth knowledge to judge the case and agree a set of realistic e2i90.9 (a)2.8 (s)1-6..7 (t (i)2.8.1 (e2i)7 (r)14

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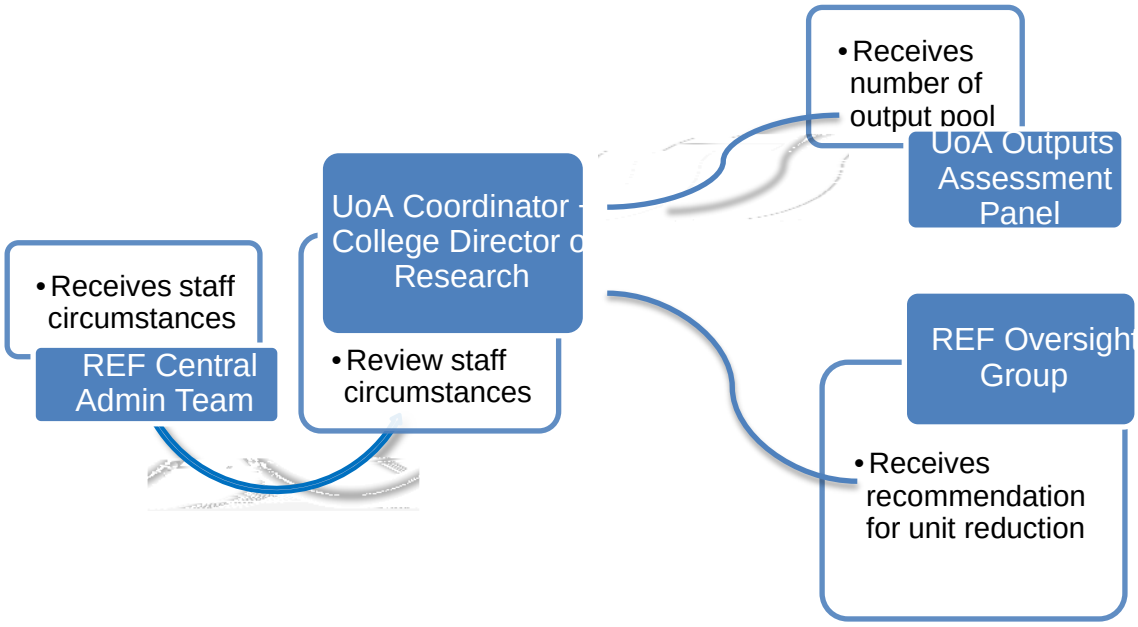
submissions' apply, such as mental health issues, caring responsibilities or long-term health conditions;

c) Two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave.

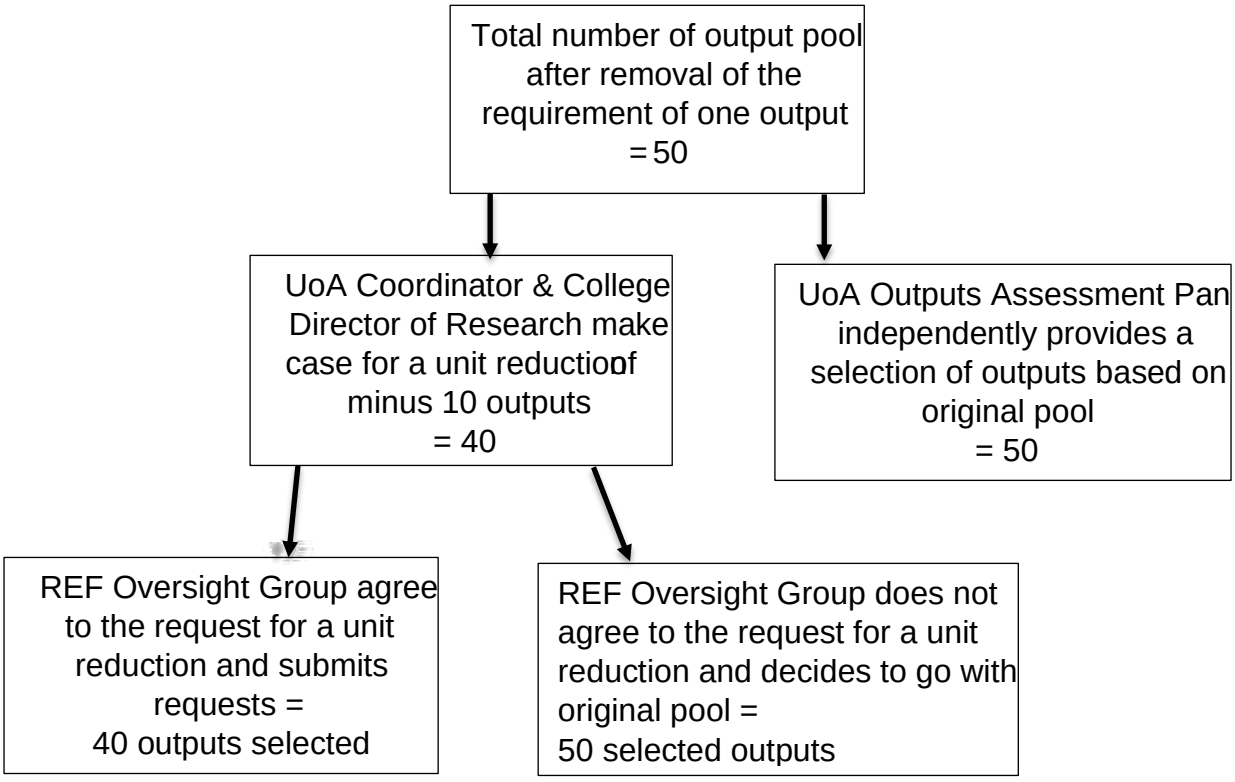
ii. Making a recommendation for a potential request for a unit reduction. The recommendation will go to the REF Oversight Group, which will have the final say regarding submitting requests for unit reductions.

It is expected that a request for a unit reduction will only be made in cases in which staff circumstances have had a disproportionate effect on the unit. Although the University of Lincoln do not wish to be prescriptive about the point from which the effect of staff circumstances become disproportionate, the following aspects will be assessed when making judgments about the nature of the effect of staff circumstances in a unit's abilitoilit nor-1.3 (in) (

Disassociate processes for establishing the size of the output pool and the final selection of outputs for submission



Worked example of disassociate process for establishing the size of the output pool and the final selection of outptus for submission



Staff, committees and training

The Central Administrative REF Team will run specific training sessions for all Unit of Assessment Coordinators and College Directors of Research on the criteria and the processes and procedures governing the process to disclose staff circumstances and the process to request reductions of outputs. The training will also be compulsory for all the members of the REF Oversight Group, which will make final decisions on requests for reduction of outputs following recommendations from UoA Coordinators and College Directors of Research.

For content, target audience and timeline of the training, please see Appendix C

iii. Selection of outputs

The selection of outputs follows a three-stage process:

a. assignment of authors to Unit of Assessment (UoA)
b. selection of first output;
c.

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no individual has more than five outputs assigned to them (as necessary, outputs will be reassigned to valid multiple authors to avoid exceeding the maximum limit of five).

When the lowest level of rating that needs to be included is reached, there may remain a residual pool of outputs with same rating of which only a subset may be included in the submission.

The UoA Output Assessment Panel will convene and rank (e)-3 (d)2.2 (i)13 ( )T61W8j 12 0 6de onet43-9

Crucially, this working group will be responsible for preparing recommendations for the REF Oversight Group based on the evidence gathered through EIAs. The REF Oversight Group will consider the findings of the EIAs and make final decisions about any potential amendments to processes and procedures related to REF2021 preparations.

The EIAs will include data analysis on the final selection of outputs for submission. This data analysis will build on the EIAs that are being conducted on the results of the mock REF2018 and will be conducted on the results of the mock REF2019.

The Equality Impact Assessments are therefore living documents that will be reviewed at key stages of the REF2021 preparations.

The final EIA will be referred to the REF Oversight Group for review and consideration prior to final decisions on submission to REF2021. [illegible] process [illegible] to the Oversight Group

Part 5: Appendices

Appendix A – Timeline and details for Code of Practice Programme of Communication

Event	Date	Delivered by / Led by	Audience
Initial consultation on Code of Practice principles with UCU	December 2018	DVC Research and Innovation	UCU representatives
Targeted information sharing activity with UCU	29th March 2019	DVC Research and Innovation, HR representative and Research Environment Manager	UCU representatives
UCU declined offers from the DVC Research and Innovation to meet again to discuss feedback on Code of Practice			
Notice about open sessions on draft Code of Practice on University staff news, Research & Enterprise portal & all academic staff email communication	Early April 2019	REF Team	All staff
Draft Code of Practice distributed to all academic members of staff on long-term leave	Early April 2019	HR	All staff on long-term leave
Open sessions to all staff and invitation for feedback	9th April 2019 10.00am – 11.00am 11th April 2019 3.30pm – 4.30pm 15th May 2019 9.00am – 10.00am	DVC Research and Innovation	All staff
Targeted information sessions with Early Career Researchers	11th April 2019 1.00pm – 2.00pm 26th April 2019 12.00noon – 1.00pm 1st May 2019 3.00pm – 4.00pm 8th May 2019 1.00pm – 2.00pm	Research Environment Manager	Early Career Researchers

Planned activity following approval of the Code of Practice			
Sessions on the criteria and processes and procedures used to determine REF research independence	Summer 2019 & Summer 2020	REF Team	All "Research Only" staff
Sessions on confidential processes to disclose staff circumstances	Summer and Autumn 2019	REF Team	All staff with 'Significant responsibility for research'

AppendixB - The University REF Committees and Panels

Membership of these committees and panels may change during the course of the REF period, for a variety of reasons. Updated membership will be posted on the University's REF portal page.

REF Oversight Group

Terms of Reference

- To make decisions on the final selection of outputs for submission to the REF, by Unit of Assessment, based on recommendations by the UoA Outputs Assessment Panels.
- To notify Unit of Assessment Coordinators (UoACs) of decisions made for their unit of assessment.
- To oversee the progress of the University's REF strategy;
- To continuously monitor progress towards the REF submission, including outputs, impact and environment;
- To regularly report on REF progress to the Research and Employer Engagement Group (REEG);
- To recommend actions to REEG and other bodies in the University, to optimise REF performance.

Membership
Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation
Director of Research, College of Arts
Director of Research, College of Science
Director of Research, College of Social Science
Director of Research, Lincoln International Bus(f R)-hanŠ,' <'"‘ c= ffÑãa a ‘ Ò6à„•f#¡“ Ããn0&nq ¹f#3É

Research & Industrial Partnerships has an institutional role supporting researcher development and is a member of the Doctoral School Management Board and the Lincoln Institute for Advanced Studies Management Board.

The Chair of the panel has an in depth knowledge of the research culture at Lincoln and an extensive knowledge of research assessment-related policy in the context of Higher Education in the UK.

The officer of the group,

The officer of the group, a member of the Central Administrative REF team, will take formal

Submissions

To submit this form you should email it to REF@lincoln.ac.uk to the attention of the Senior REF Manager (Strategy & Delivery) and marked 'Strictly confidential'.

Name: Click here to insert text.
Department: Click here to insert text.

Do you have a REF eligible output published between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2020?

Yes δ
No δ

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

Circumstance	Time period affected
Early Career Researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016). Date you became an early career researcher.	Click here to enter date.
Junior clinical academic who has not gained Certificate of completion of Training by 31 July 2020.	Tick here δ
Career break or secondment outside of the HE sector. Dates and durations in months.	Click here to enter dates and durations.
Family-related leave; • statutory maternity leave • statutory adoption leave • Additional paternity or adoption leave or shared parental leave lasting for four months or more. For each period of leave, state the nature of the leave taken and the dates and durations in months.	Click here to enter dates and durations.

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

Please confirm, by ticking the box provided, that:

- The above information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances as of the date below
- I realise that the above information will be used for REF purposes only and will be seen by the Central Administrative REF Team.

- I realise it may be necessary to share the information with the REF team, the REF Equalityand Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs.

  I agree δ

Name: Print name here
Signed: Sign or initial here
Date: Insert date here

δ I give my permission for the Senior REF Manager (Strategy & Delivery) to contact me to discuss my circumstances, and my requirements in relation this these.
δ I give my permission for the details of this form to be passed to the relevant contact within my department/faculty/centre. (Please note, if you do not give permission your department may be unable to adjust expectations and put in place appropriate support for you).

I would like to be contacted by:

Email δ Insert email address
Phone δ Insert contact telephone number

Appendix E – Equality Impact Assessment Summary Action Plan

Determining REF Research Independence	Stage one – March 2019 – At outset of process
	Stage two – September 2019 – Review of effects of current process
	Stage three – Recommendation/Decision-making – Autumn 2019
	Stage four – Re-run of process August 2020
	Stage five – Review of effects of process – September 2020
Selection of outputs for submission	Stage one – Mock REF2018, including review of effects of process
	Stage two – Mock REF 2019, including review of effects of process
	Stage three – Final selection for REF2021 submission