



University of
St Andrews

**UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS
REF 2029 CODE OF PRACTICE**

Document type	Policy
Scope (applies to)	All researchers
Applicability date	31/08/2026
Expiry date	31/12/2030
Approved date	01/09/2026
Approver	Professor
Document owner	Head of Research Information and Policy
School / unit	Research and Innovation Services
Document status	Published
Information classification	Public
Equality impact assessment	01/05/2026
Key terms	Research/Research performance/Research excellence framework
Purpose	Outlines the internal policies and processes associated with the institutional submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF)

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and School or unit	Date
1.0	Draft for IRED proposed independence review process. Most recent REF2029 release: Volume Measure – Winter 2025		Head of Research Information and Policy	29/05/2025
1.2	Draft including updated independence process and new output selection section		Head of Research Information and Policy	18/08/2025
1.3	Draft incorporating feedback from phases I and II of the		Head of Research Information and	22/10/2025

	consultation		Policy	
1.4	Draft incorporating feedback from Phase III of consultation and inclusion of revised governance structure		Assistant Director of Research Support Services (Policy and Governance)	31/03/2026
1.5	Draft incorporating feedback from SFC review		Head of Research Information and Policy	22/07/2026
1.6	Revised draft addressing additional SFC feedback		Head of Research Information and Policy	01/09/2026

- British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us via the online BSL Video Relay Interpreting Service: <https://contactscotland-bsl.org>
- This document and forms associated with this document are available in an alternative format upon request.
- We encourage employees to access the [Probation webpage](#) to access FAQs regarding the probation process, and download the forms referred to in this policy.

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Background to REF 2029

REF

The REF ([Research Excellence Framework](#)) is the UK’s system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions. The last REF was carried out in 2021, building on the REF 2014 exercise. The next REF is planned for 2029, with UK HEIs submitting in 2028.

The key purposes of REF are:

- To provide accountability for public investment in research and produce evidence of the benefits of this investment.
- To provide information into the overall health of research, and specific disciplines, in the UK
- To inform Scottish Funding Council (SFC)’s allocation of funding for research through the Research Excellence Grant (REG).

The exercise has continued to evolve under the Future Research Assessment Programme (FRAP), overseen by senior representatives from the UK funding bodies. This programme sought to:

“encourage and strengthen the emphasis on delivering excellent research and impact, support a positive, productive research culture, while simplifying and reducing the administrative burden on the HE sector.”

The initial decisions from the programme were published in Jan 2023, with further updates published in Jan, March and June 2024. In a departure from previous exercises the guidance for REF 2029 will be published in a modular format, releasing guidance in 2024, 2025 and finalising all guidance in 2026.

To accommodate the modular release schedule, the institutional Code of Practice (COP) is a living document which is updated as guidance is made available. All changes and the guidance to which they respond are listed in the version update table at the beginning of this document.

REF 2029

Submissions to REF 2029 can be made in 34 discipline-based ‘units of assessment’ (UoA). Expert sub-panels for each UoA, appointed by the funding bodies, will conduct a detailed assessment of submissions. The University of St Andrews will make an institutional submission to REF 2029, based on the appropriate subject-based UoAs for this institution. Table 1 below, illustrates how the University of St Andrews submissions from each discipline will map onto the REF 2029 prescribed UoAs. The submission deadline is Autumn 2028.

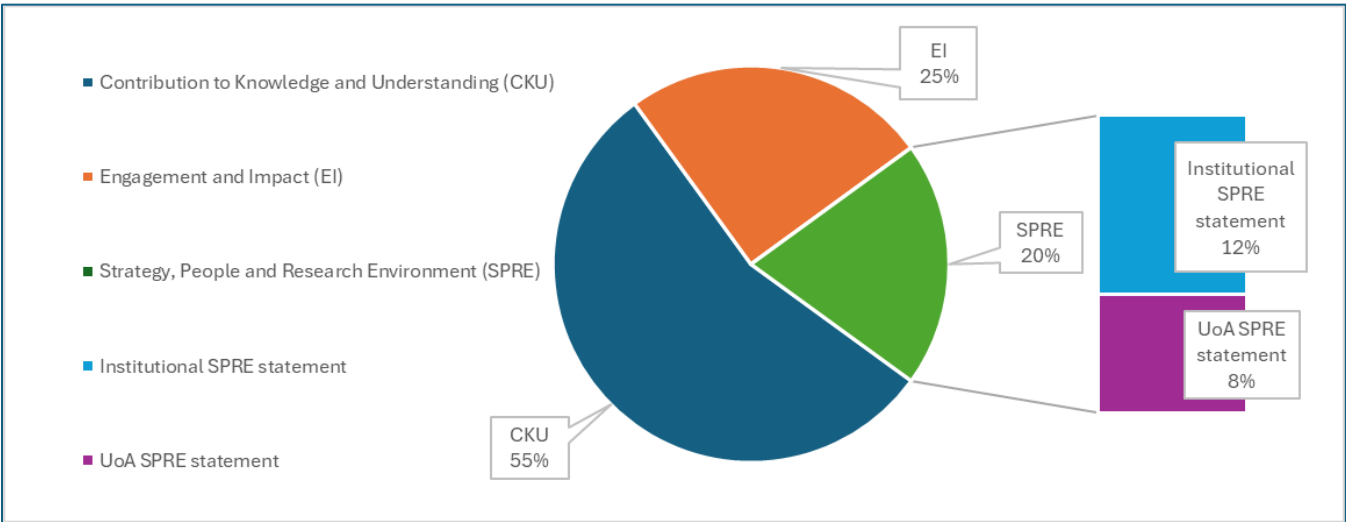


Figure 1 Weighting for REF 2029 outcomes

For each submission, as is shown in Figure 1, three distinct elements are assessed: **Contribution to knowledge and understanding (CKU)**, products of research produced by the institution during the assessment period (formerly known as Outputs), **Engagement and Impact (E&I)**, effects, changes and benefits resulting from the research (formerly known as Impact) and **Strategy, People and Research Environment (SPRE)**, an evidence statement identifying key features of a healthy research environment within the University of St Andrews and each UoA (formerly known as Environment) which make up 55%, 25% and 20% of the assessment respectively.

Within the SPRE element the institutional level statement (ILS) and UoA level statement (ULS) will be assessed separately with the weighting split 60% ILS and 40% ULS for the UoA SPRE. Meaning 12% of the University's overall scoring will be an outcome of the ILS assessment. This emphasis on the ILS is intended to reflect the responsibility institutions have to support and resource their research environments.

Each element submitted to the REF will be graded on a 5-point scale; from unclassified (did not meet REF criteria) to 4* (world leading).

Table 1 Current mapping of Units of Assessment to the University of St Andrews schools/departments

Main Panel	Unit of assessment		University of St Andrews School/ Department
A	1	Clinical Medicine	School of Medicine
	4	Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience	School of Psychology and Neuroscience
	5	Biological Sciences	School of Biology
B	7	Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences	School of Earth and Environmental Sciences
	8	Chemistry	School of Chemistry (Joint Submission with University of Edinburgh)
	9	Physics	School of Physics and Astronomy
	10	Mathematical Sciences	School of Mathematics & Statistics
	11	Computer Science and Informatics	School of Computer Science
C	14	Geography and Environmental Studies	School of Geography and Sustainable Development
	17	Business and Management Studies	Business School
	19	Politics and International Studies	School of International Relations
	22	Anthropology and Development Studies	Department of Social Anthropology
D	26	Modern Languages and Linguistics	School of Modern Languages
	27	English Language and Literature	School of English
	28	History	School of History
	29	Classics	School of Classics
	30	Philosophy	Department of Philosophy
	31	Theology and Religious Studies	School of Divinity
	32	Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory	School of Art History
	33	Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies	Department of Film Studies

Outputs must be published during the publication period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2028; i.e. the date at which the output first becomes publicly available should fall within this timeframe.

The research environment and data about research income and research doctoral degrees awarded must fall within the assessment period. This will run from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2028.

The assessment period for research impact will be 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2028. Table 2 highlights the key dates for REF 2029.

Table 2 Key dates for REF 2029

Contribution to knowledge (CKU)	First published (made publicly available) between 01/01/2021 and 31/12/2028
Staff volume period	Have an eligible contract of employment between 01/08/2025 and 31/07/2027
Engagement and Impact (E&I)	Impact to have occurred between 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2028 The underpinning research first produced between 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2028
Strategy, People, and Research Environment (SPRE)	Information is required from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2028

Details on eligible staff, output and impact requirements are outlined below.

Volume Measure:

Decoupling Volume from Outputs and Impact Case Studies

In a departure from previous REF exercises, REF 2029 submissions no longer include a staff list with a snapshot FTE recorded on a fixed census date. Instead, the Funding Bodies have introduced a decoupled model, whereby an individual's output and impact contributions are submitted independently of whether they contribute to the REF staff FTE volume measure. This change means that an individual's eligibility for the volume measure has no bearing on whether their outputs and/or impact case studies may be included in the University's submission.

The staff FTE volume measure for REF 2029 will be derived from HESA staff return data, as set out below.

Staff Volume Measure and HESA Returns

Unlike previous REFs which included a staff element in their submission, for REF 2029 the staff FTE volume measure will be an average derived from the HESA¹ staff return data for academic years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027.

All (100%) of staff with significant responsibility for research are expected to be returned in the HESA staff return as REF eligible.

Contractual status ([Academic](#) – “Education and Research”) will identify the majority of staff who have an eligible volume contributing contract at St Andrews.

Additionally Academic – “Research-only” staff will be included in the measure where they meet the definition of Research Independence, outlined in Part 3: Determining Research Independence.

¹ The Higher Education Statistics Agency: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/about>

Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR)

Throughout this Code, SRR is defined in accordance with REF guidance – “*Contracts with significant responsibility for research are those where explicit time and resources are made available to engage actively in independent research, and where this is an expectation of the job role*”.

Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding:

- The number of outputs required for each submission will be determined by the staff volume measure x 2.5.
- The **minimum output requirement** per staff member with responsibility for research is **zero**.
- There is a recommended **maximum of five outputs per** substantive link.
- **Output portability**: Institutions can submit any output where there is a demonstrable and substantive link to that institution within the REF period. The indicators for a substantive link are outlined in Part 5: Selecting outputs.
- **Open Access (OA) policy**: The REF 2021 Open Access Policy submission requirements will continue to apply to **articles** in journals or conference proceedings with an ISSN until 1 Jan 2026 when the [REF2029 OA policy](#) takes over.

Engagement and Impact:

Table 3 The number of case studies required in submissions

FTE of Volume Contributing staff	Required number of case studies
Up to 9.99 (option 1)	1
Up to 9.99 (option 2)*	2
10 to 19.99	2
20 to 39.99	3
40 to 59.99	4
60 to 89.99	5
90 to 119.99	6
120 to 169.99	7
170 or more	8, plus one further case study per additional 50 FTE
* UoAs <9.99 FTE may choose optionally to submit two ICS, if submitted, both will contribute equally to their quality profile.	

- Submissions will therefore include **a minimum of one case study**.

Key University of St Andrews Contacts for REF 2029:

- General REF enquires: ris@st-andrews.ac.uk
- Equality and Diversity Research enquiries: ired@st-andrews.ac.uk
- Support for Impact: impact@st-andrews.ac.uk
- Support for Open Access: openaccess@st-andrews.ac.uk
- Data Protection: dataprot@st-andrews.ac.uk

If you are unsure how to direct your query, please send it to ris@st-andrews.ac.uk in the first instance.

REF 2029 Information Events

The University is holding regular events to keep staff updated on REF 2029. These will be advertised on the internal REF 2029 webpages.

Details on upcoming information events for REF 2029 will be circulated to Schools/departments for dissemination and will be advertised via the University's 'In the Loop' and staff memos.

University of St Andrews REF 2029 Code of Practice

Institution name: University of St Andrews

Date of submission: May 2026 (re-submitted August 2026)

Part 1: Introduction

The REF exists to measure the quality of research in UK Higher Education Institutions, and it will be used to determine future quality-related research funding from the Funding Councils.

This Code of Practice (“Code” or “CoP”) aims to ensure that the University of St Andrews is committed to the principles of robustness, transparency, equity and inclusion in its approach to preparations for REF 2029 and specifically avoids discrimination in relation to the determination of who is an independent researcher, how contracts are assigned to Units of Assessment (“UoAs”) and the processes involved in selecting outputs.

REF 2029 represents a significant departure from previous research assessment exercises. Most notably, the Funding Bodies have introduced a decoupled model in which the staff FTE volume measure is no longer derived from a census-date staff list included within the REF submission. Instead, the volume measure assesses institutional research capacity at an aggregate level, based on an average of HESA staff return data over two academic years. Under this model, the volume measure is an institutional-level assessment of research capacity, derived from averaged HESA staff-record data, and does not involve assessment or adjustment based on individual staff circumstances.

In planning for REF 2029, the University embraces the opportunities created by the decoupling approach introduced in the REF 2029 guidance. Our submission will adopt a holistic view of institutional research capacity, culture and environment, underpinned by a strategic perspective on institutional excellence and the diverse community that delivers this.

How this Code supports the principles of:

1.1 Robustness – How the policies and processes set out in this CoP ensure that contracts identified as contributing to the volume measure reliably reflect the responsibilities of staff.

The University has used the Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA) to facilitate the role analysis process and all roles have been put through the system to determine their grade. New roles continue to be added to the grading structure via the role analysis of job adverts and further particulars. HERA is a tool used to analyse roles found in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). It was developed by a consortium of HEIs to cover the vast range of jobs which can be found within the Higher Education sector. The scheme has been rigorously tested at a national level to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

The University, in consultation with the Trade Unions (<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/human-resources/wellbeing/workplace-wellbeing/trade-unions/>), has developed four job families to represent its key job groups, these are:

- Academic (Education and Research; Research; Education).
- Managerial, Specialist and Administrative.
- Technical
- Operational and Facilities

Each grade within the University’s Academic job family has a published [generic role descriptor](#) which outlines the expected responsibilities of a staff member in that family/grade. Roles that substantially combine both teaching and research (Academic - Education & Research -HESA ACEMPFUN 3) have a requirement for significant responsibility for research within the generic role descriptor at all applicable grades and are automatically eligible to contribute towards the REF volume measure. Roles that are mainly research based (Academic – Research - HESA ACEMPFUN 2) may be eligible if they require independent research (see Part 3). Roles that are primarily teaching-based (Academic - Education Focused - HESA ACEMPFUN 1), are not eligible for the REF volume measure (REF2029 Guidance section 3, para 6.0.4).

The independence process outlined in Part 3 was developed in close consultation with Professional Services colleagues, in particular, Human Resources. Feedback on the indicators suggested in the REF guidance was also collected from Directors of Research, the Research Excellence Board and the Institutional Research Equality and Diversity review group prior to the development of the independence process. While the initial recommendations and decisions are made based on evidence from central systems, all post holders can provide additional evidence of their current responsibilities, thus allowing central records to be updated where necessary. Being eligible to contribute to the REF volume measure does not automatically mean a role will be counted in the HESA-derived volume calculation, which is based on averaged contractual data returned over the relevant HESA years.

1.2 Transparency – How the Code is communicated to all staff

The development of the Code has taken place alongside the phased release of REF 2029 guidance. As national guidance has evolved, including changes to the structure and terminology of assessment elements such as the transition from People, Culture and Environment (PCE) to Strategy, People and Research Environment (SPRE), the University has reviewed and updated the Code to ensure continued alignment with REF requirements. The Code has therefore been developed iteratively, responding to emerging guidance while maintaining consistency of approach. Further REF 2029 guidance, including detailed SPRE and joint submission guidance, is expected to be published in Autumn 2026 and any material changes arising from this will be managed through version-controlled updates and communicated appropriately to staff.

During the development of the Code, staff were consulted in three main phases:

PHASE	TIMELINE	STAFF CONSULTED	SUMMARY
I – Development Phase	Feb – Aug 2025	IRED, REB, RIS, HR, UCU, Vice Principal (People and Diversity), LGBTQI+	Phase led by the Internal REF 2029 Equality and Diversity Review Group (IRED) involving staff with responsibility for overseeing REF policy and processes.
II – Initial Consultation	Sep 2025	Heads of Schools, Directors of Research, Directors of Impact & Innovation, Trade Union representatives, Staff networks including BAME, Disabilities, Neurodiversity, Parents & Carers and LGBTQI+	Consultation with key staff groups, this phase, including Open Fora where stakeholders were presented with the key principles and decisions underpinning the Code and given the opportunity to inform its further development.
III – Wider Consultation	March 2026	All staff	All staff were invited to comment on the draft Code.

Feedback from all consultation phases was considered collectively. Where conflicting views were expressed, IRED sought to balance stakeholder input with REF requirements, equality and diversity considerations and institutional policy. Amendments to the draft Code have been made following consultation prior to submission for internal approval.

The final Code will be submitted to the University Court for approval in April 2026. Once approved, the Code will be communicated to all staff through institutional and Unit of Assessment-level communication channels. This will include dissemination to Heads of Schools, Directors of Research and relevant governance and research groups, with the request that the Code is shared widely with staff. From then, the Code will be available on the internal REF webpage: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/research/environment/ref-2029/staff-information/> and the University's Research at St Andrews Sharepoint site. The Code will also be published and made externally accessible via the University governance zone.

The Code will be submitted to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) in May 2026 for the required external approval. If any changes are made to the Code following the external assessment and approval process, these will be

communicated via email to Directors of Research for circulation, and the updated Code will be published on the internal REF webpages and the Research at St Andrews SharePoint site.

To ensure transparency and accessibility, Research and Innovation Services (RIS) and Human Resources (HR) will jointly agree and maintain an appropriate process for signposting the Code to staff appointed to relevant roles, or whose contractual arrangements or duties change during the REF 2029 preparation period. This signposting will form part of existing induction, contractual notification or role-change communications and is intended to ensure awareness of the principles and processes set out in the Code. It does not indicate individual eligibility for the REF volume measure, which is assessed institutionally in accordance with REF guidance.

The various routes by which staff are made aware of the Code are described below:

- An internal staff REF webpage with general information on REF and answers to Frequently Asked REF Questions, which will be updated regularly.
- An internal SharePoint Site namely Research at St Andrews – a hub for research support at the University.
- Visibility of the Code will be increased via staff-wide communication channels and dissemination at UoA level.
- The Code will be made available in several accessible and inclusive formats where requested.

The University of St Andrews is committed to making all of its webpages accessible, including those relating to REF 2029, in accordance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. This website is partially compliant with the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) version 2.1](#) AA standard due to the non-compliances and exemptions listed [here](#).

Staff on leave of absence or based outside the UK will be made aware of the Code via the agreed communications policy for their type of absence. This may include dissemination via their Head of School, HR business partner or other appropriate contact.

Contacts for support and guidance for the REF processes outlined in this Code:

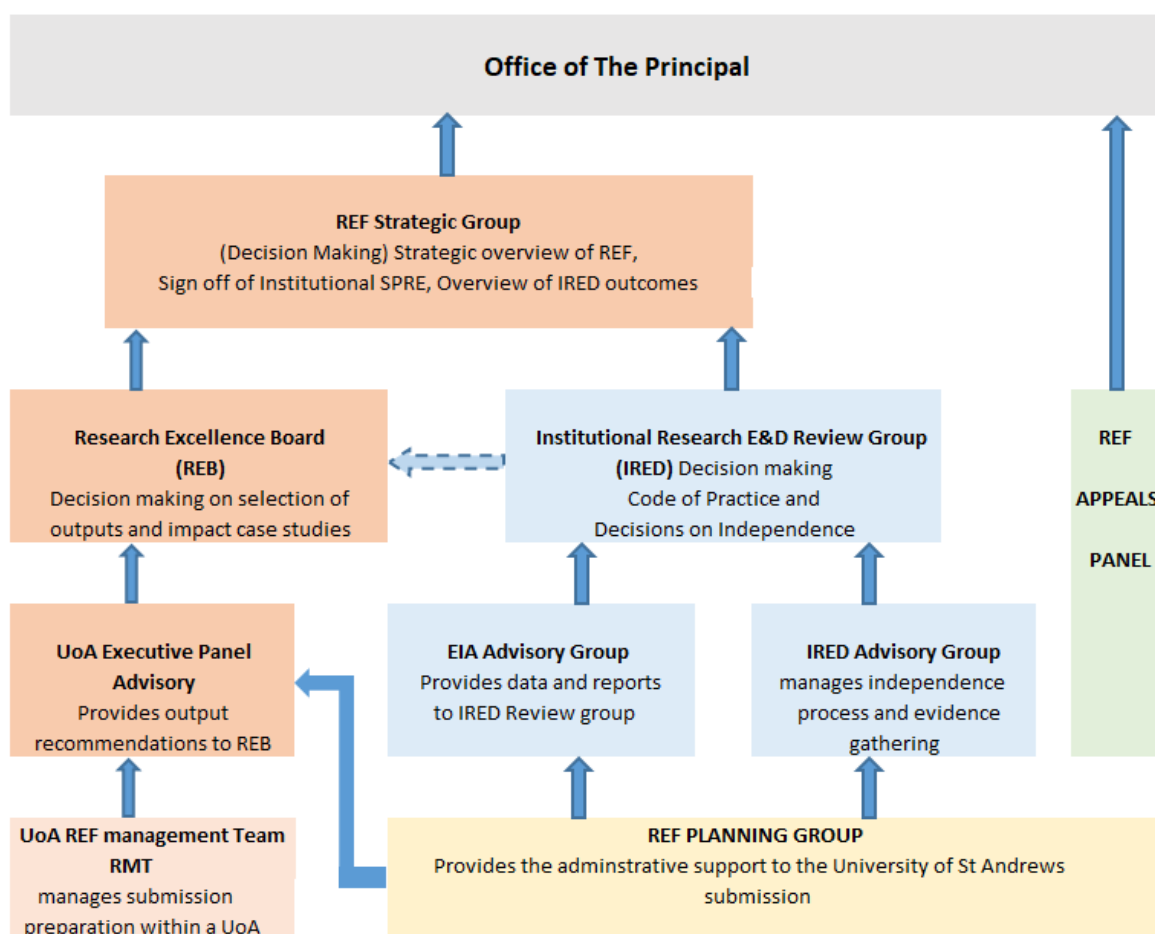
- Any general enquiries on REF can be directed to the REF Institutional Contact (ris@st-andrews.ac.uk).
- Any REF related enquiries that relate specifically to equality, diversity and inclusion issues can be directed to the Institutional Research Equality and Diversity Review (IRED) Group (ired@st-andrews.ac.uk).

1.3 Equity, accountability and inclusion – How decisions about submissions are fair and impartial supporting a diversity of people and research, where diverse contributions are valued and supported.

Equity

The University is committed to a robust, equitable and transparent approach to the selection of outputs for REF across the institution and the treatment of staff in relation to the identification of who is an independent researcher. The University's Research Excellence Board (REB) and its Institutional Research Equality and Diversity (IRED) Review Group ([Appendix 5](#)) are developing centralised policy and processes at an institutional level, to ensure that REF policy is implemented uniformly across each Unit of Assessment. Training will be provided to staff members managing processes for individual Units of Assessment, and to School Equality and Diversity Directors, to ensure policy is implemented equitably.

Figure 2 Institutional Decision and Advisory Groups for Independence, Outputs and Unit Reductions in exceptional circumstances for REF2029



Accountability

This Code describes in detail how decisions on output selection for REF will be made and describes the people and processes involved. Ultimately, the Principal is responsible for the submission to REF 2029. All staff with REF management responsibilities, as well as School Directors of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), will undertake equality, diversity and inclusion training, as well as REF-specific training ([Section 3.4](#)). The IRED Advisory Group email (ired@st-andrews.ac.uk) serves as a dedicated point of contact for staff with any concerns about equality and diversity processes who wish to raise concerns with the University's central REF team. School Directors of EDI will be a local point of contact for staff with any concerns about equality and diversity processes within their School/Department.

Inclusion

The University of St Andrews is firmly committed to fostering and promoting an inclusive environment. The University recognises that academic staff members contribute to the success of the University of St Andrews as a world-leading institution in many different, and highly valued, ways such as producing and evidencing REF impact case studies, mentoring colleagues, supporting research enabling activities and contributing to collegiate culture.

The University will apply this Code to ensure fair, consistent and transparent processes for identifying and selecting excellent research which meets the eligibility criteria for submission.

The specific mechanisms supporting inclusive practice are set out in Parts 3 and 5 of this Code and in the supporting appendices.

Contextualisation within Institutional Policies:

1.4 How this Code relates to our institution's policies/strategies on equality, diversity, and inclusion, PCE and responsible research assessment.

This Code of Practice aims to ensure that all members of the University of St Andrews staff are informed of the processes that have been put in place for our preparation for REF 2029. This Code has been written to supplement the University's policies on employment and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) which reflect equality law, such as the Equality Act (2010) and Public Sector Equality Duty (2011), Scottish Specific Duties (2012), and sets these policies in the context of REF requirements. The Code also provides guidance to support consistent and fair practice within individual Units of Assessment.

The Code reflects and reinforces the University's commitment to equality of opportunity, fairness, diversity and inclusivity, as laid out in our Strategy (2022-2027) and its specific strategic theme of Diverse St Andrews. This theme commits the University to placing equality and diversity at the centre of institutional activity and to enabling an environment in which all staff and students can flourish and realise their potential. In the context of research, impact and innovation, this includes embedding an inclusive research culture that recognises a wide range of contributions across different career pathways, while fostering ethical research practice, positive working environments and responsible leadership and behaviours.

As stated in the Strategy, as part of Diverse St Andrews we will:

- Ensure that our teaching, research, and operations are at the forefront of best practice in equality, inclusion, and diversity.
- Foster an inclusive culture where all feel able to be their authentic selves, and where prejudice and discrimination are robustly challenged.
- Make real progress in addressing the inequalities and disadvantages experienced by minoritised groups including, but not limited to, those related to race and ethnicity; socio-economic backgrounds; the experience of LGBTQIA+ people in our culture; disability; sex and gender.
- Build greater diversity across our student community – strengthening the pathways that enable access and success – and in our workforce, particularly at senior levels, ensuring that the leadership of the University has an intrinsic understanding of the perspectives and potential of its community.
- Take steps to support staff and student physical and mental wellbeing and resilience and to foster a culture of care and compassion (<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/about/governance/university-strategy/diverse/>)

In support of the above, the University's refreshed People Strategy 2023-2027 aims to enhance staff experience through a series of targeted actions and initiatives. This strategy has identified key strategic priorities which are critical to delivery of the University Strategy each of which have a clear aim and set of actions for delivery. These include a commitment to reduce disparities between different groups of staff's terms and conditions, such as those on fixed term and flexible contracts.

"We want to build a stronger culture of engagement in which staff have the opportunity to be involved in decisions that affect them and feel that their achievements and wider contributions are recognised and valued." <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/about/governance/university-strategy/supporting-documents/people-strategy-2023-2027/>

This Code is being developed in accordance with the information provided by the REF 2029 Guidance on Submissions. The University is required to submit the Code to the UK REF team by 15 May 2026. The Principal will be required to confirm that the University has adhered to the Code when making the University submission to REF 2029. Before submission to REF 2029, this Code will be made public online by the UK REF team. In addition, the University will publish a final Equality Impact Assessment for REF 2029. The Equality Impact Assessment will be reviewed and updated at key stages throughout the REF preparation period and following submission to inform REF-related decision-making and to ensure that policies and processes do not discriminate against or disadvantage individuals or groups of staff (including those on fixed or part-time contracts), particularly those protected under equality legislation.

Equality Statement

The University is fully committed to respectful and fair treatment for everyone, eliminating discrimination and actively promoting equality of opportunity and delivering fairness to all. In addition to being compliant with the equality laws, public duties and human rights, a key strategic focus of the University is the promotion of diversity and equality of opportunity for all categories of staff, students and visitors regardless of their:

- Protected Characteristic' (Equality Act 2010)
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender Reassignment
 - Marriage and Civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and Maternity (including Paternity)
 - Race (colour, ethnic or national background)
 - Religion or Belief (including non-belief)
 - Sex/Gender
 - Sexual Orientation
- Caring responsibilities
- Socio-economic background/grouping

The list above is not exhaustive and other aspects e.g. political views, will be covered similarly by the University's commitment.

[Appendix 3](#) provides a glossary of terms relevant to equality, diversity and inclusion issues.

The [University's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy \(Appendix 4\)](#) outlines our responsibility to promote inclusive environments, which are free from discrimination for our staff; students; and anyone associated with the University (e.g. visitors, contractors and service providers).

1.5 Update on Actions Since REF 2021

Summary of key actions taken since REF 2021 to address issues or recommendations from previous EIAs.

A report on progress achieved in the implementation of the Equality Outcomes Action Plan, which included actions developed because of the REF 2014 and 2021 Equality Impact Assessments was published in April 2025. Key achievements highlighted in the report include the attainment of an institutional Athena Swan Silver Award, a Race Equality Charter Bronze Award and a Carers Excellence Award in recognition of the progress made and the commitment demonstrated to enhancing gender, race and carers inclusion across the institution. The report also highlights increased diversity in staff and student bodies with substantive increases in the proportions of ethnic minority and disabled staff and students and of staff and students who identify as LGBTQIA+. There has also been an increase in the representation of women in leadership positions and in the professoriate. Specific actions, which came out of the 2021 REF process were also achieved. These include the provision of pronoun and gender inclusive language training and the development of interactive webpages that enable leave calculation and respond to frequently asked questions related to leave entitlement.

Part 2: Identifying Staff Contracts with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR)

This process is not required as the University of St Andrews Academic “Education and Research” contracts (ACEMPFUN 3 - contracts in the HESA staff record) already comprehensively identify all staff with significant responsibility for research.

Within this Code, SRR is defined in accordance with REF guidance – “*Contracts with significant responsibility for research are those where explicit time and resources are made available to engage actively in independent research, and where this is an expectation of the job role*”.

Part 3: Determining Research Independence

Policies and Procedures:

3.1 Criteria and Evidence used for determining research independence, including information about how the criteria are being applied.

The University will include 100% of its eligible volume contributing posts (REFQUALCONs - HESA REF Qualifying Contracts). The total full time equivalent (FTE) of the eligible volume contributing posts across academic years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 will be averaged to calculate the REF 2029 volume measure.

The FTE of staff on 'Education and Research' contracts is automatically considered as eligible and contributes to the volume measure as mentioned in Part 2 of this Code.

The FTE of staff employed on 'Research Only' contracts (ACEMPFUN 2 - contracts in the HESA staff record) will only be considered as contributing to the volume measure if the contracted post is able to meet the criteria of research independence.

For the purposes of the REF, a 'Research Only' contract is considered to demonstrate Research Independence if the individual undertakes self-directed research rather than carrying out another individual's research programme.

A member of staff is not deemed to have undertaken independent research purely based on their job title or on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs.

Research assistants (sometimes also described as postdoctoral research assistants, research and innovation associates or assistant researchers), do not contribute to the volume measure for REF unless, exceptionally, their contract meets the definition of research independence in the qualifying HESA period/s.

"Research assistants are primarily employed to support another individuals' research rather than pursuing independent research. They are usually funded from research grants or contracts from Research Councils, charities, the European Union (EU) or other overseas sources, industry, or other commercial enterprises, but they may also be funded from the institution's own funds" (REF2029 Guidance – Section 3, para 9.5.1-9.5.2).

The University will use the following indicators, together with evidence from Human Resources, to inform the RI of a contracted post:

- Hold a post where research independence is an inherent expectation of the post holder
- Leading or acting as Principal Investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project
- Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement
- Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where a transition to research independence is supported and where the transition to independence has been demonstrably achieved during the relevant REF volume-measuring period
- Leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package

In line with REF guidance, the University will use the REF published fellowship lists when determining research independence. Fellowships identified by REF as supporting a transition to research independence will not be treated as automatically research independent and will be considered against the criteria set out in this Code.

The following indicators will also be used where the post is associated with Panels C or D (UoA 13-34):

- Being named as a PI/Co-I on an externally funded research grant/award
- Having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research.

The indicators above will be applied consistently with the definition of research independence set out above, including the distinction between self-directed research and delivery of another individual's research programme.

It is not necessary for all indicators to be met. Where a post is determined through this process to meet the criteria for research independence, it will be treated as contributing to the REF volume measure for HESA purposes while it is occupied. This classification applies to the post rather than the individual occupying it and will remain in place unless there is a material change to the role or its associated responsibilities.

Where a relevant change has been identified, this will be considered through established institutional processes. Relevant changes may include a material change to the duties or funding basis of the post, a formal contractual variation, or progression within a fellowship identified by REF as supporting transition to research independence. In the case of transitional fellowship posts, recognition of research independence will normally be considered when the sponsoring School confirms that the expectations of the fellowship, including progression to research independence, have been met. Review will involve the relevant line manager, Head of School and HR, with referral to IRED where required. There is no routine or automatic reassessment of research independence where no such change has occurred.

3.2 Decision-Making and Communication: The process, roles, and timelines.

Process for identifying independence

Year 1 – 2024-2025 HESA Pilot

Using St Andrews centrally held data, the IRED Advisory group reviewed all Research Only contracted posts against the stated indicators and assigned one of the following three recommendations:

- **Independent:** Posts for which independence could be evidenced directly by centrally held data
- **Not Independent:** Posts which could be shown to have no centrally evidenced indicators
- **IRED review required:** Posts which required understanding of disciplinary norms and/or a cumulative set of central and additional evidence to establish independence.

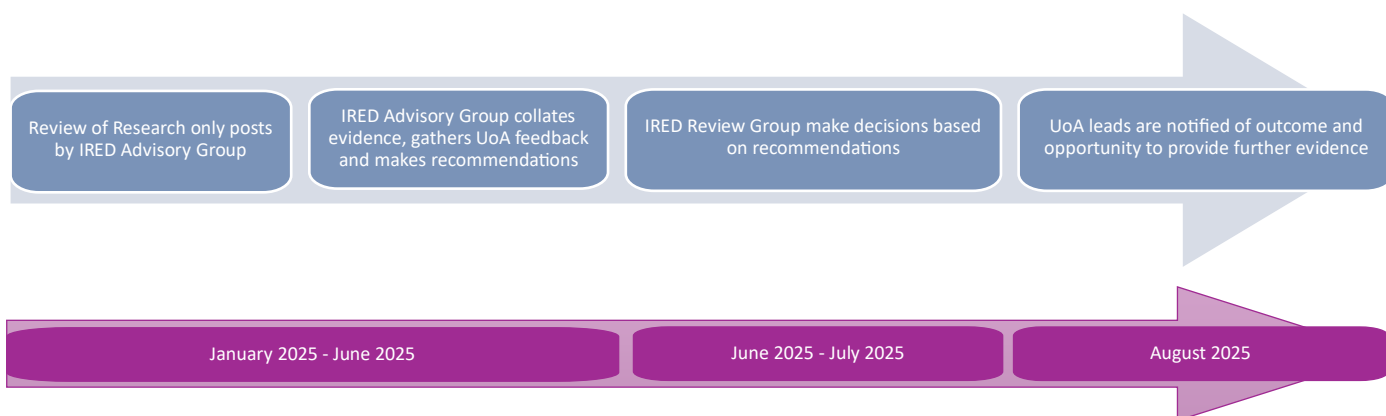
The centrally held data comprised information held within the HESA staff record, HR contract and role data, centrally recorded grant and fellowship data, and other institutional systems used to evidence the indicators, as set out in [Appendix 7](#).

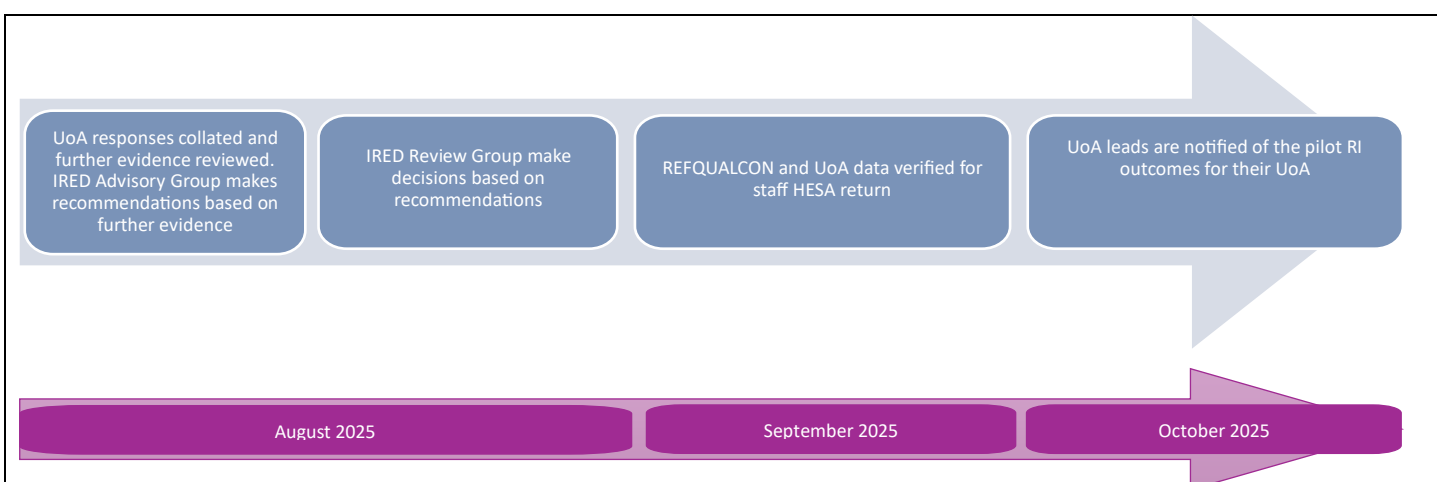
Each UoA was provided with a complete list of the posts, including recommendations, and invited to raise any immediate concerns. The lists, together with the qualifying evidence and any associated feedback for each post, were then presented to the IRED review group. Where an Advisory group recommendation was “IRED review required”, the evidence was discussed by the IRED review group before a provisional decision was returned to HESA.

Once a provisional decision against a post had been approved by the IRED review group, the post was returned to the pilot reflecting that provisional outcome. Associated UoA leads were notified of their research independent post provisional decisions. To avoid unnecessary concern or confusion, post holders were not notified of provisional outcomes for the pilot year.

As a pilot exercise, this process did not resolve all underlying data corrections, which are addressed through ongoing data quality work and subsequent REF volume contributing years.

Figure 3 Independence Approval Flow





Year 2 – 2025-2026 (REF Volume contributing year)

As in Year 1, using St Andrews centrally held data, the IRED Advisory group will review all relevant ‘Research Only’ contracted posts against the stated indicators and assign one of the following three recommendations:

- **Independent:** Posts for which independence can be evidenced directly by centrally held data
- **Not Independent:** Posts which can be shown to have no centrally evidenced indicators
- **IRED review required:** Posts which require understanding of disciplinary norms and/or a cumulative set of central and additional evidence to establish independence.

In respect of this Code, which is a living document, if changes are deemed necessary to the evidence required for independence as an outcome of the pilot these will be reflected in an updated [Appendix 7](#) and communicated to all UoA leads.

The decision making process for Year 2 will follow the approach set out for Year 1.

Unlike Year 1, once a provisional decision against a post has been approved by the IRED review group, the post holder and associated UoA leads will be notified of the outcome including the supporting evidence underpinning the decision.

No decisions will be considered final until the University’s Code of Practice has been approved by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

Evidence Verification Step

To ensure institutional records used to determine independence are robust, where an individual does not agree with the underpinning evidence presented with their outcome, they will be directed to complete a secure online survey to provide further details to support their case. The survey is accessible via the staff intranet. In line with the principles of this Code, all ‘research only’ staff have access to the survey to provide evidence and capture changes in their responsibilities at any time during the eligible submission period. Admissible evidence types are listed in [Appendix 7](#).

Routes to the survey are as follows:

- Independence Decision Email – ‘Research Only’ post holders will receive a decision on the independence of their post. This will include an invitation to complete the survey if they dispute the evidence used in their initial research independence decision. This email will include a link to the Code of Practice for their reference.
- Staff intranet page – accessible to all St Andrews staff, advertised by dissemination to research only staff via Heads of School and Directors of Research
- New staff welcome email – sent to all new ‘research only’ staff by HR, this will advise them of the independence status of their new post and will direct them towards a copy of the approved Code.

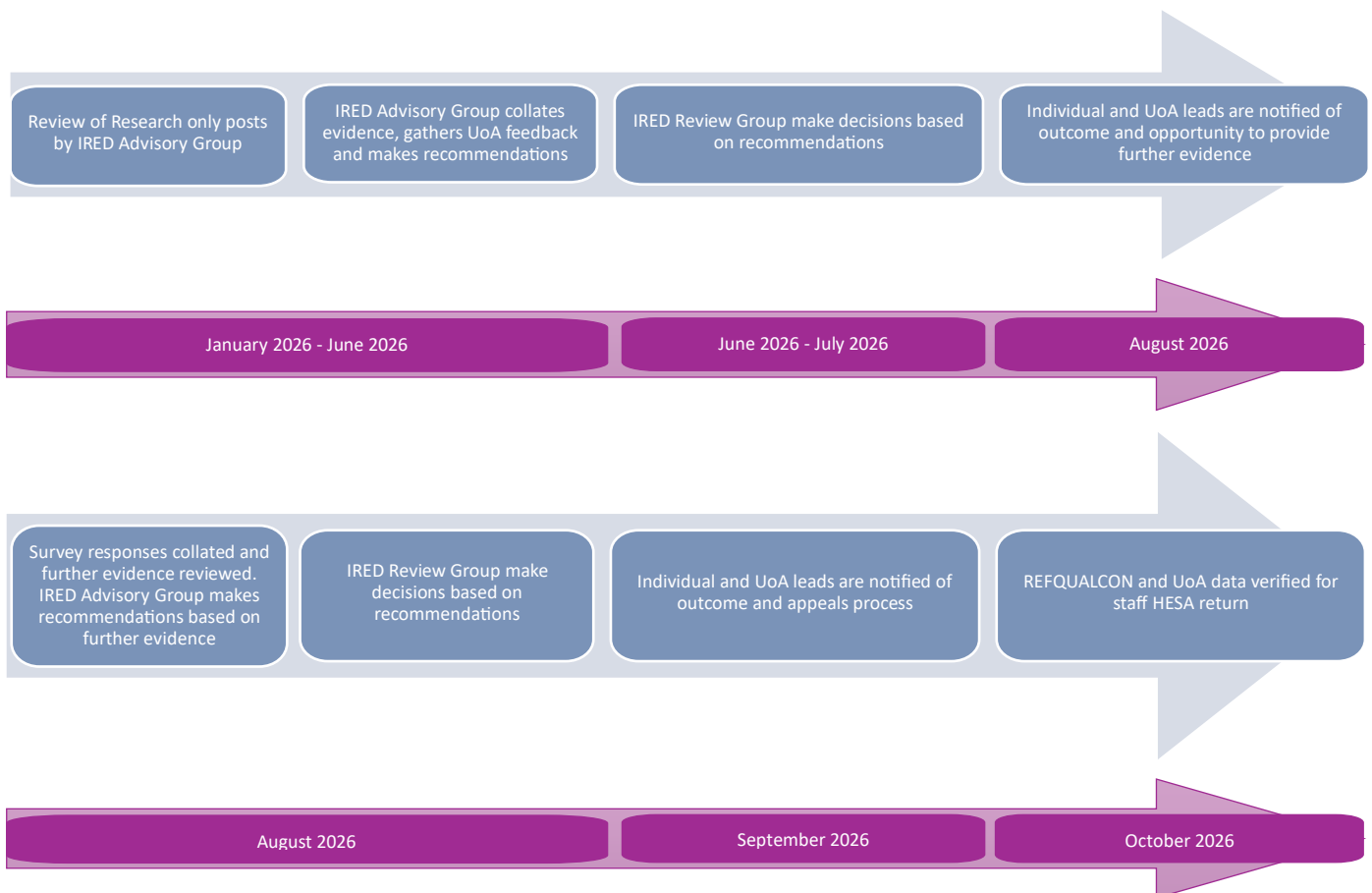
The survey is optional. If the post holder agrees with the research independence outcome and supporting evidence against their post they do not need to take any further action. Where there is a challenge to an outcome, the post

holder will be asked to provide supporting evidence against the indicators described in section 3.1. All post holders will receive a copy of their completed survey for their personal records.

Data gathered from the survey will be held and disposed of as defined in the institutional REF Privacy notice (Appendix 6).

The survey does not operate within a fixed submission window and is not time limited as an appeals process. While staff are invited to complete the survey when notified of their research independence outcome for the 2025–26 volume contributing year, it remains available throughout the eligible HESA period. Where updated evidence is intended to inform the 2025–26 HESA staff return, staff are encouraged to submit information in sufficient time to allow verification prior to that return.

Figure 4 Independence Approval Flow



Evidence Verification Outcome

Where a survey response is submitted following communication of an initial independence determination, the additional or corrected evidence will be updated in central systems records as appropriate and presented to the IRED review group for consideration. At this stage, the purpose of the survey is to enable verification of the original determination, rather than to reopen the case for full reassessment.

The IRED review group will reach one of the following outcomes:

- **Independent:** Posts for which independence can be evidenced directly by centrally held data
- **Not Independent:** Posts which can be shown to have no centrally evidenced indicators

Cases considered through post-decision evidence verification will not revert to “IRED review required” status. The outcome of this process will therefore be either confirmation of the original determination or reclassification of the post.

Where the IRED review outcome is disputed, the matter will be directed to either the independent appeals process outlined in section 3.5 or to the relevant HR business partner for resolution via existing HR policies, depending on the nature of the issue raised.

Year 3 (2026-2027) onwards – Adopting Independence checks into St Andrews business as usual

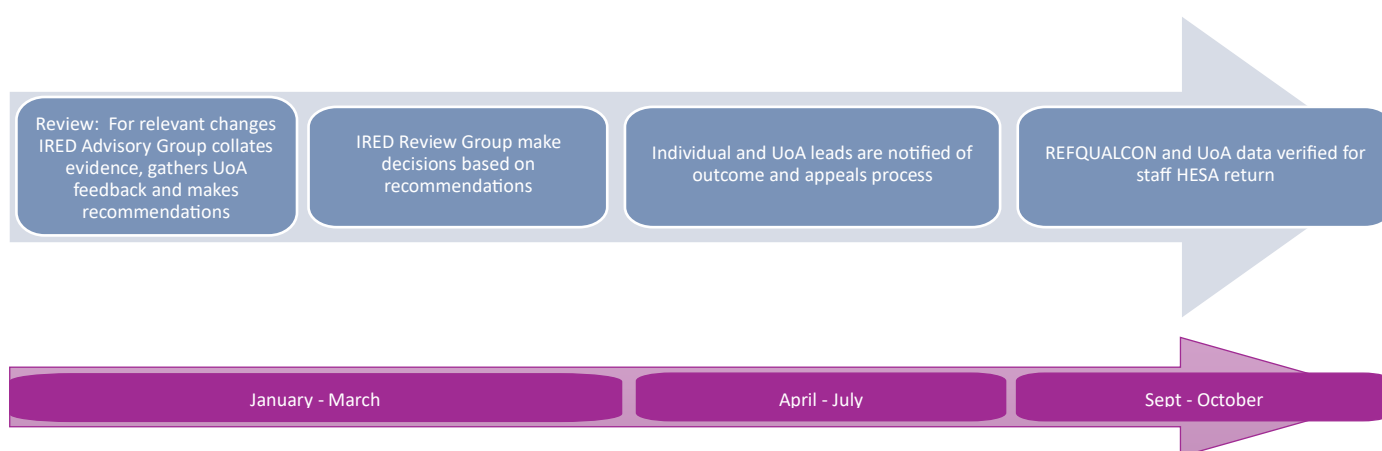
An annual review of all research only posts will be conducted as part of the HESA staff return preparations. Posts already submitted to the previous HESA staff return will be reviewed where there has been a change. Where there are no changes, or those changes are identified as not significantly affecting independence, the existing decision will persist.

For new posts, consideration of independence will be included in the post planning and captured prior to appointment of a post holder, except for new fellowship posts. For staff promoted within the Research Only cohort, changes to independence will be picked up in the annual review of posts.

The decision making process for Year 3 will follow the approach set out for Year 1.

Once a decision against a post has been approved by the IRED review group, the post holder and associated UoA leads will be notified of the outcome and the supporting evidence underpinning the decision. As in Year 2, if a post holder does not agree with the underpinning evidence presented with their outcome, they will be directed to complete the secure online survey following the process outlined in “Evidence Verification Step” above.

Figure 5 Independence Approval Flow – Year 3 onwards



Evidence Verification Outcome

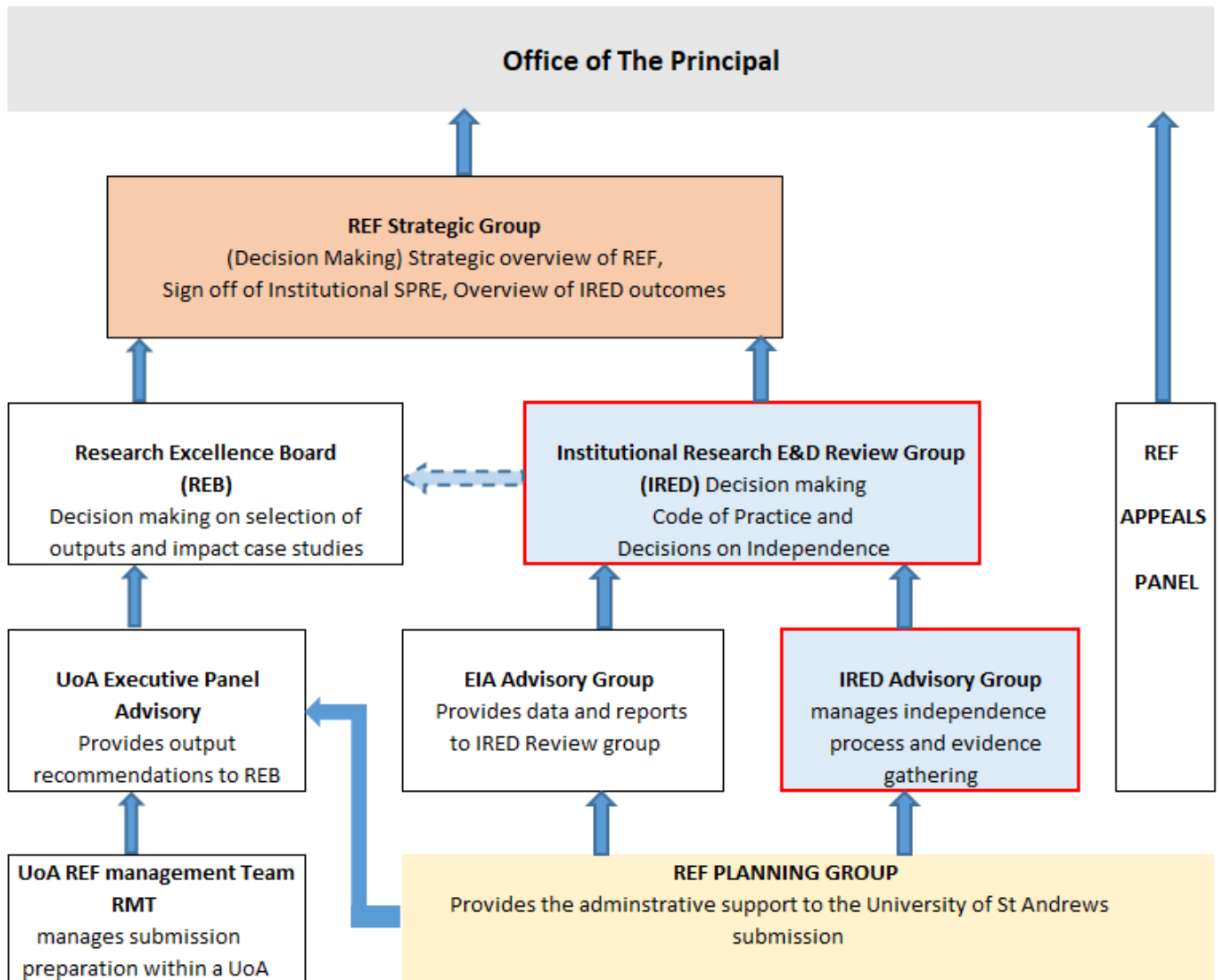
Year 3 onwards will follow the same process as Year 2.

Staff, Committees, and Training:

3.3 Roles and Responsibilities

Procedures for identifying designated staff, including those with decision-making and advisory roles under the terms of reference for the IRED Review Group and IRED Advisory Group, are outlined in [Appendix 5 Decision Making and Advisory groups](#).

Figure 6 Institutional Decision and Advisory Groups for Research Independence



3.4 Training

All members of staff involved in the REF submission in an advisory or decision-making capacity (including determining research independence and output selection), as well as those hearing appeals, must complete the University's mandatory online training modules before undertaking any REF-related advisory or decision-making activity. These include 'Information Security', 'Diversity in the Workplace' (Equality Act 2010) and 'Unconscious Bias' training modules and are available online via the University's training portal - <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/guides/mandatory-training-staff/>. A central record is maintained by the REF Planning Group to monitor completion of the required training.

In addition, all staff involved in REF decision-making processes must undertake the bespoke 'Equity in the REF' training prior to participating in REF-related decision-making, to ensure they are fully informed of their legal obligations and the University's commitments regarding equality, diversity and data protection. This includes School Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Directors.

All staff involved in either making recommendations, decisions or appeals on research independence will complete a tailored briefing session before contributing to final recommendations, to ensure a consistent, fair and transparent approach is adopted in all cases.

3.5 The appeals process, including how cases are submitted, eligible grounds for appeal and communications.

All final decisions on research independence, when communicated to those staff members concerned, will include details of the process in place to appeal such decisions. Information on the appeals process will also be made available on the internal REF 2029 webpages alongside REF-related FAQs for staff. Where possible, staff and Schools will also be informed in advance of the indicative timeframe during which research independence decisions will be communicated, to ensure staff are aware and able to engage with the process if required.

An appeal may be made against a decision to categorise a post as either research independent or not research independent by the staff member concerned only on the grounds that the process set out in this Code was not followed correctly or that incorrect or incomplete data was used to inform the decision. Appeals based solely on disagreement with the outcome of the process, where the process has been correctly applied and the supporting data is accurate, will not be considered.

An appeal must be lodged in writing to the Director of Human Resources (hrdirector@st-andrews.ac.uk), outlining the areas of disagreement, normally within 10 working days of the decision being formally communicated in writing to the staff member. Where a staff member is unable to meet this deadline due to absence (for example, annual leave fieldwork or sickness) reasonable flexibility may be applied. All written communications of decisions to staff will include guidance on the right to appeal and details of how an appeal may be submitted. The appeals process will also be laid out in full on the University's internal REF 2029 webpages and will be communicated in REF information sessions.

Appeals will be considered by the Director of Human Resources and an Emeritus academic who will not have been part of any previous REF 2029 decision-making (the "Appeals Panel"). The inclusion of an Emeritus academic is intended to provide independent academic oversight and ensure that appeals are considered with appropriate disciplinary understanding, while remaining wholly separate from current REF governance and decision making structures.

Members of the Appeals Panel must undertake the equality, diversity and inclusion training as described in [Section 3.4](#). The staff member appealing may be accompanied to the meeting of the Appeals Panel by a member of University staff of their choosing, including an appropriate trade union representative.

The Appeals Panel will make a recommendation to the Principal, who will make the final decision. Where the Principal's decision differs from the recommendation of the Appeals Panel, the reasons for that decision will be recorded and communicated to the staff member in writing.

The staff member, together with their Head of School and Director of Research, will be notified of the outcome of the appeal in writing. Where possible, appeal decisions will be made and communicated to the staff member by the end of September 2026 for HESA year 2025-26 and by the end of September 2027 for HESA year 2026-27.

Where an appeal falls outside the scope of this Code, it will be passed to Human Resources and be considered in accordance with existing University policies: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/policy/>

Appeals will be monitored for any trends relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

3.6 EIA Integration: How our EIA informed research independence determination and policy/procedure development - data, findings, and actions taken.

This section explains how equality impact assessment activity undertaken in support of REF 2029 informs current REF decision making and oversight, and how lessons identified through this process will also be used to support continuous improvement in future REF exercises.

The conducting of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) on this Code will help ensure that policies and practices in place at the University are protected characteristic inclusive, through the identification of negative or positive impact.

Baseline equality and diversity data relating to REF decision-making processes will be collected and summary reports presented to the IRED Review Group. The group will reflect on this data before decisions on research independence, output selection, and impact case studies are formally approved through our outlined Governance structures. In addition, for research independence the 'research only' staff will be monitored in terms of the numbers of outputs reviewed and selected for REF. Recommendations may be made to the REF Strategy Group where there are any concerns.

The version of the EIA form in place at the University to conduct institutional process, is in line with the categories and format utilised by the Scottish Funding Council. The protected characteristics data analysis is provided by the EIA Advisory Group.

A revised action plan will be developed from the outcomes of REF 2029 similar to that in place in [Appendix 2](#) for REF 2021. The plan will be led by the University's EDI team representative on the IRED review group. This will be approved by the IRED review group and rigorously monitored by the EDI team for institutional progression. Where relevant, findings from subsequent EIAs will also be used to inform revisions of the processes outlined in this Code within the REF2029 pre-submission period. Communication of any process changes will be managed as described in [Section 1.2 Transparency](#).

The University Equality Policy can be found in [Appendix 4](#).

Findings and actions taken

In the initial EIA ([Appendix 1](#)) there was no identified equality related negative or positive impact of the institutional process followed to make decisions on whether a post contributes towards the REF volume measure including the determination of independent researcher status.

The REF stipulation that only contracts with a SRR contribute towards the REF volume measure, however, is seen as having a potential to exclude education focused academic staff who are undertaking pedagogic research. It is argued that whilst a possible majority of academics who are on education focused contracts do not perceive the REF process as one that should include their scholarly practice, a number of education focused staff who conduct pedagogic research, and who publish this research, experience their exclusion from volume measure as demotivating. Their exclusion is also experienced as a devaluation of pedagogic research. As noted below, the groups with higher representation in education focused contracts are female staff and staff who are aged 40 years and less. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic female staff are also over-represented in education focused contracts.

In response to this finding, the University will ensure that REF communications and guidance clearly explain the relationship between SRR, the REF volume measure and other routes through which staff can contribute to REF 2029. This is intended to support understanding of the REF framework and address concerns raised through consultation regarding the participation of staff undertaking pedagogic research. In communication about REF to relevant stakeholders, the University will highlight information on REF pathways through which research by staff on Education Focused contracts can contribute to the submission. This includes contributions to Impact Case Studies and the Strategy, People, and Research Environment (SPRE) component.

Part 4: Allocating Contracts to UoAs

Policies and Procedures:

Under the terms of the guidance from the UK REF team, unlike previous REF exercises, a staff list is no longer required for submission. Instead, every institution's capacity for research will be determined by the FTE of eligible contracts returned to the HESA staff return averaged over a 2-year period. This is referred to as the Volume Measure. The "volume measure will be calculated using the percentage of a full-time equivalent year of contracts that have significant responsibility for research (SRR) and research independence (RI). This figure will be taken from the Contract.CONFTE field in the HESA Staff record." ([REF 2029 Guidance on Submissions](#)).

As part of the annual HESA staff return, the University will be responsible for mapping eligible contracts to a Unit of Assessment (UoA) which they are principally associated with. This allocation will be recorded in the REFUOA2029 field in the HESA Staff record.

It is important to note that the assignment of a contract to a UoA does not limit the return of content to an alternative UoA providing the research fits within its disciplinary descriptor.

4.1 Criteria and Evidence for allocation of contracts to UoAs

The default assignment of posts to UoAs will be based on the alignment of the main post to its School or department based on table 3 below. Where an individual holds multiple posts, split across two or more Schools/Departments, the UoA allocation will also be split.

Only contracts eligible for inclusion in the volume measure will have the flexibility to be moved to another UoA.

Table 3. UoA mapping to St Andrews Schools/Departments

Main Panel	Unit of assessment		University of St Andrews School/ Department
A	1	Clinical Medicine	School of Medicine
	4	Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience	School of Psychology and Neuroscience
	5	Biological Sciences	School of Biology
B	7	Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences	School of Earth and Environmental Sciences
	8	Chemistry	School of Chemistry (Joint Submission with University of Edinburgh)
	9	Physics	School of Physics and Astronomy
	10	Mathematical Sciences	School of Mathematics & Statistics
	11	Computer Science and Informatics	School of Computer Science
C	14	Geography and Environmental Studies	School of Geography and Sustainable Development
	17	Business and Management Studies	Business School
	19	Politics and International Studies	School of International Relations
	22	Anthropology and Development Studies	Department of Social Anthropology
D	26	Modern Languages and Linguistics	School of Modern Languages
	27	English Language and Literature	School of English

28	History	School of History
29	Classics	School of Classics
30	Philosophy	Department of Philosophy
31	Theology and Religious Studies	School of Divinity
32	Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory	School of Art History
33	Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies	Department of Film Studies

4.2 Decision-making and Communication

In the majority of cases, the mapping in Table 3 will be sufficient to identify the appropriate UoA for a post. UoA allocations will normally be assigned ahead of the annual HESA staff return and will persist against a post over subsequent returns, unless a request to review or switch the allocation is raised by the individual or School/Department or where a review is initiated through the University's REF governance structures as part of institutional REF planning.

Switching UoA allocation

Where the default allocation of a post is challenged, either following a request by a UoA REF Management Team (RMT) or as part of institutional review, the proposed reallocation will be considered through the University's REF governance structures. Initial discussion between Directors of Research in the relevant UoAs may take place to inform the request and ensure appropriate disciplinary context. However, overall responsibility for reviewing and managing UoA allocation rests with the REF Strategic Group.

Requests for reallocation must be supported by a clear rationale aligned to the disciplinary descriptors published in the REF 2029 panel criteria and working methods, and will normally be considered within the annual REF and HESA planning cycle. Where a post has research activity or outputs that could reasonably align with more than one UoA, the REF Strategic Group will determine the most appropriate allocation, taking into account disciplinary fit and overall institutional coherence for REF and HESA purposes.

If a reallocation is confirmed, the associated FTE will be counted against the new UoA and removed from the former UoA for the HESA staff return. Any consequential adjustment to the number of impact case studies required and the number of outputs to be submitted will be communicated to relevant stakeholders, including the post holder, at the point the decision is confirmed. Communication to the post holder will include the rationale for the decision and confirmation that the allocation applies solely for REF and HESA purposes.

For the avoidance of doubt, decisions about output submission are distinct from HESA/volume UoA allocation. Outputs may be submitted by the UoA that best matches the disciplinary scope, in line with REF guidance, without requiring a change to the post's UoA allocation.

Reallocation to a different UoA does not change an individual's School/Department affiliation, post or contractual terms, and applies solely for REF and HESA reporting purposes. Post holders may raise questions about the process or outcome through their School or Director of Research. UoA allocation decisions fall outside the scope of the appeals process.

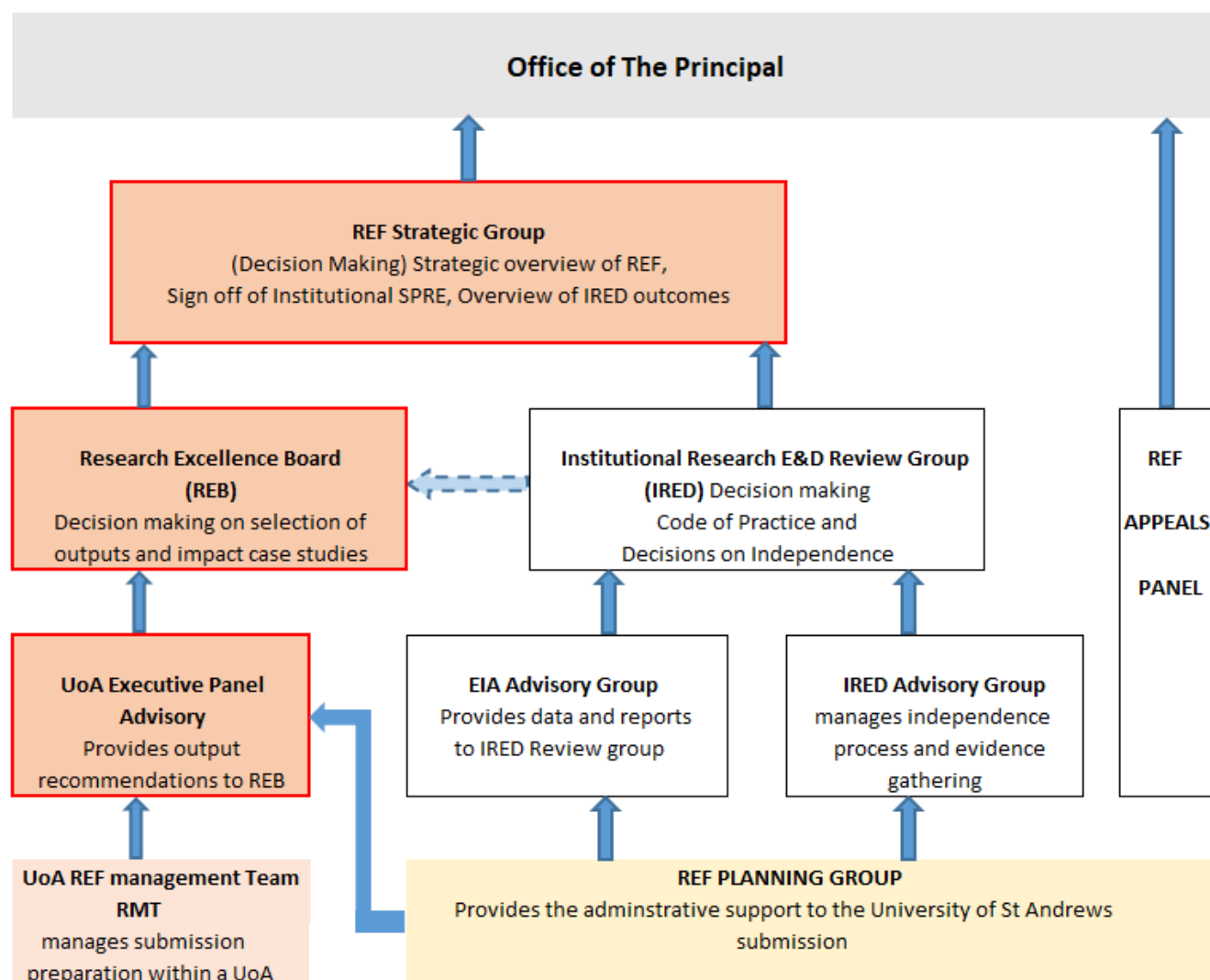
4.3 Staff, Committees, and Training

Roles and Responsibilities

Procedures for identifying designated staff, including those with decision-making and advisory roles under the terms of reference, including modes of operation, and record-keeping procedures, as well as information about where these roles/committees/panels fit into the wider institutional management structure of the University of St Andrews are outlined for the REF Strategic Group, REB, UoA Executive panels and UoA RMTs [in Appendix 5 - Decision Making and Advisory groups](#).

For the purposes of this Code, the University's REF governance structures comprise the REF Strategic Group, the Research Excellence Board (REB), the Independence, Research and EDI Group (IRED) and the Principals' Office. Final institutional sign-off of the REF submission rests with the Principal.

Figure 7 Institutional Decision and Advisory Groups for Research Outputs



4.4 Training

Training will be provided as outlined in [Part 3, section 3.4](#).

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA):

4.5 EIA Integration: How the EIA informed the selection of outputs and policy/procedure development.

Equality impact assessments will be conducted as outlined in [Part 3, section 3.6](#).

Findings and actions taken

In the initial EIA ([Appendix 1](#)) there is no data in internal or external reports that indicates that the process of allocation of contracts to UoAs will have negative or positive impact on minoritised groups. In consultation forums, the potential negative impact identified was that the University does not submit to the Education Unit of Assessment. This impact is related to the non-inclusion of teaching only (Education Focused) contracts in the UK REF team's definition of the volume measure which specifically excludes pedagogical research outputs authored exclusively by education focused staff on teaching only contracts.

In response to this finding, the University will ensure that REF communications and guidance explain how research undertaken by staff on Education Focused contracts can contribute to the institutional submission, notwithstanding the University's decision not to submit to the Education Unit of Assessment. This is intended to address concerns identified through consultation regarding the visibility and recognition of pedagogic research within REF 2029. In communication about REF to relevant stakeholders, the University will highlight information on REF pathways through which research by academics on Education Focused contracts can contribute to the submission. This includes contributions to Impact Case Studies and the Strategy, People, and Research Environment (SPRE) component.

Part 5: Selecting outputs

Policies and Procedures:

The initial recommendations and ultimate decisions for the selection of outputs will be based on the quality of the research, taking due consideration of the principles laid out earlier in this Code. The Research Excellence Board (REB) is responsible for overseeing the processes in place for output selection.

Ultimate responsibility for submission to REF 2029 lies with the Principal who is supported by the members of the Office of the Principal, the senior management group of the University.

The University aims to ensure that the institutional submission to REF 2029 is made at the highest level achievable and submission decisions will be based on research quality. As background, the current model for funding of research in Scottish HEIs from the Scottish Funding Council, is in the form of the Research Excellence Grant (REG) and is based on performance in REF 2021. The resultant funding is weighted, so that research of quality rated 4* attracts three times the level of funding of 3* rated research. Research rated as 2* and below attracts no REG funding at all. The final submission to REF 2029 will be a strategic decision. This selection process will be informed by UoA peer review outcomes presented at UoA Executive Panel meetings.

In all processes outlined in Part 4, the criteria for output inclusion into REF 2029 are, first, an eligibility decision based on the REF guidance and then, a selection decision based on a University-wide policy to maximise the percentage of 4* outputs within the submission. This approach to output quality for submission to REF 2029 has been determined by the Research Excellence Board and will apply across all UoAs. It is based on the REF 2029 grading for research quality of publications in terms of their 'originality, significance and rigour', giving rise to starred levels of 4*, 3*, 2*, 1* and unclassified (as defined by the REF Panel criteria and working methods - tbc).

The Research Excellence Board has been transparent in their discussions with UoA RMTs regarding the institutional expectations for maximizing the proportion of 4* quality of outputs for submission and that this approach must be applied uniformly across the University. External advice may be sought on specific outputs as deemed necessary by the UoA RMT. Recommendations will take into account representativeness of the unit's research activity and any national REF Panel or UoA-specific definitions related to quality and output eligibility.

The process to ensure representativeness is outlined in [section 5.5](#) of this Code.

The submitted pool of outputs will include a set number of research outputs equal to 2.5 times the 2-year average FTE of volume contributing staff included in the UOA submission.

5.1 Identifying substantive link to outputs

REF 2029 decouples individual staff members from the outputs submitted and instead requires evidence of a substantive link between the output and the submitting institution. As a result of decoupling, there is no longer a requirement for a minimum number of outputs or a declaration of circumstances for individual staff members.

There is an expectation that no more than five outputs are associated with a single substantive link per UoA. Where this number is exceeded, the submitting UoA will explain the rationale within the statement of representativeness. This approach is intended to support HEIs and ensure that the outputs collectively represent the breadth and diversity of research activity within the UoA.

The criteria for output inclusion into REF 2029 are, first, an eligibility decision based on the REF requirements such as open access compliance and publication period. To claim a substantive link, the submitting institution must have enabled the research leading to an output that is first made publicly available during the output eligibility period.

For the avoidance of doubt, a substantive link will require evidence of an eligible employment relationship with an output author (or equivalent) who has made a significant research contribution to the output. Where a HESA staff identifier exists, it will be used to evidence that substantive link.

Assessment of output eligibility for inclusion in the REF submission pool is an institutional process. Initial eligibility checks will be undertaken using centrally held information and systems, operated by RIS, the Library and HR, as appropriate.

There is no right of appeal in relation to the inclusion or exclusion of individual outputs, as there is no expectation that any specific output will be submitted to REF 2029. Where the sufficiency or robustness of evidence supporting a substantive link is considered to be borderline, this will be discussed at UoA / REB-level as part of institutional decision making.

Figure below provides a high level summary of the core output eligibility requirements. In line with REF guidance, longform outputs (including research monographs) may evidence a substantive link based on where the underlying research was undertaken, even where publication occurred after the author left the institution.

When establishing an output's eligibility for the submission pool individuals should use the REF 2029 guidance: <https://2029.ref.ac.uk/guidance/section-4-contributions-to-knowledge-and-understanding-cku-guidance/>

Figure 9: Brief summary of output eligibility



For staff employed at the University of St Andrews, the inclusion or non-inclusion of an individual's outputs in the REF 2029 submission will not be used as a criterion in decisions on promotion or salary review.

The University recognises that the decoupling of staff and outputs in REF 2029 increases the flexibility for a UoA to build a portfolio of outputs for submission with no expectation that all staff members with an eligible substantive link would have outputs in the submission. It is also recognised that outputs submitted to REF 2029 linked to any

individual or research group will not necessarily give a complete picture of an individual or research group's portfolio of research.

REB requested that all staff with research activity propose outputs they would like to be considered for the REF submission, including staff that are not contributing towards the FTE volume driver. Within the UoA RMT, each UoA Director of Research is required to oversee a review of the proposed outputs and record a quality score for each of the outputs.

The UoA Directors of Research are responsible for overseeing that the scoring of outputs and ensuring that staff involved in reviewing and scoring outputs are supported and guided through a range of measures. These include:

- undertaking an exercise to 'calibrate' the scoring process in which UoA outputs are scored by both internal and external persons, and the rationales for scores made explicit and compared;
- being required to complete the University's online training on Diversity in the Workplace and Unconscious Bias;
- attending workshops on assessment for REF;
- following guidance on how to manage their reviews in the institutional CRIS (Pure); and
- using a scoring scale that allows for uncertainties to be expressed.

Furthermore, all those involved in the process of scoring outputs are bound by the [University's Principles of Good Research Conduct](#), which relate to reviewing the work of other researchers, stating that such review should be fair, full, and unbiased. The process of scoring outputs is periodically scrutinised by the UoA Executive Panel, including consideration of the number, and gender balance, of persons involved in scoring. Anonymised reports are provided by the Secretariat to REB to review progress in output scoring. Specific training for handling output scoring with respect to equity and inclusion is mandatory for all UoA Directors of Research.

Joint Submissions: The University will ensure that any joint-decision making across institutions does not compromise adherence to the terms of this Code and its overriding principles.

5.2 Selecting outputs where the substantive link is via former staff

This section applies where a substantive link is demonstrated primarily or solely via a former member of staff. Where a substantive link is evidenced through current staff co-authors, the former staff provisions will not normally be relied upon.

For the purposes of REF, former staff are categorised as staff who were previously employed by the University during the REF period but are no longer employed at the point of submission, including:

- a. staff who have been selected for voluntary redundancy or severance
- b. staff who have been subject to dismissal
- c. staff who have retired
- d. staff leaving after the expiry of a fixed-term contract or leaving voluntarily
- e. staff who have been made compulsorily redundant

Outputs with a substantive link via former staff are eligible where the author was employed by the University at the point the output was first made publicly available, or where institutional employment immediately preceding publication enabled the research. The first public availability refers to the REF eligible published output; preprints do not in themselves determine eligibility.

Former Staff - a, b, c and d: UoA RMTs may consider outputs by former staff, in groups a to d. Recommendations regarding outputs for former staff will be monitored by the IRED Advisory Group and referred to the IRED Review Group for possible equality and diversity issues.

Former Staff - e: Guidance for the development of a Code for REF requires institutions to directly address the treatment of outputs for staff who are made compulsorily redundant. The process outlined here in no way indicates an intention by the University to introduce redundancy plans.

To align with paragraph 6.7.2 of the Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding exclusion guidance:

“Outputs where the substantive link occurred before the submitted output was made publicly available, will not be eligible for submission where the author was subject to compulsory redundancy.”

The University will **not** include outputs in submissions to REF 2029 where the substantive link is only to a former staff member who has been made compulsorily redundant prior to the output becoming publicly available.

For the avoidance of doubt, this exclusion applies only where an individual had already been subject to compulsory redundancy at the point the output was made publicly available. Outputs produced and made publicly available while an individual was still employed by the University, including those subsequently leaving due to the end of externally funded employment or compulsory redundancy, remain eligible for submission in line with REF guidance.

5.3 Assigning outputs to UoA/s: Considering interdisciplinary research and submitting an output to multiple UoAs.

Output selection is based on disciplinary fit and quality in line with CKU guidance and is decoupled from contract UoA allocation. The UoA submitting an output may differ from the UoA that holds the author's contract for HESA/volume purposes.

When proposing outputs for inclusion in a submission, proposers will be invited to indicate any UoAs outside their own which the output could meaningfully align to. Each UoA RMT will judge the disciplinary alignment against the UoA descriptor, set by the REF panel criteria and working methods. Where an output is judged to be aligned outwith the UoA descriptor, the UoA RMT will be passed for review to the alternate UoA(s). If the output does not align with any of the institution's UoAs, it will be removed from the pool of eligible outputs.

Where one of the alternate UoAs agrees with the alignment to their UoA's descriptor, it will be included in the review of their proposed outputs.

REB will be provided with periodic reporting on outputs which have been aligned to a different UoA from their proposer and will have the right to reject an output's submission recommendation to a UoA where the alignment is not considered sufficiently meaningful or the number of UoAs submitting the output using the same substantive link is greater than two.

The above process does not replace the cross-referral process. Proposers will remain free to request a referral to any of the 34 UoAs for outputs that fit at least one of the institution's submitting UoAs, regardless of the outcome of the initial disciplinary alignment review.

5.4 Procedures for supporting diversity of outputs

The University recognises that research outputs come in a wide variety of types and supports the inclusion of high-quality outputs that may be considered non-standard but are within scope of eligible output types for submission, such as software, portfolios, performances etc. Further guidance on eligible output types is set out in the REF Contributions to Knowledge and Understanding (CKU) guidance (Section 5.6.4).

Staff will be encouraged when proposing outputs to submit their highest quality work irrespective of output type. All outputs proposed to a UoA remain within scope for consideration and will not be excluded based on format or medium alone. Where the UoA review group considers themselves unable to review any output because of its type, they will be required to seek expertise firstly via internal referral to an appropriate colleague. If the review cannot take place internally, they will be encouraged to seek external review before coming to a judgement on quality. If an external reviewer cannot be identified, the UoA RMT are required to report these output cases to REB.

Not all eligible outputs will necessarily be scored individually at every review stage however, all outputs proposed for REF are considered as part of the overall review and selection process, and decisions on inclusion or exclusion are made with reference to quality, representativeness and diversity of output types within the UoA.

REB will be provided with periodic analysis on the quality ratings assigned by UoA RMT review broken down by output types against their UoAs total number of outputs of that type in Pure. Where the analysis suggests under-representation or consistent low scoring of a particular output type, the UoA RMT will be challenged at UoA executive panel meetings to justify their scoring and selections. REB will consider each under-represented output type on a case-by-case basis and will make recommendations to the REF Strategic Group on an output's inclusion or exclusion from a submission.

5.5 Procedures for ensuring submissions are representative of the research undertaken within the submitting unit during the REF period

Each UoA is responsible for ensuring that its REF submission fairly represents the breadth, diversity and collaborative nature of research undertaken within the unit during the REF period. Representativeness will be considered throughout the output review and selection process, informed by School annual planning meetings with the Master and UoA Executive panel meetings with REB members, which include discussion of their research strategy, structures and activity.

While the School annual planning meetings cover the full remit of an academic School, including but not limited to research strategy, the UoA Executive panel meetings, focus specifically on a UoA's preparation for submission. Each UoA meeting is accompanied by supporting paperwork including the analysis of the research output review/selection pool and a narrative statement on the UoA's strategy, structures and activity, prepared by the UoA RMT, including details of how they are addressing representativeness for:

- Contributions to large-scale research programs, networks, or national/global initiatives.
- Different and diverse types of research.
- Contributions from multidisciplinary collaborations and institutional partnerships, supporting sustainable contributions to knowledge and understanding.

Where a UoA's narrative has neglected any of the above list, that UoA's RMT will be challenged to explain their approach. If necessary, issues of misrepresentation or omission can be escalated by REB to the REF Strategic Group for adjudication. Individual authors may also challenge representativeness via the route outlined in section 5.6 headed "Output communications".

It is recognised that a research group/theme/centre may be significantly impacted by staff turnover, absences and external factors. Where a UoA's CKU outputs omits a group, theme or research centre covered in the annual strategic planning meetings, the UoA RMT will be invited to provide justification for the underrepresentation to REB in the first instance. Representativeness is considered both in relation to the range of research activity and, through equality impact assessment, to ensure that output selection practices do not disproportionately disadvantage staff with protected characteristics.

While quality remains the primary criteria for selection, if a UoA's research group/theme/centre is outlined in their strategy as part and only has eligible outputs below 4* and the justification for omission is not credible, an output of 3* or below produced by the group/theme/centre can be recommended for submission.

5.6 Policies and procedures and responsible research assessment practice

To maintain transparent and fair assessment of research outputs, all UoAs will periodically report their output selection progress to REB, who will also be supplied with analysis of outputs against the total population of outputs in the School/Department which makes up the UoA. Analysis will include representativeness, diversity of output types, demographics of proposers and distribution of outputs to substantive links. These reports will also

be shared with the IRED review group for equality impact assessment. The timeline in Table 4 below provides a high-level overview of the steps in preparation of the output submission.

As stated in section 5.1, no direct or indirect link will be made between the number of outputs submitted to REF 2029 and an individual's performance assessment, probation, promotion, salary review or any other employment related decision. This principle is fundamental to the decoupled model introduced for REF 2029. While the University recognises that academics have an enduring scholarly relationship with their own body of work, REF 2029 does not assess or submit individuals and does not treat outputs as proxies for individual performance or contribution. For the purposes of REF, outputs are treated solely as institutional research contributions.

Decisions about which outputs are included in the REF submission are therefore strategic, collective decisions taken at UoA and institutional level, with the aim of constructing a submission that maximises overall quality and appropriately represents the breadth and diversity of research within the UoA. The identification of substantive links, including the use of a HESA staff identifier where available, is a technical mechanism to evidence an eligible employment relationship in line with REF guidance and does not constitute attribution, ownership, or evaluation of individual researchers.

Accordingly, the inclusion or exclusion of an individual's outputs or impact case studies from the REF 2029 submission must not be interpreted, and will not be used, as a judgement on that individual's research quality, professional standing, or career progression. Any such use would be inconsistent with the principle of decoupling and with this Code of Practice.

Output communications

Academic (Education and Research): As part of School/department annual staff reviews, Directors of Research are encouraged to meet with their Academic staff individually. These meetings may cover a range of topics including research outputs and provide individuals with an opportunity to discuss their REF proposed outputs. DoRs will not share internal review scores with authors but can discuss output quality and review findings more generally.

Academic Research and others eligible contract types: Annual reviews for these cohorts are normally carried out by the individual's line manager. To ensure parity of access and consideration any staff member in these cohorts may request a meeting with the UoA DoR to discuss their research outputs. An additional REF E&D trained member of academic staff can also be present at these meetings if the requester would like additional support present.

Where any individual wishes to query REF processes within their UoA they should, in the first instance, contact their UoA Director of Research. If for any reason they are unable to do so or cannot find resolution, they will have the option to raise their issue with the University's REF planning team, who will refer these cases to IRED and/or REB as appropriate to the issues raised.

Use of Artificial Intelligence and other automations for REF

While it is recognised that tools such as AI platforms may present efficiencies in REF preparations, they must not be used to make judgement-based or final decisions. All UoAs wishing to employ such tools for efficiencies will be required to document their use to REB and the staff in their UoA. All material that is uploaded into the AI tool must already be accessible within the public domain or make use of the secure Institutional Environment. UoA RMTs are also responsible for ensuring human oversight of automations to maintain data protection, security, integrity, fair use and equity and transparency in line with existing institutional policies.

The use of AI tools or other automations must **not** be used for content generation without human intervention or validation.

Table 4 Approximate timetable for output selection

Apr -May 2025:	Individual researchers propose outputs for REF 2029
Jun - Aug 2025:	2025 Output Review
Nov 2025:	Widening the output pool

	All research active staff are encouraged to continue to propose further outputs as appropriate. In tandem, the UoA RMT continues to review the output pool and can also choose to review outputs that had not been proposed by an individual, including the outputs of former staff. Periodic reporting to REB will monitor diversity of output types, representation of research areas/groups and UoA fit throughout the review period. Jun-Aug 2026: Identifying the highest quality within the pool Each UoA RMT is required to agree quality scores for all reviewed outputs. These scores are collated, and summary-level reports are prepared and used to discuss the output quality at UoA Executive Panel meetings. Any reports provided to REB are anonymised summary level information only	
	Aug-Sept 2026: 2026 Output Review	
	Aug 2026: Ongoing review of output pool All research active staff are encouraged to continue to propose further outputs as appropriate. In tandem, the UoA RMT continues to review the output pool and can also choose to review outputs that had not been proposed by an individual, including the outputs of former staff. Periodic reporting to REB will monitor diversity, representation and UoA fit throughout the review period. August 2027: Indicative selection of highest quality outputs for submission. Each UoA RMT will report to their UoA Executive Panel their indicative selection of outputs to be submitted to REF. A summary report will be used to discuss the UoA's output quality at the Panel meeting. Reports provided to REB will be anonymised summary level information only.	
	Sept - Oct2027: Output Selection Review	
	Dec 2027 – Mar 2028 Move towards the final selection of outputs and attribution of its substantive link to the university. Note that all outputs submitted to REF 2029 require a substantive link that can be evidenced as described in the REF guidance. Each UoA RMT will be required to make recommendations to their UoA Executive Panel for outputs to be submitted to REF 2029, including the substantive link for outputs to the University. Decisions of the outputs to be included, their fit to the submitting UoA and the substantive link to individuals will be made by REB.	
	Nov 2028: The University submits to REF 2029 (Deadline tbc Nov 2028)	
	Feb 2029: The REF planning team will provide a list of all outputs submitted to REF 2029 to Schools/Departments for information. No details of substantive links or internal scoring will be shared.	

British Sign Language (BSL)

The University of St Andrews recognises the need to improve access to information and services for BSL users. The BSL plan focuses on promoting BSL in public communications, increasing interpreter availability, and ensuring inclusive, accessible content for Deaf communities. The Institutional Research Equality and Diversity Review (IRED) Group will be ensuring that outputs in British Sign Language (in England, Wales, and Scotland) and Welsh (in Wales) are not treated less favourably during output selection by offering engagement activities and reviewing data analysis.

The Scottish Languages Act 2025 grants official-language status to both Gaelic and Scots and mandates support for education, promotion, and institutional integration of these languages. Universities operating in Scotland therefore fall within the scope of public authorities expected to support and promote these languages in

institutional life. The University enables staff and students to request services or learning materials in Gaelic, in line with the Act's wider institutional support requirements.

The University will:

- Monitor compliance with obligations, especially where there are links to other Scottish Institutions or Northern Ireland.
- Offer translation or editing support for researchers producing bilingual or multilingual outputs.
- Encourage collaborative research that strengthens linguistic heritage and cultural identity, in line with policy frameworks embedded in both jurisdictions.
- Respects the official or protected status of these languages in outputs, dissemination, and public engagement conducted jointly with partner institutions.
- Where research outputs will be used in public bodies, ensure linguistic compliance advises by the relevant commissioners or public sector duties.

Staff, Committees, and Training:

5.7 Roles and Responsibilities

Procedures for identifying designated staff, including those with decision-making and advisory roles under the terms of reference, including modes of operation, and record-keeping procedures, as well as information about where these roles/committees/panels fit into the wider institutional management structure of the University of St Andrews are outlined for the REF Strategic Group, REB, UoA Executive panels and UoA RMTs [in Appendix 5 - Decision Making and Advisory groups](#). The institutional decision and advisory groups route for research outputs, is the same as shown in [Part 4 Figure 7](#).

5.8 Training

Training will be provided as outlined in [Part 3, section 3.4](#).

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA):

5.9 EIA Integration: How the EIA informed the selection of outputs and policy/procedure development.

Equality impact assessments will be conducted as outlined in [Part 3, section 3.6](#).

Findings and actions taken

In the initial EIA ([Appendix 1](#)) findings are based on previous REF output selection processes as the output pool for REF2029 was still to be identified. Based on this historical data, there is the potential that there will be underrepresentation of outputs by members of minoritised groups who are on contracts that contribute to the REF volume measure. In the Final REF 2021 EIA, it is recorded that whilst there was an improvement seen in terms of the average number of outputs by female staff from REF 2014, there was still a wide gap between the average number of outputs by female staff selected and the average number of outputs by male staff. The same pattern was observed in the case of outputs by staff with disabilities compared to those who had not declared a disability. Whilst both groups were more likely to receive reduction for circumstances, the extent to which this factor contributed to underrepresentation in outputs selected is not determinable. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic researchers also had proportionately less outputs selected compared to white researchers. Researchers aged 34 or less also had proportionately fewer outputs selected.

In consultation forums concern was expressed that decoupling outputs from researchers would reduce visibility of the level of inclusion/exclusion of underrepresented groups and could increase already existing inequalities in output selection.

In addition to the mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training, including in 'Equity in the REF' undertaken by all individuals who are involved in the selection of outputs, the following actions will be recommended to UoA RMTs:

- Pursue Gender balance in the constitution of the team scoring the outputs
- Where disclosure allows and burden is not disproportionate, explore the possibility of diversifying outputs scoring teams along other equality dimensions such as ethnicity and disability in each UoA.

The following actions will be undertaken by the REF planning group and EIA Advisory group:

- Provide a breakdown of data by gender and ethnicity categories in the annual research data analysis reports provided to each UoA.
- Pilot research culture cafes in some UoAs to understand perceptions of inclusion in research and in the REF and if there are any perceived barriers with respect to protected characteristics
- Review 2029 REF outputs to establish whether REF 2021 patterns of underrepresentation in relation to selected outputs are repeated and to determine what the reasons for underrepresentation are.
- Use findings of representation in REF 2029 review to inform the development of targeted interventions.

Part 6: Appendices

Appendices to the Code

Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 2: REF 2021 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA): Action Plan Progression

Appendix 3: Equality Act (2010) - Glossary of Terms

Appendix 4: University of St Andrews Equality and Diversity Inclusion Policy

Appendix 5: Decision Making and Advisory groups

- REF Strategic Group
- Research Excellence Board (REB)
- UoA Executive Panel
- UoA REF management team
- Institutional Research Equality & Diversity Review Group (IRED)
- Institutional Research Equality & Diversity Advisory Group (IRED Advisory Group)
- EIA Advisory Group
- REF Planning Group
- REF Appeals Panel

Appendix 6: REF Privacy Impact Statement

Appendix 7: Independence criteria and supporting evidence requirements

Appendix 8: Glossary and List of abbreviations

REF 2029 Code of Practice Equality Impact Assessment

University REF 2029 Code of Practice University REF 2029 Code of Practice

Name of Activity being assessed	St Andrews Research Excellence Framework Participation Process
Aims and Objectives of the activity	The Research Excellence Framework (REF) exists to measure the quality of research in UK Higher Education Institutions, and it will be used to determine future quality-related research funding from the Funding Councils. Under the terms of the guidance from the UK REF team, every institution “will include all eligible volume contributing staff it employs in the annual staff HESA return” (REF 2029 Guidance, section 3 – Volume Measure guidance). The St Andrews University REF Code of Practice (CoP) aims to ensure that the University remains committed to the principles of robustness, transparency, equity, accountability and inclusion in its approach to preparations for REF 2029 and specifically avoids discrimination in relation to the determination of who is an independent researcher; assignment of Units of Assessment (UoAs); and in the processes involved in selecting outputs and managing appeals against decisions made. The CoP is developed by the Institutional Research Equality and Diversity Review Group (IRED).
Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event?	The REF process affects all categories of academic staff according to whether research activities are specified as a requirement of their roles, whether they are determined as having Research Independence (RI), and whether they are in Education Focused roles whose contracts do not specify a Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR). REF also affects staff with School roles that related to REF and Research e.g. Heads of School, Directors of Research, Directors of Engagement and Impact.
What data and consultation have you used?	The main questions that were asked in the initial impact assessment of the practice that St Andrews will follow in participating in the REF 2029 process were whether there was risk of discrimination and unfairness or a potential of enhancing equality and inclusion in the processes of a) decision-making on SRR and RI, (including the appeals process) b) assignment of UoAs to individual posts c) selection of Outputs for Submission as outlined in the CoP The data used were data collected through HR systems, Schools culture surveys, the Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter 2023 institutional self-assessment processes. There was also consultation with Directors of EDI (EDI representatives in each School), Directors of Research in each School, Athena Swan Implementation Group Chair, Staff networks including the BAME staff and Staff with Disability and Neurodiversity networks. There was also consultation with all staff. Reports such as the St Andrews Final 2021 REF Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), St Andrews Research Culture Survey Report 2021 and external reports such as the Equality in higher education: staff statistical report 2024 published by AdvanceHE based on HESA data and REF 2021 Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel final report were also used.

Analysing Impact

A. Decision-making on SRR and RI

Summary of decision/ process: St Andrews will enter into the volume measure all education and research focused contracts and research only contracts that are determined to be of independent researchers. The process of determining independent researcher status was piloted by IRED in 2025 and included a review of all research only contracts using REF indicators for RI. The process, co-ordinated by IRED involved Human Resources, UoAs and the Research Excellence Board (REB).

1. General or overarching impacts on multiple groups

Are there general or overarching impacts on multiple groups? Please explain the impact	Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity
There was no identified equality related negative or positive impact of the institutional process followed to make decisions on whether a post contributes towards the REF volume measure including the determination of independent researcher status. The REF stipulation that only contracts with a SRR contribute towards the REF volume measure, however, is seen as having a potential to exclude education focused academic staff who are undertaking pedagogic research. In several consultation sessions the blanket exclusion of education focused contracts from contracts contributing to the volume measure has been raised as a concern and defined as discriminatory. It is argued that whilst a possible majority of academics who are on education focused contracts do not perceive the REF process as one that should include their scholarly practice, a significant number of education focused academics who conduct pedagogic research as required by their contracts, and who publish this research in highly regarded journals, experience their exclusion from volume measure eligible contracts as demotivating. Their exclusion is also experienced as a devaluation of pedagogic research. As noted below, the groups with higher representation in education focused contracts are female staff and staff who are aged 40 years and less. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic female staff are also over-represented in education focused contracts.	In communication about REF to various stakeholders, highlight information on REF pathways through which research by academics on education focused contracts can be submitted. This includes contributions to Impact Case Studies and the Strategy, People, and Research Environment (SPRE) component.

2. Protected characteristics

Protected characteristics	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used	Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity
	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			
Age		✓	Institutional data reveals that the majority of staff who are on contracts that contribute to the REF volume measure are in higher age categories with the majority (76.6% FTE) being over 40. The majority (80.4%) of academics in Education Focused category are aged under 40. This would mean that academic staff who are under 40 would be potentially disproportionately negatively impacted by the REF2029 definition of REF eligibility to be included in the volume measure.	The University is signatory to the Researcher Development Concordat and in its HR Excellence in Research (HREiR) Action Plan 2026-2028 it recognises the need for the institution to increase its ability to retain and support the development of Early Career researchers². One of the activities listed under Obligation 12 A in the action plan is the creation of an Early Career Researcher Development Pathway. As part of a broad review of how mentoring and coaching are used as academic development tools, a review of how different cohorts of staff, including education focused academics, are served by the academic staff development programme will be undertaken.
Disability			Data and results of consultation with the Staff including the Staff with Disabilities and Neurodiversity network did not reveal possible disproportionate negative or positive impact of the decision and processes followed to determine contract eligibility to be included in the volume measure.	
Gender reassignment		✓	Whilst data and results of consultation did not reveal possible disproportionate negative or positive impact of the outcome and process of decision-making on SRR on minority genders staff, it was noted that there	Seek legal guidance in the recording of sex and gender in REF activities.

² There is a strong correlation between age and academic career stage.

Protected characteristics	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used	Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity
	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			
			is a possibility of misrepresenting minority gender staff in REF processes in the recording of participation by sex.	
Race		✓	Intersectional data reveals that of 33% of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women are in education focused roles compared to 28% white female staff. Therefore, there is a possible disproportionate negative impact of the decision to exclude education focused staff from the REF2029 definition of volume eligible..	Use networks and forums like Women in Science at St Andrews (WISSA) and BAME Staff network to disseminate information on pathways that can be taken by academics on education focused contracts who want to be included in the REF submission.
Religion or belief			Data and results of consultation did not reveal potential disproportionate negative or positive impact of the outcome and process of decision making on REF volume measure on staff on the basis of religion or belief.	
Sexual Orientation			Consultation did not reveal potential disproportionate negative or positive impact of the process of decision-making on volume measure on LGBTQ+ staff.	
Sex		✓	Female staff form 40% of the cohort that are in contracts that do not contribute to the REF volume measure and form 54.2% of staff on education focused contracts. As noted above, a fraction of staff on education focused contracts experience the exclusion of education focused contracts from the volume measure as exclusionary and discriminatory. There is therefore a possible disproportionate negative impact of the REF2029 decision to exclude education focused staff from the volume measure	Use forums like WISSA to disseminate information on pathways that can be taken by academics on education focused contracts who want to be included in the REF submission.

1. Additional relevant characteristics

Additional characteristics	Positive Impact	Negative Impact		
	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			

Parent/guardian/ Carer responsibilities			Consultation did not reveal possible negative or positive impact of the process of decision making on the volume measure on the basis of caring or guardian responsibilities.	
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2. Evaluation

Final Decision:	Selection	Justification
1. No negative or positive impact identified; therefore, activity will proceed.		
2. Adapt or change the activity in a way which you think will eliminate negative impact or promote equality		
3. Stop the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups.		
4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the activity (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore, you are going to proceed with caution with this activity knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.	✓	The equality related impact of the process of deciding on volume measure and its outcome that has been expressed so far is the experienced exclusion from the REF by academics on education focused contracts who also publish pedagogic research. The University will implement the actions listed above to mitigate the potential negative impact. The actions will be monitored and can be seen as sufficient intervention at this stage.

B. Allocating eligible contracts to UoAs

Summary of process. All academic staff will be allocated to UoAs on the basis of their alignment of their posts to a School or Department. Schools and Departments have been mapped onto REF UoAs. An assignment of a contract to a UoA does not preclude the submission of output by that researcher by another UoA as long as the output meets the UoA descriptor. Contracts that contribute to the REF volume measure can be moved to another Unit of Assessment.

1. General or overarching impacts on multiple groups

Are there general or overarching impacts on multiple groups? Please explain the impact	Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity

Even though it is noted that some UoAs have more diversity in terms of outputs by academics from minoritised groups, there is no data in internal or external reports that indicates that the process of allocation of contracts to UoAs will have negative or positive impact on minoritised groups. In consultation forums, the potential negative impact identified was that the University does not submit to the Education Unit of Assessment. This impact is related to the non-inclusion of education focused contracts in the REF2029 definition of the volume measure and is reported to specifically exclude education focused staff who undertake research that is pedagogical while on a teaching only contract and who want to participate in the REF.	In communication about REF to various stakeholders, highlight information on REF pathways through which research by academics on education focused contracts can be submitted. This includes contributions to Impact Case Studies and the Strategy, People, and Research Environment (SPRE) component.
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2. Protected characteristics

Protected characteristics	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used	Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity
	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			
Age		✓	As already indicated, there is a higher concentration of education focused staff in the category of academic staff aged 40 and less. Linked to the UK REF definition of contractual eligibility to be included in the volume measure, academic staff in this age category would potentially be disproportionately negatively impacted by the inability to allocate teaching only staff to the volume of an Education UoA.	Create an Early Career Researcher Development Pathway. (HREiR Obligation 12 A) As part of a broad review of how mentoring and coaching are used as academic development tools, a review of how different cohorts of staff, including education focused academics, are served by the academic staff development programme will be undertaken
Disability			Data and results of consultation with the Staff including the Staff with Disabilities and Neurodiversity network did not reveal possible disproportionate negative or positive impact of the decision not to include an Education Unit of Assessment amongst those mapped against St Andrews Schools and Departments.	
Gender reassignment			Data and results of consultation did not reveal possible disproportionate negative or positive impact of the decision not to include an Education Unit of Assessment, amongst those mapped against St Andrews Schools and Departments, on gender minority staff.	

Protected characteristics	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used	Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity
	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			
Race		✓	Linked to the REF2029 definition of contract eligibility to be entered into the volume measure, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff could be potentially disproportionately negatively impacted by the inability to allocate teaching only staff to an Education UoA since they are overrepresented in the education focussed category. .	Use networks and forums like WISSA and BAME Staff network to disseminate information on pathways that can be taken by academics on education focused contracts who want to be included in the REF submission.
Religion or belief			Data and results of consultation did not reveal possible disproportionate negative or positive impact of the decision not to include an Education Unit of Assessment amongst those mapped against St Andrews Schools and Departments on staff based on their religion and belief.	
Sexual Orientation			Data and results of consultation did not reveal possible disproportionate negative or positive impact of the decision not to include an Education Unit of Assessment amongst those mapped against St Andrews Schools and Departments on sexual and gender minorities staff.	
Sex		✓	Because of over representation in education focused contracts and linked to the determination of the REF volume measure, female staff could be potentially disproportionately negatively impacted by the decision not to have an Education UoA.	Use forums like WISSA to disseminate information on pathways that can be taken by academics on education focused contracts who want to be included in the REF submission.

1. Additional relevant characteristics

Additional characteristics	Positive Impact	Negative Impact		
	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			
Parent/guardian/carer responsibilities			No disproportionate potential negative or positive impact on staff with caring and guardian responsibilities of the decision not to include an Education Unit of Assessment.	

2. Evaluation

Final Decision	Selection	Justification
No negative or positive impact identified; therefore, activity will proceed.		
Adapt or change the activity in a way which you think will eliminate negative impact or promote equality		
Stop the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups.		
Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the activity (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore, you are going to proceed with caution with this activity knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.	✓	The inclusion/exclusion related impact of the process allocation to UoAs that has been identified at this stage as potentially having disproportionate negative impact on some protected characteristics groups is the absence of an Education Unit of Assessment and is linked to the criteria used to determine the REF volume measure. The University will proceed and implement the actions listed above which should suffice as interventions at this stage of the REF process.

C. Selecting outputs

Summary of process: Selection of outputs will be based on the quality of the research. REB is responsible for overseeing the processes in place for output selection. Ultimate responsibility for submission to REF 2029 lies with the Principal who is supported by the members of the Office of the Principal, the senior management group of the University. This selection process will be informed by UoA peer review outcomes presented at UoA Executive Panel meetings.

1. General or overarching impacts on multiple groups

Are there general or overarching impacts on multiple groups? Please explain the impact	Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible) on all the groups. Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity
1. Based on outcomes of past REF processes, there is the potential that there will be underrepresentation of outputs by members of minoritised groups who are on contracts that contribute to the REF volume measure. In the Final REF 2021 EIA, it is recorded that whilst there was an improvement seen in terms of the average number of outputs by female staff from REF 2014, there was still a wide gap between the average number of outputs by female staff selected and the average number of outputs by male staff. The same pattern was observed in the case of outputs by staff with disabilities compared to those who had not declared a disability. Whilst both groups were more likely to receive reduction for circumstances, the extent to which this factor contributed to underrepresentation in outputs selected	Ensure that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training, including in 'Equity in the REF' is undertaken by all individuals who are involved in the selection of outputs. Pursue Gender balance in the constitution of the team scoring the outputs

Are there general or overarching impacts on multiple groups? Please explain the impact	Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible) on all the groups. Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity
has not been determined. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic researchers also had proportionately less outputs selected compared to white researchers. Researchers aged 34 or less also had proportionately fewer outputs selected. (See appendix 1) 2. In consultation forums concern was expressed that decoupling outputs from researchers would reduce visibility of the level of inclusion/exclusion of underrepresented groups and could increase already existing inequalities in output selection.	Explore the possibility of diversifying outputs scoring teams along other equality dimensions such as ethnicity and disability in each UoA.
	Action D8 in the Race Equality Charter Action Plan entails breaking down of data by gender and ethnicity categories in the annual research data analysis report provided to each School.
	Pilot research culture cafes in some UoAs to understand perceptions of inclusion in research and in the REF and if there are any perceived barriers with respect to protected characteristics
	Review 2029 REF outputs to establish whether REF 2021 patterns of underrepresentation in relation to selected outputs are repeated and to determine what the reasons for underrepresentation are.
	Use findings of representation in REF 2029 review to inform the development of targeted interventions.

2. Protected characteristics

Protected characteristics	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used	Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity
	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			
Age		✓	There is potential of underrepresentation of outputs by researchers younger than 34 in the output selected for the REF submission.	As indicated above, one of the activities listed under Obligation 12 A in the HREiR action plan is the creation of an Early Career Researcher Development Pathway.
Disability		✓	There is potential underrepresentation of outputs by staff with disabilities and neurodiversity in the REF submission. Whilst one factor that contributed to the underrepresentation of outputs by staff with disabilities in the 2021 REF is reduction for circumstances, the extent to which underrepresentation can be attributed to this factor has not been determined.	Pilot research culture cafes in some UoAs to understand perceptions of inclusion in research and in the REF and if there are any perceived barriers with respect to protected characteristics.
Gender reassignment			There is no potential of underrepresentation of outputs by members of minority gender groups in REF 2029 submissions.	
Race		✓	There is potential underrepresentation of outputs by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff in the outputs selected for the REF submission.	Action A5 in the Race Equality Charter Action Plan which reads "Identify and implement a mentoring scheme that will help with the advancement of BAME staff members' career ambitions to improve retention and promotion" entails activity that will provide mentorship support to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Early Career researchers.
				Pilot research culture cafes in some UoAs to understand perceptions of inclusion in research and in the REF and if there are any perceived barriers with respect to protected characteristics.
Religion or belief			Because of the intersection of race and religion, there is potential of underrepresentation of outputs by members of minority religions in REF 2029 submissions.	Pilot research culture cafes in some UoAs to understand perceptions of inclusion in research and in the REF and if there are any perceived barriers with respect to protected characteristics.

Protected characteristics	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used	Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity
	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			
Sexual Orientation			REF 2021 submissions data does not indicate an underrepresentation of outputs by LGBTQ+ academics in the outputs selected for the REF submission.	
Sex		✓	There is potential underrepresentation of outputs by female staff in the outputs selected for the REF submission.	Pilot research culture cafes in some UoAs to understand perceptions of inclusion in research and in the REF and if there are any perceived barriers with respect to protected characteristics.

3. Additional relevant characteristics

Additional characteristics	Positive Impact	Negative Impact		
	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			
Parent/guardian/carer responsibilities		✓	In the 2021 REF EIA report, as in most equality reports, the data is not broken down by caring responsibilities however, it can be ascertained from the type of circumstances claimed that parent and guardian responsibilities were a factor in REF participation.	Conduct a review of the existing carers support initiatives, such as the caring fund, to establish what their impact is in relation to the goal of enhancing research inclusion.
Outputs in British Sign Language (BSL), Welsh and other recognised languages such as Scottish Gaelic, Scots, Ulster Scots, Irish and Irish Sign Language,			In the 2021 REF EDAP report and our institutional EIA from REF2021 there is no available breakdown by output language, the impact of language type on the selection of outputs is unknown. It is recognised however that language type could be a potential source of bias in output selection and this should be monitored in the REF 2029 processes.	The Institutional Research Equality and Diversity Review (IREDD) Group will be ensuring that outputs in British Sign Language (in England, Wales, and Scotland) and Welsh (in Wales) and other recognised languages such as Scottish Gaelic, Scots, Ulster Scots, Irish and Irish Sign Language, are not treated less favourably during output selection by offering engagement activities and reviewing data analysis. Outcomes from this analysis will inform the action plan going forward.

4. Evaluation

Final Decision	Selection	Justification
No negative or positive impact identified; therefore, activity will proceed.		
Adapt or change the activity in a way which you think will eliminate negative impact or promote equality		
Stop the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups.		
Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the activity (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore, you are going to proceed with caution with this activity knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.	✓	From an equality and diversity perspective, feedback on the process to be followed in the selection of inputs focused on the underrepresentation of outputs by minoritised groups. The concerns raised included that the decoupling of outputs from researchers will exacerbate the existing inequalities in REF. The University will proceed with caution continuously monitoring the process of selection. The University will review 2029 REF outputs to establish whether REF 2021 patterns of underrepresentation in relation to selected outputs are repeated and use the results of the review to inform the development of targeted interventions.

D. Review and sign off

What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?	This EIA is a living document which will be updated annually and as needed as the REF process unfolds and the CoP is implemented. We will continue to collect and collate data and continue to hold consultation sessions with our stakeholders as part of the continuous assessment of the impact of the REF process.
Next Review Date	April 2027
Will this EIA be published? * Yes/Not required	
Point of contact	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Signed off by (name and date):	

E. Change Log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	May 2026	1	

F. Action Plan

Action plan Use the table below to define the actions you intend to take (or have taken) to address the indications of negative impact you have identified or to promote equality. Actions should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound).

	Action	Deadline	Owner	How will it be monitored	What is the expected outcome/impact
1.	In communication about REF to various stakeholders, highlight information on REF pathways through which research by academics on education focused contracts can be submitted. This includes contributions to Impact Case Studies and the Strategy, People, and Research Environment (SPRE) component.	Ongoing.	Head of Research Information & Policy	In continuing consultations with stakeholders an increasingly greater awareness of the different paths research by education focused staff can contribute to the REF submission is exhibited.	An increase in the understanding of different pathways of participating in REF.
2.	Create an Early Career Researcher Development Pathway. (HREiR Obligation 12 A)	September 2026-September 2028	Executive Director of Research Support Services, Head of OSDS, Head of Research Culture	Feedback collected from ECRs	ECRs feel better supported with training and development opportunities specifically tailored to them.
3.	As part of a broad review of how mentoring and coaching are used as academic development tools, a review of how different cohorts of staff, including education focused academics, are served by the academic staff development programme will be undertaken.	September 2027	Head of OSDS	In self-assessment processes, such as Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter related research and in Schools culture surveys education focused academics report feeling sufficiently supported by academic	Early career education focused academics feel supported in career development.

	Action	Deadline	Owner	How will it be monitored	What is the expected outcome/impact
				development programmes.	
4.	Use staff networks and other relevant forums to disseminate information on pathways that can be taken by academics on education focused contracts who want to be included in the REF process.	September 2026	EDI Faculty Leads. Head of EDI	In continuing consultations with stakeholders an increasingly greater awareness of the different paths research by education focused staff can contribute to the REF submission is exhibited.	An increase in the understanding of different pathways of participating in REF.
5.	Seek legal guidance in the recording of sex and gender in REF activities.	May 2026	Head of Research Information & Policy	All concerns and complaints are addressed by the legal team.	All REF related data is collected using categories as advised by the legal team.
6.	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training, including in 'Equity in the REF' will be undertaken by all individuals who are involved in the selection of outputs.	May 2026 and Ongoing	Head of Research Information & Policy and Head of OSDS	A record of training will be kept by the REF planning group	All staff involved in REF submission decision making and advisory capacity receive equality, diversity and inclusion training.
7.	Pursue gender balance in the constitution of the team scoring the outputs	June 2025	Head of School	Constitution of REF Management Teams in each UoA are discussed at IRED meetings	Scoring teams have gender balance.
8.	Explore the possibility of diversifying outputs scoring teams along other equality dimensions such as ethnicity and disability in each UoA.	June 2025	Head of School	Constitution of REF Management Teams in each UoA are discussed at IRED meetings	Scoring teams have other dimensions of diversity including gender.
9.	Breakdown data in the annual research data analysis report provided to each	August 2026 and ongoing	Head of Planning	Race Equality Charter Action Plan	Annual data pack provided to Schools

	Action	Deadline	Owner	How will it be monitored	What is the expected outcome/impact
	School by gender and ethnicity categories. in the. (Race Equality Charter Action Plan Action D8)			monitoring processes	contains data on research activity (including development and funding) broken down by protected characteristics
10	Review 2029 REF outputs to establish whether REF 2021 patterns of underrepresentation in relation to selected outputs are repeated and to determine what the reasons for underrepresentation are.	October 2028	Assistant Director (Research Culture, Impact and Engagement) Research and Innovation Services and Head of EDI	Research Culture Plan Monitoring processes.	There is increased understanding of St Andrews specific factors that influence research activity and output.
11	Use findings of representation in REF 2029 research to inform the development of targeted interventions.	January 2029	Assistant Director (Research Culture, Impact and Engagement) Research and Innovation Services and Head of EDI	Research Culture Plan Monitoring processes.	Researchers from minoritised groups feel supported by research development initiatives specifically tailored to them.
12	Pilot research culture cafes in some UoAs to understand perceptions of inclusion in research and in the REF and if there are any perceived barriers with respect to protected characteristics.	June 2027	Assistant Director (Research Culture, Impact and Engagement) Research and Innovation Services	Research Culture Plan Monitoring processes.	There is an increased understanding of St Andrews specific factors that influence participation in REF.
13	Develop a mentorship scheme to support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Early Career researchers. (REC A5)	September 2026	Head of OSDS	Race Equality Charter Action Plan monitoring processes	A mentoring scheme that recruits 10 mentees in 2026-27 academic year.
14	As an extension to Athena Swan Action 17 (Undertake targeted measures to better support women with caring responsibilities and improve their experiences of workload) conduct a review of the existing	Parent/guardian/carer responsibilities	HoEDI	Athena Swan Action Plan monitoring processes.	A report on the impact of existing carers support initiatives is produced and used

	Action	Deadline	Owner	How will it be monitored	What is the expected outcome/impact
	carers support initiatives, such as the caring fund, to establish what their impact is in relation to the goal of enhancing research inclusion.				to inform planning initiatives.

Appendix 2: REF 2021 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA): Action Plan Progression

REF 2021 EIA Actions Status Report

27/11/2025

Public Sector Equality Duty (2011) alignment	- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act (2010). - Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups.					
No.	Actions	How action will be achieved?	Protected Characteristic	Timescale	Action Owner	2025 update
6.1	Present new REF 2021 EIA findings at relevant committees/groups.	a). Present findings and good sector practice specific to the sections of the Advance HE Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter submission.	All	April 2022	Institutional Self-Assessment Team, EDI team.	Completed as recorded in Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter 2024 Institutional Assessment Reports.
6.2	Investigate and implement (as appropriate) REF 2021 good EDI practice methods, once published by Advance HE.	a) Gain good practice external report from Advance HE as part of institutional membership. b) Update REF 2021 EIA Action Plan with recommendations per protected characteristic. c) Present new actions (if any) to the relevant internal committees/groups for progression			EDI Team, Advance HE.	There is no record of us obtaining a REF 2021 good EDI practice methods published by Advance HE and there is no REF 2021 good EDI practice methods currently published on the AdvanceHE website.
6.3.	Launch Pronoun & Gender-inclusive Language Training Video as an awareness video as an internal resource.	a) Embed awareness tool into staff training platform.	G/R, Sex	Jan 2022 (TBC)	OSDS, EDI Team.	Completed
6.4.	Conduct analysis from an EDI perspective on the 2019 CROS/PIRLS and 2021 CEDARS results once provided.	a). Analyse differences between 2019 CROS/PIRLS results with 2015 specific to EDI. b). Analyse CEDARS results specific to EDI. c) Provide overview to Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter Self-Assessment Teams to identify action(s) (if required).	All	Jul 2022 (TBC)	OSDS, Planning, EDI Team.	a). CROS/PIRLS replaced by CEDARS in 2019. b). The Concordat and "findings from the Concordat are mentioned in the Athena Swan Application as informing discussions about researcher needs. The Concordat is mentioned in the REC Application.
6.5	Publish interactive webpages of FAQs and leave entitlement calculator of leave specific	a) Create suite of interactive FAQs. b) Create online calculator facility. c) Engage with relevant staff networks for feedback.	All	May 2021 -2022	EDI Team, HR, Staff Parents & Carers Network.	Completed

No.	Actions	How action will be achieved?	Protected Characteristic	Timescale	Action Owner	2025 update
	policies (family-friendly), as planned by IT, as part of the Human Resources and Organisational Staff Development Services enhancement programme					
6.6	Identify and implement (as appropriate) leadership programmes specific for staff with disabilities.	a) Sought input from external agencies (Advance HE, Business Disability Forum, National Association of Disabled Staff Networks, UK Government Disability Confident campaign etc), and internal input from the Staff with Disabilities Network. b) Attain methods in place/planned by other UK HEIs. c) Present findings with costings at the Central EDI Committee. d) Develop proposal to VP Governance for implementation (if appropriate).	Dis	March 2022	EDI Team	Whilst there are disability leadership programmes developed in the NHS sector, there are currently no sector specific leadership programmes for staff with disability and neurodiversity. The draft Disability and Neurodiversity inclusion plan contains an action on ensuring all line managers and leaders have the skills to effectively support disabled and neurodivergent staff.
6.7	Ascertain supportive measures or HR policy review impacting REF 2021 staff declared circumstances.	a) Conduct focus groups or individual interviews with staff declared circumstances.	All	Jul 2023	EDI Team.	Completed Focus groups were held as part of the Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter self-assessment processes.
6.8	Undertake further investigation into research support for BAME research staff.	a) Gather good HE sector practice specific to race post-REF 2021. b) Identify funding support for BAME research staff.	Rac	July 2023	EDI Team, RIS, Institutional Race Equality Charter Self-Assessment Team.	a). Good Sector Practice knowledge gathered as part of the Race Equality Charter Institutional Self-Assessment process. b). This work will be progressed as part of REC Action Plan action D2. (Develop an Institutional Positive Action Plan).
6.9	Investigate the internal process undertaken for impact case studies to be selected.	a) identify potential supportive measures such as funding, mentorship, or training for research staff.	All	Jul 2023	EDI Team, RIS.	The action is entailed in the Diverse Action Plan Dv35 "Implement a reform of research support (processes, procedures and reports) to better support researchers throughout their career / academic journey.

No.	Actions	How action will be achieved?	Protected Characteristic	Timescale	Action Owner	2025 update
6.10	Investigate equality of opportunity of access routes to research independence.	a) Investigate access routes to research independence for research staff of the 45-54 age category, working with the School EDI Committees and OSDS.	All	Jul 2023	EDI Team, RIS.	There is no evidence of the EDI team progressing this action and the action does not appear in any of the EDI plans and People Strategy (PS). This however could be seen as entailed in the following PS action: <i>PS 10. Create clearly defined career pathways with structures for development and progression from entry-level to senior leadership roles, with an initial and phased focus on professional services staff.</i>
6.11	Investigate recruitment and retention trends in REF 2021 Panel A for lower age groups, ethnicity and gender.	a) Analyse data sets for recruitment and retention by age categories, ethnicity and gender. b) Present findings of data trends to Institutional Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team and Institutional Race Equality Charter Self-Assessment Team.	Age, Rac, Sex	May and Aug 2022	EDI Team, HR Recruitment, RIS, Planning.	Race and Sex recruitment and retention data in the 2024 Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter applications. Recruitment and retention data is not broken down by age in both self-assessment reports.
6.12	Identify further actions to address gender disparities in Panel B, through school Athena Swan initiatives.	a) Present data for identifying gender disparity actions to REF 2021 Panel B Departmental Athena Swan Self-Assessment Teams, utilising good HE sector practice.	Sex	Dec 2023	EDI Team, Planning.	The issue of female underrepresentation in Panel B (STEMM) in Research Focused roles is discussed in the 2024 Athena Swan Application. In the application it is stated that further actions to address this inequality will be progressed through the implementation of the Researcher Development Concordat.
6.13	Identify approaches of career support within the sector for women in 55+ age categories.	a). Analyse age categories of women accessing the external Aurora Leadership Programme. b). Gather external good HE sector practice. c) Present findings of data trends to Institutional Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team for further actions.	Age and Sex	Sep 2023 Nov 2023 May 2024	EDI Team, Planning.	Age sex intersection (for the staff population, by academic and PS staff) was looked at as part of the Athena Swan self-assessment (in the early stages). An analysis looking at women in older age brackets (linked to a question regarding menopause - data didn't show any particular inequalities).
6.14	Identify approaches for mentoring or coaching for underrepresented age categories.	a) Analyse age categories of staff accessing the internal staff mentoring and career coaching schemes amongst academics with OSDS using HR monitoring data. b) Gather external good HE sector practice. c) Present findings for further action to the Institutional Athena Swan Self-Assessment	Age	Sep 2024 Oct2024 Dec 2024	EDI Team, HR.	This work has not yet been undertaken.

No.	Actions	How action will be achieved?	Protected Characteristic	Timescale	Action Owner	2025 update
		Team and Institutional Race Equality Charter Self-Assessment Team.				
6.15	Undertake further investigation into REF 2021 gender disparities of Early Career Researcher and non-Early Career Researcher.	a) Analyse Early Career Researcher and non-Early Career Researcher data sets by gender. b) Analyse quantitative and qualitative findings from School EDI Surveys for Early Career Researcher and non-Early Career Researcher for gender. c) Identify good HE sector practice approaches from successful external Athena Swan submissions. d) Present findings for further actions to the Institutional Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team.	Sex	Dec 2022 Jan 2023 Jun 2023	EDI Team, Planning.	A discussion of the gender disparities in early career research inclusion and support is not presented in the 2024 Athena Swan Application. This will be picked up in the Research Culture Plan development Process

Appendix 3: Equality Act (2010) - Glossary of Terms

Glossary of Equality Terms as used in this Code

(Equality Terms are also defined in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy in Appendix 4)

Term	Definition
Accessible:	Barriers are removed to enable as many people as possible to use facilities and tools and to engage and participate in everyday activities. This includes removing barriers that might prevent or make difficult for people with disabilities to use digital tools for purposes of work, study and other everyday interactions.
Age:	A person belonging to a particular age (for example 32 year olds) or range of ages (for example 18 to 30 year
Disability:	A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Diversity:	Diversity is about respecting and valuing the differences between people. It is also recognising and understanding
Equal Opportunities:	Equal opportunities, or equality of opportunity, may be defined as ensuring that everyone is entitled to freedom from discrimination. There are two main types of equality encompassed in equal opportunities. The term has mostly been replaced by Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in recent years.
Equality:	Equality is about fairness and not discriminating against individuals or groups because of peoples' backgrounds.
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA):	A detailed and systematic analysis of how a policy, practice, procedure or service potentially or has differential impact on people of different 'protected characteristics.
Equity:	Equity is based on the recognition that due to systemic inequalities there is need for the provision of different levels and types of support to ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed. This approach seeks to level the playing field by addressing the unequal social and economic positioning in the accessing of opportunities.
Ethnicity:	'Ethnicity' refers to shared cultural expressions among a group of people, such as religion, traditions, and customs. In the Equality Act 2010 Ethnicity and Nationality are entailed in the protected characteristic of Race.
Gender Reassignment:	The process of transitioning from one gender to another.
Inclusion:	Inclusion means pursuing practices and policies that foster a culture and environment in which everyone feels welcome and

	valued and is enabled to participate on equal terms with others.
Marriage and Civil partnership:	Marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted)
Minoritised Groups:	The term minoritised puts emphasis on the processes of exclusion and domination that result in groups of people positioned as political, economic and social minorities in given societies.
Protected Characteristics:	In the Equality Act Protected Characteristics are given as; Age Disability Gender Reassignment Marriage and Civil Partnership Pregnancy and Maternity Race Religion or Belief (including non-belief) Sex Sexual Orientation
Race:	Refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.
Religion and belief:	Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
Sex:	'Sex' is understood as binary, with a person's legal sex being determined by what is recorded on their birth certificate. The Supreme Court Ruling of April 16, 2026 distinguished between the terms "sex" and "gender" as used in the Equality Act
Sexual orientation:	Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.
Socio-Economic Background:	In the UK the Government recommended measure of Socio-Economic background includes the factors of parental qualifications; parental occupation; type of school attended and eligibility for free school meals.



University of
St Andrews

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Document type	Policy
Scope (applies to)	Staff and students
Applicability date	28/09/2023
Expiry date	31/12/2025
Approved date	20/08/2025
Approver	
Document owner	
School / unit	University-Wide
Document status	Published
Information classification	Public
Equality impact assessment	None
Key terms	Staff/Equality, diversity and inclusion/Review
Purpose	Committed to respect and fair treatment for everyone, eliminating discrimination and actively promoting equality of opportunity and delivering fairness to all.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and School or unit	Date
1.7	Updated policy format and links. Extended expiry to allow review and completion of EIA.	Published	Deputy Head of EDI	20/08/2025

- British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us via the online BSL Video Relay Interpreting Service: <https://contactscotland-bsl.org>
- This document and forms associated with this document are available in an alternative format upon request.

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1. Statement

The University of St Andrews is fully committed to respect and fair treatment for everyone, eliminating discrimination and actively promoting equality of opportunity and delivering fairness to all.

In addition to being compliant with the equality laws (public duties and Human Rights), the University also supports diversity and promotes equality of opportunity for all staff, students and visitors regardless of their:

- 'Protected Characteristic' as defined under the Equality Act (2010):
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender Reassignment
 - Marriage and Civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and Maternity (including Paternity)
 - Race (colour, ethnic or national background)
 - Religion or Belief (including non-belief)
 - Sex
 - Sexual Orientation
- Caring responsibilities for a 'Protected Characteristic' including dependants
- Socio-economic background/grouping
- Union activity
- Unrelated spent criminal convictions

2. Purpose

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy outlines the responsibility for promoting inclusive environments, which are free from discrimination for our national and international staff; students; and anyone associated with the University (e.g. visitors, contractors and service providers).

The policy considers the updated approach to equality by the UK Government as outlined in the Equality Act (2010), Public Sector Equality Duty (2011), and the Scottish Specific Duties (2012), which requires the University to:

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3. Scope / jurisdiction

All staff, students and anyone associated with the University, have a responsibility to adhere to this statement and apply it in their day-to-day work.

The University aims to ensure that equality is embedded into all its functions, operations and activities. Initiatives to support the embedding process are facilitated by the University's EDI Team.

- Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are methods of 'self-assessment or auditing', which result in a detailed indicator of the University's performance with the Equality Act and the Scottish Specific Duties. The University is committed to promoting and monitoring fairness and equality of opportunity through the conducting of EIAs.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Everyone is responsible for their own behaviour and must accept the principle that there is equality of opportunity and fairness for all staff and students and anyone associated with the University (e.g. visitors, contractors and service providers), in all aspects of university life.

Individuals must ensure they do not support unfair behaviour by ignoring what is happening around them and must not incite or collude with unfair or unlawful discrimination.

The specific responsibilities in relation to the policy statement are as follows:

- The University Court, as the employer, is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the University fulfils its legal responsibilities for promoting equality and eliminating discrimination, and for making sure that the commitments within this statement are fulfilled.
- The Principal's Office, having the overall leadership for managing the University, has the responsibility to ensure that the legal responsibilities for promoting equality and eliminating discrimination, and for making sure that the commitments within this statement are fulfilled across the University.
- The Director of Human Resources is responsible for implementation of this statement with respect to staff and for implementing related

policies and procedures. The Director of Human Resources will also ensure that all staff receive appropriate equality and diversity inclusion training.

- The Director of Student Services is responsible for implementation of this statement with respect to students and also for implementing related policies and procedures.
- Heads of School/Unit have a responsibility to raise the profile of the policy within their Schools/Units and ensure that all staff and students are aware of the commitments within the policy. They also have a responsibility to promote equality of opportunity and to eliminate discrimination within their Schools/Units.
- All staff and students have a responsibility to promote equality and to eliminate discrimination on the grounds listed in section 2 and to adhere to the 'Equality Statement'. Any act of discrimination or harassment by a member of staff or a student will be taken very seriously and may result in disciplinary action being taken.

5. Procedures

Monitoring will be essential to ensure that the University's 'Equality Statement' is working effectively. To achieve this, the University will monitor annually and publish details of:

- the profile of the staff and student population across the 'protected characteristics'
- student applications, offers made, acceptances, assessment results, drop-out rates and awards of degrees
- recruitment and selection, leavers, promotion, re-grading and participation in training and development activities
- complaints including harassment and bullying complaints, grievances and disciplinary proceedings for staff and students

The University guarantees that information gathered for the purposes of monitoring will be used only for monitoring and to improve its equality performance and will be held and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018). The University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee (UEDIC) is the central committee responsible for the University's EDI remit, strategy and best practice. The committee is responsible for identifying and implementing strategies, actions and best practice regarding all aspects of EDI.

6. Sanctions

The law stipulates that, any member of the University community found to be responsible for inciting, perpetrating or colluding with discrimination or harassment may face disciplinary action.

7. Related documents and regulatory framework

If a member of staff feels that they have been bullied, harassed or discriminated against, the complaint should be raised in accordance with the appropriate University [‘Dignity and Respect at Work Policy’](#).

If a student feels that they have been bullied, harassed or discriminated against, the complaint should be raised through the University’s [student support](#) pathways.

All employees, students, and members of the public can use the online [‘Report and Support tool’](#) to report complaints or concerns to the University and access support information.

Other relevant policies can be found in the University’s [Policy, Procedures and Guidance Repository](#)

Advice on the use of these procedures can be obtained from Human Resources and Student Services.

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed to ensure consistency with best sector practice and updated terminology.

9. Contacts

For staff:

diversity@st-andrews.ac.uk

<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/hr/businesspartner/>

For students:

[Student Support](#)

10. Version control

Version number	Purpose or changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and School or unit	Date
1.1	Included updated terminology, institutional contacts, and new Report & Support provision and migration to Governance Zone.	Published	Head of E&D, EDI Team.	16 December 2020

1.2	Included weblink to the Central EDI Committee webpage.	Published.	Head of E&D, EDI Team.	31 Mar 2022
1.3	Change to review date only.	Published.	Head of E&D, EDI Team.	05/01/2023
1.4	Change to review date only.	Published.	Head of E&D, EDI Team.	27/03/2023
1.5	Change to review date only.	Published.	Head of E&D, EDI Team.	28/09/2023
1.6	Review date extended to allow review to take place.	Published.	Deputy Head EDI	04/01/2024
1.7	Updated policy format and links. Extended expiry to allow review and completion of EIA.	Published	Deputy Head of EDI	20/08/2025

11.

Appendix A: Glossary of terms

Terminology	Description or example
Adverse impact:	Identified where a university operation has a less favourable effect on one or more groups covered by equality law than it has on other groups.
Age:	A person belonging to a particular age (for example 32-year-olds) or range of ages (for example 18 to 30 year olds).
Associated Discrimination:	Where a victim of discrimination does not have a 'protected characteristic' but is discriminated against because of their association with someone who does e.g. the parent of a disabled child.
Dependants:	An employee's spouse, child or parent, or anyone who lives in the same household (except employees, tenants, lodgers or boarders).
Differential impact:	Identified where a policy or practice affects a given group or groups in a different way to other groups. Unlike adverse impact, differential impact can be positive or negative.
Direct Discrimination:	Occurs where a person is treated less favourably on the grounds of being a member of a particular group than a person who is not from that group would be treated in the same or similar circumstances.
Disability:	A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

	Also refer to 'Reasonable adjustment'.
Diversity:	Diversity is about respecting and valuing the differences between people. It is also recognising and understanding the mix of people and communities who use services and their different needs.
Equal Opportunities:	Equal opportunities, or equality of opportunity, may be defined as ensuring that everyone is entitled to freedom from discrimination. There are two main types of equality encompassed in equal opportunities. The term has mostly been replaced by Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in recent years.
Equality:	Equality is about fairness, and not discriminating against individuals or groups because of peoples' backgrounds.
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA):	A detailed and systematic analysis of how a policy, practice, procedure or service potentially or actually has differential impact on people of different 'protected characteristics'.
Equality strands:	Different equality groups/communities in equal opportunities law, now replaced by the Equality Act (2010) - refer to 'Protected Characteristics'.
Gender Reassignment:	The process of transitioning from one gender to another.
Harassment:	Unwanted behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creates a degrading, humiliating, hostile, intimidating or offensive environment.
Indirect Discrimination:	Refers to applying University operations that disadvantages people of different 'protected characteristics'. Indirect discrimination is illegal if it cannot be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
Marriage and Civil partnership:	Marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).
Perceived Discrimination:	Applicant/employee treated less favourably because it is perceived that the applicant/employee has a protected characteristic. Even though the employee/employer may be mistaken it is still discriminatory.
Prejudice:	An adverse judgement, conviction or opinion formed beforehand or without knowledge or examination of the facts. It may be felt or

	expressed. It may be directed, without reason, toward a group or an individual of that group and may develop into an irrational suspicion or hatred.
Pregnancy and Maternity:	Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
Protected Characteristics:	Gives legislative protection from discrimination to the following 'protected characteristics': Age Disability Gender Reassignment Marriage and Civil partnership Pregnancy and Maternity Race Religion or Belief (including non-belief) Sex/Gender Sexual Orientation
Qualitative Data:	Information that is difficult to count measure or express in numerical terms (for example, feedback from focus groups or interviews).
Quantitative Data:	Information that can be expressed in numerical terms, counted or compared on a scale (for example, monitoring data).
Race:	Refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.
Reasonable Adjustment:	Where a disabled person is at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled, there is a duty to take reasonable steps to remove that disadvantage by: Changing provisions, criteria or practices Altering, removing or providing a reasonable alternative means of avoiding physical features Providing auxiliary aids
Religion and belief:	Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
Sex:	'Sex' is understood as binary, with a person's legal sex being determined by what is recorded

	on their birth certificate. 'Gender' refers to socially constructed roles of women and men and/or an individual's conception of their identity. The term is often used interchangeably with 'sex', partly in recognition that much of the inequality between women and men is driven by underlying social and power structures rather than by biological sex. Although the Equality Act protects people from discrimination because of their sex, other UK legislation (such as the regulations requiring employers to publish their gender pay gap) refers to gender.
Sexual orientation:	Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.
Trans:	Trans is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth, including people who are non-binary or otherwise gender non-conforming and women or men with a trans past.
Victimisation:	Subjecting a person to a detriment because they have done a protected act or there is a belief that they have done a protected act.

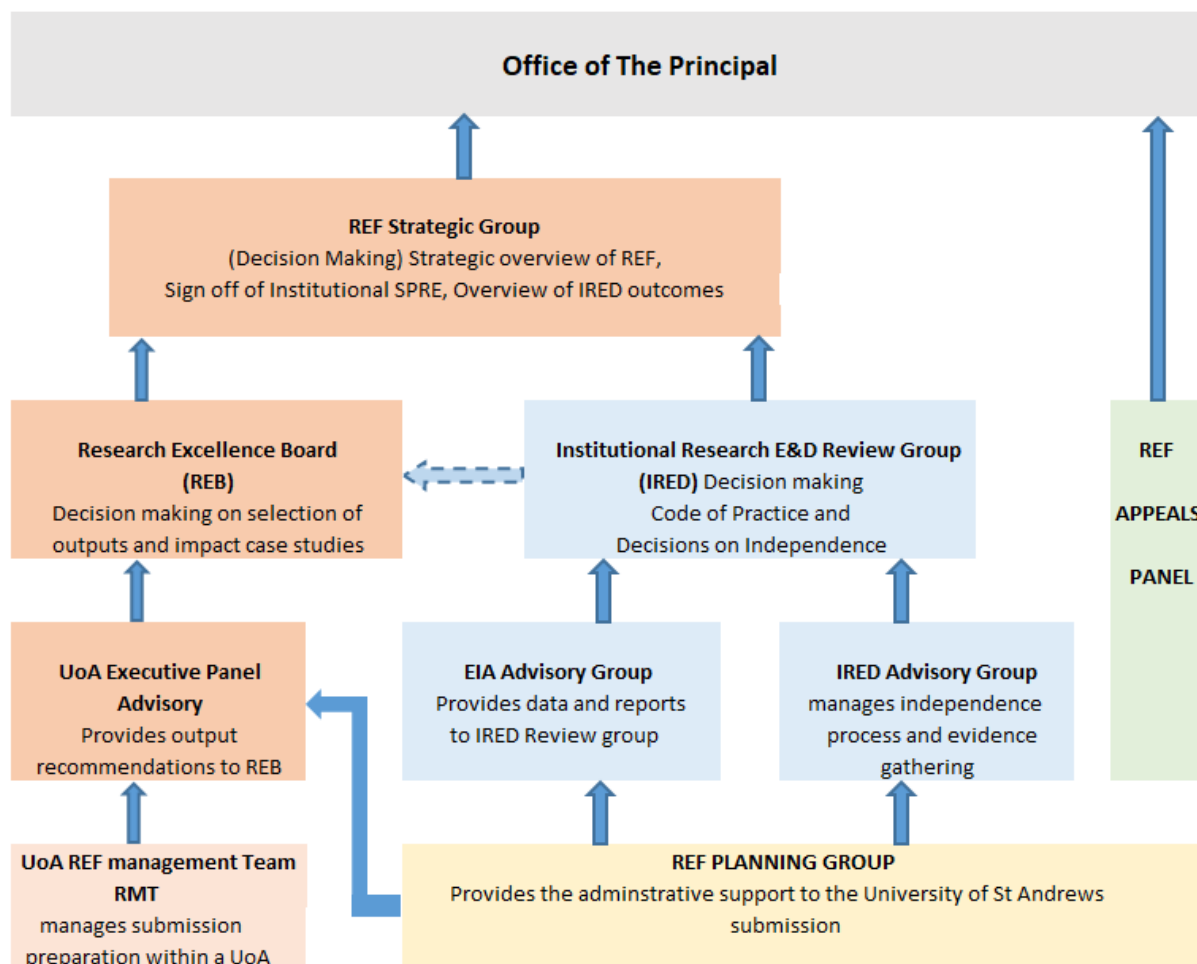
Appendix B: Summary of how the policy impacts people

What does this mean for:	Positive Impact
Someone applying to work at the University	You can be confident that you are applying to work for an organisation fully committed to ensuring equality and diversity and that the recruitment process fully supports and upholds this statement.
An employee at the University	You are working for an organisation whose commitment to the promotion of equality and diversity is furthered by a range of policies and procedures that ensure the University is benefiting from best practice in this area.
Applying to become a student at the University	You will be treated with equality and fairness in accordance with our admissions policy and procedures. You will have access to information and advice throughout the admissions process to assist you with your decision making.
As a student at the University	You will benefit from studying at a university with a diverse student body and workforce. Our commitment to equality and to dignity and respect is furthered

	through policies, and University Strategy Diverse St Andrews theme.
As a partner organisation in any sector (public, private or voluntary)	You can be welcomed and treated with dignity and respect. You will work with the University to promote equality within joint activities for the benefit of all.
As a contractor working on our premises	You have both rights and duties (as detailed in your contract) and will act in accordance with our principles and standards.
Visiting the University	You will be welcomed and treated with dignity, respect and courtesy.

Appendix 5: Decision Making and Advisory groups

Below is a diagram summarising the committees involved in advisory and decision-making processes for REF 2029 in the University of St Andrews and fit into the wider institutional management structure. Following this are descriptions of the role and membership of each group.



REF Strategy Group

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The REF Strategic Group (the Group) is established to provide senior-level strategic oversight and decision-making for the University's preparation and submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2029. The Group ensures that institutional decisions relating to REF are optimised at University level, fully compliant with REF regulations, and aligned with the University's strategic priorities.

2. Role and Responsibilities

The Group will:

- Provide overall strategic oversight of the University's REF 2029 preparations and submission.

- Take responsibility for key institutional-level REF decisions, including (but not limited to):
 - The structure, composition and final configuration of Units of Assessment (UoAs).
 - Decisions relating to staff FTE allocation between UoAs where this is necessary to optimise the submission.
 - Decisions on the submission to specific UoAs.
- Consider and take a view on recommendations and decisions arising from the Institutional Research Equality and Diversity Review Group (IRED), particularly in relation to research independence and adherence to the REF Code of Practice.
- Oversee and sign off the Institutional Strategy, People and Research Environment (SPRE) statement for REF 2029.
- Ensure that REF-related decisions are taken transparently, consistently, and in accordance with REF guidance, audit requirements, and the approved Institutional Code of Practice.
- Receive advice, analysis and recommendations from the Research Excellence Board (REB), IRED, and Research and Innovation Services (RIS) to inform decision-making.

3. Scope of Authority

The Group acts as the University's primary REF decision-making body, subject to ultimate approval by the Principal's Office. It takes over from the Research Excellence Board (REB) in respect of central strategic REF decisions, while REB retains responsibility for supporting, challenging and holding UoAs to account for the quality of their submissions and in supporting the development of the Institutional SPRE statement.

4. Reporting and Accountability

- The Group reports directly to the Principal's Office on REF matters, including progress, risks, and decisions requiring institutional endorsement.
- The Group will receive structured input from:
 - The Research Excellence Board (REB) on UoA quality, outputs, impact case studies and unit-level SPRE development.
 - The Institutional Research Equality and Diversity Review Group (IRED) on equality, diversity, research independence and Code of Practice compliance.
 - Research and Innovation Services (RIS) on progress towards institutional submission and centralised support and data requirements.

5. Membership

5.1 Co-Chairs

- Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation)
- Master The Group is co-chaired to reflect the strategic nature of decisions relating to research, Schools, and UoA-level FTE allocation.

5.2 Core Members

- Deputy Principal
- Vice-Principal (People and Governance)
- Vice-Principal (Strategy and COO)

- Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Arts and Divinity)
- Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Science)
- Assistant Vice-Principal (Strategy and Planning)
- Executive Director of Research Support Services

5.3 Attendees and Observers

- Assistant Directors, Research and Innovation Services (with management responsibility for REF) – observer
- Assistant Vice-Principal (Diversity) by invitation
- Additional attendees may be invited by the Co-Chairs as required to provide expert advice on specific issues (e.g. finance, HR, data or REF policy, REB Members or Heads of UoA).

6. Secretariat and Support

Research and Innovation Services (RIS) will provide analytical, policy and administrative support to the Group, including preparation of papers, data analysis, and coordination with REB and IRED.

7. Frequency of Meetings

The Group will meet at key points in the REF planning and pre-submission cycle, with meeting frequency determined by the stage of preparation and decision-making requirements. It is anticipated that the interval between meetings shall not be longer than 6 weeks.

8. Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain fit for purpose and aligned with REF guidance, the Institutional Code of Practice, and the University's governance framework.

Research Excellence Board (REB)

Terms of Reference

The Research Excellence Board (REB) is a board which contains senior academic representatives with an established track record in research and innovation. REB provides key advice to the Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation (VPRCI)) on driving and supporting research excellence on an ongoing basis and nurturing a positive research culture throughout the University. REB is chaired by the VPRCI and reports via the VPRCI to the Principal through Principal's Office (PO) meetings. REB has a broad mission to champion excellent research activity and a high-quality research environment as university priorities, providing positive messaging to build research confidence across the University. REB also provides advice to the VPRCI and the PO on research strategy and investment for the University.

REB exists as a senior advisory board under the chair of the VPRCI and sits alongside the Research, Impact and Innovation Committee which has specific responsibilities for overseeing research activity and reviewing and approving policy developments. Minutes of the RIIC are shared with REB members for information.

REB's specific responsibilities include:

- Providing oversight for planning, managing, and informing of the Institution's strategy, preparations, and submissions to future research assessment exercises. The Board also acts as an institutional memory for Research Excellence Assessment cycles.
- Providing recommendations to the Principal's Office on new and re-licensing applications for Research Centres and Institutes.
- Being a decision-making body on inter and multi-school level reporting reviews for Research Centres and Institutes.
- Having, where possible, advance sight of large-scale funding calls to enable pro-active, encouragement of collaborations, new research hubs, joint initiatives etc.
- Acting as a decision making and oversight body for internal and external funding when requested by the Chair.
- Being responsible for the oversight of strategic research campaigns within the University, as prioritised by the Chair.

Membership:

Members	Role	Headcount
Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation), Chair	Decision making	1
Master of United College	Decision making	1
Assistant Vice Principal (Dean of Science)	Decision making	1
Assistant Vice Principal (Dean of Arts)	Decision making	1
Dean of Medicine	Decision making	1
Academic Member (Sciences and Medicine)	Decision making	5
Academic Member (Arts and Divinity)	Decision making	9
Executive Director of Research Support	Advisory	1
Human Resources Key Representative	Advisory	1
Library and Museums Representative (optional attendee)	Advisory	1

Research & Innovation Services (Secretariat)	Advisory	1
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Senior academic expertise will be sought from across arts and humanities, social sciences and sciences, typically for a three-year term.

Procedures for appointing designated staff to the Research Excellence Board:

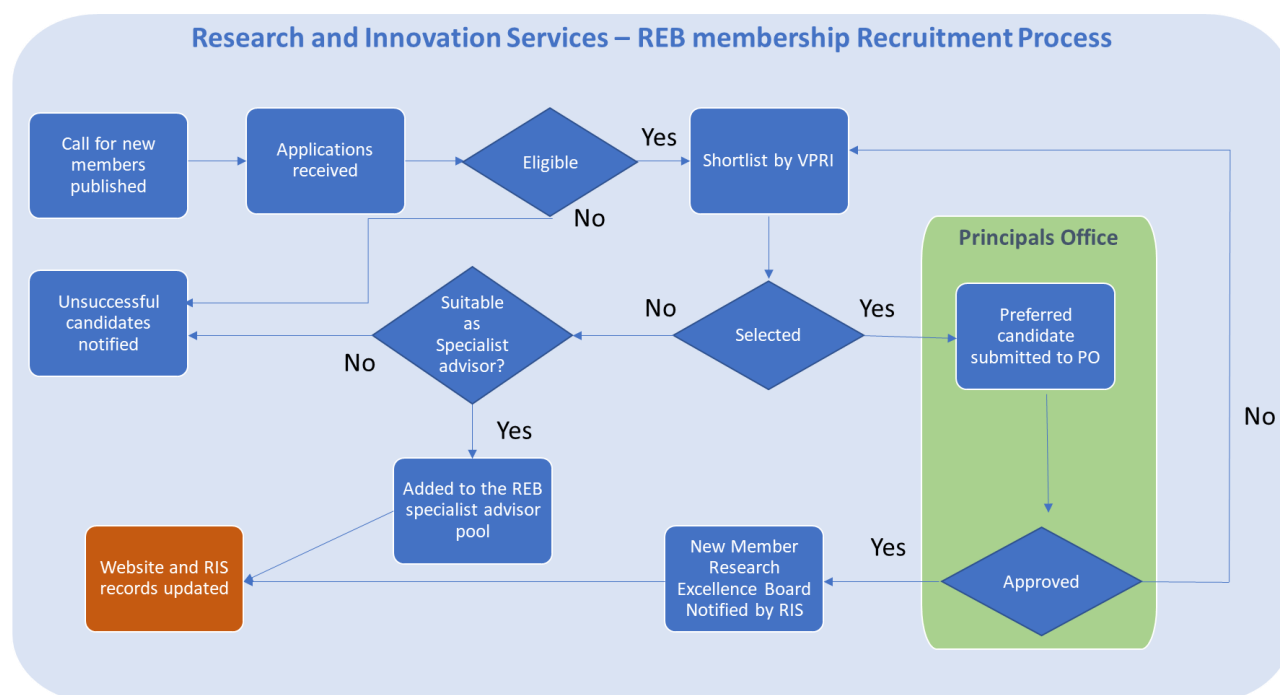
Following an open call to academic staff, the VPRCI will recommend appointments to PO to ensure a balance of membership for an effective and diverse board.

The REB member will initially be appointed for a 3-year term, rolling recruitment processes for replacements will be managed to avoid undue turbulence. To widen the skills and experience on the Board during research related campaigns, a pool of applicants may be invited to serve as specialist advisors for a 1-2 year term. Advisory roles are determined by their management or administrative post.

Eligibility Criteria for Academic Research Excellence Board Members

Academic members of REB are expected to have significant experience at a senior management position either internally as, for example, Director of Research, Director of Impact and Innovation or externally as a REF panel member or through the holding of a significant appointment previously at University level. The expertise of former Heads of School will be particularly welcome. Experience in other senior management/committee roles will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Board members in an advisory capacity will be appointed in collaboration between the VPRCI and the director of the professional services unit and will be expected to have considerable experience in their field and the University.



Governance roles and responsibilities: Accountability

The REB is accountable to the Principal's Office.

Relationship with other groups

The REB reports its recommendations to the Research Impact and Innovation Committee and provides minutes of meetings to the Principal's Office via the VPRCI. REB also reports verbally to the

Head of Schools, Directors of Research and Directors of Impact and Innovation networks, as required, via attendance of REB members to these regular meetings.

The REB will exchange guidance and recommendations from:

- Research and Innovation services (Policy, Assessment, Culture, Pure, Impact and Innovation) (Advisory representative)
- Libraries and Museums (Advisory representative)
- Human Resources (Advisory representative)
- Finance (standing paper to REB)
- Business Development and Contracts (standing paper to REB)

And during active Research Assessment Exercises:

- the REF Planning Group
- the UOA Executive Panels
- the IRED Review
- the IRED Advisory Group
- the REF Strategy Group

Modes of operation

The REB meets no fewer than 4 times a year. During Research Assessment submission preparations, REB members are also expected to attend an average of 4-5 Unit of Assessment Executive Panel meetings per semester during Research Assessment Exercises.

Decisions will be made by a majority agreement. Where a majority cannot be reached, the Chair will determine the outcome.

Attendance

It is recognised that members may not be able to attend all meetings. In these cases, involvement will be via email communications with the Chair and Secretariat however members will be expected to attend a majority of the meetings. Where a member does not attend a series of meeting, the VPRCI will investigate the circumstances and may ask that member to demit from REB.

It is expected that all standing members will attend scheduled meetings if possible and advisory members will attend when relevant or by special invitation.

Record-keeping and communications procedures

It is the responsibility of the Secretariat to collate, circulate and archive meeting papers. All papers are held securely with limited access and are kept in line with the University's data Privacy Policy. Where a decision has been agreed by the Board, it will be communicated to the appropriate audience electronically by the Secretariat. Knowledge will be shared through the attendance of meetings, the electronic circulation of information and verbal communications.

Routine communication will be through the generic email ris@st-andrews.ac.uk, owned by the Director of Research and Innovation services and/or the Chair's email vpres@st-andrews.ac.uk.

Sub-Groups

REB may, from time-to-time, setup short life working groups to address particular topics or to respond to requests from the PO. These groups will include REB members but may also include others with particular expertise.

During Research Assessment submission preparations, members of REB will form part of the UOA Executive panel

Administration

Research and Innovation Services provide a secretariat to REB. The secretary will be responsible for:

- Preparation of meeting agendas and Chair briefing
- Circulation of agendas and papers prior to scheduled meetings
- Circulation and archiving of approved records after each meeting
- Recruitment processes for new members
- Existing maintenance of membership record

Unit of Assessment (UoA) REF Executive Panel

Terms of Reference

Remit - To manage the Unit of Assessment level REF processes in line with the institutional Code of Practice. To have over-arching responsibility for planning, managing and driving all aspects of the Unit of Assessment, preparations including assessment of research quality and identification of eligible staff. The Panel will report to the Research Excellence Board through the at least bi-annual meetings.

The composition of each UoA REF Executive Panel includes at least two members of the REB and the appropriate Head of School, Director of Research, Director of Impact and a research support representative for the UoA. When appropriate, the REB may approve the presence, at the UoA REF Executive Panel, of other members of staff within the UoA's RMT or for example, with specific expertise. The Vice Principal (Research and Innovation) or a REB member alternate will chair the UoA REF Executive Panel.

Membership:

Members	Role
Vice Principal (Research and Innovation) or REB alternate (Chair)	Chair
UoA Head of School	Advisory
UoA Director of Research	Advisory
UoA Director of Impact	Advisory
UoA REF Research Support representative	Advisory
REB representatives	Advisory
Research & Innovation Services (Secretariat)	Advisory

Procedures for appointing designated staff to the UoA Executive panel:

At School/dept level, membership of the UoA Executive Panel is determined by their participation in the UoA RMT. Those holding the posts Head of School, Director of Research or Director of Impact are automatically members of their UoA RMT and the REF Executive panel. The REB members will rotate as dictated by their experience, expertise and availability.

Governance roles and responsibilities: Accountability

The UoA Executive Panel is accountable to the REB.

Relationship with other groups

The UoA Executive Panel will receive guidance from the REF Planning Group. They will also receive guidance on internal REF processes which have equality and diversity issues from the IRED Review and Advisory Groups to ensure all processes relating to REF are in line with the principles of the institutional Code of Practice.

Modes of operation

The UoA Executive Panel will meet once every semester at the REF REB school meetings. Recommendations will be made to by the UoA Executive Panel at these meetings and the internal REF submission management system (PURE).

Attendance

It is expected that members attend all meetings. In these cases, where this is not possible involvement will be sought prior to meetings via email communications with the other panel members and Secretariat.

Record-keeping and communications procedures

It is the responsibility of the Secretariat to collate, circulate and archive meeting papers for the REF REB school meetings. All papers are held securely with limited access and are kept in line with the REF and Institutional Data Privacy statement. Knowledge will be shared through the attendance of meetings and the electronic circulation of papers.

Routine communications from the Secretariat will be through the generic email ris@st-andrews.ac.uk, owned by the Director or Research and Innovation services.

Document sharing for collaboration will be determined by the school members.

Sub-Groups

The school members of the UoA Executive Panel will form the local REF management group for their Unit of Assessment.

Administration

Research and Innovation Services provide a secretariat to UoA Executive Panel meetings.

They are responsible for:

- Preparation of meeting agendas
- Circulation of agendas and papers, where possible, no later than 1 week prior to scheduled meetings
- Circulation and archiving of approved records, where possible, no later than one week after each meeting

Unit of Assessment (UOA) REF management team

Terms of Reference

Remit – The UoA REF Management Team (UoA RMT) will steer the development and delivery of their UoAs submission for REF. The team will have the following responsibilities:

- Head of School (Overall submission)
 - Accountable for the development, monitoring and delivery of the Unit of Assessment level REF submission.
 - Accountable for ensuring all REF related processes are carried out in line with the institutional REF Code of Practice.
 - Accountable to REB for the quality of their submission.
 - Data owner for UoA level submission plans and reports.
 - Responsible for reporting changes or additions to the UoA RMT to RIS
- Director of Research (Outputs and SPRE lead)
 - Responsible for research output quality supporting activities and ongoing monitoring.
 - Responsible for training colleagues on and application of REF research quality criteria for their UoA to their submission content.
 - Responsibility for development of SPRE and management of supporting evidence (if not devolved to an UoA additional role)
 - Responsible for internal reviews prior to submission including recording review information in Pure.
 - Responsible for dissemination of communications on REF information from Research England, RIS and external networks to their UoA.
 - Responsible for progress reporting to REB.
- Director of Impact (Engagement and Impact lead)
 - Responsible for impact case study quality supporting activities and ongoing monitoring.
 - Responsible for training colleagues on and application of REF research quality criteria to the Engagement and Impact content for submission.
 - Responsibility for development of the engagement and impact narrative and management of supporting evidence (where not held centrally)
 - Responsible for internal reviews of impact case studies prior to submission.
 - Responsible for impact case study progress reporting to REB.

The UoA RMT will report to the Research Excellence Board, chaired by the VPRCI through at least annual meetings.

The composition of each UoA REF management team will include as a minimum the Head of School/Department, Director of Research and Director of Impact supported by the REF administrator for the UoA. Where required, additional senior management staff within the UoA may be engaged as additional members for example, where responsibility for an element of submission has been devolved. The Director of Research will lead the operational management of their UoA's submission. The Head of School will be accountable for the activities of the UoA RMT. All members are expected

to provide a thorough hand over of their REF preparations and responsibilities to their incoming replacement, should they vacate their role before the submission is made.

Membership:

Members	Responsibility
UoA Head of School/ Department	Accountable
UoA Director of Research	Responsible
UoA Director of Impact	Responsible
Research/REF administrator (Secretariat)	Responsible
UoA additional role/s (senior management academics)	Responsible

Procedures for appointing designated staff to the UoA REF Management Team:

Membership of the UoA RMT is determined by role for school representatives, holding the posts Head of School, Director of Research or Director of Impact are automatically members of the team. The Head of School may appoint additional roles as dictated by the needs of the School/Dept based on experience, expertise and availability. The responsibilities of additional role holders are defined by the School/Dept and may involve devolving the responsibilities of existing members to the additional appointees. All changes in personnel and accountability/responsibility should be outlined clearly and communicated to RIS as soon as possible.

In constituting UoA RMTs, Schools are expected to give active consideration to equality, diversity and inclusion, including gender balance, recognising the role that diverse panels play in supporting fair and consistent assessment of research outputs. UoA RMT composition and associated justification will form part of institutional oversight, and IRED may seek assurance that appropriate consideration has been given to diversity in appointments.

Governance roles and responsibilities: Accountability

The UoA RMT is accountable to the Vice Principal (Research, collections and Innovation), and REB.

Relationship with other groups

The UoA RMT will attend UoA Executive Panel meetings and will receive guidance from the REF Planning Group. They will also receive guidance on internal REF processes which have equality and diversity issues from the IRED Review and Advisory Groups to ensure all processes relating to REF are in line with the principles of the institutional Code of Practice.

RMT members should liaise with other School/Dept managerial roles as appropriate, such as Directors of EDI on considerations for PCE.

Modes of operation

The UoA RMT operational model will be determined at School / Department level, as appropriate. All UoA RMTs must record submission content in the internal REF submission management system (PURE) and provide updates as required by central submission planning overseen by REB.

Attendance

It is expected that members attend all meetings. In these cases, where this is not possible involvement will be sought prior to meetings via email communications with the other panel members and Secretariat.

Record-keeping and communications procedures

It is the responsibility of the Secretariat to collate, circulate and archive meeting papers for the UoA RMT meetings. All papers, including agendas, supporting documentation and formal records of

discussion and decisions, will be held with appropriate access controls and retained in line with REF requirements and the University's institutional data protection and privacy statements.

Routine communications from the UoA RMT will be determined at School / Department level by the team.

Document sharing for collaborative purposes will be agreed by UoA RMT members on a case-by-case basis. This will include proportionate arrangements for documenting decision-making and maintaining appropriate records and minutes to evidence how decisions relating to the selection of outputs have been reached, in accordance with the expectations and principles set out in this Code of Practice.

Sub-Groups

UoA RMT sub-groups will be determined at School / Department level by the team.

Administration

Research secretariat to the UoA RMT will be provided by the appropriate members of the UoAs administrative team. Their role will be to support the UoA leads in the preparations for REF.

Working closely with the UoA leads, they are responsible for:

- Notifying RIS of any additional REF roles within their UoA, the post holder's name and the School/Depts defined responsibilities of that role.
- Preparation of UoA level meeting agendas
- Circulation of agendas and papers, where possible, no later than 1 week prior to scheduled meetings
- Circulation and archiving of approved records, where possible, no later than one week after each meeting
- Maintenance and storage of UoA level REF paperwork and data
- Circulation of REF related news

Institutional Research Equality and Diversity (IRED) Review

Terms of Reference

The Institutional Research Equality and Diversity Review Group, chaired by the Vice-Principal (People and Diversity) (VPPD), will consider and make recommendations on research-supporting processes that may have equality and diversity implications for staff. In particular, the group makes decisions on research independence and oversees adherence to the Institutional code of practice during REF. The group will provide advice to the Research Excellence Board (REB) and to the Principal's Office on EDI matters related to research assessment and peer review.

Remit:

12. Research Excellence Framework

- Review development of the University's Code of Practice for REF and provide feedback and recommendations to REB and PO
- Act as a decision-making group for EDI-related internal processes and communications around the Research Excellence Framework (REF)
 - staff circumstances/unit circumstances
 - research independence
 - EDI training for REF decision makers
 - and additional EDI aligned processes for REF as required.
- Provide assurance that the appeal processes for decisions on the above areas are clear and independent from the REB
- Monitor the progress from the institutional Equality Impact Assessment for REF 2021 action plan

13. Peer Review/Demand Management

- Review EDI reports (provided by RIS) on the composition and operation of the Peer Review College and review panels and make recommendations to REB and PO on any action or changes required

Membership:

Member	Role	Headcount
Assistant Vice-Principal (Diversity) (Chair)	Decision making	1
Academic Representative (Science and Medicine)	Decision making	3
Academic Representative (Arts and Divinity)	Decision making	3
EDI Faculty Lead (Arts and Divinity or Science and Medicine)	Decision making	1
Union Representative	Decision making	1
Head of Equality & Diversity	Advisory	1
Human Resources Representative	Advisory	1
Planning Representative	Advisory	1
Research & Innovation Services (Secretariat)	Advisory	2

Academic representatives will be sought from across arts and humanities, social sciences and sciences, typically for a three-year term.

Procedures for appointing designated staff to the Institutional Research Equality and Diversity (IRED) Review Group:

IRED members will initially be appointed for a 3-year term, with option for extension of service where appropriate. Rolling recruitment processes for replacements will be managed to ensure continuity. To widen the skills and experience of the group during specific campaigns, a pool of applicants may be invited to serve as specialist advisors on short life working groups for a 1-2 year term. IRED secretariat/advisory roles are determined by their post.

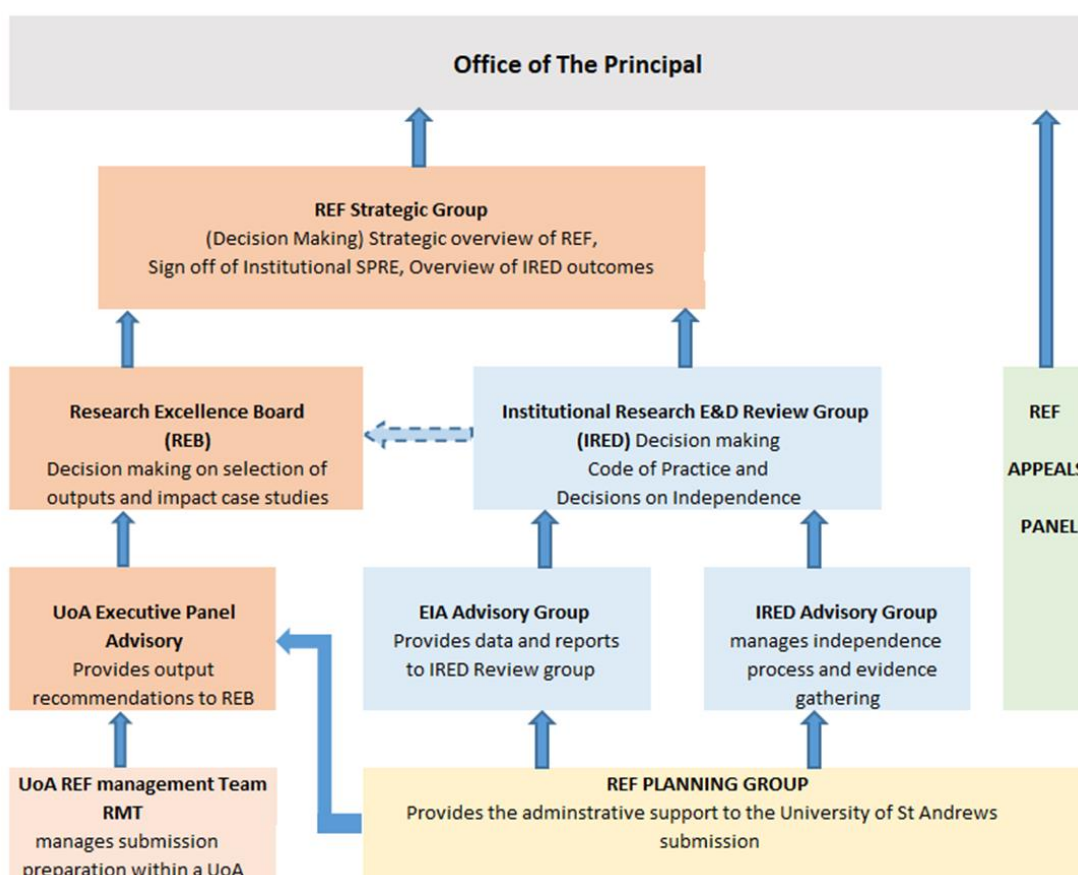
Governance roles and responsibilities: Accountability

The IRED Review Group is accountable to the Principal's Office.

Relationship with other groups

The IRED Review Group will work closely with and receive recommendations from the specialist advisors and relevant professional services units. During preparations for REF, they will also receive guidance from the REF Planning Group and receive recommendations from the IRED Advisory Group. IRED will provide guidance to the Research Excellence Board on EDI considerations.

REF Committee Structure



Modes of operation

The IRED Review Group will meet twice a year and at least once every 3 months during the REF submission preparations.

Decisions will be made by a majority agreement. Where a majority cannot be reached, the Chair will determine the outcome.

Attendance

It is expected that members attend all meetings. In cases where this is not possible, involvement will be sought prior to meetings via email communications with the VPPD and the Secretariat.

Record-keeping and communications procedures

It is the responsibility of the Secretariat to collate, circulate and archive meeting papers. All papers are held securely with limited access and are kept in line with the REF and Institutional Data Privacy statement. Knowledge will be shared through the attendance of meetings and the electronic circulation of papers. Confidential records of the Group's discussions will be kept, and this approach should ensure a consistent basis for judgement across all Schools/Departments and UoAs

Routine communications from the Secretariat will be through the generic email ired@st-andrews.ac.uk, owned by the Head of Research Information and Policy.

Document sharing for collaboration will be via a limited group shared drive with access controlled by the Secretariat.

Sub-Groups

Members of the IRED Review Group may also be members of short life working groups and the REF planning group.

Administration

Research and Innovation Services provide secretariat support for the IRED Review Group.

They are responsible for:

- Preparation of meeting agendas
- Circulation of agendas and papers, where possible, no later than 1 week prior to scheduled meetings
- Circulation and archiving of approved records, where possible, no later than 1 week after each meeting

Institutional Research Equality and Diversity (IRED) Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

The IRED Advisory Group chaired by the Head of Research Information and Policy, will collate, review and make recommendations to the IRED Review Group to inform the decisions that may have equality and diversity implications for staff. In particular the group will manage the processing of the independence review for REF/HESA. They will provide advice and recommendations to the IRED Review Group on the following key areas:

- Internal processes and communications around independence and selection of outputs
- Guidance on the University's Code of Practice for REF
- Collating and reviewing evidence of independence for IRED Review Group decisions including handling of the disclosure processes and communications
- Updating central systems records where necessary and advising on process improvements for management of REF related data.

Membership

Members	Role
Head of Research Information and Policy (Chair)	Advisory
Human Resources Key Representative	Advisory
UoA Human Resources Business Partner	Advisory
Research & Innovation Services (Secretariat)	Advisory

Procedures for appointing designated staff to the (IRED) Advisory Group:

Members of the IRED Advisory Group are determined by their management or administrative post and their experience with REF, equality & diversity issues and institutional data responsibilities.

Governance roles and responsibilities: Accountability

The IRED Advisory Group is accountable to the IRED Review Group.

Members of the IRED Advisory Group are required to complete the training as described in the training section.

Relationship with other groups

The IRED Advisory Group will work closely with and provide recommendations to the IRED Review Group. They will also receive guidance and collaborate on REF processes with the REF Planning Group.

Modes of operation

The IRED Advisory Group will meet at least once every month during the HESA/REF submission period and will have additional ad hoc meetings as and when they are required.

Attendance

It is expected that members attend monthly meetings. In cases, where this is not possible involvement will be sought prior to meetings via email communications with the Secretariat.

Record-keeping and communications procedures

It is the responsibility of the Secretariat to collate, circulate and archive meeting papers. All papers are held securely with limited access and are kept in line with the REF and Institutional Data Privacy statement ([Appendix 6](#)). Knowledge will be shared through the attendance of meetings and the electronic circulation of papers.

Routine communications from the Secretariat will be through the generic email ired@st-andrews.ac.uk owned by the Head of Research Information and Policy.

Document sharing for collaboration will be via a limited group shared drive with access controlled by the Secretariat.

Sub-Groups

Members of the IRED Advisory Group may also be members of the EIA Advisory Group.

Administration

Research and Innovation Services provide a secretariat the IRED Advisory Group.

They are responsible for:

- Preparation of meeting agendas
- Circulation of agendas and papers, where possible, no later than 1 week prior to scheduled meetings
- Circulation and archiving of approved records, where possible, no later than one week after each meeting

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

The EIA Advisory Group chaired by the Head of Equality and Diversity, will collate, review and report on equality and diversity information required for REF 2029. In particular, the group will be responsible for the production of the Equality Impact Assessment documents. They will provide advice and recommendations to the IRED Review Group on the following key areas:

- Possible impact of internal processes and communications for REF on particular groups by reference to protected characteristics
- Collation of Equality and Diversity data for the EIA
- Analysis of data with respect to all declared protected characteristics

Membership

Members	Role
Head of Equality & Diversity (Chair)	Advisory
Human Resources Key Representatives	Advisory
Planning Representative	Advisory
Research & Innovation Services	Advisory

Procedures for appointing designated staff to the EIA Advisory Group:

Members of the EIA Advisory Group are determined by their management or administrative post and their experience with REF, equality & diversity issues and institutional data responsibilities.

Governance roles and responsibilities: Accountability

The EIA Advisory Group is accountable to the IRED Review Group.

Members of the EIA Advisory Group are required to complete the training as described in the training section.

Relationship with other groups

The EIA Advisory Group will work closely with and provide recommendations to the IRED Advisory and Review Groups. They will also receive guidance and collaborate on REF processes with the REF Planning Group.

Modes of operation

The EIA Advisory Group will meet at least once every month during the REF submission period and will have additional ad hoc meetings as and when they are required.

Attendance

It is expected that members attend monthly meetings. In cases, where this is not possible involvement will be sought prior to meetings via email communications with the Secretariat.

Record-keeping and communications procedures

It is the responsibility of the Secretariat to collate, circulate and archive meeting papers. All papers are held securely with limited access and are kept in line with the REF and Institutional Data Privacy statement ([Appendix 6](#)). Knowledge will be shared through the attendance of meetings and the electronic circulation of papers.

Routine communications from the Head of Equality and Diversity will be through email: pnn1@st-andrews.ac.uk with the group.

Document sharing for collaboration will be via a limited group shared drive with access controlled by the Head of Equality and Diversity.

Sub-Groups

Members of the EIA Advisory Group may also be members of the IRED Advisory Group.

Administration

The Head of Equality and Diversity is responsible for:

- Preparation of meeting agendas
- Circulation of agendas and papers, where possible, no later than 1 week prior to scheduled meetings
- Circulation and archiving of approved records, where possible, no later than one week after each meeting
- Minutes of meeting and communication facilitated by the ED&I Team
- Conduct a check of the REF 2021 EIA Action Plan
- Create a new REF 2029 EIA Action Plan based on REF 2021 findings to advance equality where required

REF Appeals Panel

Terms of Reference

The REF Appeals Panel chaired by an Emeritus Professor will consider and make decisions, to be approved by the Principal on REF appeals in the following areas:

- Decisions made on independence where the individual has appealed

Membership

Members	Role
Emeritus Professor (Chair)	Decision
Director of Human Resources	Decision
Human Resources (Secretariat)	Advisory

Procedures for appointing designated staff to the REF Appeals Panel:

The REF Appeals Panel will be convened by a University Emeritus Professor from within a gender mixed membership of Emeritus staff. Member of the pool will be approved by the Principal's Office. Where possible members will have management experience of a previous research assessment exercise.

Members will not be or have been part of any REF 2029 decision-making.

Governance roles and responsibilities: Accountability

The REF Appeals Panel is accountable to the Principal.

Members of the REF Appeals Panel are required to complete the training as described in the training section.

Relationship with other groups

The REF Appeals Panel will work with the Human Resources office and will operate independently from the IRED Review Group and Research Excellence Board.

Modes of operation

The REF Appeals panel will meet as appropriate for the number of appeals lodged and will have additional ad hoc meetings as and when they are required.

Record-keeping and communications procedures

Human Resources will operate as the secretariat and will handle all communication confidentiality.

Sub-Groups

Not applicable.

Administration

Human Resources operate as the secretariat of the REF Appeals Panel.

They are responsible for:

- Preparation of meeting agendas
- Circulation of agendas and papers, where possible, no later than 1 week prior to scheduled meetings

- Circulation and archiving of approved records, where possible, no later than one week after each meeting
- Co-ordination of collaborative process developments for REF
- Compliance with REF and Institutional Data Privacy statements

Appendix 6: Supplementary Privacy notice - University Research Excellence Framework 2029

Document type	Policy
Scope (applies to)	All staff
Applicability date	07/10/2024
Review / Expiry date	07/10/2029
Approved date	16/10/2024
Approver	Vice Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation)
Document owner	Head of Research Information and Policy
School / unit	Research and Innovation Services
Document status	Published
Information classification	Internal
EDI review/Equality impact assessment	None
Key terms	Research/Research performance/Research excellence framework
Purpose	Provides REF 2029 specific guidance on the collection, management and retention of personal data for REF.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	Initial Version	Draft		

Supplementary Privacy notice

University Research Excellence Framework 2029 (“REF”)

Introduction

This privacy notice introduces how the University gathers, shares and makes use of information that about individuals when preparing for and making a submission to the REF. This privacy notice should be read in conjunction with the University privacy notice: collection and use of University employee personal data¹

How we gather personal data

Individuals with research work to be considered for the University's REF submission may be asked to pass some details to the University via calls for information (e.g. surveys), in other instances information will be gathered from the staff record such as job title, contract type, research outputs, as documented and held in the University research repository (PURE) and from individuals tasked with assessing the suitability of research work for inclusion in the University's submission.

How we use your personal data

Your personal data is used by the University to plan, prepare for and make the institutions submission to the REF exercise 2029.

The legal bases for the use of your personal data for REF

The lawful bases for processing personal data under Article 6 of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) are:

- Article 6(1)(b) – Contract: processing is necessary for the performance of the employment contract between the University and its staff, including activities directly connected with research duties and institutional research assessment processes; and
- Article 6(1)(e) – Public task: processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the University. Research is a core function of the University, and REF data are required to inform the allocation of public research funding.

Sharing and transferring your personal data

Where the University is making a joint REF submission with another institution, personal data of the relevant staff will be shared with that partner. The University will have in place data sharing agreements, as appropriate. Personal data will also be shared across the University with Research and Innovation Services, Human Resource Services and the committees established to oversee and coordinate the University's REF activities.

Keeping your personal data

Information produced for the REF submission will be held for a period of between 12 and 24 months following the conclusion of the REF exercise 2029, after which it will be destroyed. Information about you sourced from other University records e.g. PURE will not be destroyed.

Some information on the independence of researchers may be retained by the University for longer periods, where there is a requirement to provide statistical data to the Higher Education Statistics Agency.

Available online: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/assets/university/data-protection/employee-privacy-notice.pdf>.

Your privacy rights

These vary, depending on the legal basis used by the University to make use of personal data. Rights may be restricted where one of the exemptions from the Data Protection Act 2018 is engaged. For example, where the University is making use of personal data for planning and/or forecasting purposes, and releasing personal data used to support decision making would undermine that process, there will be no right for an individual to seek a copy of associated personal data. Information on data protection rights is available from the University website: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/terms/data-protection/rights/>, or by contacting the University Data Protection Officer: email dataprot@st-andrews.ac.uk.

In addition, you have a right to complain to us and to the data protection regulator. The University Data Protection Officer can provide more details.

Contact

You can get in touch with the University Data Protection Officer: Christopher Milne, Head of Information Assurance and Governance by email dataprot@st-andrews.ac.uk, if you have any questions about how the University makes use of your personal data.

Revisions to this notice

Revisions may be made from time-to-time, where guidance from the REF is updated, which have an impact on how personal data are used and/or where University REF processes/procedures change.

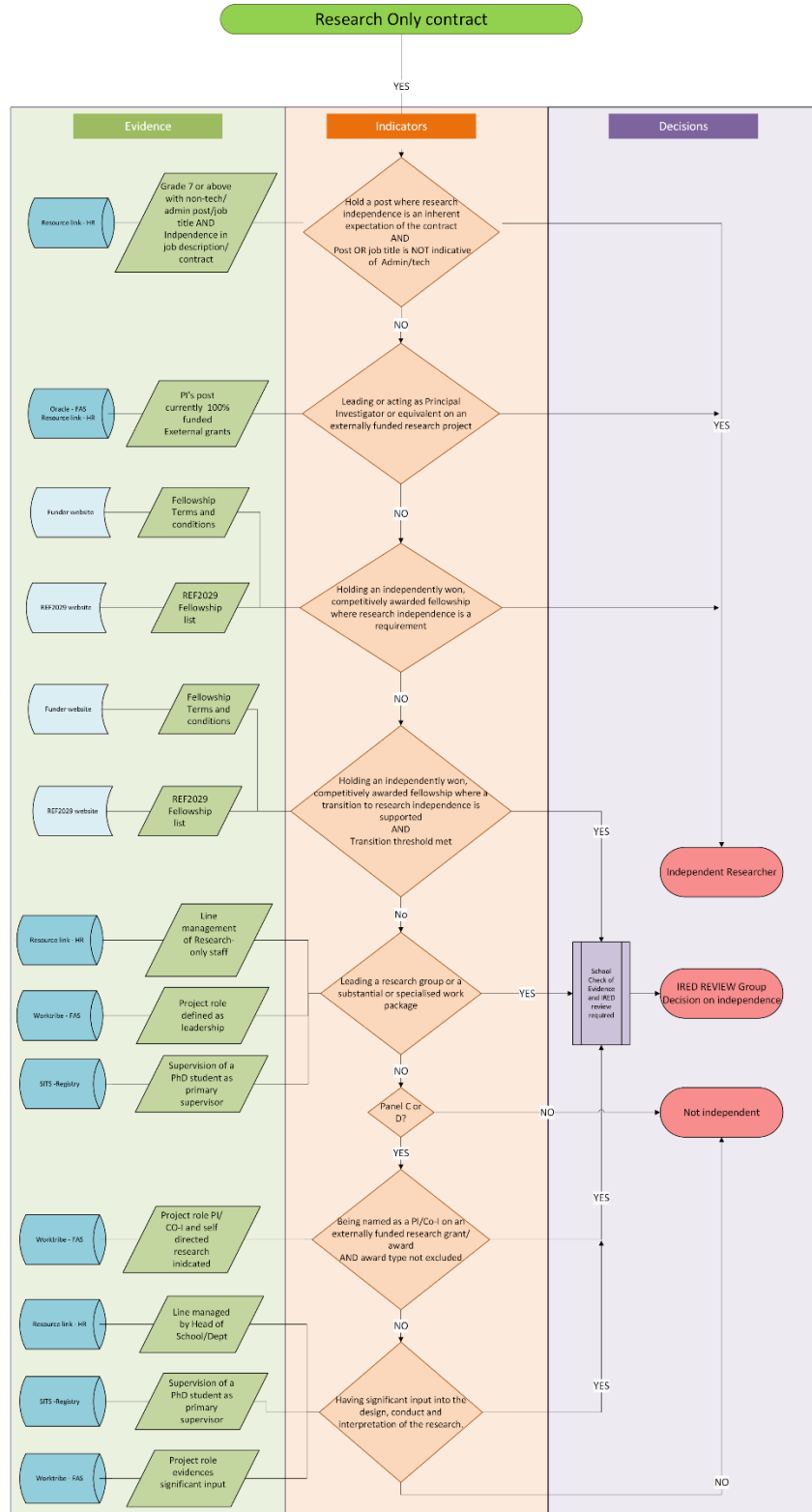
This notice will be available on the University's website: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/terms/data-protection/>. Supplementary Privacy notice - University Research Excellence Framework 2029 ("REF")

Appendix 7 Research Independence (RI) criteria and supporting evidence requirements

The table below outlines the centrally held evidence required to support a positive research independence recommendation/decision, where that evidence is held and verifiable, the post will be granted independence by the IRED advisory group on behalf of the IRED review group and decisions reported at the IRED review meetings. Where information is not verifiable by centrally held data or requires disciplinary expertise, the judgement on independence will be the responsibility of the IRED review group.

Applicable to all UoAs			
Indicator	Threshold for evidence	Source	Further check required
Hold a post where research independence is an inherent expectation of the contract	Post > grade 6 OR grade 7 AND role description for post explicitly states independent in Job description or contract	HR system	Is post/job title indicative of a tech/admin role
Leading or acting as Principal Investigator or equivalent on an externally funded research project	Post holder is 100% funded from external research project/s where they are the PI	HR & FAS Systems	N/A
Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement	Fellowship appears in the REF 2029 independent fellowships non-asterisk list. OR the fellowship is not listed but has independence as a requirement	REF 2029 website	For non-listed fellowships is RI a requirement
Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where a transition to research independence is supported	Fellowship appears in the REF 2029 independent fellowships asterisked list OR the fellowship is not listed and requires a transition to independence during the fellowship	REF 2029 website and funder guidance	Has transition been reached
Leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package	Line management of 'research only' staff OR Project role that describes research leadership OR primary supervisor of PhD student	HR, FAS & Registry systems	Confirmation of evidence by - Head of School or line manager
Applicable for Panels C and D only (UoAs 14-34)			
Being named as a PI/CO-I on an externally funded research grant/award AND award type not excluded	Project PI/CO-I and self-directed research indicated	FAS System	Confirmation of evidence by - Head of School or line manager
Having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research	Line management by Head of School OR Project role evidence significant input OR primary supervisor of PhD student	HR, FAS & Registry systems	Confirmation of evidence by - Head of School or line manager

Decision Tree - Research Independence (RI) criteria and supporting evidence



Appendix 8: List of Abbreviations

List of Abbreviations

ACEMPFUN	Academic employment function
CKU	Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding
CONFTE	Contract FTE (%FTE for the year according to the contract of employment)
Co-I	Co-Investigator
DoR	Director of Research
COP	Code of Practice
RMT	REF management team
ECR	Early career researcher
EDAP	Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
EI	Engagement and Impact
EIA	Equality impact assessment
EU	European Union
FAS	Finance advice and support
FRAP	Future Research Assessment programme
FTE	Full-time equivalent
HEI	Higher education institution
HERA	Higher Education role analysis
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HoS	Head of School
HR	Human Resources
IRED	Institutional Research Equality and Diversity
PCE	People, Culture and Environment
PI	Principal Investigator
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
RE	Research England
REB	Research Excellence Board
REF	Research Excellence Framework
REG	Research Excellence Grant
RMT	REF Management Team
SFC	Scottish Funding Council
UOA	Unit of assessment

