
REF 2017/03

October 2017

Roles and recruitment of the expert panels

This document sets out the roles and responsibilities of main panels and sub-panels for the Research Excellence Framework, and invites nominations from associations or organisations with a clear interest in the conduct, quality, funding or wider benefits of publicly funded research.

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Roles and recruitment of the expert panels

To

Subject associations

Organisations with an interest in commissioning or using academic research including businesses, public sector bodies, charities and other third sector organisations

Heads of HEFCE-funded higher education institutions

Heads of higher education institutions in Northern Ireland

Heads of higher education institutions in Scotland

Heads of higher education institutions in Wales

Heads of alternative providers in England

Of interest to those responsible for

Research

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Executive summary

Purpose and key points

1. This document sets out:
 - the roles and responsibilities of main panels, sub-panels and their members in the Research Excellence Framework assessment
 - the criteria and process for recruiting panel members.
2. This document also invites organisations and associations with an interest in research to nominate candidates for panel membership.

Action required

3. Subject associations and other organisations with an interest in the conduct, quality, funding or use of research are invited to nominate candidates to be panel members. Nominations should be completed online at www.ref.ac.uk/about/nompan, by **noon on 20 December 2017**.
4. No action is required by HEIs.

Background

The Research Excellence Framework

5. The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the system for assessing research in UK higher education institutions (HEIs). It was first conducted in 2014, and replaced the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). The REF assesses the quality and impact of UK HEIs' research in all disciplines.

6. The REF will be undertaken by the four UK higher education funding bodies: the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), and the Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland (DfE). The exercise will be managed by the REF team based at HEFCE and overseen by the REF Steering Group, which consists of representatives of the four UK higher education funding bodies.

7. As laid out in the Higher Education and Research Act (2017), from 1 April 2018 HEFCE's research and knowledge exchange functions will move to a newly created council, Research England, within the new organisation UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). Research England will assume joint responsibility with the other three UK funding bodies for undertaking the REF, with the REF team based at Research England from this date.

Initial decisions on the REF

8. Following an independent review of the REF in 2016, led by Lord Stern, the UK funding bodies have consulted on the implementation of the exercise in 2021. The initial decisions on many aspects of the framework have now been set out (REF 2017/01)¹.

9. As set out in the initial decisions, the REF will be a process of expert review, assessing three distinct elements for each submission: outputs, impact, and the environment. Institutions will be invited to make submissions to 34 units of assessment (UOAs). The submissions will be assessed by an expert sub-panel to be established for each UOA, working under the guidance of four main panels to ensure common procedures and consistent application of the overall assessment standards.

10. The chairs of the four main panels were appointed earlier in 2017². We invited applications for the role of sub-panel chair in REF 2017/01.

11. The initial decisions also set out the configuration of the 34 UOAs for REF 2021, and these are set out again at Annex B. The REF panels will develop descriptors of the scope and boundaries of each UOA, ensuring that all fields of research can be assessed within the collective scope of all the UOAs.

¹ See www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/year/2017/ref201701/.

² Further information about the main panel chairs is available on our website at www.ref.ac.uk/about/rolepan.

12. Respondents to the consultation also raised points in relation to the structure, including around increasing visibility for disciplines within the broader UOAs, ensuring appropriate breadth and depth of expertise in panel appointments, and the processes for cross-referral and assessment of interdisciplinary research. To take account of these points, the initial decisions set out that:

- We will explore with the main and sub-panels whether to introduce discrete sub-profiles for outputs to provide increased visibility for the distinct areas covered in the broader UOAs, and will consider implementation following further consultation on the panel criteria.
- There will be a two-stage approach to appointing sub-panel members. As part of this, sub-panels will identify where additional expertise may be required to contribute to the assessment, to ensure that submitted research is assessed by panels with the appropriate breadth and depth of expertise.
- We will work with the interdisciplinary research advisory panel (IDAP) to develop additional measures to support the assessment of interdisciplinary research (set out at REF 2017/01, paragraph 15).

13. In terms of the recruitment of the expert panels, we announced that we will:

- Appoint sub-panels at the criteria-setting stage with sufficient members to ensure the sub-panel has appropriate expertise for this task (including of interdisciplinary research and the wider use of research), rather than the volume required to undertake the assessment.
- Appoint additional main panel members, including users of research and international members, for the criteria-setting.
- Make further appointments to the sub-panels at a second stage in the exercise, to ensure an appropriate number of panel members to assess the volume of expected submissions. Assessors (who will assess either outputs or impact only) will also be appointed at this stage.

14. We also set out a range of measures we will implement to improve the representativeness of the expert panels (REF 2017/01, paragraph 44).

15. Further information about the REF is available at www.ref.ac.uk.

Roles and responsibilities of panels

16. As mentioned above, the REF will be conducted by 34 expert sub-panels, working under the guidance of four main panels.

17. The panels will work within a generic framework to develop the assessment criteria and to conduct the assessments. In developing detailed guidance and criteria for the assessment, our starting point is that the approach should be consistent across the exercise, unless there are justifiable reasons for main or sub-panels to vary the approach in

specific areas. Informed by the REF 2014 guidance and criteria, we will work with the panels to identify those aspects of the criteria and procedures that should be common across the framework, and those specific aspects that should be determined by the main and sub-panels.

18. The panels will then carry out two phases of work:

- a. During 2018: to define in detail those aspects of the criteria and working methods that are specific to the panels.
- b. From late 2020 to late 2021: to assess submissions and deliver the assessment outcomes.

Role of a main panel

19. Each main panel will provide leadership and guidance to a group of sub-panels. In particular, the role of a main panel is:

- To produce a document setting out the criteria and working methods for the group of sub-panels under its remit. In doing so, the main panel will ensure that:
 - The criteria and working methods adhere to the overall assessment framework.
 - The criteria and working methods are as consistent as possible across the sub-panels within each main panel's remit, and vary between the sub-panels only where justified to the REF Steering Group.
 - The academic community has been consulted effectively when developing the criteria and working methods.
 - Other appropriate stakeholders have been consulted, particularly when developing the criteria for assessing impact. This includes stakeholders from the private, public and third sectors who are informed by, make use of, or benefit from academic research in the disciplines covered by the panel.
- To work with the sub-panels during the assessment period to ensure adherence to the criteria, working methods and equality and diversity guidance.
- To work with the sub-panels during the assessment period to calibrate the assessment standards between sub-panels and ensure the consistent application across the framework of the overall assessment standards.
- To sign off the assessment outcomes for all submissions made to the sub-panels, based on the work and advice of the sub-panels.
- To work with the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) and IDAP as required on the criteria and assessment process.
- To give advice as requested by the REF team and funding bodies on aspects of the assessment process.

- To produce a final report on the state of research in the disciplines covered by the sub-panels, and its wider benefits.

20. In signing off the assessment outcomes, the main panel will confirm that it has worked with the relevant sub-panels to ensure the adoption of a reasonable and consistent approach to the assessment of all forms of research, including basic, applied, practice-based and interdisciplinary research; and that each sub-panel has applied the quality thresholds for the exercise to a consistent standard.

21. Final responsibility for the effective conduct of the assessment process for the REF lies with the funding bodies' chief executives (or equivalent). Decisions about academic judgements in the assessment will remain the responsibility of the panels. The main panels will report their progress in reaching assessment outcomes to the four UK higher education funding bodies, and will report the final outcomes to the funding bodies at the conclusion of their assessment. In the event of any dispute about the assessment process that cannot be resolved within the main panel, the decision of the UK funding bodies will be final.

Role of a sub-panel

22. The role of a sub-panel is:

- a. To consult on and contribute to the criteria and working methods of the group of sub-panels within a main panel, and develop any necessary criteria and working methods specific to the individual sub-panel, for approval by the main panel.
- b. To work within the agreed criteria and methods, and under the guidance of the main panel, to assess submissions.
- c. To advise the main panel and REF team on cross-referrals of submitted material to other sub-panels and on any need for additional expertise required to assess submissions.
- d. To produce draft assessment outcomes for each submission to be recommended for sign-off by the main panel, and associated concise feedback for submissions.

23. We intend that the working relationship between a main panel and its sub-panels be close and collaborative, with sub-panels developing their criteria collectively as far as possible within a main panel, and each sub-panel assessing submissions through an iterative process, in dialogue with the main panel. Main and sub-panel meetings will be timed to enable such iteration, and the main panel chair and additional members will be expected to attend a range of sub-panel meetings.

Composition and recruitment of panels

Main panel composition

24. Each main panel will be made up of:

- the chair
- the deputy chair
- the chairs of each sub-panel under its remit
- additional members (including individuals with interdisciplinary expertise, with international expertise, and with expertise in the use, application and wider benefits of research).

25. **Main panel chairs** will lead their main panel, and the constituent sub-panels, in the development of criteria for the assessment, the consistent application of assessment standards and the timely delivery of results. The chair will also play a key role in engaging with the UK higher education sector on the REF. During the initial phase, the chairs (designate) will advise on the developing decisions and make recommendations on the appointment of the sub-panel chairs.

26. We have appointed chairs (designate) for the four main panels, through an open process of application. Their role initially is to advise the REF team in the further development and planning of the REF. Following the announcement of decisions on the REF and further appointments to the REF panels later this year, they will take up their roles in chairing and providing leadership to the main panels. Further details of the main panel chairs can be found at www.ref.ac.uk/about/rolepan.

27. **Deputy chairs** will be identified from among the main panel members during the criteria phase. The deputy will chair meetings of the panel in the absence of the chair. This includes planned and unforeseen absences of the chair, and in cases where there is a major conflict of interest for the chair³.

28. **Additional members with interdisciplinary expertise** will have senior-level experience of leading, commissioning or making use of interdisciplinary research across a range of the sub-panels covered by the main panel. Each main panel will include a member with specific responsibility to contribute to and provide assurance about the criteria and procedures relating to the assessment of interdisciplinary research. They will work closely with the interdisciplinary advisers appointed to the sub-panels, and with the interdisciplinary members of the other main panels as appropriate to ensure consistency across the panels. This role may be held by one of the additional main panel members described below, or may be a direct appointment to the panel.

³ Examples of conflicts of interest include institutions at which the individual, their partner or immediate family is currently or has previously been employed during the assessment period.

29. **Additional members with international expertise** will have experience of leading research internationally, and expert knowledge of international research across more than one sub-panel covered by the main panel. This should include substantial experience of leading research in at least one country outside the UK. Such 'international' members should be people whose judgement is likely to command the respect of the higher education community across a range of disciplines. International members will be asked to contribute especially to the development of main panel criteria that reflect international standards, and to provide assurance during the assessment phase that sub-panels adhere to internationally referenced standards. We envisage that this will involve active participation during panels' initial calibration exercises, and attendance at a range of sub-panel meetings during the assessment phase.

30. **Additional members with expertise in the use, application and wider benefits of research** will have senior-level experience in the private, public or third sectors of commissioning, benefitting from, applying or making use of research from a range of disciplines covered by the main panel. Candidates should be people whose judgement is likely to command the respect of the higher education community as well as external stakeholders. Given the key oversight task associated with this role, we will look to appoint a good proportion to this role who have previous experience of assessing impact in REF 2014. Main panel members with expertise in the use and wider benefits of research will be asked especially to contribute to and provide assurance about the criteria and procedures relating to the assessment of research impact.

31. We may invite observers from key stakeholder groups to attend main panel meetings. Observers may provide informal advice to panels but will not share their responsibility for determining criteria or assessment outcomes. The UK funding bodies' chief executives (or equivalent) will decide which groups will be invited to send an observer.

Sub-panel composition

32. Each sub-panel will be made up of:

- the chair
- deputy chair(s)
- members (including practising researchers, individuals with expertise in commissioning, applying or making use of research, and interdisciplinary advisers)
- output assessors
- impact assessors.

33. **Sub-panel chairs** will advise on sub-panel membership, and will chair and lead their sub-panel's work, including contributing to the development of the criteria and assessing submissions in accordance with the published criteria. We are currently in the process of appointing the sub-panel chairs, following an open, written applications process. We invited applications for the role in REF 2017/01, with a deadline of 11 October 2017. The sub-panel chairs will be announced in late 2017.

34. **Deputy chairs** will be identified from among the sub-panel members during the criteria phase. The deputy will chair meetings of the panel in the absence of the chair. This includes planned and unforeseen absences of the chair, and cases where there is a major conflict of interest for the chair. The deputy will also support the chair with key processes during the assessment phase, such as allocation of items to panellists for assessment.

Sub-panel members

35. **Sub-panel members** will predominantly be practising researchers of suitable personal standing who collectively have an appropriate breadth of research expertise and carry the confidence of the community. Sub-panels will also include members from the private, public or third sectors with expertise in commissioning, applying or making use of research.

36. **Interdisciplinary research (IDR) adviser.** Each sub-panel will have appointed members with a specific role to oversee and participate in the assessment of interdisciplinary research submitted in that UOA, to ensure its equitable assessment. We are seeking to appoint at least one member with this role to each sub-panel in 2018, to develop the criteria. We expect to make further appointments of members with this role in the assessment phase. The IDR adviser role will include liaison with corresponding members on other sub-panels. This role is new to the 2021 exercise, and further information is provided in Box 1 below.

37. As we set out in the initial decisions (REF 2017/01), sub-panel members will be appointed in two stages:

- **2018:** sufficient members will be appointed at this stage to ensure the sub-panel has appropriate expertise (including in IDR and the wider use of research) for contributing to the development of the criteria for the assessment. These members will input into the panel criteria development, and will contribute to the assessment of all elements of submissions (outputs, impact and environment) in 2020-2021.
- **2020:** for the assessment phase of the exercise, additional sub-panel members will be appointed to ensure the sub-panel has an appropriate volume of members who will contribute to the assessment of all elements of submissions.

38. During the assessment phase, all sub-panel members will be expected to participate in all meetings of the sub-panel; this will include initial meetings for briefing and to calibrate their standards of assessment with the sub-panel, and all assessment meetings. Sub-panel members may work with more than one sub-panel, for example: those assessors with interdisciplinary expertise; or with expertise in the use or benefits of research that is relevant across sub-panel boundaries.

Box 1: Interdisciplinary adviser role

Alongside the core responsibilities of the sub-panel (see paragraph 22), an IDR adviser will also specifically:

- Consult on and contribute to the criteria and the associated working methods, with particular relevance to IDR (where appointed at the criteria-setting stage), working with IDAP and the network of main panel interdisciplinary members and IDR advisers across the panels.
- Advise on and provide oversight of the assessment of IDR elements in submissions, which may include:
 - Advising on whether outputs flagged as interdisciplinary meet the definition in the published guidance.
 - Advising on the cross-referral of outputs that have been identified as interdisciplinary, where cross-referral is required.
 - Moderation and monitoring of output scores for outputs that have been identified as interdisciplinary.
 - Advising on the assessment of impact case studies underpinned by interdisciplinary research, and the IDR section of the environment template.
 - Participating in calibration activities both within the sub-panel, and with the network of IDR advisers across the panels.
- Assess submissions, including both outputs identified as interdisciplinary and those that are not, as appropriate to their field of expertise and in accordance with the working methods set out in the panel criteria. There will be an appropriate reduction in the volume of outputs allocated to the IDR advisers for assessment, to ensure a comparable workload with that of other sub-panel members in recognition of the IDR advisers' additional assessment duties and engagement activity with the IDR advisers' network.
- Engage with the network of main panel interdisciplinary members and IDR advisers across the panels to share good practice and consistency of approach as appropriate, and feed this into the sub-panel's assessment – this will include meeting at key times during the development of criteria and the assessment of submissions, and, where appropriate, observing or advising at a meeting of another sub-panel.

Sub-panel members undertaking this role may come from a variety of research backgrounds and will usually have experience in some or all of the following areas: publication of interdisciplinary research; managing complex interdisciplinary research projects; leading interdisciplinary initiatives, including networks and institutes; or they may be experts in interdisciplinary research practice.

Assessors

39. **Output assessors** will predominantly be practising researchers with specific expertise, to contribute in particular to the assessment of outputs during the assessment phase. This will enable the sub-panels to ensure that outputs are assessed by experts with the appropriate breadth of expertise, and that the workload of assessing potentially large volumes of outputs can be spread across a sufficient number of people. Significant numbers of assessors may be recruited in particular to work with those panels with very large and diverse remits. Assessors may also be recruited with expertise in interdisciplinary research or research in the pedagogy of the discipline.

40. **Impact assessors** will predominantly be individuals with professional experience of making use of, applying or benefitting from academic research, to contribute in particular to the assessment of those elements of submissions relating to the impact of research. This will enable the sub-panels to ensure the assessment of impact involves a range of research users and beneficiaries in assessing impacts, while focusing their efforts on this task and minimising the time they are asked to commit in reviewing material and attending meetings.

41. All assessors will be appointed for the assessment phase of the exercise, with their role being to contribute to the assessment of particular aspects of submissions as requested by the sub-panel. While the focus of their role will be to assess either outputs or impact, assessors may also consider the information submitted about the research environment to help inform their assessments, and may be asked by panels to contribute to the assessment of environment.

42. During the assessment phase they will be expected to attend initial meetings for briefing and to calibrate their standards of assessment with the sub-panel, and to attend meetings where the material they have assessed is to be discussed. Assessors will thus make a full contribution to the assessment of specific aspects of submissions; the sub-panel members will retain responsibility for producing the draft assessment outcomes for each submission as a whole and for recommending these to the main panel.

43. As with sub-panel members, individual assessors may work with more than one sub-panel, for example: those assessors with interdisciplinary expertise; or with expertise in the use or benefits of research that is relevant across sub-panel boundaries.

Specialist advisers

44. In REF 2014, specialist advisers provided specialist advice on specific outputs to the sub-panel, primarily relating to outputs in languages (or in specialist forms of notation) that were not assessable by the sub-panel members and assessors. This was a much more restricted role than was played by specialist advisers used in RAE 2008, following feedback from the panels.

45. In REF 2021, we expect that the sub-panels will work in a similar way to REF 2014 with specialist advisers. Requirements for specialist advisers will be determined for the assessment phase using data collected on submission intentions, and data on the language

competencies of the appointed sub-panels. Where gaps in language skills or expertise are identified, specialist advisers will be appointed through the nominations process.

46. In the case of research outputs in the medium of Welsh, the specialist adviser(s) will normally be paired with a designated panel member with whom they will discuss the advice provided. If a sub-panel receives a substantial volume of research outputs in the medium of Welsh, the specialist adviser(s) will be invited to attend one or more of the panel meetings. These provisions are made in recognition of the particular legal status of the Welsh language in Wales.

Recruitment of panel members and assessors

Increasing the representativeness of the REF panels

47. Following analysis of the REF 2014 panel membership, the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel for that exercise recommended that in a future exercise the funding bodies should identify ways of more effectively mainstreaming equality and diversity considerations among all participants, at all stages of the appointment process⁴. We consulted on a number of measures aimed at increasing the representativeness of the panels in HEFCE 2016/36, and set out in our initial decisions (REF2017/01) what we will implement in this area in REF 2021.

48. EDAP has been established for REF 2021, to advise the UK higher education funding bodies, the REF team and the REF panels on the implementation of equality measures in the REF⁵.

49. Informed by advice from EDAP, we have introduced the following measures in the nominations process:

- a. We will collect data on the personal characteristics of all nominees for panel membership through an online equal opportunities monitoring form, sent directly to nominees on receipt of nominations. This data will be collected anonymously and used to compare the representativeness of the pool of nominees with the appointed panels. It will not be used to inform individual selection decisions.
- b. All associations or organisations wishing to submit nominations for REF panel membership will need to provide information about how equality and diversity issues were taken into account in putting forward nominations.

50. Guidance and information about available contextual data is provided at Annex C. This is intended to inform nominating bodies' equality and diversity considerations when following processes for making nominations for panel membership in REF 2021.

51. We have provided a template at Annex D for nominating bodies to complete, to submit information about how equality and diversity issues were taken into account. This

⁴ 'Equality and diversity in the 2014 REF: A report by the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP)' (2015), available at www.ref.ac.uk/2014/equality/edapreport/.

⁵ Further information about EDAP is available on the web at www.ref.ac.uk/about/edap.

information will be reviewed by EDAP to consider examples of good practice. Where a nominating body's report suggests that equality and diversity issues may not have been appropriately taken into account the funding bodies may request further information. EDAP's findings will be summarised and published in a report in advance of further nomination rounds for the assessment phase.

Invitation to nominate panel members

52. We recently contacted 2,154 organisations to update information on our list of nominating bodies from REF 2014, as amended following the recent consultation (HEFCE 2016/36)⁶. We are now contacting each of them directly to invite them to nominate candidates to be:

- additional main panel members
- sub-panel members
- assessors.

53. However, any other association or organisation with a clear interest in the conduct, quality, funding or wider benefits of publicly funded research – except for mission groups, individual UK HEIs and groups within or subsidiaries of individual UK HEIs – may also make nominations; this document invites any such body to make nominations.

54. The funding bodies are seeking nominations of candidates from a diverse range of backgrounds, institution types and geographical regions. We particularly welcome nominations of candidates from groups previously under-represented on assessment panels, including women, people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds, and disabled people. We have provided guidance and contextual data at Annex C. Nominating bodies are invited to consider this information in putting forward nominees.

55. Individuals who are nominated will need to confirm that they are willing and able to serve as a panel member, before their names and contact details are put forward. Nominating bodies should also ensure that nominees are aware of the provisional timetable and workload implications (see Annex A).

56. All nominations should be submitted by nominating bodies according to the following process:

- Seek consent from nominees to put forward their names and contact details to the REF team.
- Complete the template at Annex D, providing information about how equality and diversity issues were taken into account in putting forward nominations (see paragraph 49b).
- Submit nominations and the completed template using the online nominations form at www.ref.ac.uk/about/nompan by **noon, 20 December 2017**.

⁶ The REF 2014 list of nominating bodies is available on the web at www.ref.ac.uk/2014/panels/panelmembership.

57. Annex E sets out the information required for each nominee in the online form. All nominations should be submitted using the online form.

58. Where nominees discover that they will not be available to sit on REF panels, we urge them to email the REF team at admin@ref.ac.uk and ask to be withdrawn from consideration.

59. In general we expect that candidates nominated to be sub-panel members at this stage, but not appointed in 2018, would also be considered as potential sub-panel members or assessors at the next round of appointments. During 2020 we will also invite a further round of nominations for sub-panel members and assessors, including those with expertise in the use or benefits of research across the private, public and third sectors. During 2020 we may also invite specific bodies to make further nominations for members, assessors or specialist advisers with specific research expertise required by panels.

Criteria for appointing panels

60. All main and sub-panel chairs, members and assessors will be appointed by the chief executives (or equivalent) of the four UK higher education funding bodies.

61. Additional main panel members will be appointed in early 2018 after considering nominations received and taking advice from the main panel chairs.

62. Sufficient sub-panel members to ensure the sub-panels have appropriate expertise to contribute to the criteria will be appointed in early 2018 after taking advice from the sub-panel chair in each case, and in discussion with the main panel chairs.

63. Further sub-panel members and assessors will be appointed after taking advice from the sub-panels, during 2020. As outlined in paragraph 59, for these appointments we will draw on both nominations submitted at this stage and nominations made through a further round in 2020.

64. The criteria for appointing sub-panels for the REF criteria phase in 2018 are as follows:

- a. Each sub-panel should include expertise across the main fields of research within the UOA, and its membership should collectively command the respect of the relevant research and wider communities.
- b. The sub-panel members should have appropriate expertise to contribute to the development of the criteria across the sub-panel's remit, with an ability to understand and appreciate a diverse range of research topics and approaches. Appropriate expertise includes interdisciplinary research and expertise in the wider use or benefits of research.
- c. Each sub-panel will have at least one appointed member with a specific role to oversee and participate in the assessment of interdisciplinary research submitted in that UOA, to ensure its equitable assessment. We expect to make further appointments of members with this role in the assessment phase.

- d. The diversity of the research community in the relevant fields should be reflected in the sub-panel membership.
- e. Sub-panels will be composed predominantly of practising researchers, and will include individuals with expertise in the use or benefits of research.
- f. Sub-panel members will be appointed on the basis of their personal experience and expertise, not as representatives of any group or interest.
- g. There should be an appropriate degree of continuity in the sub-panel's membership from previous assessment exercises. Where possible at least a third of the members of the sub-panel will have REF or RAE panel experience; and at least a third will not have served on REF or RAE panels.

65. In deciding the sub-panel membership the UK funding bodies will have regard to the desirability of ensuring that the overall body of members reflects the diversity of the research community, including in terms of protected characteristics, scope and focus of their home institution, and geographical location. The REF EDAP will monitor the diversity of the panel membership.

66. The membership of the main and sub-panels for the criteria phase will be published in early 2018.

67. As the REF progresses, the main or sub-panels may recommend to the funding bodies the appointment of a small number of members or assessors in addition to those appointed through the processes outlined above, to provide further expertise where this is necessary and in accordance with the criteria for appointments. Where a candidate with the appropriate expertise has not been nominated, the main or sub-panel may recommend that the funding bodies seek further nominations from an appropriate body or co-opt a member or assessor whose expertise is known to the panel. The funding bodies will co-opt no more than a small proportion of each panel's members and assessors.

Annex A

Provisional timetable and workload for panels

1. The provisional timetable for REF 2021 is as follows:

11 October 2017	Deadline for applications for sub-panel chairs
20 December 2017	Deadline for nominating panel members
Autumn 2017	Decisions on staff and outputs
Winter 2017	Sub-panel chairs appointed
Early 2018	Panel members for criteria phase appointed Panels begin meeting
Mid 2018	Draft guidance on submissions published Panels consult on criteria
Winter 2018-19	Panel criteria and methods published
Early 2020	Submission system operational
2020	Panels meet to prepare for the assessment Further nominations sought, members and assessors appointed
Late 2020	Submissions deadline
2021	Panels assess submissions
December 2021	Outcomes published

2. The workload implications for panellists are as follows:

- a. During 2018 (the criteria-setting phase) each main and sub-panel will meet three or four times to develop and finalise the criteria and working methods. Panellists will also be involved in consulting stakeholders about these through their routine contacts and attending meetings of subject associations or other stakeholder groups, ensuring appropriate input into these by research users, beneficiaries and audiences.

- b. During 2020 we anticipate each main and sub-panel will meet up to three times to prepare for the assessment, to consider institutions' submission intentions and the need for additional assessors, and to undertake initial calibration exercises.
 - c. During 2021 (the assessment phase) we anticipate that each main panel will meet around six times and each sub-panel around seven times to assess submissions. Some of the sub-panel meetings during this phase may be held over several days each, and may involve staying away. In preparation for meetings during this phase, sub-panel members and assessors will be expected to review a range of submitted material. This will involve a substantial workload for individual members, especially in reviewing outputs.
3. Panel members appointed for the criteria-setting will be expected to attend meetings throughout this stage of the exercise in 2018. All sub-panel members will be expected to participate in all meetings of the sub-panel at the assessment stage, including initial meetings for briefing and to calibrate their standards of assessment with the sub-panel, and all assessment meetings. Assessors will be expected to attend initial briefing and calibration meetings in 2020, and those meetings during 2021 at which the material they have reviewed is to be discussed. Further details about the workload for members with expertise in the use and benefits of research are available on our website www.ref.ac.uk/about/researchuser.
 4. Main and sub-panel members will receive fees covering the criteria-setting and assessment phases of the exercise, to be paid at regular intervals. The fees for the criteria-setting phase have been set at £3,000. Panel members will be provided with a full schedule of fee payments on appointment. Travelling and subsistence expenses will be reimbursed according to an agreed scheme.
 5. Main and sub-panels will be supported by panel advisers and panel secretaries, who will assist panels in planning and managing their work; co-ordinate the schedule of meetings; provide guidance and advice on the rules and procedures; prepare agendas, relevant papers, reports and feedback; and record the discussions and assessment outcomes. The panel advisers will also report the progress of the main and sub-panels' work to the REF team. Panel advisers and secretaries will be seconded from HEIs or other organisations involved in the funding, management or conduct of research.

Annex B

Unit of assessment structure for REF 2021

Main panel	Unit of assessment
A	1 Clinical Medicine
	2 Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care
	3 Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy
	4 Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience
	5 Biological Sciences
	6 Agriculture, Veterinary and Food Science
B	7 Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences
	8 Chemistry
	9 Physics
	10 Mathematical Sciences
	11 Computer Science and Informatics
	12 Engineering
C	13 Architecture, Built Environment and Planning
	14 Geography and Environmental Studies
	15 Archaeology
	16 Economics and Econometrics
	17 Business and Management Studies
	18 Law
	19 Politics and International Studies
	20 Social Work and Social Policy
	21 Sociology
	22 Anthropology and Development Studies
	23 Education
	24 Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism
D	25 Area Studies
	26 Modern Languages and Linguistics
	27 English Language and Literature
	28 History
	29 Classics
	30 Philosophy
	31 Theology and Religious Studies
	32 Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory
	33 Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies
	34 Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management

Annex C

Equality and diversity in the nominations process

1. The four UK higher education (HE) funding bodies recognise that diversity of perspective and experience contributes fundamental insight and value to the work of the REF panels, and that this insight and value comes not only from academic achievement but also from other aspects of panel members' lives. We have introduced several measures to the recruitment process for panel members, which are aimed at increasing the representativeness of the REF panel membership. This reflects the funding bodies' wider commitment to supporting equality and diversity in research careers.

Guidance and contextual data

2. The purpose of the guidance below is to inform nominating bodies' considerations about equality and diversity issues when following processes for nominating panel members for REF 2021. Responsibility for compliance with equality and diversity requirements when making nominations rests with nominating bodies. Further information, advice and guidance relating to the Equality Act (2010) can be obtained from the Equality and Human Rights Commission⁷.

3. We recognise that there will be substantial variation in the nature and size of the nominating bodies that will put forward candidates for REF panel membership. Consequently, the processes each body follows to identify and select nominees will vary, as appropriate to that body's nature and size.

4. To help achieve diversity in the pool of nominated candidates, we expect nominating bodies to give due consideration to equality and diversity in the process of identifying and selecting nominees. The term 'equality and diversity' describes an approach that values difference and treats each individual fairly and with dignity and respect, free from harassment and bullying.

5. Processes for identifying and selecting nominees should incorporate the principles of transparency and inclusivity:

- Transparency: processes should be transparent and made available to interested groups.
- Inclusivity: processes should promote an inclusive approach, enabling the identification of all interested candidates that meet the role requirements.

This could involve, for example:

- increasing understanding of any equality and diversity issues relevant to the nominating body's research area of interest (we have made available current contextual data, which may inform nominating bodies – see paragraph 6)

⁷ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en>. This site includes links to the work of the Commission in Scotland and in Wales.

- reaching out to or tackling any known barriers for under-represented groups, to identify nominees
- establishing transparent criteria for any processes followed to select nominees
- reviewing the language used in any communications and criteria in the nominations process, to consider its inclusivity and accessibility
- making clear in communications that nominees from groups under-represented in REF2014 panels are encouraged
- considering the representativeness of any groups involved in selecting nominees
- raising awareness of, or providing training on, unconscious bias for groups involved in selecting nominees.

6. To further inform nominating bodies, we have made available on our website (see www.ref.ac.uk/about/nompan/Contextual>Data) contextual data relating to HE academic staff in the UK, split by age, gender, ethnicity and disability. We have drawn on existing data sources to provide this contextual information by academic job type, and by subject. The contextual data provides a broad indication of the current representation of staff according to these protected characteristics. The data highlights where key challenges remain for equality and diversity in the academic staff population.

7. Nominating bodies may also be interested to review the analysis conducted on the REF 2014 panel membership. The analysis highlighted that, while some progress had been made to improve the representativeness of the panels from previous exercises, some groups remained under-represented on the panels. The report and data can be accessed at www.ref.ac.uk/2014/pubs/analysisofpanelmembership.

Annex D

Nominating body template for submitting information on equality and diversity in the nominations process

Introduction

1. All associations or organisations wishing to submit nominations for REF panel membership will need to provide information about how equality and diversity issues were taken into account in putting forward nominations, using the template below.
2. The information provided by nominating bodies will be reviewed by the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) to consider examples of good practice. Where a nominating body's report suggests that equality and diversity issues may not have been appropriately taken into account the funding bodies may request further information. EDAP's findings will be summarised and published in a report, which will inform any amendments to the nominations process for the assessment phase.
3. Information on equality and diversity in the nominations process submitted in this template may be disclosed on request, under the terms of the relevant Freedom of Information Acts across the UK. The Acts give a public right of access to any information held by a public authority, in this case the four UK funding bodies. This includes information provided in this template. We have a responsibility to decide whether any responses, including information about your identity, should be made public or treated as confidential. We can refuse to disclose information only in exceptional circumstances. This means that information submitted in this template is unlikely to be treated as confidential except in very particular circumstances. For further information about the Acts see the Information Commissioner's Office website, <https://ico.org.uk> or, in Scotland, the website of the Scottish Information Commissioner www.itpublicknowledge.info/home/.
4. The completed template should be submitted when making nominations through the online nominations form at www.ref.ac.uk/about/nompan.

Template for nominating bodies

Name of nominating body

Q1. Please describe the nature and size of your association or organisation, including research areas of interest and details of any organisational policies on diversity and inclusion (max 250 words).

Q2. Describe the process your association or organisation followed in making nominations, and how equality and diversity issues were taken into account in the process followed (max 750 words). This could include, where applicable:

- A description of any distinct processes followed for identifying a pool of candidates, and then for selecting nominees from among the pool identified.
- A description of any differences in the processes followed for different panels, where making nominations to multiple panels.
- Information about who (in terms of job roles) from your association or organisation was involved in the nominations process.
- Considerations relating to the diversity of the group(s) involved in any selection processes, as well as considerations relating to the diversity of the pool of nominees.
- Information about how the guidance and data provided at Annex C informed any processes followed.

Annex E

Nomination information

1. This annex sets out guidance on the information that will be required for each nominee in the online form at www.ref.ac.uk/about/nompan. The deadline for making nominations is **noon on Wednesday 20 December 2017**.
2. On receipt of nominations, the REF team will invite all nominees to complete an online equal opportunities monitoring form. This data will be collected anonymously.

Information required	Description
Title, Given name, Family name	
Institution/organisation	The institution / organisation at which the nominee is currently employed. If this is not applicable, please describe their alternative employment status (for example, self-employed).
Current role	The nominee's current job title.
Nominee's contact email address	
Confirmation that nominee has agreed to nomination	Individuals who are nominated will need to confirm that they are willing and able to serve as a panel member, before their names and contact details are put forward. Nominating bodies should also ensure that nominees are aware of the provisional timetable and workload implications (see Annex A).
Previous REF/RAE panel experience	Confirm whether the nominee has previously served on REF or RAE panels. Where they have previous experience, please briefly outline the panel and role held.
Languages able to assess	List any languages (other than English) in which the nominee is able to assess submissions.
Area of expertise	Outline the nominee's main fields or areas of research expertise, including any interdisciplinary research expertise. For nominees with experience in the wider use and benefits of research, please outline the areas, sectors or domains in which the nominee has this expertise or professional experience.
Reason for nomination	Please provide evidence to support the candidate's nomination. This should include, where applicable : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• their current role and other recent posts of relevance.• evidence of conducting leading research in their field (for example, key academic appointments or achievements)• other indicators of standing in their academic community (for example, editorial posts or chair positions for subject bodies) or their professional community

Reason for nomination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relevant experience of research management or commissioning, using or benefitting from research • relevant experience of leading, managing or practising interdisciplinary research • relevant experience of peer review, research quality standards, or of evaluating the impact, benefits or quality of research.
Panel	<p>Each nominee may be nominated for up to three roles. Please select the panel(s) to which you are nominating this individual, in order of preference.</p> <p>Select from one of the four main panels (A to D) or the 34 sub-panels (for each of the units of assessment, as set out at Annex B).</p>
Role	<p>Select the role(s) you are nominating this individual for, from the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional main panel member – interdisciplinary • Additional main panel member – international • Additional main panel member – wider use and benefits of research • Sub-panel member - practising researcher • Sub-panel member - wider use and benefits of research • Impact assessor (appointment in 2020) • Output assessor (appointment in 2020). <p>In general we expect that candidates nominated to be sub-panel members at this stage, but not appointed in 2018, would also be considered as potential sub-panel members or assessors at the next round of appointments. During 2020 we will also invite a further round of nominations for sub-panel members and assessors.</p>
Interdisciplinary adviser	<p>For sub-panel member nominations, indicate whether you are nominating the individual to the role of interdisciplinary research adviser (as described in the main text, in Box 1).</p>



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