REF 2029
Research Excellence Framework

Code of Practice template

Institution name: University of Surrey

Date of submission: 13th May 2026

1 Introduction

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2029 is the UK's system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions (HEIs). The purpose of REF is:

- Inform the allocation of block-grant research funding to HEIs based on research quality
- Provide accountability for public investment in research and produce evidence of the benefits of this investment
- Provide insights into the health of research in HEIs in the UK

The REF outcomes are used to inform the allocation of around £2 billion per year of public funding for universities' research. The REF is a process of expert review, carried out by sub-panels focused on subject based Units of Assessment (UoAs), under the guidance of overarching main panels and advisory panels. Institutions will be invited to make submissions into UoAs, and each submission will be assessed in terms of the quality of research outputs, the wider impact of research and the vitality and sustainability of the research unit.

> *For the purposes of REF, research is defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared.*

Each institution making a submission to REF 2029 is required to develop, document and apply a Code of Practice on identifying contracts that contribute to the REF 2029 volume measure, and the selection of outputs for their REF submission. Eligibility to make a submission to the REF requires that the Code of Practice is approved by the funding councils.

This Code of Practice is submitted to the UK funding bodies for approval in accordance with REF 2029 Section 8 guidance. Approval of this Code if a condition of Surrey's participation in REF 2029.

This Code of Practice communicates to our research community at the University of Surrey the procedural framework supporting the preparation of the University's submission to REF 2029 and the embedded principles of robustness, transparency and equity and inclusion. This ensures that the process of identifying contracts that contribute to the REF 2029 volume measure, and selecting outputs, aligns with the University's Equality and Diversity Strategy, associated policies and with all relevant legislation.

The Code also aims to assure staff that there is no advantage or disadvantage to contributing to the REF 2029. A distinct change for REF 2029 is the decoupling of staff from the content of the submission and the move to a group exercise without the focus on the individual. All processes relating to the REF 2029 volume measure will be based at a contract level rather than at an individual level (as in REF 2021). The selection of outputs will focus on quality and optimising the submission and will have no direct bearing on an individual, nor will it be considered in any other University process.

1.1 Principles

The principles of robustness, transparency, and equity and inclusion (Guidance on Codes of Practice REF 2029. 2025/01) are embedded throughout the processes articulated in this Code of Practice but have also been fundamental in forming our overall approach to REF 2029. The examples below are not exhaustive, but serve as key examples of where we believe the principles have applied:

1.1.1 Robustness

- With the introduction of the REF 2029 Volume Measure and the change in focus to be at contract level, a full review of any changes to staff contracts since REF 2021 was carried out by the REF 2029 Code of Practice Working Group and verified by the REF 2029 Executive Committee.

- A programme of HESA data verification checks is carried out by the Research Excellence Manager and HR to ensure all volume contributing contracts are identified correctly in the University's HESA returns.
- Visibility of volume contributing staff by UoA is provided quarterly through a REF 2029 Volume Measure dashboard. The dashboard is shared with UoA Leads, Heads of Discipline, REF 2029 Management Group and REF 2029 Executive Committee.
- A research independence process has been implemented for staff on Research Fellow A contracts, as, whilst typically staff on these contracts do not meet the REF Research Independence criteria, there are exceptions which need to be identified. This process will be widely communicated among research staff and REF 2029 research independence criteria and examples of evidence are clearly set out in this Code of Practice (Part 3).
- The Code of Practice will be applied universally to all UoAs. Where there are justified deviations in practice, based on REF 2029 Panel Criteria, these have been articulated in the Code, for example in the use of citation information in the output selection process.
- Sharing of best practice between UoA Leads in output selection processes ensures robust practices are being adopted and followed.
- The REF 2029 team will advise and/or be present throughout output selection and research independence assessments to ensure the Code of Practice and wider Guidance on Submissions and Panel Criteria are followed and understood.
- REF 2029 specific Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training is detailed in the Code of Practice (CoP), with records of completion maintained. All the individuals involved in the bodies in Annex C will complete unconscious bias training and REF 2029 specific EDI training.
- The process diagram provided by REF to identify volume measure contributing contracts has been followed by the REF 2029 team and is available in the CoP for all staff to see (Annex A:1).

1.1.2 Transparency

- The Code of Practice has been publicised widely and through a wide range of inclusive communication routes, for example through University Intranet, Faculty Executive Boards, Research Committees and EDI Committees and through a variety of Research SharePoint sites.
- The final version of the Code of Practice will be published on the external University website.
- We will ensure all relevant research staff who are away from campus have access to the Code of Practice.
- Where staff need alternative ways of accessing the Code the REF 2029 Team will accommodate this on request.
- The Code of practice has been developed collaboratively with colleagues in EDI, HR and Faculty and has been subject to a full staff consultation (consultation with Union representatives through EDI Forum) and actions implemented.
- Clearly defined responsibilities are set out for both individual roles and Committees involved in the REF 2029 processes. Published Terms of Reference (ToR) are laid out below and included in full as Annex C.
- A clear distinction is made between those committees/groups with decision making roles and those with advisory roles. Each of the bodies associated with this Code of Practice (Annex C) has had a briefing session from the REF 2029 Team about their responsibilities in their Terms of Reference.

- A formal appeals process has been developed and articulated in the Code of Practice.
- A live set of frequently updated FAQ's is available to staff.

1.1.3 Equity and Inclusion

- With the aim of ensuring each UoA potential output pool is as diverse and inclusive as possible, researchers are strongly encouraged to participate in REF 2029 preparation processes (i.e. Output Review). Frequent reminders and updates to staff are issued, ensuring knowledge of the available process is widespread. All communications clearly highlight that there is no advantage or disadvantage to having a research output submitted to REF 2029, and REF Output Selection has no direct bearing on other internal processes such as appraisals and promotions.
- Internal Output Review process guidance advises staff to nominate all their research outputs that could meet the REF 2029 quality profile of 4* or 3*. There is no minimum output requirement for staff in REF 2029 and so the Output Review process guidance makes it clear that there is no expectation on staff to nominate an output in each cycle. There is no advantage or disadvantage in the number of outputs staff nominate in the Output Review process.
- Ensuring that output selection processes cast the widest possible net, capturing the full diversity of research at the University and offering the opportunity for individuals to nominate their strongest outputs.
- An extra phase of output selection has been added for REF 2029 and output selection panels will meet earlier in the preparation process than for REF 2021. Feedback from REF 2021 Output Selection Panels highlighted the challenges of managing high volumes of potential outputs. This additional phase will give an opportunity for the panels to identify and correct any gaps in the representativeness of their pool of potential outputs for submission. Output selection panels will therefore have the space for robust, thorough decision making and the opportunities for bias will be reduced.
- Ensuring UoA Leads and staff making decisions on REF (i.e. Output Selection Panels) from across the University represent the diversity of the staff population. REF EDI Working Group will review membership of all Output Selection Panels.
- Conducting Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) to ensure processes promote inclusivity and that decisions about submissions are fair and impartial supporting a diversity of people and research, where diverse contributions are valued and supported.

How these principles are applied in practice to the identification of significant responsibility for research and research independence (Sections 2-3), the allocation of contracts to UoAs (Section 4), and output selection (Section 5), is set out in detail below in section 3.5, and is reflected in the EIA in Annex E.

1.2 Contextualisation within Institutional Policies

1.2.1 Equality, diversity and inclusion

Vision 2041 outlines and informs the University's strategy for the coming years and one of the key pillars of the strategy is 'Talented people and inclusive culture'. Surrey places great value on developing our community's (both staff and student) skills and aspirations within a diverse and inclusive environment.

Aligning with Vision 2041, Surrey's EDI Plan 2030, sets out the University's approach to EDI up until 2030. The plan is both a pledge and a framework, a guide to help us act with intention and integrity as we shape a more inclusive future together.

The University's EDI vision statement commits to 'build a truly inclusive organisation where diversity is celebrated, equity is embedded and everyone thrives in a community of belonging and a culture of

excellence'. The plan builds on past efforts, while acknowledging that meaningful change requires sustained effort, accountability, and a willingness to listen and learn. Authentic inclusivity is not a one-time initiative but a long-term journey that touches every aspect of our work.

EDI Plan 2030 has four strategic themes and over the next five years the focus will be on cultivating inclusive leadership, increasing representation, eliminating systemic barriers and fostering a work, study and research environment where everyone feels a true sense of belonging.

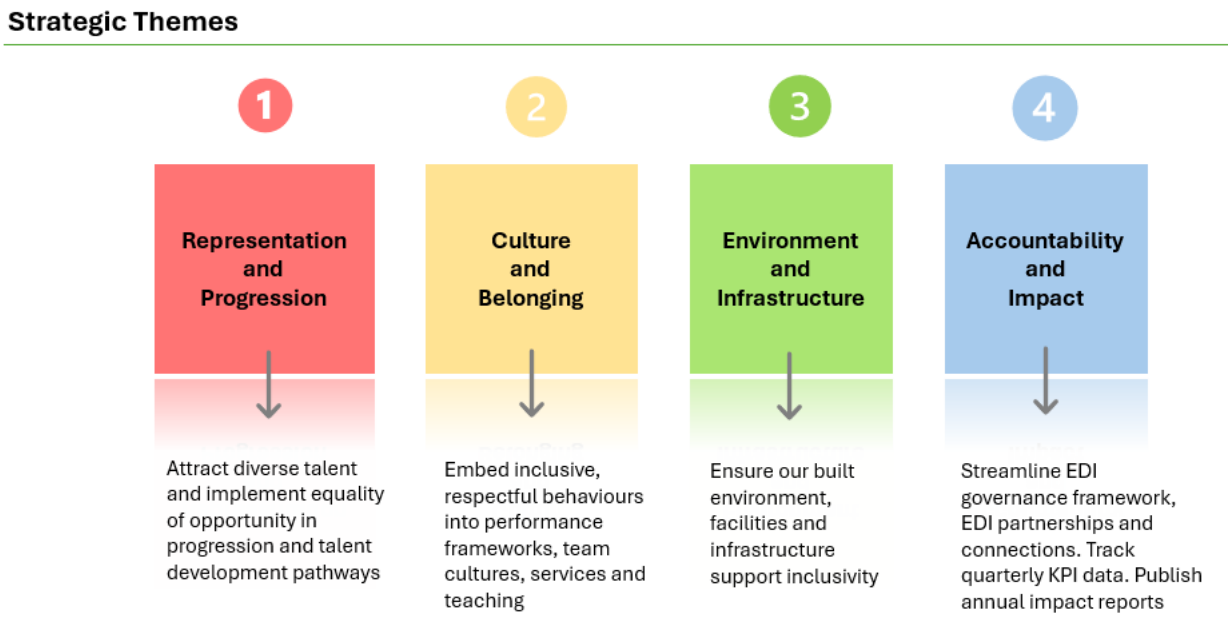


Table 1: Strategic Themes

REF2029 is included in EDI Plan 2030 as a key framework in the complex higher education landscape, where alignment and streamlining to ensure greater clarity and avoid duplication is important.

This Code of Practice will ensure that inclusive and respectful behaviours are embedded into Surrey's REF preparations, that comprehensive REF EDI training will be delivered for all those involved (even indirectly) in making decisions around REF and that inclusive communications are guaranteed. We will ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are mainstreamed into all areas and levels of our work.

Surrey's EDI Team works closely with the EDI Executive Committee and EDI action plans are driven and supported by the EDI Forum whose membership includes the chairs of all the EDI Networks (Women, Race& Ethnicity, LGBTQIA+, Disability and Neurodivergence) and the Chaplaincy network (supporting faith/belief) and representatives from each Faculty EDI Committee (FEDICs). The FEDICs co-ordinate activity for staff, students and visitors, reporting to the Faculty Executive Board. All levels of this EDI governance framework at Surrey were involved in the creation of this Code of Practice.

We will undertake EIA on our Code of Practice and the processes described therein. Our approach to conducting EIA's is set out in Annex E.1.

1.2.2 Legislative context

As both an employer and a public body, the University must ensure under the Equality Act 2010 that its REF 2029 procedures do not discriminate unlawfully against individuals because of the protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The University and funding bodies are also subject to the public sector equality duty, which requires that these organisations have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality or opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (a 'relevant protected characteristics' is any of the characteristics listed above other than marriage and civil partnership).
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

While caring responsibilities are not a protected characteristic, carers are afforded some protections under the concept of 'discrimination by association'. Meaning if a carer faces direct discrimination or harassment due to their association with someone who has a protected characteristic (e.g., a disabled person), they may have legal recourse.

Furthermore, under the fixed-term employee and part-time workers regulations, fixed term employees and part-time workers also have the right not to be treated any less favourably than the University treats comparable employees or open contracts or full-time workers. The relevant regulations are:

- Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000.
- Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002.

1.3 Research culture and environment

Vision 2041 recognises that 'the most inspiring environments to work in are diverse, inclusive, open and supportive' ones. The strategy emphasises the importance of developing 'a supportive, inclusive, diverse and open research culture and environment that inspires, energises and motivates staff across all of our disciplines' as fundamental to achieving its goals in research and innovation.

Vision 2041 articulates a commitment to nurturing talent in all areas of the research ecosystem by rewarding curiosity and collaboration; developing skills in leadership and innovation; providing support for existing and emerging areas of excellence; and building diverse and high-performing teams. The strategy's 'Talented People and Inclusive Community' component prioritises 'the advancement of a values-led inclusive culture that supports both performance and individual wellbeing'.

Surrey has worked to embed research culture into its key structures. Academic leaders in research culture are members of the University Research and Innovation Committee (URIC), the Research

Leadership Group, the Technician's Steering Committee, and work closely with the ECR Academy, Public Engagement Advisory Group, Human Resources team, and central EDI team.

A dedicated People, Culture and Environment Committee, which feeds into URIC, is responsible for overseeing aspects of research culture, training, and open research, and aims to foster a culture of inclusive excellence in research, encompassing the behaviours, values, expectations and attitudes of our research communities. This committee directs the development and implementation of programmes and procedures in such areas as: open research; responsible metrics and research assessment practices; responsible innovation; EDI in research and innovation; career development and support, including technical staff; concordats related to Research and Innovation (including for KE, career development, sustainability and public engagement).

The policies and procedures outlined in this Code of Practice, with the emphasis they place on robustness, transparency and equity and inclusion, provide the foundation upon which the Strategy, People and Research Environment (SPRE) component of Surrey's REF 2029 submission is based.

At the heart of the University's approach to SPRE is a commitment to support the varied endeavours of our diverse research community. At both institutional and unit levels, our SPRE statements will demonstrate how the processes described in this Code of Practice translate into practice, evidencing:

- How our institutional research and impact strategies support the building of excellent research cultures and environments.
- The effectiveness of our approaches to identifying and supporting diverse roles, career stages, and research contributions.
- Outcomes from the inclusive processes outlined in this Code of Practice.
- How we value all people who undertake, enable, or support research, engagement, and impact.

Our SPRE statements will also draw on evidence from the EIA conducted on our Code of Practice processes, demonstrating our commitment to continuous improvement in fostering and sustaining an inclusive research environment.

1.4 Responsible Research Assessment

Our approach to responsible research assessment, outlined below, reflects principles of equality, fairness, and transparency that align with our broader research assessment values and support the strategic objectives articulated in our SPRE submissions.

The University signed the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (commonly known as DORA) in 2022. This commitment to DORA is available in a prominent place on Surrey.ac.uk, positioned on the Research Excellence pages and linked to the Library Open Research pages, Surrey's commitment to the responsible use of metrics.

This commitment is evident in the adoption of the following practices in research assessment:

- An overarching general recommendation of DORA states "Do not use journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors, as a surrogate measure of the quality of individual research articles, to assess an individual scientist's contributions, or in hiring, promotion, or funding decisions."

Two further recommendations of DORA form the institutional commitment:

- The first of these advises that institutions "be explicit about the criteria used to reach hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions, clearly highlighting, especially for early-stage investigators, that the scientific content of a paper is much more important than publication metrics or the identity of the journal in which it was published".

- The second recommendation considers that "for the purposes of research assessment, consider the value and impact of all research outputs (including datasets and software) in addition to research publications, and consider a broad range of impact measures including qualitative indicators of research impact, such as influence on policy and practice."

1.5 Update on Actions Since REF 2021

Surrey has continued to embed EDI through delivering our EDI Plan 2020-2025. Key achievements for 2020-2025 include stronger EDI governance and oversight; enhanced visibility and growth of EDI networks; impactful delivery of high quality programmes such as: the Springboard Women's Development Programme; Inclusive Management training; a sector-leading Menopause Support programme; tailored disability support; inclusive recruitment initiatives (e.g. Diversity 200 and Surrey Future Fellows); a Race Equality Charter Bronze award; an Athena Swan Institutional Silver Award; and being one of a very limited number of Universities where every School holds an Athena SWAN award.
Surrey received a Universities Human Resources (UHR) award for excellence in 2023 for the inclusive recruitment initiative of Surrey Future Fellows which exceeded its diversity targets with Senior Fellow appointments being 83% women and 50% BAME.

Surrey's REF 2021 Final EIA identified several action points to be implemented:

- Develop an intentions statement and code of practice for future review exercises and REF preparation, setting out the behaviours we expect from those undertaking reviews and preparing for REF.
- Ensure junior female academics receive leadership training, career support and mentoring.
- In future output review exercises, all external and internal reviewers must have undertaken suitable EDI training within the last three years. All internal reviewers should receive calibration exercises and feedback on their reviews; this could be extended to external reviewers where possible.
- To avoid un-intended bias in the collation of the output pool data, future output reviews exercises will take account of all Surrey co-authors. The individual who submits an output to any internal exercises will, where possible, be irrelevant to any assessment or selection process.
- Stipulate output calibration activities take place at school/UoA level, alongside discussion of potential biases.

All of the above action points have been successfully implemented. A full review of Surrey's internal Output Review process was carried after REF 2021 submission and improvements were incorporated particularly around calibration, training and inclusivity of data.

To support Early Career Researcher progression, changes were made to the Output Review process to ensure that all output data includes all Surrey co-authors and that outputs are no longer just linked to the author who nominated it for review. This was to remove any unintended bias that may have impacted ECR's. Following an institution-wide review of Surrey's research culture in 2025, mentoring has been identified as a priority: to provide all colleagues with appropriate career support and development of their leadership potential, along EDI lines.

Surrey's ECR Academy, founded in 2023, delivers a dedicated training curriculum for ECRs and is enabling ECR colleagues (supported by senior colleagues) to play a more significant role in planning and decision-making, while also gaining leadership experience valuable for their career development. ECR representatives have attended the University Research & Innovation Committee (URIC) meetings, as well as People, Culture & Environment Committee meetings.

EDI principles have been embedded within all management and senior leadership training. Surrey's Senior Leadership Programme 2023 included modules on inclusive behaviour, leadership expectations

and support to enable a more self-aware, curious and collaborative culture. Race equity training for senior leaders through a Reverse Mentoring Programme was completed in 2022/23.

Overall, gender representation of women at Executive Board level has increased from 25% in 2021/22 to 45% in 2025/26. This progress has strengthened the balance of gender representation among Executive Board sponsors championing Surrey's EDI networks.

1.6 Communications

In order to deliver the principles, set out in section 1.1 a key activity is ensuring that staff are made aware of the development of the Code of Practice and the broader University plans for delivering the REF 2029 submission.

1.6.1 Phase 1: Developing the Code of Practice

The University's REF Governance Groups and REF 2029 EDI Working Group have worked with the research community and professional services to develop the Code of Practice. Wider consultation has also been undertaken to ensure the Code meets the needs of the research community. Examples of the consultative activities undertaken in developing the Code include:

- All staff consultation (Feb/March 2026)
- Engagement with Union representatives
- Briefing to: Executive Board, Senate, UoA Leads Committees, Doctoral College, Faculty EDI Committees (FEDICs), Faculty Research & Innovation Committees, HR

1.6.2 Outcome of Consultation

The consultation activities undertaken resulted in feedback covering all aspects of the Code. The full set of feedback received and resulting actions are available on request to the REF Team. Table 2 summarises the main areas of feedback and the resulting changes to the Code.

Consultation Feedback	Action
Principle of 'Equity' needs more detail in terms of Output Selection Panel membership and Output Selection Process	Expanded section 1.1.3
Research Independence process for staff on Research Fellow A contracts – instances should be picked up by Head of Discipline through internal process i.e. application stage	Retained staff led Research Independence process for staff and expanded visibility of Volume Measure data to include Head of Discipline as well as UoA Leads.
Decisions on allocating contracts to UoAs should be made as early as possible	Timeline set out in Table 10. Communications with staff to highlight there is no advantage or disadvantage in being submitted to one UoA over another.
Clear guidance needs to be provided for staff on which outputs to nominate for Output Review processes	Output Review process guidance will include more detail on REF 2029 assessment criteria (Panel Criteria and Guidance). UoA Leads will communicate with staff what excellence looks like for their UoA and encourage nominations from diverse output types
Clarity is needed on how Substantive links relate to Eligible Employment Relationships	Expanded section 5.1.2

Clarity is needed on the possibility of outputs being submitted to a UoA where none of the authors are contributing to the Volume Measure for that UoA	With the REF 2029 guidance decoupling staff from the content of the submission this situation is available to institutions. Full visibility of potential situations, where outputs are eligible in multiple UoAs, is set out in section 5.1.6
Clarity is needed on Surrey's quality criteria for reviewing outputs in Output Review exercises	Expanded section 5.1.1
Ensure staff with caring responsibilities are considered in Code although not an official protected characteristic	REF EDI Working Group ensured that staff with caring responsibilities were considered in EIA in Annex E.1
Ensure REF 2029 Output Selection has no direct bearing on other processes i.e. appraisals, promotions	Expanded section 1.1.3

Table 2: Summary of Consultation Feedback

1.6.3 Phase 2: Sharing the Code of Practice

The Code of Practice will be shared widely, using a variety of methods, as set out in Table 3. The communication of the Code will be further complemented by broader REF updates provided throughout the REF period. Any future revisions to this Code will be made only with the agreement of the funding bodies and will be clearly communicated to staff.

Method	Audience	Indicative Timing
Issue to all staff (electronically) including those away from campus (i.e. maternity/paternity/shared parental/adoption leave, secondments or long-term sickness)	All staff	September 2026
REF 2029 all staff briefing (academic and professional services staff) recorded and shared on REF 2029 SharePoint site	All staff	October 2026
SurreyNet article, Newsletter, View from VC and on relevant SharePoint sites	All staff	September 2026
Briefings to research community including Faculty Research Committees, Doctoral College	Research staff	October 2026
Briefing pack on Code of Practice	UoA Leads	October 2026
Code of Practice published on external website	All staff	November 2026
EIA's, updates to feature on REF 2029 SharePoint site	All staff	6 monthly from September 2026

Table 3: Sharing the Code of Practice

1.6.4 Key Contacts for REF Communications

Role	Contact Details
Research Excellence Manager	REF29@surrey.ac.uk
Project Officer	REF29@surrey.ac.uk
Table 4: Key Contacts for REF Communications	

1.6.5 Complaints and queries about this Code of Practice

Staff who believe that the processes set out in this Code of Practice have not been followed correctly, or who have general queries about the operation of the Code, may contact the REF 2029 team in the first instance (see Table 4 for contacts). Where a concern relates to equality or potential discrimination, staff may also raise this with the Chair of the REF 2029 EDI Working Group. These routes are distinct from, and in addition to, the formal appeal mechanism described in Section 3.4.

2 Identifying Staff Contracts with Significant Responsibility for Research

Contracts with significant responsibility for research are those for whom:

'Explicit time and resources are made available'

'To engage actively in independent research'

'And that is an expectation of their job role'

All Teaching and Research contracts (ACEMPFU 3) meet the definition of Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) and will therefore be identified in Surrey's HESA return using the REFQUALCON field as contributing to the REF 2029 volume measure. Consequently, no additional internal process is required to distinguish SRR within this group.

Career Pathway	Research and Teaching
Roles within career pathways	Professor
	Associate Professor
	Senior Lecturer
	Lecturer B
	Lecturer A
Table 5: Career pathways	

2.1 Variations

2.1.1 Sabbaticals

For staff on sabbaticals, we will adhere to the HESA staff record guidance. No changes will be made to their position within Surrey's HR system, and their Eligible Employment Relationship continues. As per the HESA guidance the staff member's FTE is reduced to zero for the duration of the sabbatical, meaning that the contract will not contribute to the REF 2029 Volume Measure during this time.

2.1.2 Staff with joint HEI and NHS appointments

The contracts of staff holding joint appointments with both Surrey and the NHS are eligible and if their contract meets the REF 2029 eligibility criteria it will be identified in the HESA return as contributing to the REF 2029 Volume Measure (REF 2029 Volume Measure Guidance 11.2).

2.1.3 Pensioned Staff

The contracts of pensioned staff who continue in salaried employment and meet the REF 2029 eligibility criteria will be identified in the HESA return as contributing to the REF 2029 Volume Measure (REF 2029 Volume Measure Guidance 11.3).

2.1.4 Unpaid leave and secondment

For staff on unpaid leave or secondment within Surrey, we will adhere to the HESA staff record guidance. The contract information in the HESA return should reflect the seconded post only, and if the secondment is part-time two contracts will be reflected. If the secondment contract meets the REF 2029 eligibility criteria it will be identified in the HESA return as contributing to the REF 2029 Volume Measure (REF 2029 Volume Measure Guidance 11.4).

2.1.5 Secondment to another UK HEI

The contracts of staff seconded to another UK HEI can be submitted by both their employing institution and the host institution. The combined CONFTE submitted for the staff member across both HEIs must not exceed 100% CONFTE (REF 2029 Volume Measure Guidance 11.5).

2.1.6 Staff on hourly or daily pay

The contracts of hourly or daily paid staff meeting the REF 2029 eligibility criteria will be identified in the HESA return as contributing to the REF 2029 Volume Measure (REF 2029 Volume Measure Guidance 11.6).

2.1.7 Staff working outside the UK

For staff working outside of the UK the REF 2029 Volume Measure guidance will be followed (REF 2029 Volume Measure Guidance 11.7). Those contracts meeting the REF 2029 eligibility criteria will be identified in the HESA return as contributing to the REF 2029 Volume Measure. The REF Team will confirm with HR which contracts are on Surrey's UK payroll and work with the relevant UoA Lead to determine if their activity is clearly and directly connected to a UK based School/Unit.

2.1.8 Multiple contracts

For staff with multiple contracts the UK the REF 2029 Volume Measure guidance will be followed (REF 2029 Volume Measure Guidance 11.8). Those contracts meeting the REF 2029 eligibility criteria will be identified in the HESA return as contributing to the REF 2029 Volume Measure.

2.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Regular monitoring of all Teaching and Research contracts (ACEMPFU 3) in the HESA data will take place throughout the REF 2029 assessment period. Staff contract data will be provided to the REF 2029 EDI Working Group and included in the Equality Impact Assessments (Annex E).

More detail on EIAs is set out in section 3.5.

3 Determining Research Independence

3.1 REF 2029 Guidance

The REF 2029 Guidance on Code of Practice, offers the following guidance to support institutions in identifying 'research only' contracts (ACEMPFU 2) that are research independent and therefore eligible for inclusion in the volume measure for REF 2029 (section 3, paragraph 9).

> *9.1.2 Definition of research independence*
>
> *9.1.3 A 'research only' contract is considered to demonstrate research independence if the staff member undertakes self-directed research, rather than primarily carrying out another individual's research programme.*
>
> *Indicators of research independence*
>
> *9.2.1. Contracts typically exhibiting research independence (RI) are those where staff members:*
>
> *act as lead applicant on externally funded research projects*
>
> *hold an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship requiring research independence. This is the list of eligible research fellowships.*
>
> *lead a research group or a substantial/specialised work package*
>
> *where research independence is an inherent expectation of a contract*
>
> *for UoAs 13-34 this may also include:*
>
> *being named as a co-applicant on an externally funded research grant/award*
>
> *having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research*
>
> *9.3* ***Research independence should be considered persistent***
>
> *9.3.1. Only in exceptional cases should independence be removed.*
>
> *Variations in submission approach*
>
> *The approach to identifying research independence might vary across UoAs due to disciplinary or employment practices. Any variations should be rooted in disciplinary norms, not local preferences, and be documented in the institutional Code of Practice.*
>
> *Research Assistants*
>
> *9.5.1. 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.*
>
> *9.5.2. Exception for independent research assistants: in exceptional cases, the contracts of research assistants who meet the definition of an independent researcher and are on the submitting institution's payroll with a 're-search only' contract can be included. Their contracts should be flagged as REFQUALCON in the HESA Staff record.*
>
> *9.6 Outputs not sufficient*
>
> *9.6.1. Being named on research outputs alone does not necessarily qualify a contract for inclusion*

3.2 Policies and Procedures

3.2.1 University Career Pathways and Role Profiles

The University has the career pathways and roles profiles shown in Table 6 below:

Career Pathway	Research	Teaching Intensive	Research and Teaching
Roles within career pathways	Professorial Research Fellow	Professor (Teaching Track)	Professor
	Principal Research Fellow	Associate Professor (Teaching Track)	Associate Professor
	Senior Research Fellow	Senior Lecturer (Teaching Track)	Senior Lecturer
	Research Fellow B	Lecturer B (Teaching Track)	Lecturer B
	Research Fellow A	Lecturer A (Teaching Track)	Lecturer A

Table 6: Surrey Career Pathways

As confirmed in section 2 above, all contracts within the 'Research and Teaching' career pathway (ACEMPFU 3) meet the REF criteria for having SRR. These individuals are not required to demonstrate research independence.

None of the roles in the 'Teaching Intensive' career pathway (ACEMPFU 1) can be included in the volume measure calculation as they are not identified as eligible contracts in the REF 2029 guidance (REF 2029 Volume Measure Guidance 6.0.4).

All roles in the 'research' career pathway (ACEMPFU 2) have been reviewed to establish our principles on how research independence will be determined. These are set out below and in Table 7.

3.2.2 Establishing Research Independence – Principles

Through thorough consideration and review of all career pathways by the REF 2029 Executive Committee, the University of Surrey has adopted the following principles for establishing which 'Research' contracts demonstrate research independence:

- The introduction of Surrey's Criteria for Academic Performance (CfAP) (Surrey Login Required) since REF 2021 (approved by Senate 27th April 2023 – extract included in Annex A.2), has clarified the expectations around Research Excellence, including research independence, for all contract levels.
- Based on this framework, within the research career pathway, the following role profiles clearly require staff to be research independent and will therefore typically be considered as volume contributing:
    - Professorial Research Fellow
    - Principal Research Fellow
    - Senior Research Fellow
    - Research Fellow B
- Research Fellow B contracts require research independence and will be considered volume contributing. However, verification checks highlighted there are some instances of historical

contracts, i.e. prior to the Criteria for Academic Performance (CfAP), where the activities of staff on Research Fellow B contracts may not meet the REF 2029 indicators of research independence. The criteria for exemptions and a process for capturing these exemptions is set out below.

- Research Fellow A contracts do not require research independence, however verification checks highlighted there were some exceptions where staff on Research Fellow A contracts did meet the REF 2029 RI criteria (i.e. awarded a fellowship). An exceptions process for determining research independence is set out below.
- Staff with role profiles of Research officer/assistant have been identified as meeting the "research assistant" definition and are therefore not considered volume contributing, unless, by exception, they can demonstrate research independence.

Research Pathway Role Profiles[1]	Does the role profile include research independence?	Complete research independence form?	Rationale
Professorial Research Fellow	Yes	No	Research independence is a pre-requisite for this role (as per published role profile). No further requirement to demonstrate research independence
Principal Research Fellow	Yes	No	Research independence is a pre-requisite for this role (as per published role profile). No further requirement to demonstrate research independence
Senior Research Fellow	Yes	No	Research independence is a pre-requisite for this role (as per published role profile). No further requirement to demonstrate research independence
Research Fellow B	Yes	No	Research independence is a pre-requisite for this role (see published role profile) No further requirement to demonstrate research independence. Exemptions process set out in 3.2.4.
Research Fellow A	No	Exceptions basis only	Research independence is not anticipated in this role (as per published role profile) but there are exceptions. In these exceptional cases, the research independence form must be completed.
Research Officer/ Assistant	No	No	Research independence is not anticipated in this role (as per published role profile) but staff *may select to exceptionally* complete the research independence form to demonstrate research independence

Table 7: Establishing Research Independence

Applying the research independence criteria expressed in the Guidance on Submissions to the University of Surrey context, the approach outlined in Table 8 will be applied.

1. Alternative job titles are used across the University of Surrey, but roes fit into formal generic published roles profiles

Indicators of Research Independence	Evidence Anticipated	Acceptable criterion by itself?
Inherent expectation of contract	Role contract	Yes
Act as lead applicant on an externally funded research project	Copy of grant/award application confirmation or grant/award letter data must include individual's name as principal applicant or investigator (PI) and funding source	Yes
Hold an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship requiring research independence **List available at; Research Fellowships demonstrating research independence for REF 2029 volume measure – REF 2029**	Copy of fellowship agreement data must include individual's name and fellowship scheme	Yes
Lead a research group or a substantial or specialised work package	Copy of grant/award letter or grant application and screenshot of Research finance entry data must include individual's name and group/work package, evidence of contribution to the development of the work package	No, should be accompanied by one or more of the other indicators
Following indicators are only applicable to UoA in Main Panel C and D		
Being named as a co-applicant or Co-I on an externally funded research grant/award	Grant application and screenshot of Research finance entry data must include individual's name and grant details	Yes
Having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research	Grant application and supporting statement from PI of grant	No, should be accompanied by one or more of the other indicators

Table 8: Applying Research Independence criteria

3.2.3 Determining Research Independence Process

All Research Fellow A contracts will be excluded from the volume measure unless research independence is confirmed through the determining research independence process set out below.

A 'Determining Research Independence' form, set up in MS Forms, will be available for staff on Research Fellow A contracts to complete if they believe they meet the REF 2029 Indicators of Research Independence (set out in 3.1. above). Along with a completed form staff will also need to provide the evidence set out in Table 6.

The 'Determining Research Independence' form will be available on Surrey's Intranet (Staff login required) and will be promoted to relevant staff through a range of Faculty and School level communications. A REF 2029 Research Independence briefing slide deck will be available for all staff and individual cases can be discussed with the relevant UoA Lead and Surrey's Research Excellence Manager.

Staff should liaise with their line manager, UoA Lead or Head of School to complete the form. Faculty HR may be consulted where necessary.

When completed, the MS form will be automatically sent to the Research Excellence Manager, who will follow up with the individual to gather the evidence required.

Submitted forms will then be subject to the following process and principles:

a) Initial review by Research Excellence Manager, collation of evidence

b) Where necessary, the REF 2029 Team will contact HR, Research Finance and follow up on any additional evidence required.

c) The form will then be reviewed at the next applicable Faculty UoA Leads Committee Meeting.

d) The review undertaken by the Faculty UoA Leads Committee will consider the following when making their decisions.

   I. Type of criterion met and relevance to their discipline

   II. number of criteria evidenced

   III. strength of evidence.

e) Escalation to the REF 2029 Management Group will be available if a decision cannot be reached at UoA Lead level.

f) Where the application of research independent indicators varies between UoAs this will reflect the disciplinary norms (i.e the use of co-applicant status as an indicator in main Panels C and D) and will be applied consistently within each UoA. Such variations are documented in this Code and overseen by the Faculty UoA Leads Committees and REF 2029 Management Group.

g) Research independence should be considered permanent (REF 2029 Volume Measure Guidance – 9.1)

h) The necessary changes will then be made to the relevant HESA field in Surrey's HR system to ensure the contract contribute to the REF 2029 Volume Measure (REFQUALCON = 1).

3.2.4 Exemption process for Research Fellow B's

All Research Fellow B contracts will be identified as contributing to the volume measure unless identified as exempt by the relevant UoA Lead.

Criteria for exemption:

a) The responsibilities of the staff member are focused on supporting research infrastructure, and they are not directly research active i.e. software engineers

b) The staff member was employed on a Research Fellow B contract prior to the introduction of the Criteria for Academic Performance (April 2023) and the responsibilities of the staff member do not meet the expectations set out in the Criteria for Academic Performance

Process for confirming an exemption:

a) The HESA volume measure data will be provided to UoA leads and Heads of Discipline using a REF 2029 Volume Measure dashboard (quarterly). This will provide details of all Research Fellow B staff mapped to their UoA.

b) UoA Leads will be asked to review the list of Research Fellow B staff and discuss with the relevant line manager to identify any staff who meet the criteria for an exemption

c) Any exemptions will then be reviewed at the next applicable Faculty UoA Leads Committee Meeting.

d) Any exemptions should be confirmed in writing by the Chair of the Faculty UoA Leads Committee to the Research Excellence Manager setting out the relevant details.

e) The Research Excellence Manager will make the necessary changes to the REFQUALCON field in the HESA data to remove the contract from contributing to the REF 2029 Volume Measure (REFQUALCON = 2).

3.2.5 Feedback on Research Independence

The REF 2029 Team, on behalf of the Chair, will provide the outcome via email within 10 working days of the UoA Leads Committee meeting (as described in Annex C.3: Faculty UoA Leads Committee Terms of Reference). The outcome will include the offer of a meeting with the Head of School/Centre if requested.

Where the Faculty UoA Leads Committee are unable to reach an agreed decision and require further information or escalation to REF 2029 Management Group, the member of staff will be notified of this additional stage via email, within the same timeframe as above. The individual will then be notified of the outcome via email within a further 10 working days.

Communications will reaffirm that there is no advantage or disadvantage to contributing to the REF 2029 volume measure.

3.3 Staff, Committees, and Training

Faculty UoA Leads Committee will approve research independence assessments (see Terms of Reference in Annex C.3 for full details of the committee, including its formation, decision making, training and procedures).

REF 2029 specific EDI training will be provided to all staff and committees involved in decision making and advising on staff-related REF 2029 processes. The training schedule and outline of training provided is in Annex B.4.

The completion of the generic Unconscious bias training will also be confirmed and recorded as part of the REF 2029 training records, alongside attendance at the REF 2029 specific training sessions outlined in Annex B.4.

3.3.1 Summary of stages of approval for determining research independence

Staff/Committee	Role
UoA Lead	Advisory
REF 2029 Team	Advisory
Faculty UoA Leads Committee	Decision-making
REF 2029 Management Group	Ratify decision-making

Table 9: Research Independence process - stages of approval

3.3.2 Communication the Research Independence process

The Determining Research Independence process will be available to researchers all year round but will be specifically promoted to them prior to the quarterly REF 2029 Volume Measure review processes (October, January, April and July).

A REF 2029 Research Independence briefing slide deck including a link to the MS Form, will be available for all staff through a variety of routes, including Faculty Research SharePoint pages, School level communications and the REF 2029 intranet pages. Staff will be able to discuss individual cases with the relevant UoA Lead and Surrey's Research Excellence Manager.

The REF 2029 Team will also offer briefings to staff across Faculties, through the Doctoral College and at any staff forums.

3.4 Appeals

The REF 2029 guidance is clear that institutions should provide sufficient opportunity for staff to appeal decisions about SRR and RI. Appeal mechanisms should be independent of the original decisions and be made clearly available to staff in a timely fashion.

Staff who are not considered to have significant responsibility for research, or to be research independent and are notified that their contract will not contribute to the REF 2029 volume measure, have the right to appeal that decision.

An appeals process is not necessary in cases where the individual's job description explicitly states a primary purpose of supporting the research of others or carrying out another's research plan e.g. Research Assistants (REF 2029 Code of Practice Guidance 13.4.2).

3.4.1 Communicating the Appeals process

Staff will be sign-posted to the Appeals process via the University REF 2029 intranet pages, and Research and Innovation SharePoint sites. They will also be reminded of their right of appeal in correspondence regarding their eligibility.

3.4.2 Appeals Committee

The REF 2029 Appeals Committee has overall responsibility for reviewing and making decisions on all appeals related to REF 2029. The REF 2029 Appeals Committee terms of reference are provided in Annex C.5.

The members of the Committee are entirely separate from other aspects of the REF 2029 submission process to ensure impartiality. The Committee will meet physically or virtually to consider the written appeal within 15 working days from receipt of the appeal by the Committee chair.

3.4.3 Grounds for appeal

Staff who are not considered to have significant responsibility for research, or to be independent researchers and are notified that their contract will not contribute to the REF 2029 Volume Measure will have the right to appeal that decision. The basis of the appeal must be on (one or more of) the grounds of (i) procedural irregularity, (ii) equality or (iii) new evidence.

There is no right of appeal on grounds of academic judgement. Guidance of how to make an appeal will be provided on the Staff intranet REF webpages and Research and Innovation SharePoint sites. Details of where this guidance can be found will be included in the outcome emails mentioned in section 3.2.4.

The appeals process does not negate any existing rights as contained within the University's policies and procedures.

3.4.4 Appeals process

The appeals process is set out schematically in Annex D.1 and detailed below.

a) Appeals must be made in writing to the Associate HR Director within 10 working days of being informed of the decision. An appeal must include details of the grounds of appeal and any supporting evidence.

b) In the first instance, staff who are considering making an appeal may discuss their grounds informally with their Head of School or the University REF 2029 Team. These discussions will remain confidential and will not to be used to inform any future action by the University. The intention is to enable the individual to best decide whether the grounds are appropriate before any formal appeal is made.

c) The Associate HR Director will inform the Chair of the Appeals Committee of an appeal within 2 working days of receipt.

d) The Committee will meet to consider the written appeal within 15 working days from the Chair being notified of the appeal.

e) The Chair of the Committee may seek further clarification of the case, if this is thought to be necessary, through co-opting a senior academic from the faculty to which the appellant belongs, who is not otherwise connected with the REF process to obtain a discipline specific perspective. The University has the right to make written representation to the Committee.

f) The Chair of the Committee may request a meeting with the individual making the appeal. At such a meeting the opportunity will be given to explain the case further and to explore in more detail the reasons why the individual's contract was not considered as meeting the criteria to contribute to the REF 2029 volume measure. This may also involve the UoA Lead or other relevant individual being asked to attend the meeting to clarify the basis on which the original decision to not submit was reached. The individual may be accompanied by a fellow employee of the University of Surrey who may or may not be a trade union representative.

3.4.5 Outcome of Appeals process

The Committee's decision on every appeal will be either to uphold or not uphold. The REF 2029 Management Group and the relevant Faculty UoA Leads Committee will be informed in writing of the outcome of all appeals that are upheld.

3.4.6 Feedback on Appeal

A written response to every appeal will be provided by the Chair of the Committee within 30 working days from receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Appeals Committee will be final (as described in Annex C.5: REF 2029 Appeals Committee Terms of Reference).

3.5 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

3.5.1 Equality Impact Assessment Principles

Regular EIAs will be undertaken throughout the REF preparation period. These will monitor the processes and procedures set out in this Code on identification of volume contributing staff contracts (Sections 2-3), the allocation of contracts to UoAs (Section 4), and output selection (Section 5), in terms of protected groups. These EIAs will aim to ensure that the University is fulfilling its responsibilities in respect of promoting EDI, complying with legislation and avoiding discrimination.

The EIAs will be based on the evidence and data available and will genuinely reflect on the possible ways to mitigate negative impacts the processes and procedures may have on groups with protected characteristics.

The REF 2029 EDI Working Group (Annex C.4) has been created in order to ensure EDI is promoted through REF 2029. This group will review relevant data such as volume contributing staff contracts in

terms of the protected characteristics; Gender, Ethnicity, Age and Disability, and will also view this data by Full-time/Part-time contract type and job function. This group will also consider the EIAs of any supporting processes such as the Output Review process.

3.5.2 EIA on Code of Practice

The REF 2029 EDI Working Group conducted an EIA on this Code and reviewing this EIA is an on-going commitment. The EIA is provided in Annex E. This involved consideration of whether the processes articulated in this document pose any barriers to volume contributing staff from a particular group. Data on final volume contributing staff contracts is unavailable at the point of submitting this Code to the Funding Bodies. Once data is available further EIAs will be completed.

3.5.3 Future EIAs

The University's REF 2029 EIA is a live document, and EDI data will be reviewed and analysed by the REF 2029 EDI Working Group on a regular basis throughout the REF preparation period.

The EIAs will provide systematic analysis to compare volume contributing and non-volume contributing populations and determine if the processes and procedures have a different impact on groups based on protected characteristics. Analysis on staff contracts will take place prior to the volume measure calculating HESA returns being submitted (HESA 2025/26 and 2026/27) and again once the final volume measure is confirmed (using internal data October 2027).

Analysis on output selection (including processes for identifying substantive links, allocating outputs to UoA's and the representativeness of each UoA submission) will take place after each phase of output selection and again when the final output selection has been confirmed (July 2028).

The timetable set out below (Table X) shows the key periods where the EIAs will be conducted. The outcomes of these, including any recommendations, will be shared with the REF 2029 Management Group and REF 2029 Executive Committee. If more fundamental reasons for inequality are identified these will also be shared with the University wide EDI Executive Committee. Thus, ensuring the University remains accountable for addressing issues beyond the remit of REF itself.

After the submission has been made a final EIA will be undertaken and an EIA statement will be published on the University's external website, including the outcomes of any actions to prevent discrimination and advance equality.

The EIAs rely on various sources of data and evidence including; HESA staff contract data, analysis of volume contributing staff contracts and HR records (including confidential data on gender, ethnicity, age, disability). It is recognised that HEIs do not necessarily have comprehensive data in relation to all protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010, where appropriate, qualitative data will also be considered. Data required to conduct EIAs will be handled in accordance with Data Protection requirements.

3.5.4 EIA Anticipated Timetable

EIA	Timeline
EIA on Code of Practice	February 2026
EIA – Volume Measure Year 1 (HESA 2025/26) and Output Selection Phase 1	October 2026
EIA – Volume Measure Year 2 (HESA 2026/27) and Output Selection Phase 2	October 2027
EIA – Output Selection Phase 3	July 2028
Final EIA	December 2028

Table 10: EIA Anticipated Timetable

3.5.5 Communicating EIAs

The EIAs will be made available to staff via the REF 2029 SharePoint site. The final EIA will also be published externally on the University of Surrey website.

4 Allocating Contracts to UoAs

4.1 Policies and Procedures for allocating contracts to UoAs

As the REF 2029 guidance sets out, HEIs are responsible for mapping eligible contracts to UoAs (REF 2029 Volume Measure Guidance 12.1). Eligible contracts include all staff on an academic Research & Teaching contract (ACEMPFU 3) or an academic Research Only contract (ACEMPFU 2).

> *12. Allocating eligible contracts to UoAs*
>
> *12.1.1. HEIs will be responsible for mapping CONFTE to Units of Assessment. Each eligible contract should be linked to the UoA to which it is principally associated. This allocation is to be done using the REFUOA2029 field in the HESA Staff record.*
>
> *12.2.1. Where more than one contract is attributable to an individual, each contract may be returned to a different UoA*

4.1.1 Criteria and evidence for allocation contracts to UoAs

The REF 2029 Initial Decisions (June 2023) confirmed that the UoAs used in the assessment exercise would be unchanged from REF 2021. Since REF 2021 preparations, Surrey has had an internal cost centre to REF UoA mapping which is used by HR to map new staff or existing staff with a change in contract, to a REF UoA in Surrey's HR system.

There are School and Faculty level processes in place where face to face conversations with researchers provide up to date insights into the breadth of research being carried out. School and Faculty Research Committees provide the forums to review these insights and identify if there are any changes to research disciplines that would impact the REF UoA mapping.

Any proposed updates to the UoA Mapping would be raised by the Associate Head for Research & Innovation (AHRI) or the Associate Dean for Research and Innovation (ADRI) with the relevant REF UoA Lead and discussed at the Faculty UoA Leads Committee.

If the outcomes of the UoA Leads Committee discussions lead to a proposal to update the REF UoA mapping of a School or research group, this would be escalated to the REF 2029 Management Group. Decisions made by the REF 2029 Management Group then go to REF 2029 Executive Committee for ratification. For the reallocation of a small number of individuals this would be managed at UoA Lead level without the need for escalation.

REF 2029 Strategy, People and Research Environment (SPRE) guidance (Dec 2025) confirms the definition of a submitting unit, and it is expected that contracts allocated to a UoA will be reflected in the UoAs research community statement within the unit level SPRE statement.

4.1.2 Process for allocating contracts to UoAs

Surrey has an internal cost centre to REF UoA mapping which is used by HR to map new staff or existing staff with a change in contract, to a REF UoA in Surrey's HR system (HESA field Contract.REFUOA2029).

This internal cost centre to REF UoA mapping is reviewed at the beginning of each academic year by the REF Team and HR to ensure that any changes to the internal cost centre structure is accurately reflected in the mapping. The REF Team works closely with the Strategic Planning and Performance Team to capture any new cost centres created to reflect new research disciplines and to ensure these are accurately mapped to a REF UoA.

The REF Team reviews HESA data quarterly to ensure the UoA mapping is being used correctly and that the HESA field Contract.REFUOA2029 is correctly populated in Surrey's HR system (HR Dynamics). This review is particularly important for staff on multiple contracts, where the contracts may map to different UoAs. This data is then shared with the REF UoA Leads to ensure transparency.

4.1.3 Timeline for allocating contracts to UoAs

Task	Timeframe
HR assign REF UoA to new starters/existing staff with a contract change (HESA field Contract.REFUOA2029)	Ongoing throughout year
Review of cost centre to REF UoA mapping	Beginning of academic year (August)
Detailed review of HESA data	Dec 2025, Feb 2026, Apr 2026, Jun 2026

Table 11: Timeline – allocating contracts to REF UoAs

4.2 Staff, Committees, and Training

Any proposed updates to the cost centre to REF UoA mapping, to reflect changes in research disciplines, would be raised by the Associate Head for Research & Innovation (AHRI) or the Associate Dean for Research and Innovation (ADRI) with the relevant REF UoA Lead and discussed at the Faculty UoA Leads Committee.

Any proposals would be escalated to the REF 2029 Management Group. Decisions made by the REF 2029 Management Group then go to REF 2029 Executive Committee for ratification.

Terms of Reference for the UoA Leads Committee, REF 2029 Management Group and REF 2029 Executive Committee are included in Annex C.3, C.2 and C.1 respectively and include full details of the committee, including its formation, decision making, training and procedures.

REF 2029 specific EDI training will be provided to all staff and committees involved in decision-making and advising on staff-related REF 2029 processes, as detailed in Annex B.4.

4.2.1 Summary of Stages of Approval for allocating contracts to UoAs

Staff/Committee	Role in allocating contracts to UoAs
REF 2029 Team	Advisory
UoA Leads	Advisory
REF 2029 Management Group	Decision-making
REF 2029 Executive Committee	Ratify decision-making

Table 12: Allocating contracts to UoAs - stages of approval

4.2.2 Communicating the allocation of contracts to UoAs

Staff will be kept informed of the UoAs that Surrey will be submitting to in REF 2029, through information published on the Intranet, Faculty SharePoint sites, and a variety of Faculty level communications throughout the REF submission preparations.

Communications will reinforce that there is no advantage or disadvantage for an individual to being allocated to a particular UoA. The link between volume and output selection has been decoupled for REF 2029, meaning which UoA a contract is allocated to does not necessarily determine where research outputs will be considered for submission.

The processes set out in this Code of Practice will enable staff to determine if their contract is volume contributing. Individuals will not be contacted directly to inform them which UoA their contract is allocated to.

UoA Leads will be expected to communicate with relevant Schools the research disciplines to be included in their Unit level SPRE statement.

4.3 EIA

Data on the allocation of volume contributing staff contracts to UoAs is unavailable at the point of submitting this Code to the Funding Bodies. Once data is available further EIAs will be completed (detail set out in section 3.5).

The University is clear that there is no advantage or disadvantage for an individual in being allocated to a particular UoA.

5 Selecting Outputs

5.1 Principles and procedures for selecting outputs

5.1.1 Principles for selecting Outputs

- Procedures will be fair and transparent (i.e. published and will be applied across all UoAs)
- Development of the procedures are undertaken collaboratively with UoA Leads and the REF 2029 EDI Working Group
- Stages of approval for the selection of outputs are clearly defined (see Table 14) and widely shared, as part of this Code of Practice
- The selection of outputs for REF 2029 submission will have no direct bearing, nor be considered, in any other University process (e.g. in appraisal or promotion processes)
- Outputs will be selected based on an overall judgement of the quality (in terms of REF 2029 assessment criteria of originality, significance and rigour) of the output informed by output data, including Surrey's Output Review exercises undertaken throughout the REF 2029 assessment period and any relevant metrics identified in the REF 2029 Panel Criteria guidance (as yet not published). Any metrics will be considered in line with Surrey's commitment to responsible metrics.
- Output selection will be based on making the strongest possible submission to the UoA (Strongest is in relation to the REF 2029 output assessment criteria of originality, significance and rigour, described in REF 2029 Guidance on Submissions REF 2029 Contributions to Knowledge and Understanding Guidance (CKU))

- Output selection panels will follow the REF 2029 CKU Guidance on ensuring that submissions reflect the range of research activity and the diversity of output types produced by the unit, including contributions to large-scale research programmes or networks, national/global initiatives or discrete areas of specialised academic endeavour. The statement of representation, required as part of a UoAs Unit-Level SPRE statement, is where units will reflect on the extent to which different and diverse types of research are included in the submission and provide a rationale for any area of research activity not represented.

- An individual may appear as a co-author on more than five outputs within a submission, but within the UoA submission itself may only provide evidence for the substantive link (through an Eligible Employment Relationship) for up to 5 outputs. There will be no consequence or impact for individuals based on the number of substantive links they are used to evidence in the submission.

- Output Review process guidance advises staff to nominate all their research outputs that could meet the REF 2029 quality profile of 4* or 3*. There is no minimum output requirement for staff in REF 2029 and so the Output Review process guidance makes it clear that there is no expectation on staff to nominate an output in each cycle. There is no advantage or disadvantage in the number of outputs staff nominate in the Output Review process.

5.1.2 Identifying substantive link to outputs

- A substantive link to an output is evidenced by there being an author (or equivalent) who has made a significant research contribution to the output, with an Eligible Employment Relationship at the time of publication (first in public domain) (REF 2029 CKU Guidance, 6.3.1).

> *6.3* ***Eligible employment relationships***
>
> *6.3.1 Eligible employment relationships are defined as:*
>
> *a minimum of 0.2 FTE for at least 12 months continuous employment (as defined by Section 210 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 (ERA 1996) or the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996) by the HEI making the submission. Continuous employment may be demonstrated by a sequence of consecutive contracts* ***and***
>
> *the role descriptor includes an explicit expectation of research activity (in line with the REF definition of research) within the role. 'Research activity' is not restricted by profession and an eligible employment relationship may be with any staff member who undertakes, enables or supports research*

- Identifying the substantive links for an output will predominantly be done through Surrey's research information system (WorkTribe). WorkTribe identifies the 'Linked authors' (Surrey staff with an active employment contract during the REF 2029 assessment period) for every output.

- The substantive link is double checked manually by the REF Team for every output included in Surrey's output review processes. If a substantive link cannot be evidenced, then the output is manually marked as 'ineligible' in WorkTribe by the REF Team.

- For outputs that may not be captured through WorkTribe i.e. Practice based research, manual processes will be followed to confirm the substantive link.

- During the output selection process UoA Output Selection Panels will be provided with data on the substantive links available for all outputs in their eligible REF output pool to enable decision making based on REF guidance around ensuring no author is used as the substantive link for more than 5 outputs at Unit level.

5.1.3 Selecting outputs where the substantive link is via former staff

- 'Former staff' relates to staff who have taken voluntary redundancy, retired or left after a fixed term contract expired, and meet the eligible employment relationship criteria. The REF 2029 guidance is clear that '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' (REF 2029 CKU Guidance, 6.7.1) At the time of publication for this Code of Practice, no Surrey staff have been made compulsory redundant.
- Former staff eligible REF outputs will be included in the UoA eligible REF Output pool dataset along with the outputs of current staff and provided to the Output selection panels.
- The substantive link is checked in WorkTribe and then double checked manually by the REF Team for every former staff output included in Surrey's output review processes.
- Eligible outputs authored by former staff will be identified in the UoA eligible REF output pool dataset but there will not be a separate process when it comes to output selection. The outputs of former staff will be considered alongside the outputs of current staff.

5.1.4 Assigning Outputs to UoAs

The Unit's Strategy, People and Research Environment (SPRE) statement and the required statement on the research community, will provide an overview of the subject structures, research groups and research activity within a UoA. The staff included in a UoAs research community will form the basis of identifying the eligible REF output pool for a UoA.

With the decoupling of staff from outputs in REF 2029, outputs included in a UoA submission, do not need to be authored by the staff contributing to that UoAs REF 2029 Volume Measure. Therefore, this will not be limited to identifying outputs published by the volume contributing staff of a UoA, but outputs published by all staff engaged in research in the UoAs defined research community.

This will include outputs published after 1 Jan 2021, authored by:

- Current Teaching & Research and Research Only staff with an eligible employment relationship
- Staff with an eligible employment relationship
- Other staff with an eligible employment relationship (i.e. Technicians, Teaching Track staff who are in the process of moving to a Teaching & Research contract)

The REF team will work with UoA Leads to identify all staff with an eligible employment relationship in their research community and capture any eligible outputs.

There are a number of internal processes to identify if an output may be assigned to the wrong UoA or could be eligible for multiple UoAs. During the nominations phase of Surrey's output review process authors can suggest the UoA that they believe is the best fit. Output reviewers (internal and external) are also asked to flag any outputs that they believe do not meet the UoA descriptor they are reviewing for or aligns with another UoA. This information will be considered by the UoA Lead and an output may be reviewed in multiple UoAs.

5.1.5 Procedures for Supporting Diversity of Outputs

The University of Surrey's institutional repository is designed to showcase the full breadth of the university's research culture by supporting a diverse range of outputs. Alongside publications such as journal articles and theses, the repository also enables the deposit of datasets, practice-based research, creative works, conference materials, and other non-traditional forms of scholarship. By accommodating multiple formats and disciplines, it ensures that the richness and variety of Surrey's research contributions are openly accessible and preserved for long-term discovery and reuse.

Surrey's output review exercises are developed to capture a diverse range of outputs. The REF Team work with UoA Leads to ensure their eligible REF output pool and subsequent outputs review processes capture the full range of research practices for their UoA, as set out in their SPRE Research Community statement. The updated REF 2021 Guidance on Submissions, Annex K, which offers a good indication of the potential range of outputs, is shared with all UoA Leads.

5.1.6 Procedures for Selecting Outputs

Output selection will take place at UoA Output Selection Panel meetings held in accordance with guidance set by the University's REF 2029 Team. An additional Output Selection phase (due to take place in 2026) has been added for REF 2029 preparations. This is in response to feedback from REF 2021 Output Selection Panels who found the volume of outputs to consider at the later stages in the REF 2021 cycle challenging. This additional phase is intended to enable an accumulation of outputs for submission and to reduce the burden on the output selection panels late in the REF cycle. With more time provided to the Output Selection Panels it is anticipated this will enable more time for consideration and reduce the opportunities for unintended bias in the process.

A member of the REF 2029 Team will be present at most panel meetings, and REF EDI Working Group members will be invited to attend. Panel meetings will, wherever possible, include at least one other neutral observer (usually another UoA Lead). Membership of the output selection panels will be made available to staff.

Membership of the output selection panels will include suitable representation from across the disciplines within the UoA and take account of the staff population characteristics of the UoA. Proposed members will be reviewed by the REF 2029 EDI Working Group ahead of the meetings taking place. All final attendees must have undergone REF 2029 EDI training. Meetings will be chaired by the UoA Lead, and the following steps will be followed in establishing the output selection panels;

- Proposed panel membership provided to REF 2029 Team.
- REF EDI Working Group review proposed panel membership.
- UoA Lead Committee approve panel membership.
- Panel members receive REF 2029 EDI training (detailed in Annex B.4).
- Panel is convened (meeting commences with EDI briefing) and follows the process outlined in Table 12 below.

Where an output has multiple substantive links within the same UoA decisions will be based on:

- Ensuring no author has more than 5 substantive links at Unit level
- Alternative substantive links available within the UoA, including via former staff
- Authorship contribution conventions
- Alternative substantive links available across other UoAs

Decisions for selecting outputs will consider:

- Quality profile (based on REF assessment criteria of originality, significance and rigour)
- Representativeness in terms of discipline/research areas and diversity of output type

The University REF 2029 Team will be responsible for providing all relevant data to the UoA Output Selection Panels (predominantly available in WorkTribe) and will work with the UoA Lead to ensure it is complete. The data will include:

- REF 2029 Volume Measure data and number of outputs required for submission
- Technical data, open access status, authorship (confirmation of authors with Eligible Employment Relationship)

- Details of substantive links available for each output
- Quality related data, output review ratings and feedback (based on REF assessment criteria of originality, significance and rigour), author nominations captured in the first stage of internal output review processes and any UoA specific metrics identified in REF 2029 Panel Criteria and guidance
- Relevant data, agreed with the UoA Lead, to ensure the submitted outputs are reflective of the research strategies and structures of the UoA (including contributions to large-scale research programs, networks or national/global initiatives) and of the diversity of research practices and outputs produced by the unit over the full REF period
- Surrey Output Review ratings (based on REF assessment criteria of originality, significance and rigour) alone will not dictate inclusion in the UoA submission, but it is expected to in many cases provide a strong indicator of quality

Where an output is being considered for submission by multiple UoAs, this will be flagged to the relevant UoA Output Selection panels, to ensure their confidence in the output meeting all relevant UoA descriptors. The REF 2029 Team will monitor outputs being considered by multiple UoAs to ensure there will be no likely audit implications (REF 2029 CKU Guidance, 13.1.3 - Submission to more than two UoAs will increase the likelihood of audit, to ensure that it meaningfully aligns with the UoA descriptors for each UoA to which it is submitted).

As set out in Table 12 the UoA Output Selection Panels will submit their selection of outputs to the REF 2029 Team. The REF 2029 Team will then coordinate a review with the REF EDI Working Group, and the analysis will be provided to the REF 2029 Management Group. The REF 2029 Management Group will either ratify the output selection at this stage or refer to the UoA Output Selection Panel to be reconsidered. This stage of the process continues until the REF 2029 Management Group ratify the output selection.

As output selection presents no procedural consequence to individuals, then there will be no right to appeal the selection of outputs. Staff with concerns about whether the procedures described in this Code have been followed in output selection may raise these with the relevant UoA Lead or the REF 2029 Management Group and/or REF EDI Working Group as part of ongoing monitoring and EIA activity.

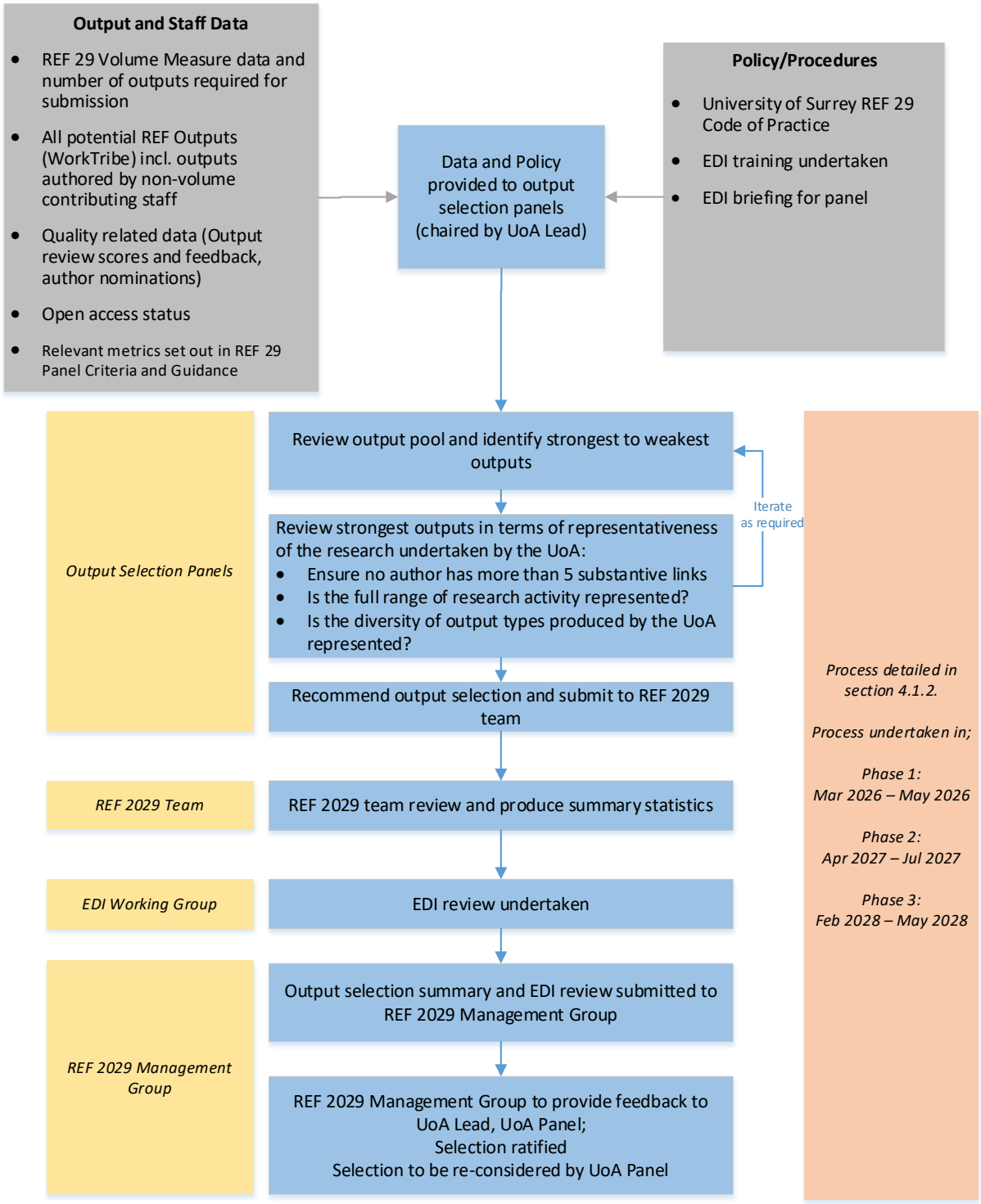


Table 13: Output Selection Process Diagram

5.1.7 Ensuring Submissions are Representative of the Research undertaken within the UoA during REF 2029 period

Representativeness will be considered in terms of:

- Reflection of the research strategies and structures of the UoA
- Reflection of the diversity of subject areas within the UoA

- Reflection of diversity of research practices and outputs produced within the disciplinary area

A Unit's SPRE statement will provide information on the full range of research activity taking place in the UoA within the context of the research strategies and structures. The REF 2029 Team will work with the UoA Leads to ensure that the data provided to the UoA Output Selection Panels reflects the full range of research activity and diversity of output types in the UoA.

Output Selection panels will be expected to provide a narrative on how their proposed output submission represents the range of research activity in their UoA. These will then be reviewed by the REF 2029 Management Group the REF 2029 EDI Working Group, alongside the proposed outputs to be submitted. Any issues identified during Phase 1 of output selection are expected to be resolved through Phases 2 and 3 of output selection.

5.1.8 Responsible Research Assessment Practice

The University signed the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (commonly known as DORA) in 2022. This commitment to DORA is available in a prominent place on Surrey.ac.uk, positioned on the Research Excellence pages and linked to the Library Open Research pages.

These commitments, along with the principles of equity, fairness and transparency are reflected in Surrey's output review processes that provide the data to support the decision making of Surrey's REF 2029 Output Selection panels:

- Peer review is still the basis of the output review process, supported by the responsible use of metrics where relevant, and guidance provided to UoA Leads advises two reviewers for each output included in the process.
- The first stage of the output review process provides the opportunity for authors to nominate their strongest outputs to be included in the review process. This first stage is communicated widely with all researchers and guidance is provided through a range of channels; Intranet pages, Research Committees, Faculty SharePoint sites and the Research Excellence Manager attending a range of forums to explain the process and ensure researchers know where to access the guidance they need. There is a bespoke output review email address for staff to raise questions.
- The University REF 2029 Team works with UoA Leads to regularly check the researchers who have and have not engaged with the nominations process; and this first stage is not closed until the UoA Lead confirms that the nominations gathered are a fair reflection of the research activity for their UoA.
- UoA Leads confirm their list of outputs for review. This decision making can be supported by the responsible use of metrics in line with the University's position on Responsible Metrics
- Calibration sessions are required for all UoA internal reviewers, and these processes are supported by the University REF Team.
- All internal reviewers are required to have completed Surrey's Unconscious Bias training in the last 3 years.
- Output review is delivered through WorkTribe, but processes are set up to ensure that outputs not easily captured in WorkTribe (i.e. practice based research and portfolios) are reviewed outside or WorkTribe.
- Outputs in languages other than English, including British Sign Language (BSL), will be assessed using the REF criteria of originality, significance and rigour in the same way as all other outputs. Additional information from the author may be gathered to support the review process if required. Such outputs will not be treated any less favourably and where possible will be reviewed in their original format. Any research outputs in languages other than English, including BSL, will be monitored through the University's EIAs and data will be shared with the

REF EDI Working Group to ensure the process in this Code do not lead to any unintended consequences.

5.1.9 Indicative Timeline for Selecting Outputs

Table 13 describes the indicative timeline for selecting outputs and sets out three key phases for output selection.

Phase 1 will consider all data known by January 2026, including the output review 2022 and 2025

Phase 2 will consider all data known by April 2027, including the output review 2026/27.

Phase 3 will consider new information by February 2028, including the output review 2027/28. The output selection panel will reconvene to consider this new data.

The final stage described as "Exceptions process", will take account of outputs published in the final months of the REF publication period.

Where an individual identifies an exceptionally strong output that will be published by 31st December 2028 but has not been considered in earlier output selection panels, or in the output reviews, they should notify the UoA Lead in writing and propose it be considered for inclusion in REF 2029. These outputs will not be required to undergo an output review but may be internally or externally reviewed. The output selection panel will reconvene to consider this new data.

Task	Timeframe
Development of Output Selection Process (Phase 1) guidance	Oct 2025 to Dec 2025
EDI training of attendees of output selection meetings	Feb 2026 to Apr 2026
Output selection process (Phase 1)	Mar 2026 to May 2026
Internal Output Review process	May 2026 to Dec 2026
Development of Output Selection Process (Phase 2 & 3)	Dec 2026 to Feb 2027
Development of Output Selection Phase 2 & 3 guidance (in line with Code of Practice process and principles)	Feb 2027 to Mar 2027
EDI Training of attendees of output selection meetings	Mar 2027
Output selection process (Phase 2)	Apr 2027 to Jul 2027
Internal Output Review process	May 2027 to Dec 2027
Refresher training for attendees of output selection meetings	Jan 2028
Output selection process (Phase 3)	Feb 2028 to May 2028
Begin upload of selected outputs to REF 2029 submission system	May 2028
Exception process – for outputs produced in later period of REF cycle	May 2028 to Sept 2028
Output Selection process (ad hoc exceptions)	Sept 2028
Final confirmation of output selection by UoA	Beginning of Oct 2028
Final upload selected outputs to REF 2029 submission system (based on end Nov 2028 submission deadline)	Throughout Oct 2028

Table 14: Indicative timeline for output selection

5.2 Staff, Committee and Training

UoA output selection panels will make decisions on the outputs to be submitted, supported by the REF 2029 Team and REF 2029 EDI Working Group.

The REF 2029 Management Group will then ratify the selection of outputs, reflecting on the EIA data alongside the output profile anticipated.

Terms of Reference for the REF 2029 Management Group and REF 2029 EDI Working Group are included in Annexes C.2 and C.4 respectively and include full details of the committee, including its formation, decision making, training and procedures.

REF 2029 specific EDI training will be provided to all staff and committees involved in decision-making and advising on staff-related REF 2029 processes, as detailed in Annex B.4.

5.2.1 Summary of Stages of Approval for Output Selection

Staff/Committee	Role in output selection
EDI Working Group	Advisory
REF 2029 Team	Advisory
Output Selection Panel	Decision-making
REF 2029 Management Group	Ratify decision-making

Table 15: Output Selection – approval stages

5.2.2 Communicating the Output Selection Process

Staff will be kept informed of output selection processes throughout the REF 2029 submission preparations. Communications will reinforce that the selection of outputs for the REF 2029 submission will have no direct bearing, nor be considered, in any other University process (e.g. in appraisal or promotion processes).

Post submission, in April 2029, details of all the outputs included in the University of Surrey's REF 2029 submission, will be shared with staff.

Former staff will also be notified in writing, wherever possible, of all outputs included in the University of Surrey's REF 2029 submission.

5.3 EIA

It is too early to have EDI data on the selection of outputs and their allocation to UoAs, this will be included in future EIAs (detail set out in section 3.5). EDI data for the UoA Output Selection Panel membership will also be shared with the REF 2029 EDI Working Group. This data will be reviewed prior to each phase of the output selection process (set out in Table 13) to ensure the decision-making panels follow the principle of equity and inclusion.

The University is clear that there is no advantage or disadvantage for an individual in being the author of an output selected for submission.

6 Appendices

6.1 Contents

ANNEX A: Process of identifying volume measure contributing contracts

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- ANNEX C.1: REF 2029 Executive Committee
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- ANNEX C.4: REF 2029 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group
- ANNEX C.5: REF 2029 Appeals Committee

ANNEX D: Appeals Process

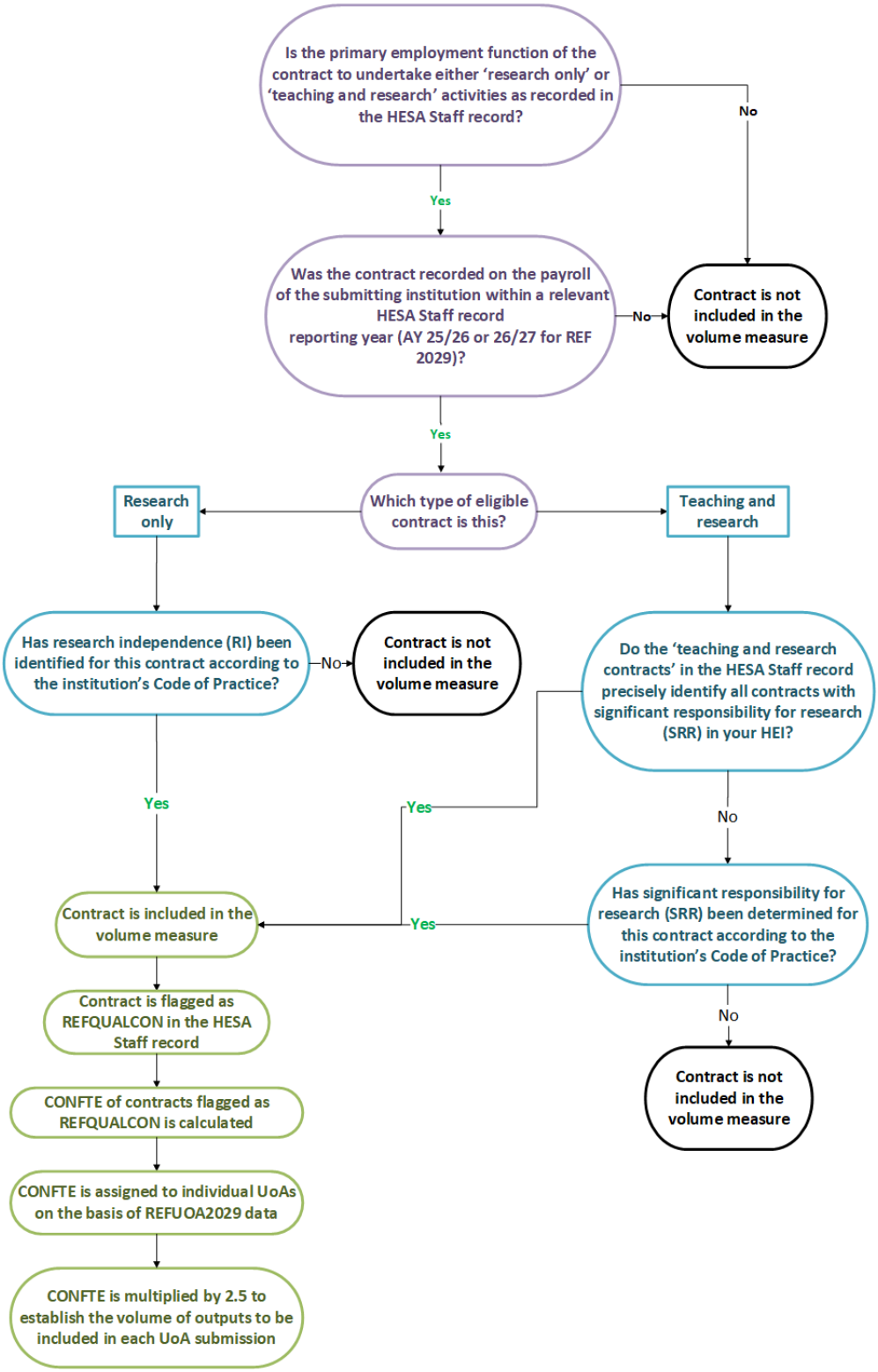
- ANNEX D.1: Appeals Flowchart

ANNEX E: EIA of Code of Practice

- ANNEX E.1: Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

ANNEX A: Process of identifying volume measure contributing contracts

ANNEX A.1: REF 2029 Volume measure contributing contracts



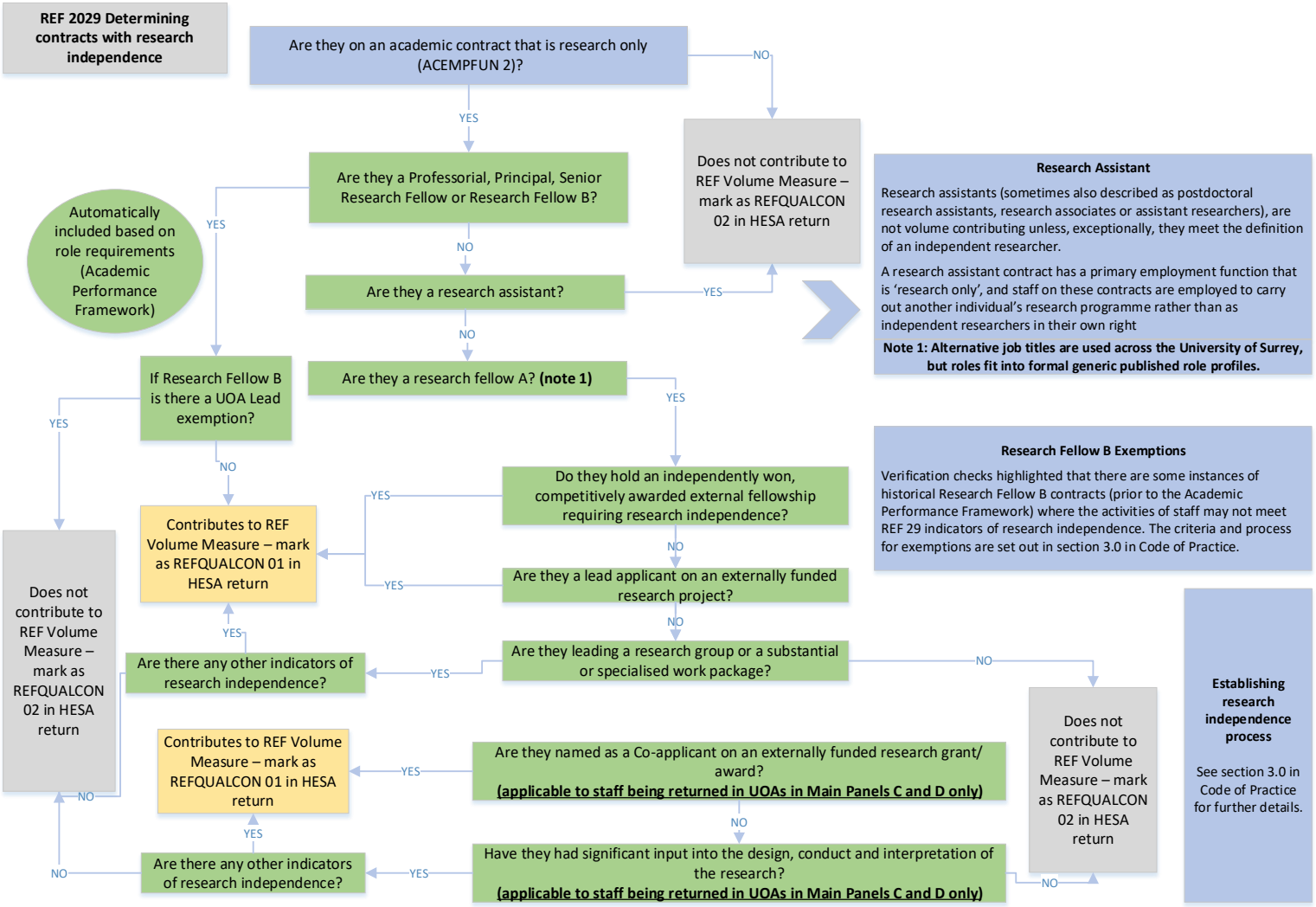
ANNEX A.2: Extract from Criteria for Academic performance: as approved by Senate

Criteria for Academic Performance: As approved by Senate 27.04.23

Academic Achievement Framework				
RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND IMPACT DOMAIN				
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: EXPECTATION BY LEVEL				
Professor	Principal Research Fellow/ Associate Professor	Senior Research Fellow/ Senior Lecturer	Research Fellow B/ Lecturer B	Research Fellow A/ Lecturer A
RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND IMPACT DOMAIN PERFORMANCE CRITERIA*				
a) **Research excellence:** Leads sustained international-leading research outputs, consolidating a prominent independent international profile.	a) **Research excellence:** Makes substantial contribution to internationally leading research outputs, often as lead, resulting in an independent international profile.	a) **Research excellence:** Produces internationally leading research outputs, often as lead contributor, resulting in an independent and developing international profile.	a) **Research excellence:** Produces internationally leading research outputs developing international profile and consolidated independence.	a) **Research excellence:** Building an independent research profile and contributing to internationally leading research outputs.

REF 2029
Research Excellence Framework

ANNEX A.3: Determining Research Independence Flow Chart



REF 2029
Research Excellence Framework

ANNEX A.4: Establishing Research Independence Form

Establishing Research Independence Form

Guidance on the REF 2029 Volume Measure has been published and Surrey needs to ensure accurate data is held on staff meeting the REF eligibility criteria. This data will be used by REF to calculate a 'Volume Measure' which will determine the size and shape of Surrey's future REF 2029 submission.

Please note, Surrey's REF 2029 Code of Practice is not yet finalised. This form is part of an interim 'Establishing Research Independence' process, however, we do not anticipate significant changes to occur.

To see the eligibility criteria and evidence required, please see the University of Surrey REF 2029 Code of Practice (Insert internal URL when available)

Why are we using this form?

Surrey has set up a REF 2029 Volume Measure review process so that we can ensure the information about staff meeting the REF eligibility criteria is accurate and up to date. We may also be required to provide evidence during the REF 2029 audit process. This form is an easy way to capture the information we need.

Why am I being asked to complete this form?

This form must be completed by UoA leads on behalf of staff in their area who are on either 'Research Fellow A' or 'Research Fellow B' contracts, but who are believed to have research independence for REF 2029 purposes.

Who are the forms shared with?

Submitted forms will be managed by the University's REF Team in Strategic, Planning and Performance, who will liaise with the relevant Head of School and UoA Lead. Where necessary the form may also be shared with the members of the REF 2029 Management Group. All staff completing an independence form will be informed of the outcome via email within 10 working days of a decision being reached.

* Required

* This form will record your name, please fill your name.

1. Staff Member's First Name *
2. Staff Member's surname *
3. Staff Number *
4. School *

FABSS - School of Arts, Humanities and Creative Industries

FABSS - School of Social Sciences

FABSS - Surrey Business School

FEPS - School of Computer Science and Electronic Engineering

FEPS - School of Engineering

FEPS - School of Chemistry & Chemical Engineering

FEPS - School of Maths & Physics

FHMS - School of Medicine

FHMS - School of Psychology

FHMS - School of Veterinary Medicine

FHMS - School of Health Sciences

FHMS - School of Bioscience

REF 2029
Research Excellence Framework

Eligibility as independent researcher Select all that apply.

To see the eligibility criteria and evidence required, please see the University of Surrey REF 2029 Code of Practice (Insert internal URL when available)

5. Are they the lead applicant or equivalent on an externally funded research project? *

   (***Evidence required:*** *a copy of grant/award letter or application confirmation, including their name as PI and funding source)*

   Yes

   No

6. Are they holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement? *

   (***Evidence required:*** *a copy of fellowship agreement, including their name and fellowship scheme)*

   Yes

   No

7. Are they leading a research group or a substantial or specialised work package? *

   (***Evidence required:*** *a copy of grant/award letter or grant application and screenshot of research finance entry. Must include their name and group/work package)*

   Yes

   No

8. (FABSS only) Are they named as a co-applicant on an externally funded research grant/award?

   (***Evidence required:*** *grant application and screenshot of research finance entry. Must include their name, grant details, evidence of contribution to the development of the work package)*

   Yes

   No

9. (FABSS only) Are they having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research?

   (***Evidence required:*** *grant application and supporting statement from PI of grant)*

   Yes

   No

Evidence

To see the eligibility criteria and evidence required, please see the University of Surrey REF 2029 Code of Practice (Insert internal URL when available)

10. Upload your Evidence of eligibility

    If you are unable to upload your Evidence of eligibility, please email it to REF29@surrey.ac.uk with the evidence.

    Upload file

    File number limit: 10 Single file size limit: 1GB Allowed file types: Word, Excel, PPT, PDF, Image, Video, Audio

11. Please confirm you have sent the relevant evidence of the staff member's eligibility

Yes, via email

Yes, attached to this form

No

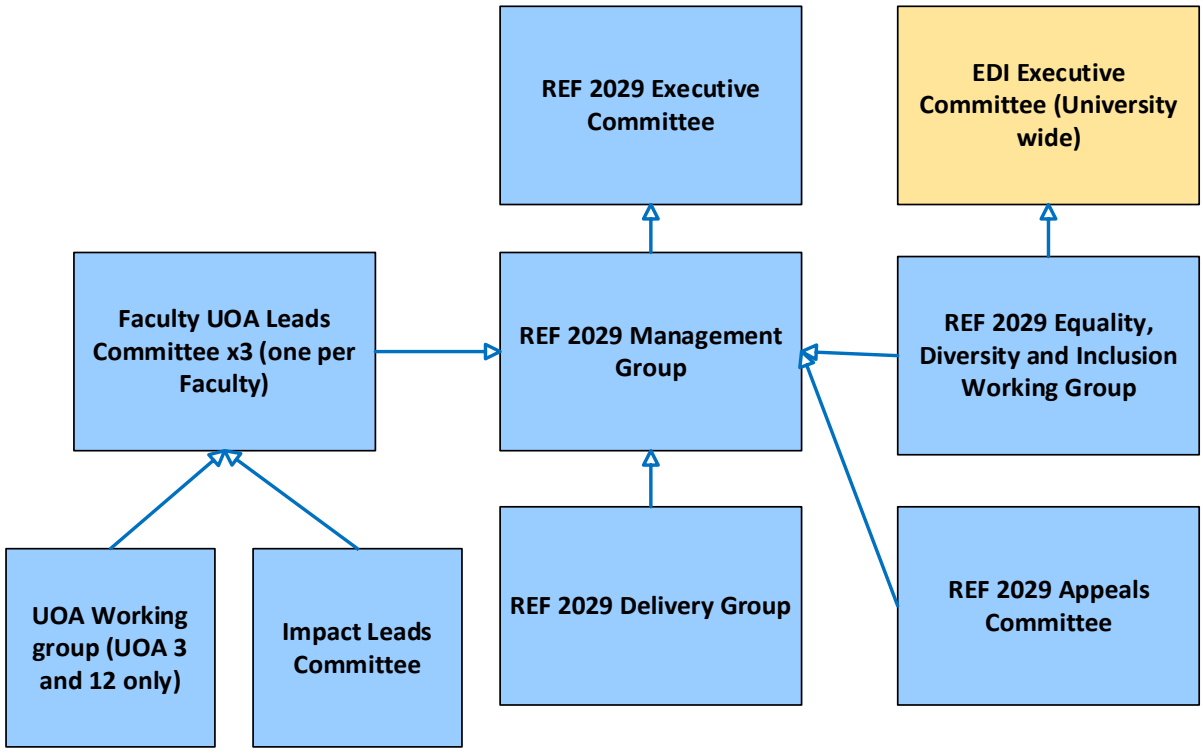
12. Please describe the available evidence

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Microsoft. The data you submit will be sent to the form owner.

Microsoft Forms

ANNEX B: REF 2029 Governance

Annex B.1: Governance Structure



REF 2029
Research Excellence Framework

Annex B.2: Summary of REF 2029 Committees

Committee Title and Chair	*Brief Description* *(annex reference provided where committee/group has a role in the processes included in this Code of Practice)*	*Role in contract eligibility and output selection*
REF 2029 Executive Committee **Chair: Vice-Chancellor**	(ANNEX C.1) Strategic oversight and overall responsibility for the REF 2029 submission.	None
REF 2029 Management Group **Chair: Vice Provost, Research & Innovation**	(ANNEX C.2) Oversee the development, delivery of the REF 2029. Ensuring appropriate structures, support and processes are set out and followed.	Ratifying decision-making
Faculty UoA Leads Committee **Chair: Associate Dean, Research & Innovation**	(ANNEX C.3) Approve volume contributing contracts, research independence assessments and output selection. Review progress of UoAs and final submissions, output selections and volume contributing contracts, consider UoA fit and optimisation. Act as a peer review forum for SPRE statement development.	Decision-making
REF 2029 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group **Chair: Appointed senior academic**	(ANNEX C.4) reports to the University EDI Executive Committee alongside REF 2029 Executive Committee. Ensuring the REF process fulfil the requirements for promoting the EDI agenda, and compliant with EDI legislation.	None
REF 2029 Appeals Committee **Chair: Vice-Provost, Education**	(ANNEX C.6) To review and evaluate formal appeals submitted by members of staff	Decision-making
Impact Leads Committee **Chair: Associate Dean (research and Innovation)**	Review progress of impact. Act as a peer review forum for impact case studies. *No role in identifying volume contributing contracts or output selection.*	None
UoA Working Group **Chair: UoA Lead**	Review and contribute to the development of a particular UoA, representing the core disciplines included within a UoA. *No role in identifying volume contributing contracts or output selection.*	None
REF 2029 Delivery Group **Chair: Research Excellence Manager**	Review data requirements for REF 2029 and ensure delivery of all necessary data to support REF strategy and submission. *No role in identifying volume contributing contracts or output selection.*	None

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Annex B.3: Designated Staff Summary

Individual Appointed	Role/position in REF 2029 structure	Procedure for appointment	Rationale
Vice-Chancellor	Member of REF 2029 Executive Committee	Nominated by Executive Board	Chair of Senate, Executive Board member with significant experience of REF
Pro-Vice Chancellor Executive Deans (PVCEDs)	Members of REF 2029 Executive Committee	Nominated by Vice-Chancellor	Executive Board member, responsible for Faculty leadership and management.
Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation	Chair of REF 2029 Executive Committee	Nominated by REF 2029 Executive Committee	Chair of the University Research and Innovation Committee, Executive Board member, responsible for institutional Research and Innovation strategy and REF.
REF 2029 Academic Lead	Chair of REF 2029 Management Group	Internal recruitment process (June 2026)	Senior academic with central role in shaping and delivering REF 2029 submission. Providing senior academic leadership, strategic direction and institutional oversight.
Academic Leads for Research Culture: People, Culture and Environment	Member of REF 2029 Management Group	Internal recruitment process (September 2024)	Senior academic, providing leadership for research culture, chair of People, Culture and Environment Committee a sub-Committee of URIC. Provides leadership on SPRE.
Senior academics	UoA Leads	Open expressions of interest process (December 2023)	Criteria requested in expressions of interest: Senior academic working in a discipline relevant to the UoA, demonstrable leadership experience and REF experience (preferred) or at least understanding of REF. Expressions reviewed by ADRIs, and appointed on basis of meeting criteria
Associate Deans Research & Innovation (ADRIs)	Chair of Faculty UoA Leads Committee	Nominated by REF 2029 Executive Committee	Member of the University Research and Innovation Committee, responsible for Faculty research agenda including REF.
Associate Director of HR	Member of Code of Practice Working Group	Nominated by REF Management Group	Senior member of HR, responsible for policies, and practices relating to Human Resources, with significant experience of REF
Appointed senior academic (REF EDI Lead)	Chair of REF 2029 EDI working group	Open expressions of interest process (November 2025)	Academic Lead for REF EDI, responsible for reviewing policies, practices relating to EDI with significant experience of REF
Vice-Provost, Education	Chair of Appeals Committee	Nominated by REF 2029 Management Group	Executive Board member, significant experience of REF, but not involved in REF 2029 development at the University of Surrey.

Research Excellence Manager	Chair of REF Delivery Group	Nominated by REF 2029 Management Group	University appointment, reporting to Director of Strategic Planning and Performance, significant experience of REF

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ANNEX B.4: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Training Summary

All EDI training and materials will be developed by the University of Surrey's EDI department and reviewed by the REF 2029 EDI working Group. The training material will draw on existing University EDI training and AdvanceHE materials where appropriate. The University's REF team will contribute to any REF specific elements.

Training	Description	Target Audience	Indicative earliest delivery date
EDI training for REF Oversight groups	PowerPoint presentation, accompanied by scenarios to discuss as a group.	REF Executive Committee, REF Management Group	Feb 2026
EDI training for REF Management groups	PowerPoint presentation, accompanied by scenarios to discuss as a group, extended to include specific research independence and output selection processes and to highlight areas of potential concern.	Faculty UoA Leads Committee, E&D Working Group	Feb 2026
EDI training for REF related groups	PowerPoint presentation, accompanied by scenarios to discuss as a group.	Appeals Committee	Feb 2026
EDI training for REF (output selection specific)	PowerPoint presentation, accompanied by scenarios to discuss as a group, extended to include specific output selection process. E&D briefing provided by UoA Lead at the start of each output selection panel meeting.	Staff involved in output selection panels	Feb 2026

All staff involved in identifying staff contracts and/or output selection will be required to have undertaken the University's unconscious bias on-line training (within the last 2 years) and provide a record of completion to the REF team.

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ANNEX C: Terms of Reference

ANNEX C.1: REF 2029 Executive Committee

Name of Committee:	**REF 2029 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**
Route of Formation:	Approved by Vice-Chancellor, 6th February 2023
Membership:	Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation – (Chair) REF 2029 Academic Lead Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean (Faculty of Arts, Business and Social Sciences) Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean (Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences) Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean (Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences) Vice-President, Strategic Growth In attendance: President & Vice-Chancellor Other Directors of relevant Professional Service areas, as required Research Excellence Manager (Secretary)
Position in REF decision-making structure	Overall responsibility for REF. REF Management Group reports to it.
Record Keeping	Full minutes, and actions log maintained by Research Excellence Manager. Minutes retained in REF 2029 folders located on SharePoint, in accordance with the REF 2029 data asset register.
Steps taken to ensure members are aware of their own and the institutions legal obligations regarding equality and diversity	REF specific EDI briefing delivered by University REF Team and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor (Annex B.4)
Terms of reference	• To define, prepare and oversee the University strategy for the REF submission • To make the final decisions on which UoAs the University will make submissions to, based on recommendations from the REF Management Group • To approve the Code of Practice • To authorise the submission of the final documentation • To ensure that the University has robust REF processes which, in the case of output selection, are fully in accordance with the Code of Practice **Quorum** The quorum for the REF Executive Committee shall be half of the members with a minimum of two Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Deans in attendance. Members remain a Member of the REF 2029 Executive Committee for the duration of the REF 2029 submission period. **Frequency of Meetings** Every 3 months until submission. Exceptional meetings may be held at the discretion of the Chair. **Decision making outside of meetings** On an exceptional basis, decisions may be taken by Chair's action on the advice of the President & Vice-Chancellor. At the discretion of the Chair, decisions may also be passed by email circular, or similar electronic means, provided all members are copied into the electronic exchange.

Criteria applicable to this committee	Not applicable.
The method and timescale by which feedback will be provided in respect of the decisions made	Not applicable.
Appeals Process	Outlined in Section 4.4 and Annex D.1

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Research Excellence Framework

ANNEX C.2: REF 2029 Management Group

Name of Committee:	**REF 2029 MANAGEMENT GROUP**
Route of Formation:	Approved by REF 2029 Executive Committee, 11th September 2023
Membership:	REF 2029 Academic Lead – (Chair) Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation Associate Dean, Research and Innovation (Faculty of Arts, Business and Social Sciences) Associate Dean, Research and Innovation (Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences) Associate Dean, Research and Innovation (Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences) Director, Research, Innovation & Impact Director of Planning and Organisational Performance (SPP) Research Excellence Manager (SPP) (Secretary) Academic Lead for Research Culture Director of Library and Learning Services In attendance: The Committee can co-opt internal members as required for specific purposes.
Position in REF decision-making structure	Reports to REF 2029 Executive Committee
Record keeping	Full minutes, and actions log maintained by the Secretary. Minutes retained in REF 2029 folders located on SharePoint, in accordance with the REF 2029 data asset register.
Steps taken to ensure members are aware of their own and the institutions legal obligations regarding equality and diversity	REF specific EDI briefing delivered by University REF Team and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor (Annex B.4)
Terms of reference	The REF 2029 Management Group oversees the day to day planning and preparation of the University's REF submission and is advisory to the REF 2029 Executive Committee. • To oversee the day to day planning and preparation of the REF submission, including defining the timeline, governance, based on the University strategy for the REF. • To update and implement the Code of Practice for the University's REF submission • To ensure that Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity are fully considered and reflected within the University's REF submission • To provide the necessary evidence and planning scenarios required by the REF 2029 Executive Committee to inform its decisions as to the choice of UoAs, staff mapping in relevant HESA returns to determine the REF 2029 Volume Measure, and output selection methodology • To ensure the timely and effective collection of expressions of interest for the UoA Lead roles and to decide on which staff will fulfil the roles. The proposed staff list will be shared with the REF 2029 Executive Committee. • To ensure the timely and effective collection, review and submission of research outputs, impact case studies and the Unit-level evidence-based SPRE statements, together with the supporting data needed for the final submission

	• To develop and implement a communications strategy so that staff are kept fully aware of Surrey's REF Strategy, REF developments and have access to key REF information. **Quorum** The quorum for the REF 2029 Management Group shall be half of the members with a minimum of two Associate Dean (Research & Innovation) in attendance. Members remain a Member of the REF 2029 Management Group for the duration of the REF 2029 submission period. **Frequency of Meetings** Every 2 months until submission. Exceptional meetings may be held at the discretion of the Chair. **Decision making outside of meetings** Decisions may exceptionally be taken by Chair's action. At the discretion of the Chair, decisions may also be passed by email circular, or similar electronic means, provided all members are copied into the electronic exchange.
Criteria applicable to this committee	Identifying staff contracts and allocating contracts to UoAs (detailed in Sections 2, 3 & 4) Output selection (detailed in Section 5)
The method and time-scale by which feedback will be provided in re-spect of the decisions made	REF Management Group will confirm its decisions in writing to the Faculty UoA Leads Committee, within one week of meeting.
Appeals Process	Outlined in Section 4.4 and Annex D.1

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ANNEX C.3: Faculty UoA Leads Committee

Name of Committee:	Faculty UoA Leads Committee
Route of Formation:	Approved by REF Management Group, 17th Jan 2024
Membership:	Each Faculty UoA Leads Committee is chaired by the relevant Associate Dean (Research and Innovation) and comprises the UoA leads for the UoAs covered by the Faculty UoA Leads Committee. Where appropriate representatives of the disciplines within the UoA will also be appointed. In attendance; Committees are supported by the University's REF team and/or the faculty research support. Heads of the relevant Schools/Disciplines, Faculty HR Manager will be invited, where considered appropriate by the Chair.
Position in REF decision-making structure	Reports to REF Management Group
Record keeping	Key actions and decisions captured by REF team and retained in REF 2029 folders located on SharePoint, in accordance with the REF 2029 data asset register
Steps taken to ensure members are aware of their own and the institutions legal obligations regarding equality and diversity	REF specific EDI briefing delivered by University REF Team and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor (Annex B.4)
Terms of reference	• Review progress of UoAs, • Co-ordinate across UoAs, consider UoA fit and optimisation. • Approve volume contributing contracts • Co-develop the output selection framework with University REF team • Review output selections • Approve research independence assessments • Act as a peer review forum for SPRE statement development Specifically, the committee will hold decision making powers for; • *Volume contributing contracts* • *research independence assessments.* • *Selection of outputs* **Quorum** The quorum for the UoA Leads Committee shall be half the members. To further reflect the terms of reference, decisions related to a particular UoA will only be made when the appropriate UoA Lead is present.
Criteria applicable to this committee	Identifying volume contributing staff (detailed in Sections 2 and 3) Output selection (detailed in Section 4)

The method and timescale by which feedback will be provided in respect of the decisions made	Within 5 days of the Committee meeting, The Chair of the Faculty UoA Leads Committee will instruct the University REF team to prepare (pre-approved) feedback and issue to the member of staff, copied to the UoA Lead and Head of School. Initial feedback will be provided within 10 working days of the UoA Leads Committee meeting.
Appeals Process	Outlined in Section 4.4 and Annex D.1

ANNEX C.4: REF 2029 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group

Name of Committee:	REF 2029 EDI Working Group
Route of Formation:	Approved by REF Management Group, 19th November 2025
Membership:	Chair: Senior Academic, endorsed by REF 2029 Management Group Members: Academic representation from each faculty In attendance; EDI Adviser, Member of REF 2029 Team (secretary)
Position in REF decision-making structure	Reports to REF Management Group (and to University EDI Executive Committee where appropriate)
Record keeping	Actions log and key decisions, EIAs and associated reports maintained by EDI team. Key actions and decisions retained in REF 2029 folders located on SharePoint, in accordance with the REF 2029 data asset register.
Steps taken to ensure members are aware of their own and the institutions legal obligations regarding equality and diversity	REF specific EDI briefing delivered by University REF Team and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor (Annex B.4)
Terms of reference	To review and advise on all EDI issues in REF, and evaluate EIAs • To ensure that EDI considerations are fully integrated into the REF process at the University, including linking with existing EDI Networks. • To arrange for the provision of EDI training appropriate to the REF process for all staff who are involved, even if indirectly, with identifying volume contributing staff and output selection. • To contribute and review the Code of Practice and ensure that it is properly communicated to all members of academic staff, and all those engaged for the purposes of external assessment. • To carry out and review at key stages EIAs, making recommendations as appropriate to the REF 2029 Management Group. • Escalate any University wide EDI issues to Surrey EDI Executive The quorum for the EDI Working Group shall be half the members.
Criteria applicable to this committee	Identifying volume contributing staff (detailed in Sections 2 and 3) Output selection (detailed in Section 4)
The method and timescale by which feedback will be provided in respect of the decisions made	Feedback to be provided to the REF 2029 Management Group, within 10 working days of meeting.
Appeals Process	Outlined in Section 4.4 and Annex D.1

ANNEX C.5: REF 2029 Appeals Committee

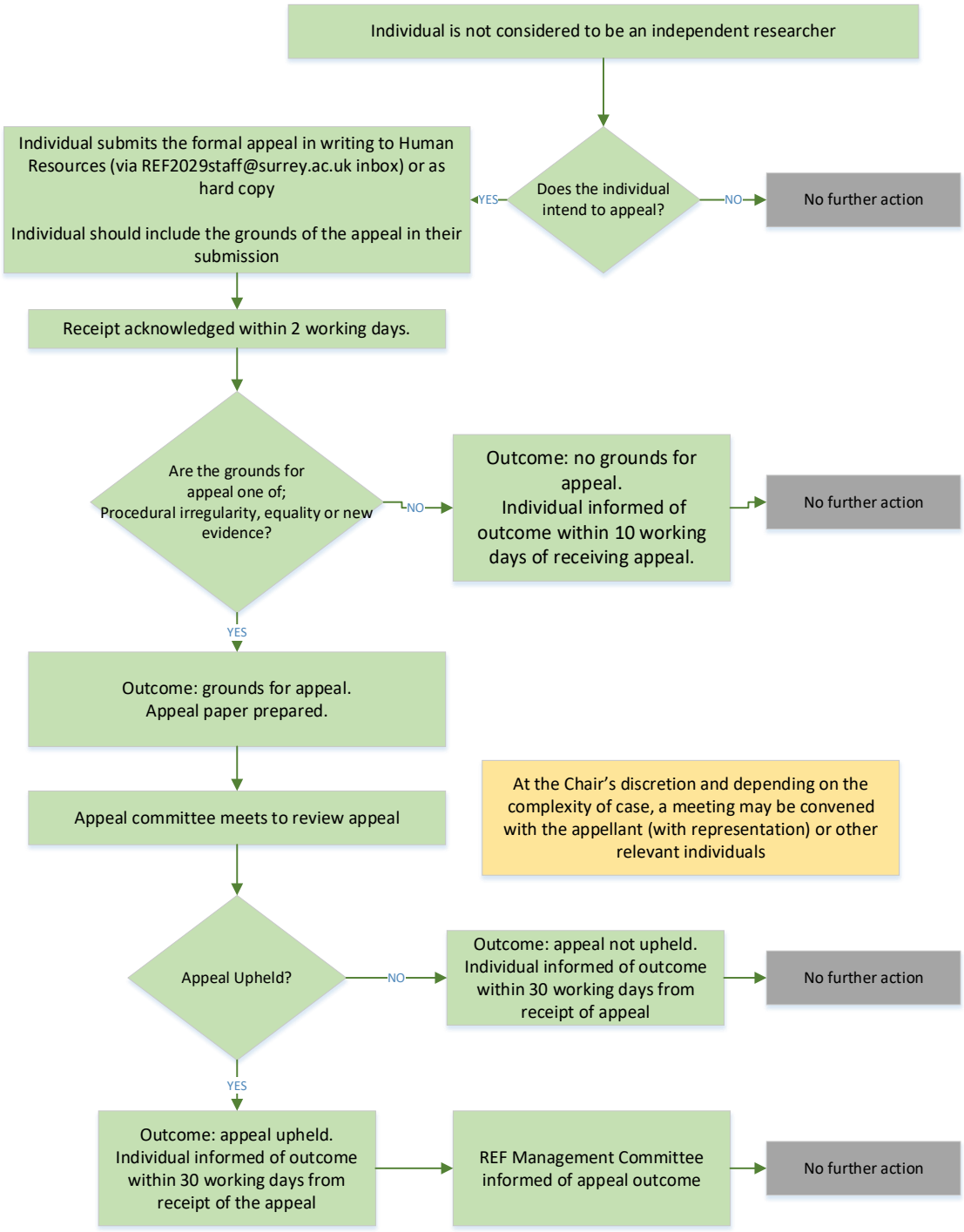
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Name of Committee:	REF 2029 Appeals Committee
Route of Formation:	Approved by REF Management Group, 28th January 2026
Membership:	Chair: Vice-Provost, Education Two academic members of Senate In attendance; Associate Director of Human Resources (Services) – (Secretary)
Position in REF decision-making structure	Reports to REF 2029 Executive Committee
Record keeping	Full minutes, and actions log maintained by Secretary. Minutes and actions log retained in REF 2029 folders located on SharePoint with restricted access, in accordance with the REF 2029 data asset register.
Steps taken to ensure members are aware of their own and the institutions legal obligations regarding equality and diversity	REF specific EDI briefing delivered by University REF Team and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor (Annex B.4)
Terms of reference	To review and advise on all appeals. • To receive all appeals made by staff in respect of the decision on their research independence. • To evaluate each case, drawing where necessary on the relevant expertise of others, ensuring at all times that every effort is made to protect confidentiality. • To decide on a case-by-case basis whether the appeal is upheld or not upheld. • To inform the individuals concerned of the outcome in writing, and where it is decided that an individual meets the definition of an independent researcher to instruct the REF Management Group to that effect.
Criteria applicable to this committee	Appeals process set out in Section 4.4 and Annex D.1
The method and timescale by which feedback will be provided in respect of the decisions made	A written response to every appeal will be provided by the Chair of the Committee within 30 working days from receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Appeals Committee will be final.
Appeals Process	Outlined in Annex D.1

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ANNEX D: Appeals Process

ANNEX D.1: Appeals Flowchart



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ANNEX E: EIA of Code of Practice

ANNEX E.1: Equality Impact Assessment

This EIA was evaluated by Surrey's REF 2029 EDI Working Group, drawing on evidence from Surrey's REF 2021 EIA and associated action plan alongside feedback from the staff consultations and EDI Networks during the development of this Code.

	Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010	**Advance Equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it**	**Foster Good relations between different groups through tackling prejudice and promoting understanding**
	Does the University of Surrey's REF2029 Code of Practice have a positive, negative or no impact on the protected characteristics covered by the Act?	Does the University of Surrey's Code of Practice have a positive, negative or no impact?	Does the University of Surrey's Code of Practice have a positive, negative or no impact?
Protected Characteristics: • **Age** • **Sex** • **Gender reassign-ment** • **Sexual orienta-tion** • **Race** • **Disability** • **Marriage and civil partnership** • **Maternity and pregnancy** • **Religion of belief**	**No impact** – the REF 2029 Volume Measure is calculated at contract rather than individual level. All contracts meeting the REF criteria will be marked as Volume Contributing in the Staff HESA return. Whether a contract is Volume Contributing or not does not influence the outputs selected for submission or which UoA the outputs are submitted to. **Positive** – in drafting the Code of Practice (CoP) all EDI Networks and the EDI Forum (including Trade Unions) were consulted and a REF 2029 EDI Working group was formed to ensure EDI implications were considered through all REF 2029 decision making processes. **Positive** – the CoP applies an Appeals Process (relating to Research Independence decisions) which is entirely separate from the REF 2029 submission process – ensuring impartiality **Positive** – An additional early phase of Output Selection is included in the CoP with the aim of	**Positive** – there is no minimum output requirement, therefore no penalty for staff with lower levels of outputs (i.e. ECRs, due to disability or mental health, due to gender reassignment, due to pregnancy/maternity/adoption/childcare, due to caring responsibilities) **Positive** – all research staff can nominate their strongest outputs to be considered as part of the Output Review process which supports the Output Selection process. **Positive** – Broader job roles can author outputs for submission, and this will be widely communicated with staff. **Positive** – Broader output types to be considered for submission, and this will be widely communicated with staff to ensure all eligible outputs are considered for nomination to the Output Review process.	**Positive** – the REF 2029 Code of Practice will be made available to all staff via SurreyNet, SharePoint and external website. Ensuring all staff have access to the same information. **Positive** – the Chair of the REF 2029 EDI Working Group is named in the CoP and the relevant EDI Networks available to staff **Positive** – Appeals process (relating to Research Independence decisions) widely communicated

	reducing biases in decision making by the UoA Output Selection Panels. **Positive** – REF 2029 EDI training (majority face to face) for all REF decision makers (REF Committees, UoA Output Selection Panels) **Positive** – Surrey's Criteria for Academic Performance (CfAP) used to determine contracts with research independence. Exceptions process communicated to all staff. **Positive** – The CoP will be applied universally to all research areas across the University. **Positive** - REF 2029 EDI Working group will carry out analysis on Surrey's internal Output Review process with the aim of reducing biases – focus on Internal reviewers and outputs selected for review.	**No Impact** – Staff meeting the REF 2029 Volume Measure criteria will automatically be identified in Staff HESA data. **No impact** – no benefit or detriment to a staff contract being allocated to one UoA over another	EIAs conducted as part of REF 2029 will be published and made available to all staff.
	Positive – All staff involved in the process of selecting outputs for inclusion in REF 2029 will complete face to face REF EDI training. The REF 2029 EDI Working group recognises that there are inherent biases in the way outputs are assessed, selected and therefore welcome the opportunity for individuals to self-nominate outputs. The Group recognises REF 2029 has changed significantly from REF 2021 and there is a decoupling of staff from the content of the submission and the move to a group exercise without the focus on the individual. There is no advantage or disadvantage for an individual to contributing to REF 2029.		