



**Senate**

<b>Paper Title</b>	Interim REF Code of Practice
<b>Outcome requested</b>	Senate is asked to <b>approve</b> this Interim Code of Practice.
<b>Points for Senate members to note and further information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The primary purpose of the Code of Practice (CoP) is to provide staff with clear and transparent information about how QMUL is managing its REF 2021 preparations and submission.</li> <li>• This Code of Practice is an interim document intended to cover the period up until the publication of the final guidance for the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF 2021), expected in early 2019.</li> <li>• The interim CoP draws upon the content of the draft REF documentation, available at <a href="http://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/">http://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/</a> in the expectation that this will inform the final guidance.</li> <li>• The interim CoP has been subject to a period of institutional-wide consultation (Sept-Nov 18). The response to the draft document was very positive and there were no major changes to processes requested. Updates made in light of feedback from the consultation process include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased clarification of the role and membership of the of the REF Committees.</li> <li>- Updates to the text relating to support for researchers.</li> <li>- Clarification on the identification of independent researchers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Questions for Senate to consider</b>	N/A
<b>Regulatory/statutory reference points</b>	An interim Code of Practice is recommended in the REF 2021 Draft Guidance on Submissions
<b>Strategy and risk</b>	REF outcomes will affect reputation, research income, recruitment and retention of staff, partnership development.
<b>Reporting/consideration route for the paper</b>	Senate to approve before publication.
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## Research Excellence Framework 2021

### Interim Code of Practice: December 2018

#### Contents

Background and summary

1. Introduction
2. Identifying staff with Significant Responsibility for Research
3. Determining Research Independence
4. Selection of Outputs
5. Appendices
  - A. Statement on use of assessments
  - B. Individuals, groups and committees involved in REF 2021
  - C. Data protection
  - D. Disclosure of circumstances and appeals
  - E. Timetable

#### Background and Summary

##### ***Note on this document***

This Code of Practice is an interim document intended to cover the period up until the release by the UK REF team<sup>1</sup> in early 2019 of the Guidance on Submissions, Panel Criteria and Working Methods and Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) briefing documentation that will form key parts of the final guidance for the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF 2021). This interim Code of Practice draws upon the content of the draft REF documentation, issued for consultation on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2018, and available at <http://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/>, in the expectation that these draft documents may inform the final guidance. As the final guidance on how individual circumstances will be treated in the REF is still under consultation, the arrangements for covering this in this interim Code should be viewed as provisional; the Code will be updated once the final set of rules is available. Sections 1-5 of this Code align with the template provided by the UK REF team. This Code of Practice, alongside other REF information for staff, will be available at the VP Research intranet site.

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<sup>1</sup> The term “UK REF team” is used for brevity - the REF is undertaken jointly by the four UK higher education funding bodies: [The UK REF team](#), the [Scottish Funding Council](#) (SFC), the [Higher Education Funding Council for Wales](#) (HEFCW), and the [Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland](#)

## ***Objectives***

The objectives of this Code of Practice are to:

- Provide staff with clear information about how Queen Mary University of London (Queen Mary, the university) is managing its REF 2021 preparations and submission;
- Describe how Queen Mary is discharging its responsibilities in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and relevant employment legislation;
- Ensure consistency of practice across Queen Mary in relation to the identification of REF eligible staff;
- Ensure that the identification of eligible staff for REF 2021 is made on transparent and defensible grounds relating only to the expectations for and assessment of the roles undertaken by staff within the university;
- Recognise the right of the Principal and President and Senior Executive to select all elements of the final submission in order to best represent the university's research and seek to optimise its assessment;
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the mechanisms that are in place to ensure they are able to disclose in confidence any personal circumstances that may have prevented the production of appropriate research outputs in any part of the assessment period and how those circumstances will be assessed, and decisions made;
- Provide an effective communication plan that informs staff of the criteria and process for the selection of all elements of the overall submission;
- Provide a summary of the framework regarding any appeals against decisions made.

## ***Summary of key points***

- It is recognised that individual members of academic staff contribute to the university and to its research mission in many ways, not all of which are necessarily captured by a REF submission. Our REF submission is intended to represent our research overall in the best way possible, within the framework of the REF regulations.
- This Code aims to cover our preparations for, and submission to REF 2021. This is a restricted purview that touches on but does not seek to directly address wider issues to do with Equality and Diversity in terms of how the university seeks to foster research. It is expected that the equality and diversity reports that are described in this Code will both inform and improve our continuing REF preparations as well as more general initiatives to improve practice via the Queen Mary Equality and Diversity Steering Group.

- Responsibility for the final REF 2021 submission rests with the Principal and President and the Queen Mary Senior Executive (QMSE) following the recommendations of the REF Strategy Group (see Appendix B for a list of Queen Mary REF committees and their membership and responsibilities). Heads of School/Institute and the Unit of Assessment (UoA) Coordinators will be responsible for overseeing the preparation of draft submissions for each UoA in which Queen Mary intends to make a return. Where there is a submission that goes across internal Queen Mary structures the appointed UoA Coordinator and the Faculty Dean for Research will oversee the coordination of submissions, but responsibility for the drafting of submissions will rest with the relevant Schools/Institutes working in close collaboration.
- All Queen Mary staff whose primary role includes a significant responsibility to undertake research, and who meet the eligibility criteria as defined by the UK REF team are eligible for return in REF 2021.
- Individuals will be asked to make the Chair of the REF Equality and Diversity Group aware of any 'individual circumstances' (see Section 7 below) that may have prevented them from undertaking research during the assessment period. This material will be anonymised and considered in confidence by the REF Equality and Diversity Group, who will make recommendations in relation to output submissions to the REF Strategy Group.
- All elements of Dry Run submissions from 2019 on will be assessed by reference to the REF Guidance on Submissions and Panel Criteria and Working Methods documentation, as these become available in early 2019. Draft forms of these documents are currently out for consultation and have informed this interim Code of Practice. The final set of criteria will apply to the final submission in 2020.
- The selection of outputs and impact case studies will be made based on internal and external assessments, with the overall aim of optimising the university submission as a whole; this may not necessarily optimise all individual UoA submissions.
- The selection of outputs for submission will in the first instance be based on optimising the expected final assessment, for example with respect to overall Grade Point Average (GPA).
- REF UoA boundaries do not in general align with Queen Mary School and Institute structures, and the research outputs or impact cases of some individuals may be suitable for submission in different or multiple UoAs in accordance with REF rules; in such cases the choice of UoA will be made by the REF Strategy Group on the basis of seeking to optimise the overall university submission, bearing in mind assessments of quality as well as the coherence of submissions.
- All Queen Mary staff involved in REF selection and decision-making processes will be expected to undertake appropriate equality and diversity training (see Appendix B, Point 3), and the equality profile of all persons/groups involved in the process will be monitored and published.

- Queen Mary will undertake equality impact assessments at key points in the process. This will include the Dry Runs of 2018, 2019 and 2020 and the submission in November 2020.
- Where the numbers of staff are small enough to enable individuals to be identified, these data will not be published in accordance with the provisions of Data Protection legislation.

## 1. Introduction

### *Broader context*

This Code of Practice has been developed by Queen Mary in the context of the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF 2021). It reflects our ambitions to meet the highest standards of research in a broad range of subject areas, as judged by international comparators, and our commitments to the ideal of a university as a mutually supportive community of scholars and to equality, diversity and inclusion within all our work. The university is noted for the diversity of its students and staff; it is highly international and encompasses people from many backgrounds.

This Code of Practice identifies the mechanisms by which Queen Mary will exercise these commitments in managing its assessments of the quality and value of the research of its academic staff through REF dry run exercises, leading up the final submission in November 2020. It forms part of the university's development of its equality, diversity and inclusion objectives, and is supported by a programme of activities and support for staff delivered at university, Faculty and Institute/School/professional services Directorate level.

Our policies and practice with regard to REF 2021 are embedded within those of the university as a whole, through researcher support and development at all career stages, and the fostering of a research environment that brings out the best in all our staff, whether they undertake or support our research. The formulation and application of this Code will be overseen by the university's Equality and Diversity Steering Group, which will receive Equality Impact Assessments and review progress.

Close attention will be paid to promoting equality and diversity during all stages of our REF preparations and final submission. A separate REF Equality and Diversity Group will provide advice and recommendations, on the basis of regular Equality Impact Assessments as well as more generally. This group will also make recommendations on individual and unit circumstances submissions and assess and rule on any appeal processes with this Code.

### *Supporting Staff*

Developmental support can be provided for individual research staff where an appropriate intervention has been agreed. This will be in conjunction with the Vice Principal for Research & Innovation and/or the relevant Faculty Vice-Principal, and/or Faculty Dean for Research or a combination of these. QMUL upholds the tenets

of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and our efforts have been independently recognised through the HR Excellence in Research Award, which we have held since 2012. Our action plans since gaining the award can be found [here](#) describing such activity as training programmes and mentoring schemes for researchers, support of research staff associations, and mechanisms facilitating research staff input into institutional decision-making processes. Queen Mary has also developed a number of equality-focused mentoring initiatives to ensure all staff can fulfil their potential; for example, partnering with other leading London institutions to set up [B-Mentor](#), a mentoring scheme where senior academics from four London institutions mentor Black and Ethnic Minorities (BME) research and early-career academic staff. QMUL is currently the holder of 11 externally reviewed [inclusion and diversity awards](#) and charter marks; this includes being a Stonewall Diversity Champion and holding an institutional Athena SWAN Silver Award. More information about Queen Mary equality objectives is available at the following link <http://hr.qmul.ac.uk/equality/governance/equalityobjectives/>.

#### *Actions taken since REF2014*

After the 2014 REF submission, a full consultation was launched across the university, seeking feedback on the policies, processes and actions taken to prepare and make the submission. The consultation received many submissions, from individuals and groups, and more formal summary submissions from Schools, Institutes and Faculties.

Much was learned from this feedback and it was used extensively to design our processes for REF 2021. Numerous actions were taken, including

- The early formulation of a detailed plan for the entire REF period, which was consulted upon widely with staff and subsequently modified and agreed;
- the early circulation of a clear official university statement (Appendix A) that the processes for determining our REF 2021 submission had no linkage with any processes concerning staff promotion, appraisal or performance management;
- a re-design of Dry Run processes, incorporating internal advice more fully, with an initial internal-only Dry Run, followed by annual iterations incorporating external input, following advice from Schools and Institutes on best practice within their disciplines;
- the provision of increased professional services support, particularly for impact;
- the instigation and completion of a programme to significantly improve the quality of data provided for Dry Runs, in order to reduce workload and improve confidence;

#### *The principles of Transparency, Consistency, Accountability and Inclusivity*

This Code is based on these principles as follows:

**Transparency:** This Code is designed to make it clear to staff how decisions are taken, by whom and when. It makes it clear how any decisions about individual

contributions to the REF submission will be reported to and discussed with staff. It will be circulated to all academic staff in Queen Mary and made available in accessible formats on our website. The Code of Practice will be consulted on with staff and the final version will be reviewed for approval by Senate. It will be disseminated and made available on-line within a dedicated REF area of the Queen Mary website.

**Consistency:** The Code applies uniformly across the university and to all Units of Assessment (UoAs) that we will be submitting to. Any variations in detail are purely on the basis of disciplinary differences and have been agreed after consultation.

**Accountability:** All groups involved with decision-making with respect to our REF 2021 submission are described in this Code, along with terms of reference, responsibility, membership, expertise and training undertaken (Appendix B).

**Inclusivity:** Care has been taken to take account of all individuals who have significant responsibility for research, to identify and fully assess work that they have done and support their development.

#### *Communication*

The Code is being disseminated in such a way as to reach all relevant audiences: it will be circulated by email in all-staff messages, highlighted in Vice Principal (VP) Research briefings, cited in all-staff newsletters, available alongside other REF material in a dedicated intranet site linked to the VP Research intranet. Staff absent from work due to secondments, career breaks or parental or other leave will be made aware of the Code through individual contacts provided by Human Resources. The Code will be an agenda item for discussion in meetings concerning research at all levels – School/Institute research committees, Faculty Dean Research Advisory Group meetings, and university VP Research Advisory Group meetings, and Queen Mary Senior Executive, as well as through the university's equality and diversity committee structures.

## **2. Identifying staff with significant responsibility for research**

Queen Mary will be submitting 100% of its REF eligible staff in all its UoA submissions.

REF eligible staff are those as defined by the UK REF team as academic staff with a significant responsibility for research and whose contract with the submitting HEI has an FTE of 0.2 or greater at the census date. Eligible staff will be identified by reference to their role and contract documentation, where this must contain a clear requirement and expectation of significant time and resource devoted to research. All staff on Queen Mary Teaching and Research roles are eligible by this definition. Staff on pure Research roles will be eligible if they qualify as an "independent researcher" according to the REF guidance – see section 3 below.

Queen Mary will judge research outputs and impact case studies by the same standards for all staff eligible for submission in a given UoA, and the standards applied will be based on the criteria announced by the UoA panels. The same criteria will apply to Queen Mary's annual Dry Runs from 2019 as will apply to the final REF submission in 2020.

### **3. Determining research independence**

#### *Policies and procedure*

Researchers who are not permanent members of academic staff on Teaching and Research roles may still be eligible for submission to the REF if they meet the criteria for research independence - for example if they hold an appropriate Fellowship and are employed in a Research only role. Expectations of research independence will normally be established at the point of contract, based upon whether the researcher has been employed in a capacity to undertake self-directed research, or to carry out another individual's research programme.

We will closely follow the REF guidance criteria in determining research independence. The preliminary *Draft Guidance on Submissions REF2018* issued by the UK REF Team in July 2018, outlines the likely characteristics underpinning determination of "research independence" in paragraphs 128-133, and a list of independent fellowships can be found at <https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1030/list-of-independent-research-fellowships.pdf>. Criteria for determining independence will be confirmed following the publication of the UK REF Guidance on Submissions in its final form.

In order to ensure that we are fairly and consistently capturing relevant information on staff in research only roles, annual Dry Run meetings with Schools and Institutes will review lists of such staff within their units. Their research will be assessed as with other REF eligible staff, except for staff members who will clearly be REF ineligible on the census date (eg research assistants whose contracts will terminate before then).

#### *Staff, committees and training*

The final proposed identification of staff on research only contracts who are independent researchers, and those deemed ineligible for REF through not meeting the independence criteria, will be made in early 2020 by the REF Coordination Group based on the final guidance from the UK REF Team. This set of recommendations, and the evidence they are based on, will then be considered by the REF Equality and Diversity Group, which will make decisions on the REF eligibility of the individuals listed, as well as considering any individual circumstances that may have limited the production of research outputs for eligible staff during the census period. These decisions will be communicated by the Chair to the individuals concerned at an appropriate time.



### *Appeals*

Any researcher who wishes to appeal against the decision of the REF Equality and Diversity Group on eligibility may do so, with an appeal panel formed as described in Appendix C, which will assess the evidence provided with regard to eligibility and form a final decision.

### *Equality Impact Assessment*

Independent researcher contributions to REF submissions will be monitored alongside other groups as described in this Code.

## **4. Selection of outputs**

### *Policies and procedure*

All selection processes (eg of outputs or impact case studies) will involve a fair and equal judgement of all relevant material that is available as the product of the research of eligible staff. This will be coordinated centrally by the President and Principal, assisted by the REF Strategy Group. The final decisions about the REF submission will be taken by the Queen Mary Senior Executive and the President and Principal, upon recommendations from the REF Strategy Group. This ensures that the same processes and procedures have been and will be applied equitably to all staff in all UoAs at all points in the process.

Queen Mary conducted an internal Dry Run in 2016 and 2017. It then held a Dry Run in 2018 which included some advice from external assessors. Following the timetable agreed with staff, it will conduct another such Dry Run in 2019 and an exercise in 2020 to agree the final submission. A range of potential external assessors were recommended by Schools/Institutes and from these a group was selected by the Faculties. Previous experience on a REF Panel was considered an advantage. The assessors remained anonymous, except in a minority of cases where they explicitly waived anonymity; see Appendix A for a statement issued to staff in August 2018 on the use of external assessments.

The first two Dry Runs were undertaken on a School and Institute basis, led by local REF Committees and under the oversight of the relevant Faculty. Staff identified their published or publicly available research outputs to that point, and those amongst them that they consider the strongest. In 2017 these were then assessed by internal assessor groups appointed by the local REF Committees, and in 2018 and 2019 additionally by external assessors. All outputs were assessed internally and there was some variation in the number of outputs sent for external assessment, based on a range of factors including advice from Schools/Institutes and the availability and expertise of assessors. Schools and Institutes then reviewed all scores for each output and agreed a “consolidated score” on a thirteen-point scale (Unclassified, and then Lower, Medium and Upper qualifiers for 1\*, 2\*, 3\* and 4\* ratings). The consistency of the scoring was reviewed in the annual REF meetings and in some cases modified on the basis of these discussions – for example in some cases where there appeared to

be an unjustified mismatch between the scores given by assessors and the consolidated score. Individual staff members were made aware of the consolidated score for all of their outputs that had been assessed.

For the Dry Runs, these consolidated scores were then put into an optimization programme that selected a set of outputs, within the REF rules, that gained the highest overall sum of individual scores and hence GPA. This newly-developed programme is purely algorithmic and only based on output labels and scores. The optimal selection is not in general unique. It is planned to refine the programme so that we can explore ensuring a more even balance of the selection of outputs across all eligible staff, whilst also ensuring the optimization of the overall outcome for QMUL and for UoAs. The representation of those with protected characteristics and groups, such as those in earlier career stages, will form part of Equality Impact Assessments.

The final selection process in 2020 will bring together all information about outputs from the Dry Runs, assigning a score to each output based on the consolidated scores assigned in the Dry Runs. This will then be used as input to the optimization programme.

#### *Staff, committees and training*

The relevant details of staff, committees and training are given in Appendix B.

#### *Disclosure of circumstances*

Disclosure of circumstances will be subject to ensuring the protection of the anonymity of the staff involved via a confidential process which is separate from the other REF deliberations of the university. The process will be integrated with the university's equality and diversity structures, with an independent appeal option being made available and clarity in communications and clear timelines for all decisions.

In the context of the final rules around circumstances, once known in 2019, all REF eligible staff will subsequently be asked to provide a confidential personal statement if they wish to draw attention or not to any circumstances potentially affecting their research in the assessment period which may apply in the context of the UK REF rules. This disclosure will be made on a dedicated form which will be sent only to the Chair and Secretary of the REF Equality and Diversity Group (REF EDG) and the Senior Human Resources REF lead. They will produce a summary of the case which protects the anonymity of the applicant and details how the application fits with the published REF criteria. This will be presented to the REF Equality and Diversity Group, who will make a recommendation on the case. Supported cases and the relevant anonymised documentation will be submitted by the Secretary of the REF Equality and Diversity Group to the UK REF team as per published procedure. The Chair of the REF Equality and Diversity Group will communicate the outcome to each applicant. The REF Equality and Diversity Group will also submit anonymised reports on its work to the university's Equality and Diversity Steering Group. Further details of the process are given in Appendix B.

### *Equality Impact Assessment*

All Schools and Institutes in the 2018 Dry Run were asked to provide a summary statement on the detail of the processes that they used to select and assess outputs, the selection of assessors, and the membership of all relevant committees involved in decision-making. These summaries will be brought together as part of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Dry Run, conducted under the aegis of the REF Equality and Diversity (E&D) Committee. The EIA will review the summaries, and evaluate the output selection process, including a review of the scoring and outcomes of the optimization programme.

The REF Equality and Diversity Group will monitor and publish anonymised versions of the recommended optimal submission in each Dry Run (where sufficient data are available) and the final submission and compare it with the equality profile of eligible staff in Queen Mary. Where the numbers of staff are small enough to enable individuals to be identified, this data will not be published in accordance with the provisions of Data Protection legislation.

These EIAs will include, but not be limited to the following:

- a. assessment of the modeled and final selection of outputs in terms of the distribution amongst different protected groups where practicable,
- b. an equivalent review of the selection of impact case studies,
- c. a discussion of the draft and final environment statements, assessing how different groups have been described and represented, as well as the presentation and discussion of relevant policies and their implementation and impact,
- d. a summary and review of the Equality and Diversity reports provided by Schools and Institutes as part of each Dry Run.

Recommendations that address any key issues arising from the EIAs will be used to inform forthcoming Dry Runs or submissions, as well as to practices more generally. These EIAs will be reported to the REF Strategy Group.

## **5. Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Use of Dry Run assessments**

In March 2017 the Queen Mary Senior Executive (QMSE) agreed the following statement with regard to REF preparations, which was circulated to all staff:

*The collection of internal and external dry run assessments and scoring of outputs, impact or environment statements is intended purely to inform decisions around the selection of outputs and impact cases for eventual submission to the next REF. These scores will not be used as a measure of staff research performance or for appraisal purposes. Individual staff will be made aware of the dry run assessments of their work as part of the REF process. The dry run assessments for staff will be shared only with*

*those directly involved in the REF planning processes - ie those attending formal central REF planning meetings – and will not be shared more widely. Central REF Planning groups are those approved by QMSE for oversight of the REF planning process; members are academic and professional services staff with senior leadership roles.*

The following further statement on external Dry Run assessments was circulated to Schools/Institutes and Professional Services Directorates on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2018:

*Our preparations for the 2020 REF submission have used advice from REF assessors who have been asked for written comments on individual outputs, impact case studies and environment drafts. Their comments will be used by senior staff working on our REF preparations to assist them in making an optimal REF submission for the university. The comments have not and will not be used as part of individual research performance reviews or processes connected with these. We have advised REF assessors that their comments will be treated in confidence by senior staff working on our REF preparations (in some cases assessors have indicated that they were happy to have comments shared with authors). We feel that this approach increases the likelihood that the university is able to recruit suitable assessors in all areas.*

## **Appendix B: Individuals, groups and committees involved in REF 2021**

### *Roles and responsibilities in the selection and decision-making process*

1. The REF 2021 preparations and submission are overseen by the Principal and President, supported by the Vice Principal (Research) and the Deputy Vice-Principal (Research Excellence). Responsibility for the final REF 2021 submission rests with the President and Principal and the Queen Mary Senior Executive, following recommendations from the REF Strategy Group.
2. The REF 2021 Equality and Diversity (E&D) Group examines submissions for individual and unit circumstances, reviewing the material in anonymised format. It will make decisions on which cases to submit to the UK REF team for approval based on official REF guidance, and it will present summary, anonymised reports on its work to the Queen Mary Equality and Diversity Steering Group.
3. All Queen Mary staff involved in the selection and decision-making processes are expected to have undertaken appropriate equal opportunities training that (as a minimum) involves fair selection training and the Equality Act. E&D training provision and expectations will be revised as necessary following publication of the REF 2021 Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) guidance.
4. All Queen Mary staff involved in the REF will be provided with copies of this Code of Practice and any relevant guidance issued by the UK REF team.
5. The list below gives details of the individuals, groups and committees involved in the selection and decision-making processes for REF 2021, and of the

process followed for their selection to undertake the stated role(s) in relation to Queen Mary's REF preparations.

As part of its Equality Impact Assessment, Queen Mary will monitor and publish the composition of the body of people in the roles listed to ensure they are representative of the overall equality profile of senior staff within Queen Mary.

*Queen Mary REF decision-making groups*

Queen Mary Senior Executive (QMSE)	
Membership	The President and Principal, advised by the Queen Mary Senior Executive, is accountable to Queen Mary and Council. Membership: <a href="http://connect.qmul.ac.uk/governance/qmse/index.html">http://connect.qmul.ac.uk/governance/qmse/index.html</a>
Selection Process	All senior Queen Mary officers have been appointed through open advertisement, in line with Queen Mary's Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice, in compliance with Queen Mary's Equal Opportunities Statement.
Responsibilities in relation to REF 2021	The President and Principal approves external assessors for each UoA from nominations made by the Faculty VP/Deans for Research via delegation to the VP Research & Innovation and the RSG.
REF Strategy Group (RSG)	
Membership	The RSG is a sub-committee of QMSE. It includes the President and Principal (chair); VP Research & Innovation, the three Faculty VPs; the Deputy VP (Research Excellence); the Deputy VP Research (Impact), Faculty Deans for Research, Director of Research Services, EO Research and Planning Manager (Academic Performance).
Selection Process	Members were appointed to their posts through open advertisement, in line with Queen Mary's Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice and complying with Queen Mary's Equal Opportunities Policy. Members were appointed to the RSG because of their Queen Mary role.
Responsibilities in relation to REF 2021	The RSG will: undertake Queen Mary-wide planning; commission and review external assessments of research; ensure that systems for recording and uploading REF documentation are robust and effective; determine criteria for selection for staff submission; report on progress to QMSE; submit the final Queen Mary submission to QMSE for approval

REF Equality and Diversity Group	
Membership	Chair (to be appointed) <sup>2</sup> , Senior Faculty representatives, Senior HR lead (nominee of the Director of HR), Queen Mary E&D Academic Lead (to be appointed), Deputy VP (Research Excellence), Planning Manager (Academic Performance).
Selection Process	Members were appointed to their posts through open advertisement, in line with Queen Mary's Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice and complying with Queen Mary's Equal Opportunities Policy. Members were appointed because of their role or expertise and understanding of REF processes.
Responsibilities in relation to REF 2021	This committee is independent from all other Queen Mary REF groups. It considers and makes decisions on all (anonymised) applications for consideration of personal circumstances as described in Section 4 above; the committee also commissions, receives and comments on REF Equality Impact Assessments. This group will report into the Queen Mary E&D Steering Group (which is currently being finalised) and the REF Strategy Group.
REF Coordination Group (RCG)	
Membership	VP Research and Innovation (Chair), Deputy VP (Research Excellence) (deputy Chair), Faculty Deans for Research, Deputy Deans for Research Impact, EO Research, Research Impact Manager, Faculty Research Managers/Deanery Officer, and the Planning Manager (Academic Performance).
Selection Process	Members were appointed to their posts through open advertisement, in line with Queen Mary's Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice and complying with Queen Mary's Equal Opportunities Policy. They are appointed to this committee because of their operational roles.
Responsibilities in relation to REF 2021	This group considers all the operational issues involved in preparing for REF 2021, and is the core group for the planning of institutional preparations, and makes recommendations to the RSG.
REF Data Group	
Membership	EO Research (Chair), Deputy Director of Strategic Planning, Planning Manager (Academic Performance), HR Head of Enabling Services, ITS Head of Development Services, Library Services Research Support Manager,

<sup>2</sup> The Chair of the REF Equality and Diversity Group will be a member of the university's academic Senior Leadership and be cognisant of the REF requirements concerning equality and diversity. They would not normally chair any of the other QMUL REF committees.

	Finance Partner Research Grants, Assistant Academic Registrar (Research Degrees), Diversity and Inclusion Manager, Research Impact Manager, Faculty Research Manager (HSS), Faculty Research Manager and Deputy FOO (S&E), Research Deanery Officer (SMD) Executive Assistant to VP Research (Secretary).
Selection Process	Members were appointed to their posts through open advertisement, in line with Queen Mary's Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice and complying with Queen Mary's Equal Opportunities Policy. They are appointed to this committee because of their operational roles.
Responsibilities in relation to REF 2021	This group considers all the data-related issues involved in preparing for REF 2021 and makes recommendations to the REF Coordination Group.
<b>External Assessors for Dry Runs</b>	
Membership	Recognised academic experts, from outside Queen Mary, of international standing in the relevant UoA. This is not a fixed body of people and may vary for different Dry Runs.
Selection Process	Approved by the President and Principal, delegated as appropriate to Faculty VPs, and chosen following consultation within relevant Schools/Institutes.
Responsibilities in relation to REF 2021	To provide, on a confidential basis, expert academic feedback to the President and Principal and VP Research on draft submissions. External Assessors will not be involved in any decisions regarding the possible overall form of any UoA or university submission, although they may be asked for academic advice as to the suitability of submission of individual outputs or impact case studies for particular UoAs.
<b>Internal Assessors for Dry Runs</b>	
Membership	Senior members of School/Institute staff with research expertise, typically Heads, Directors and Deputy Directors of Research or Impact, experienced Professors.
Selection Process	As proposed by Schools/Institutes, recommended by Heads/Directors and approved by Faculties.
Responsibilities in relation to REF 2021	To receive the advice from external and internal assessors, balancing this to form recommendations for modeling and further discussions at the annual REF meetings.

## Appendix C. Personal Circumstances

1. The REF guidance issued for consultation by the UK REF Team in July 2018 ("draft guidance" below) contained a number of proposals relating to

circumstances where universities could request a reduction in the total number of outputs required for a given UoA submission, based on a range of possible circumstances for staff eligible for submission within that UoA. As these proposals are out for consultation, this draft Code will outline the general approach to staff circumstances that is planned. Once the precise rules are published in early 2019, the Code will be revised to ensure coverage of the range of circumstances described, together with any other modifications that may be needed to ensure accordance with those rules. This section of this draft Code should be read with this in mind. Staff will not be asked to provide any information relating to personal circumstances until a time after the final REF rules are issued in 2019.

2. It may be that the extent of personal circumstances in a given UoA may lead to an overall effect on the submission that requires separate awareness from the consideration of individual cases, as this may affect the requirements of the overall UoA submission. Monitoring to account for this will be done by the Chair of the REF Equality and Diversity Group and an anonymous account of any such cases will be brought to the attention of the VP Research & Innovation to ensure this is accounted for in output selection.
3. The various cases of staff circumstances described in the draft guidance are designed to cover situations which may have prevented an individual from undertaking research during part of the assessment period. The procedures for bringing such cases to the attention of the university, the assessment of them and the appeal process for decisions made is as described in this Code.
4. All REF eligible staff will be asked to provide a personal statement if they wish to draw attention or not to any circumstances potentially affecting their research in the assessment period which may apply in the context of the UK REF rules. Individuals who do wish to draw attention to any personal staff circumstances that may fall within those covered by the UK REF guidance will be asked to provide a personal statement in writing on a dedicated form, to be sent to the Chair of the REF Equality and Diversity Group, and to give their written consent for this to be considered, on an anonymised, confidential basis, by the REF Equality and Diversity Group.
  2. The personal statement should include as much information as the individual feels is relevant and appropriate but will need to include sufficient detail to enable a judgement on whether the application falls within the relevant guidelines – eg to include a broad description of the nature of the circumstances, the timing and duration of circumstances and a summary of how the circumstances prevented the individual from carrying out research activities.
  3. This statement will be seen only by the Chair and Secretary of the REF Equality and Diversity Group and the Senior Human Resources REF lead. They may seek further information from the applicant if this is needed to make a proper assessment. They will produce a summary of the case which protects the anonymity of the applicant and details how the application may fit with the published REF criteria. This will be presented to the REF Equality and Diversity Group, who will review this and make a decision. Individuals will be



- informed of this decision in confidence by the Chair of the REF Equality and Diversity Group. The decision will be whether or not to submit the case for a reduction in outputs, based on the given staff circumstances, to the REF Equality & Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) set up by the UK REF team, by the deadline in 2020. The REF EDAP will make final decisions on all such applications and inform the university of the outcomes. The Chair of the Queen Mary REF Equality and Diversity Group will communicate this outcome to the applicant. Submissions to the REF EDAP will be subject to their policies on decision as described in the official REF documentation when available.
4. An individual may appeal against the decision by the Queen Mary REF Equality and Diversity group as described in this Code.
  5. Queen Mary staff on fixed term and part-time contracts will be treated equitably with staff on permanent contracts and all Queen Mary policies/procedures will be applied equitably to all staff regardless of their contractual status (unless there are objectively justified reasons why this should not be the case).
  6. The Queen Mary Equality and Diversity Steering Group will receive anonymised notice of appeal decisions from the Head of HR and will monitor these on a monthly basis.

### *Appeals*

1. Appeals may be made in cases where the REF Equality and Diversity Group (REDG) has decided not to forward a submission to the REF EDAP. Such appeals must be on the grounds that the REDG has not properly applied the REF regulations and/or has not abided by this Code of Practice in making this decision.
2. The employee will set out in writing to the Director of HR the full grounds of their request for an appeal hearing within fifteen working days from the date of dispatch of the letter notifying them of the REF Equality and Diversity Group's decision. The Director of HR may reject any such request that is received out of time without due cause.
3. The Director of HR will set up an Appeal Panel constituted as follows: Up to three members of academic staff, selected from the Senate's list of staff approved to deal with academic staff disciplinary matters, grievances and appeals,
  - a. none of whom shall be from the same School/Institute as the employee, nor have been previously otherwise involved in the case;
  - b. The identities of the panel members shall be made known to the employee who shall have the right of objection to a nominee on any of the above grounds;
  - c. The Director of HR will appoint one of the three members as Chair;
  - d. A member of the HR Consultancy Team shall act as Secretary to the panel.
4. The employee is entitled to:

- a. reasonable written notice (normally at least 5 working days, but less by mutual agreement) of the date of the appeal hearing;
  - b. the opportunity to be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague for the purpose of presenting their case;
  - c. postpone the meeting to another reasonable time within 5 working days of the original date, if their representative will not be available at the time proposed;
  - d. have access to all material available to the EDG;
  - e. the identity of the assessors will remain anonymized;
  - f. present their perspective of the issues under consideration;
  - g. be given the decision in writing.
5. The panel hearing the case will:
- a. have access to all material available to the REF Equality and Diversity Group;
  - b. the identity of the assessors will remain anonymized;
  - c. reject any invalid grounds of appeal and explain their reasons for doing so;
  - d. conduct the meeting to establish the relevant facts, ensuring good order and natural justice;
  - e. allow all parties to:
    - i. put their side of the matter,
    - ii. hear the case of the other side,
    - iii. ask questions, present evidence and call witnesses;
    - iv. consider valid grounds of appeal;
  - f. make one of the following decisions:
    - i. uphold part or all of the employee's case and determine that a submission to the UK REF team for individual circumstances be made in this case, or
    - ii. dismiss the employee's case;
  - g. confirm the panel's decision and the reasons for it, in writing to the individual and the Chair of the REF Equality and Diversity Group and the EDSG, within 5 working days of the hearing.

There is no other or further right of appeal under this procedure.

#### **Appendix D. Data Protection and Confidentiality**

Queen Mary seeks at all times to protect data on individuals in relation to REF selection and individual circumstances and to ensure confidentiality as far as it is appropriate. Information collected on individual circumstances will be treated as strictly private and confidential and stored securely in password protected files in permissioned folders. Only the Chair and Secretary of the REF Equality and Diversity Group and the Senior HR lead on this group will have access to non-anonymised data with regard to the details of any circumstances. The names of any individuals with an approved reduction in the minimum number of outputs to zero will be known to members of the REF Strategy Group, but no details of the circumstances will be shared

with them. Data will be destroyed after the UK REF team's audit procedures for REF 2021 have been completed.

Instances will occur where Heads of School/Directors of Institute are required to make judgements relating to the likelihood of a given output qualifying for submission by being publicly available within the assessment period. Academics are required, if requested, to share correspondence with editors that would assist in judging the nuances of their views on whether an output is ready for publication and if so, how soon. Correspondence with publishers is not private, as it is a task implicit within paid research activities and as such, access to it may not be denied by Queen Mary employees citing the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

### **Appendix E: Timetable**

The elements involved in the process are the annual dry runs and internal and external assessments within these, annual REF meetings with Schools/Institutes, plus relevant meetings of the REF Coordination Group, REF Strategy Group and QMSE.

The key events are the Annual Dry Run exercises, 2018-2020 and the final submission in November 2020.

The objective of the Dry Runs is to form a view as to the overall quality and quantity of outputs and impact case studies, as well as the environment element of the submission, as indicated by the appropriate UoA panel, and to allow Queen Mary to plan for and formulate its final submission to the REF to maximum effect.

Data, as specified for REF 2021, and communicated separately by the Head of School/Director of Institute, will be collected and verified for the annual Dry Runs.

External assessors will be appointed for each UoA in which Queen Mary expects to be, or is considering, making a submission. As appropriate, they will be sent copies of individual outputs, impact case study drafts and environment statement drafts. They will not be sent any other information about individuals. This interim Code of Practice, or its final form if available, plus any equality and diversity briefings provided by the UK REF team will be drawn to their attention. In 2018 external assessors have been asked to judge the outputs and overall research activity in accordance with the draft criteria published by the Panels; in 2019 and 2020 they will use the final criteria and working methods documentation. External assessors will be asked to provide reports back to the relevant Faculty lead.

Information received from external assessors, including comments on individual outputs, will be passed to Heads of Schools/Directors of Institutes and Directors for Research and to the VP (Research & Innovation), DVP (Research Excellence) and Executive Officer (EO) (Research). The annual REF meetings with Schools and Institutes will review all Dry Run assessments and summarise conclusions to the REF Strategy Group about the optimal shape at that point in time of each UoA submission.

After the final Dry Run, the REF Strategy Group will make the final recommendations to QMSE on the details of the final submission.

*Timelines for Queen Mary Processes:*

Queen Mary’s annual Dry Runs are mainly conducted in winter and spring each year, although further information may be sought over a longer period in order to address any gaps.

Dry Run submissions for each UoA are normally sent to external assessors early in each year, with a request to return their comments within two months wherever possible.

From 2018 individuals will be provided with the consolidated scores for their research outputs and formative assessment relating to drafts of any impact case studies that they are associated to. Indications of which of their current outputs and relevant case studies appear in the modeled optimal submission/s at each stage will also be provided. These are indicative only and the final selection will not be made until shortly prior to the final submission in 2020.

Queen Mary intends to have the staff profile for the final REF 2021 submission confirmed by no later than 30th September 2020.

Any dates above should be regarded as indicative and may be subject to review and revision. For example, this may be necessary in light of future additional REF guidance from the UK REF team.

*REF 2021 critical dates*

Staff census date	31 <sup>st</sup> July 2020
The publication period	1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2014 – 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2020
The submission date	27 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
Data period for PhD awards and research income	1 <sup>st</sup> August 2013 to 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2020
Period covered by environment statements	1 <sup>st</sup> August 2013 to 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2020
Impact case study assessment period	1 <sup>st</sup> August 2013 to 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2020
Underpinning research period for impact case studies	1 <sup>st</sup> January 2000 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020
Submission to REF 2021	27 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
Equality Impact Assessment on Final Submission	To be confirmed
2018 Dry Run deadline	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2018
External assessment	31 <sup>st</sup> January 2018
External assessment deadline	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018

Feedback to Schools/Institutes	May to June 2018
Feedback to individual researchers	Completed by November 2018
Equality Impact Assessment on 2018 Dry Run	September 2018
2019 Dry Run deadline	11 <sup>th</sup> January – 8 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2019 (deadline by Faculty)
External assessment	January - Feb 2019
External assessment deadline	15 <sup>th</sup> March -19 <sup>th</sup> April 2019 (by Faculty)
Feedback to Schools/Institutes	April to June 2019
Feedback to individual researchers	Completed by November 2019
Equality Impact Assessment on 2019 Dry Run	September 2019
Deadline for conclusions of appeal hearings	To be confirmed
Confirmation of REF 2021 submission staff profile	30th September 2020