REF2029
Research Excellence Framework

Code of Practice
Institution name: University of Hertfordshire
Date of submission: 14.05.2026
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Part 1
Introduction

1.1 This REF2029 Code of Practice (Code) sets out how the University of Hertfordshire will manage the process of developing our submission to the Research Excellence Framework 2029 (REF2029) and specifically our processes for identifying significant responsibility for research (SRR), research independence (RI), the allocation of contracts to Units of Assessment (UoAs) and the selection of outputs.

1.2 This Code operates within the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, relevant employment law and the University's Equality and Diversity Policy. It applies to all staff employed on teaching and research or research-only contracts, regardless of the length of their contract and whether they are full or part-time.

1.3 Working within a framework of robustness, transparency, equity and inclusion, it is our intention to make the highest-quality representative submission possible to REF2029, reflecting our research strengths, and to support research excellence and ambition beyond 2029.

1. **How your Code of Practice supports the principles of:**
    - **Robustness –** Explain how the policies and processes set out in the CoP ensure that contracts identified as contributing to the volume measure reliably reflect the responsibilities of staff.
    - **Transparency –** Detail how the CoP is communicated to all staff, including those on leave of absence or based outside the UK. Ensure accessibility by providing information in various formats and through appropriate channels. Highlight any additional resources (FAQs, web pages) to support staff understanding. An up-to-date version of the CoP should be published and available externally.
    - **Equity and inclusion –** Explain how decisions about submissions are fair and impartial supporting a diversity of people and research, where diverse contributions are valued and supported.

How our Code supports robustness

1.4 The volume measure in REF2029 will be calculated using data held in the HESA Staff Records for 2025/26 and 2026/27 on staff contracts identified as having SRR (for Teaching and Research contracts) or RI (for Research-Only contracts).

1.5 We used the HESA Staff Record 2024/25 pilot year to test and refine our processes and procedures for identifying contracts with SRR or RI. Our process for identifying contracts with SRR is set out in detail in **Part 2** and our process for identifying contracts with RI is set out in detail in **Part 3.**

1.6 These processes will ensure that our submission accurately reflects our research activities and staff responsibilities. A system of checks will ensure that contracts identified as contributing to the volume measure reliably reflect the responsibilities of staff which will include: a) regular review meetings between Associate Deans (Research and Enterprise) based in our five academic Schools and the Research Excellence Team in Research and Enterprise Services about which staff contracts have SRR or RI, and b) comparison of reports from two separate online systems (Human Resources and Workload Allocation Management systems) to ensure that contracts which contribute to the REF2029 volume measure have the appropriate research allocation in their workload.

1.7 Our process for allocating contracts to UoAs is set out in detail in **Part 4.** Volume-contributing contracts will be allocated to UoAs after careful consideration of research activities and in-depth review of the disciplinary areas defined by UoA descriptors set out in the Panel Criteria. Non-volume-contributing contracts will be allocated to UoAs after careful consideration of teaching activities and HESA Cost Centres.

1.8 Our process for identifying the highest quality outputs for the final submission is set out in **Part 5** and will be centred on the use of contextualised peer-review using external REF Advisors with discipline expertise and extensive experience of research assessment, with input from a range of senior staff into the final decision-making.

1.9 Responsibilities are clearly defined, and individuals, Groups and Committees involved in a) identifying staff with SRR, b) determining staff with RI, c) allocating contracts to UoAs, and d) selecting outputs for the final submission are identified by role. These processes will be applied consistently

across the University and have been validated and verified by REF Stakeholder Group, Research Committee, Academic Leadership Group, and the University Executive Team.

How our Code supports transparency

1.10 Consultation on this Code has taken place with staff representative Groups and Committees, the Trade Union, EIA focus groups and with the staff body as a whole (Annex 2a). Staff employed on Teaching and Research or Research-Only contracts on long-term leave of absence have been invited to provide feedback.

1.11 Through such consultation we have been transparent about the processes we will use to identify the staff contracts which will contribute to the REF2029 volume measure, the allocation of contracts to UoAs and the selection of outputs. The Code also includes the roles and responsibilities of individuals, Groups and Committees who will be responsible for the implementation of these processes.

1.12 When approved, this Code will be published on the University's website and intranet. Staff will be informed when the Code is published via email, the monthly Research and Enterprise Newsletter, the online update to staff led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise)[1] and via letters to staff on long term leave of absence. The final fully approved Code will be published in online, word and pdf formats. Accessibility will be fully considered in the final word version by adhering to best practice and use of the Microsoft accessibility tool.

How our Code supports equity and inclusion

1.13 The processes described in our Code will promote an inclusive environment, enabling us to identify staff who have SRR, other staff who are independent researchers, and the research outputs produced by staff across all protected characteristics and groups.

1.14 Managers are regularly reminded that the processes leading up to the final REF submission will be used only to assist the University in making the strongest possible representative submission and

[1] For the purposes of this Code, references to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (R&E) shall be taken to mean the PVC with responsibility for Research and Enterprise or another member of the University Executive Team assigned responsibility for oversight of the University's Research Portfolio.

will not play any part in relation to promotion, progression, extension of contract, performance management or redundancy procedures. Staff and external REF Advisors have been assured that this will be the case.

1.15 The Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) included in this Code, and which will be conducted in future in accordance with the Code of Practice guidance, aim to identify whether any group is treated less favourably in terms of protected characteristics during the preparations for, and submission of, our submission to REF2029.

2. **Contextualisation within Institutional Policies:**
    - Describe how this Code of Practice relates to your institution's context on equality, diversity, and inclusion, PCE and responsible research assessment.

How our Code of Practice relates to the University of Hertfordshire's context on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Overview

1.16 The University of Hertfordshire remains strongly committed to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across all areas of research. Since our submission to REF2021 we have strengthened our EDI governance and delivered institution-wide actions that directly support a fair, supportive and inclusive research environment. Our work is guided by the University's Strategy 2025-2030 and delivered through the People & Culture governance framework, our Staff Networks, and School-level (EDI Team (EDIT)) action plans. A University EDI Strategy will be published in 2026.

Athena Swan

1.17 In 2023 the University achieved an institutional Silver Athena Swan award (building on the Bronze held at the time of REF2021), evidencing significant progress in gender equality, leadership representation, and inclusive practice. Several Schools and Departments hold awards and Athena Swan action plans have driven improvements in promotions transparency, workload allocation, data monitoring, and support for staff returning from leave:

Bronze: Hertfordshire Business School, Creative Arts; Law; Education.

Silver: School of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences[2]; Physics, Astronomy & Mathematics, Engineering and Computer Science.

[2] This School was formed in 2025 through a merger of two Schools (Health & Social Work and Life & Medical Sciences), both of which held Silver. A single harmonised action plan is in place to ensure continued alignment and progress.

Race Equality Charter (REC)

1.18 The University holds a Bronze REC award (2019) and will apply for Silver in 2026. Work undertaken since REF2021 includes strengthening inclusive recruitment, increasing race-equity training, improving ethnicity data reporting, and addressing progression and awarding gaps. Staff and student consultation has shaped actions to dismantle structural barriers, increase representation in leadership, and enhance belonging for racially minoritised researchers.

LGBTQ+ Inclusion

1.19 In 2024 the University made its first submission to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (now Proud Employers) and achieved a Top 100 placing. Work continues through a targeted action plan to eliminate discrimination, increase the visibility of LGBTQ+ role models, and strengthen policies supporting gender identity and expression. A further submission to the Proud Employers scheme took place in December 2025 with the successful outcome of Champion.

Institute of Physics (IOP) Inclusion Award (PIA)

1.20 The Department of Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics was first awarded Juno Practitioner status by the IOP in January 2015 and was successful in its application to Champion status in July 2019. Since 2023 the IOP have renewed their Juno award into the Physics Inclusion Award (PIA) to broaden its remit beyond a better gender balance in Physics. It now looks at a range of themes across all areas of EDI to support departments in being welcoming and inclusive to all. The Department took part in the Pilot Scheme for the PIA and are committed to its themes, with plans to apply for the PIA later in 2026.

Support for Fixed-Term, Part-Time and Contract Research Staff

1.21 The University is committed to ensuring that fixed-term, part-time and contract research staff are fully supported within an inclusive research environment and are not disadvantaged in relation to REF2029 processes. Staff employed on fixed-term, research-only and part-time contracts have access to the same institutional policies, professional development opportunities, research support, mentoring, staff networks, wellbeing services and equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives on the same basis as staff on open-ended and full-time contracts. Decisions relating to significant responsibility for research, research independence, Unit of Assessment allocation and output selection will be based solely on the published criteria and evidence relevant to those processes and will not be influenced by contract type or working pattern. Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken to identify and mitigate any potential adverse impacts on staff with different contractual arrangements, and REF-related

communications, consultation and engagement activities will be designed to ensure that all eligible staff are able to participate fully.

How our Code of Practice relates to the University's context on PCE

1.22 The University of Hertfordshire is committed to delivering excellent research that contributes to society, the environment, and the economy, reflecting the University's FACES values,[3] and fostering a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive culture and environment that recognises the contributions of all research and research enabling staff.

1.23 The role of Director of Research Culture and Environment was established in 2021, with responsibility for nurturing a positive research culture across the University, enhancing the University's research environment, and ensuring research evaluation is conducted in accordance with best practice. Newly established practices include the use of our Enhancing Research Culture hypothecated Quality-Related (QR) funding to support initiatives nurturing research culture across our professional and academic staff, including the establishment of an Early Career Researcher staff group and mentoring scheme, exploring barriers to research engagement among teaching-focused staff, and sponsoring technician-led activities to develop skills and promote opportunities for research collaboration. Panels have been established with diversity of representation (career stage, gender, ethnicity, age) to adjudicate internal funding calls and select entrants for demand-managed external funding calls. This inclusive approach enables us to identify the excellent research produced by staff across all protected groups and ensures transparency in decision-making regarding applications to internal and external competitions.

1.24 We are also fully committed to the following key accords, all of which demonstrate our commitment to an excellent research culture:

- the Researcher Development Concordat: We have held the HR Excellence in Research Award since 2010 and in 2022 we were successful in retaining this award in our 12-year assessment, demonstrating sustained progress through institution wide action planning, researcher engagement and regular evaluation of our support for research staff
- the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) which we signed in 2024, having first ensured alignment of our policies and processes with the principles on the responsible use of quantitative indicators/metrics in research assessment

[3] Friendliness, Ambition, Collaboration, Enterprise and Student Success

- we are members of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) which we signed in 2024. Through CoARA, we are committed to developing and implementing an institutional action plan that broadens the range of recognised research contributions, supports diverse career paths, and promotes qualitative, peer review based and context sensitive approaches to assessment over narrow, purely metric driven measures.
- as a founding signatory of the Technician Commitment, we are driving visibility, recognition, and career development to create fulfilling pathways and embed technical excellence across the University for our technical staff, who are critical to the success and sustainability of our research and teaching. We are working to ensure our technicians are identifiable across the University, that their expertise is appropriately recognised and rewarded, and that they benefit from clear career pathways, professional development opportunities and a supportive, inclusive working environment.

How our Code of Practice relates to the University's context on responsible research assessment

1.25 The University of Hertfordshire is fully committed to responsible research assessment, evidenced by our commitments to DORA and CoARA, which underpin our drive to base evaluation primarily on expert qualitative judgement, supported by the responsible use of quantitative indicators to recognise a broad range of research contributions and careers, and to move away from narrow, metric driven definitions of excellence.

1.26 The University of Hertfordshire expects that staff, students and other individuals permitted to work in the University will observe the highest standards of integrity in relation to the conduct of research. We have been a signatory to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity since 2012, and we are a member of the UK Research Integrity Office. We also subscribe to the Global Code of Conduct in Resource Poor Settings. The Director of Research Governance, Ethics and Integrity oversees all research governance including Research Integrity, Trusted Research and Innovation, Ethics involving Human Participants, NHS Research Sponsorship and Clinical Trials, thus integrating our approach to the development, implementation, and oversight of our policies and institutional governance framework relating to the good conduct of research in national and international settings.

3. **Update on Actions Since REF 2021:**
    - Summarise key actions taken since REF 2021 to address issues or recommendations from previous EIAs.

1.27 Our REF2021 EIA had two key recommendations:

a) to develop interventions to improve the under-representation of women, Black, Asian and disabled staff within our REF submission
b) to focus on ensuring a thriving, inclusive and impactful research culture.

1.28 Paragraphs 1.22-1.24 (PCE context) demonstrate our substantial progress in nurturing a positive research culture across our institution, but economic and other constraints in the HE sector mean that to date we have been unable to expand our researcher base as hoped. Our Academic Women's Action Group and our Network of Women+ Professors support the promotion and visibility of academic women through networking, mentoring, and activities tailored toward career advancement, which we hope will gradually improve the under-representation of women.

1.29 Two new initiatives are aimed at leading to an improvement in the under-representation of Black women. We are participating in the national 100 Black Women Professors NOW programme, an initiative led by WHEN, focused on addressing the persistent underrepresentation of Black women in senior academic roles across UK higher education, and we have launched a Black Women Research Collective, funded by our Enhancing Research Culture hypothecated QR funding, which is designed to strengthen representation and leadership in research and higher education.

1.30 One of the key performance objectives in our University Strategy 2025-2030 is to foster a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive culture and environment. We have added a question to our 2025 Staff Opinion Survey to ask staff if they feel part of a supportive and inclusive research culture. This will be used as a benchmark to assess progress against this objective.

1.31 As part of a programme to enhance the Researcher Voice, we recently appointed Research Culture and Integrity Champions who provide a channel of communication between the central Research Culture team and the local School environment. As part of their duties, they assist in the allocation of funding for the enhancement of research culture within the School, and report to the University's Researcher Development Group.

Part 2: Identifying Staff Contracts with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR)
If all your institution's 'teaching and research' (ACEMPFUN 3) contracts in the HESA staff record already comprehensively identify all staff with significant responsibility for research, simply state this here. No further elaboration is needed in this section.

1. **Policies and Procedures:**
    - **Criteria for SRR**: Clearly define the criteria, based upon job role expectations, not past performance. Consider providing examples for consistent interpretation.
    - **Decision-Making and Communication**: Describe the process, roles, and timelines.
    - **Multiple Processes (if applicable)**: If different processes are used for different UoAs, outline each and justify any differences.

Criteria for SRR

2.1 Eligible contracts for inclusion in the volume measure are those belonging to academic staff members whose primary employment function in the annual HESA Staff Record is to undertake either teaching and research (ACEMPFUN 3) or research only (ACEMPFUN 2), and where the staff member is on the payroll within the REF period (academic years 2025/26 to 2026/27 for the relevant HESA Staff Record collections); ACEMPFUN 3 contracts must meet the criteria characteristics for SRR and ACEMPFUN 2 contracts must meet the indicators for RI.

2.2 The University's long-standing policy is that staff who have SRR are those for whom all the following criteria apply:

(a) they have a contract of 0.2 FTE or more, whose primary employment function is to undertake teaching and research **and**

(b) research is an expectation of their job role **and**

(c) they engage actively in independent research as defined in Part 3 (paragraphs 3.1-3.2) **and**

(d) they receive a research allocation in their workload in which to undertake independent research of 0.2 FTE or 20% pro rata of available allocatable hours (excluding the research and scholarly self-managed activity within the academic staff contract).

2.3 Further time for research may be allocated to staff, in addition to the 0.2 FTE/20% allocation associated with SRR, at the discretion of the School. Schools will create transparent principles for additional research allocations, which may vary in some respects due to disciplinary differences, to be approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise).

2.4 The University also has a policy stipulating that staff with SRR returning from parental or long-term leave are entitled to a 4-week period in which they can restart their research before other duties recommence.

2.5 Staff may be given a research allocation of less than 0.2 FTE/20% pro-rata of available allocatable hours, known as Research Accelerator time, at the discretion of the School. This is allocated to staff considered to be on a pathway to SRR.

Decision-Making and Communication Process

2.6 Schools consider on an annual basis whether staff members on REF-eligible contracts without SRR should be awarded it, usually as an outcome of the performance and development review (PDR) process. For staff members who undertake research, consideration is given to the individual's research plans, whether their research can be defined as independent (see paragraph 2.7), and how they contribute to the School/Unit/University research strategies.

2.7 Staff must be able to demonstrate active engagement in independent research before consideration can be given to conferment of SRR, with evidence that they meet one or more of the research independence indicators (see Part 3, paragraph 3.3).

2.8 In line with the REF2029 guidance, SRR is allocated on the basis of job role and role expectations, not past performance, and these expectations are agreed and documented as part of the PDR process. The University's expectations of a member of staff awarded SRR are to contribute substantively to University, School and Unit research strategies via an agreed combination of one or more of the following:

(a) expectations for securing external research income as lead or co-applicant
(b) expectations for making a significant independent contribution on a peer-reviewed output as an author
(c) expectations for providing leadership to other researchers
(d) expectations for leading or contributing to strategic impact activities

2.9 All staff with SRR are expected to contribute to the supervision of research students, but as this forms a separate element of the workload calculation, this expectation will not be used in allocation or renewal of SRR.

2.10 Staff with SRR are awarded a protected research time allocation of 0.2 FTE/20% pro-rata of available allocatable hours, usually for 2 years, with a pre-disposition to renewal subject to review and agreement of updated expectations as defined in 2.7, unless an individual's job role changes. Final

decisions are recorded in the HR system and Associate Deans (Research and Enterprise) are responsible for ensuring that these decisions are communicated to staff whose SRR status has been considered, including those who requested SRR. Our intranet will also provide additional information for staff about how to check whether they have been awarded SRR.

2.11 In all decision-making about SRR mitigating circumstances such as periods of parental leave, ill-health, disability, injury, and constraints related to parental or other caring responsibilities must be taken into consideration and expectations adjusted accordingly. Members of staff should be fully encouraged to disclose any current or future mitigating circumstances that may impact their capacity to work productively as disclosure will allow for consideration of reasonable adjustments. Any circumstances disclosed for the purpose of SRR will only be disclosed to staff who might reasonably be expected to make decisions about an individual's role.

Roles involved in the decision-making process

2.12 Performance and Development Review meetings take place with the individual's line manager and potentially with the School's Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise), or Head of Research Centre, or Head of Department, or Research Group Lead, on delegated authority from the Dean of School. The involvement of staff other than the individual's line manager can be requested by the Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise), the individual or the line manager. The meeting discussions are recorded online in the HR system.

2.13 Associate Deans (Research and Enterprise), in consultation with Heads of Research Centre and/or Heads of Department or Research Group Leads, create a list of staff in their School with SRR. Deans of School are consulted and asked to approve their lists based on the criteria set out in this Code. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) gives final approval to the School lists. Final decisions are confirmed to the Research Excellence Team by the Associate Deans (Research and Enterprise).

2.14 The Research Excellence Team ensures that the final decisions are recorded accurately in the University's online HR system. School-based workload allocators record the 0.2 FTE/20% pro-rata research allocations in the University's online Workload Allocation Management System (WAMS). The Research Excellence Team checks that the research allocations in WAMS align with the information in the HR system.

Timeline for identifying staff contracts with SRR

2.15 Performance and Development Review meetings with line managers and potentially with Associate Deans (Research and Enterprise) or with Heads of Department or with Research Group Leads, or separate meetings with Associate Deans (Research and Enterprise), usually take place before August each year. Job role expectations, research activities and plans, and workload allocations are discussed at these meetings and decisions feed into workload planning for the next academic year.

2.16 Key Stages in the Process for the Identification of Staff Contracts with SRR

NB: The timeline for these decisions will be consistent with School and University business planning.	
Stage	**Who**
Performance and Development Review (PDR) or separate meeting at which research activities are discussed and documented. Staff with SRR – discussion on progress and/or renewal (at 2-year stage). Staff without SRR – if requested by the staff member, discussion on potential conferment of SRR. Realistic research expectations agreed for potential new conferments and SRR renewals which are documented in the PDR review forms.	Member of staff and line manager and optionally: Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise) (ADRE) Head of Research Centre (HoRC) Head of Department (HoD) Research Group Lead
Decisions on new conferments and renewals of SRR	ADRE in consultation with HoRC/HoD/Research Group Lead/Dean of School (DoS). List prepared and sent to Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise (PVC (R&E)) for approval. Final approved list returned to ADRE.
Decisions communicated to staff whose SRR status has been considered, including those who requested SRR.	ADRE responsibility, who may delegate this task to Line Managers, HoRC / HoDs/ Research Group Leads
Appeals (should any be made)	**Informal**: Staff Member, ADRE **Formal Stage 1:** Staff Member, Director of Research Culture and Environment and panel **Formal Stage 2:** Staff Member, PVC (R&E).
Approved list of staff with SRR sent to the Workload Allocation Management System (WAMS) Allocator(s) in each School	ADRE
SRR research time allocations entered into WAMS	WAMS Allocators
Approved list sent to Research Excellence Team	ADRE
SRR status entered into HR System	Research Excellence Team will inform HR, who will update the HR system
Adjustments for any successful SRR appeals sent to WAMS Allocators who enter these into WAMS and to the Research Excellence Team who inform HR, who update the HR system	ADRE WAMS Allocators Research Excellence Team HR
HR and WAMS SRR reports checked for accuracy/alignment	Research Excellence Team

2. **Staff, Committees, and Training:**
    - **Roles and Responsibilities: Define roles and responsibilities of individuals and committees, distinguishing between advisory and decision-making roles.**
    - **Training: Detail training provided.**

Roles and responsibilities

2.17 The University has used its well-established governance structures for research to oversee REF preparations, including the drafting of its Code of Practice. Key roles are described below.

2.18 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) is the senior officer of the University tasked with leading University research, chairing the University Research Committee and having overall responsibility for the delivery of research degrees in the institution. They are tasked by the Vice-Chancellor to lead the University's REF2029 submission. **Decision-making.**

2.19 Reporting to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) are the Director of Research Culture and Environment, responsible for nurturing a positive research culture and enhancing the research environment across the University, the Director of Research and Enterprise Services, who leads the teams which provide operational support for research and enterprise activities, and the Director of the Doctoral College. These three roles constitute the Research and Enterprise Executive, led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise). **Advisory.**

2.20 The Research Excellence Team is led by the Head of Research Excellence, who reports to the Director of Research and Enterprise Services. **Advisory**.

2.21 Each of the five Schools within the University has a Dean of School, who is the senior academic leader responsible for the strategic direction, operational management, and performance of their School, and an Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise), who provides strategic leadership for all research and enterprise development within a School. **Advisory**.

2.22 Each Unit of Assessment has a Coordinator appointed through a process of nomination overseen by the Dean of School and the Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise) and approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise). Unit of Assessment Coordinators are senior members of research staff. **Advisory**.

2.23 The University Executive Team, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, makes key decisions on behalf of the University and sets direction for the running of the institution. The constitution of the University Executive Team is at Appendix 2b. **Decision-Making.**

2.24 The Research Committee of the Academic Board is the body designated by the University to advise and make recommendations to the Academic Board on all matters relating to research in the University. The Chair is appointed by the Vice-Chancellor and is the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise). The constitution of the Research Committee is at Appendix 2c. **Advisory**

2.25 The Research Committee of the Academic Board approved the establishment of the REF2029 Stakeholder Group to oversee the REF2029 preparation and submission processes. The REF2029 Stakeholder Group represents every School of the University through membership of their Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise) and Unit of Assessment Coordinator(s). It currently meets four times a year to oversee the REF2029 preparations and enables the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) to make recommendations to the University Executive Team about final decisions. The REF2029 Stakeholder Group terms of reference are at Appendix 2d. **Advisory**.

2.26 The Research and Enterprise Executive approved the establishment of the REF2029 Management Group, a working group formed to oversee preparations for submission to REF2029. It currently meets bi-monthly. The REF2029 Management Group terms of reference are at Appendix 2e. **Advisory**.

Training

2.27 It is University policy that all staff undertake Equality and Diversity and Unconscious Bias online courses as a pre-requisite to passing probation and subsequently every two years. External REF2029-specific Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training will be delivered before the end of academic year 2025/2026 to all staff in REF2029 advisory or decision-making roles including Associate Deans (Research and Enterprise), Unit of Assessment Coordinators, Senior Managers and the Research Excellence Team. On appointment our external REF Advisors are asked to confirm that they have undertaken appropriate Equality and Diversity and Unconscious Bias training.

3. **Appeals:**
    - **Clearly outline how staff can appeal decisions about SRR, with appropriate links and contact details.**

2.28 Any member of staff employed on an academic (teaching and research) contract may submit an appeal. Appeals may be submitted on the grounds of errors in the use of evidence to inform decision-making, the production of new and relevant material evidence which could not be provided previously, or irregularities within the agreed process. Appeals which solely challenge academic judgements will not normally be considered. The outcome of any appeal will be binding for two years unless new evidence is provided. Appeals should normally be lodged within 2 months of receiving notification of the final SRR decision. The appeals process has three stages.

Informal Stage

2.29 Any individual seeking to appeal an SRR decision should first raise their concern informally with their Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise) who may be able to address any issues or explain the reasons for the decision. If the Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise) is unable to resolve the matter the individual may submit a formal appeal.

Formal Stage 1

2.30 If the individual is dissatisfied with the outcome of the informal process, a formal appeal may be submitted to the Director of Research Culture and Environment who has delegated authority from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) to convene a panel to review the decision. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the REF specific email inbox (REF2029@herts.ac.uk). Stage 1 appeals must be headed “SRR – Stage 1 Formal Appeal” and must state:

- the name and School of the individual
- an explanation of the nature of the appeal, which may be based on errors in the use of evidence to reach the decision, the production of new material evidence, or on irregularities within the agreed process
- evidence to support the appeal
- confirmation that the informal stage has been completed.

2.31 Confirmation of receipt of the appeal will be provided to the appellant.

2.32 The Director of Research Culture and Environment will convene a panel to review the earlier decision based on the explanation and evidence provided by the appellant and by the School. All members of the panel will be independent of the earlier decision-making process for the appellant and will be drawn from the wider REF Stakeholder Group. In the course of their investigation the Appeals Panel may interview the appellant. The Appeals Panel will produce a report within 20 working days

detailing the nature of the appeal and the Panel's findings, which will be sent to the appellant and the School with confirmation of the outcome.

Formal Stage 2

2.33 If the appellant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal investigation, they may submit a request for review of the outcome by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise). A review will only be undertaken if evidence can be provided that the agreed appeals process has not been followed correctly. Review will be focused on the application of the procedures and whether there is evidence of procedural or administrative irregularity. Requests must be submitted in writing to the REF specific email inbox (REF2029@herts.ac.uk).

2.34 Stage 2 requests for review must be headed "SRR – Stage 2 Request for Review" and must state:

- the name and School of the individual
- an explanation of the nature of the original appeal
- confirmation that the formal stage 1 process has been fully completed
- the reason why the stage 1 decision should be reviewed
- evidence to support the request for review.

2.35 Confirmation of receipt of the request for review will be provided to the appellant.

2.36 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) will decide whether there is sufficient evidence to warrant a review. In such cases a small review panel will be convened. All members of the panel will be independent of the earlier decision-making processes. In the course of their investigation the Review Panel may interview the appellant, and anyone involved in the earlier appeals process. The appellant will be notified of the outcome of the review within 20 working days. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) will hold final authority over the decision, which cannot be appealed further.

4. **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**:
    - **EIA Integration**: Demonstrate how EIA informed SRR identification and policy/procedure development. Provide information on data, findings, and actions taken.

2.37 Our baseline EIA on SRR identification and policy/procedure development includes quantitative analysis on the data submitted to the 2024/25 HESA Staff Record and qualitative interpretation of

the data and information provided by the EIA focus group to consider whether patterns reflect the REF process itself or wider workforce structures.

2.38 The quantitative analyses are designed to be repeatable and will be conducted again during the preparation phase of the HESA Staff Records for 2025/26 and 2026/27, in accordance with the requirement that EIAs should be developed at the point decisions about our REF submission are made.

Part 3: Determining Research Independence
(Required for all participating institutions)

1. **Policies and Procedures**:
    - **Criteria and Evidence**: Clearly outline criteria and evidence used to assess research independence, particularly for 'research only' (ACEMPFUN 2) contracts.
    - **Decision-Making and Communication**: Describe the process, roles, and timelines.

Criteria and Evidence

3.1 The REF2029 Volume Measure Guidance requires institutions to implement a process to determine if 'research-only' (ACEMPFUN 2) contracts demonstrate independence. Research-only contracts demonstrating independence and belonging to staff on the payroll within the REF period (academic years 2025/26 and 2026/27 for the relevant HESA Staff Record collections) will contribute to the REF2029 volume measure.

3.2 In line with REF2029 guidance, the University defines research independence as undertaking self-directed research rather than primarily carrying out another individual's research programme.

3.3 To be classified as an independent researcher staff employed on teaching and research or research-only contracts must be undertaking self-directed research as stated in 3.2 and meet one or more of the independence indicators below:

(a) acting as lead or co-applicant on externally funded research projects
(b) holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship requiring research independence
(c) leading a research group or a substantial/specialised work package on a research project
(d) making a significant independent contribution on a peer-reviewed output as an author[4]
(e) having significant input into the design, conduct and analysis of research.[5]

3.4 As stated in Part 2, paragraph 2.7, staff employed on teaching and research contracts must be able to demonstrate active engagement in independent research before consideration can be given to

[4] Note that being named on research outputs alone does not necessarily constitute evidence of research independence
[5] This could apply to members of staff employed on another individual's research programme who are given the facility to design, conduct and/or interpret a specific element of the programme, or who conduct their own research independently of their work on the programme.

conferment of SRR by providing evidence of meeting one or more of the research independence indicators in paragraph 3.3.

3.5 All members of staff classified as independent researchers are expected to undertake self-directed research which contributes to University, School and Unit research strategies.

3.6 The University of Hertfordshire has only a small number (c.50) of research-only staff contracts, the majority of which belong to members of staff with the job role of Research Assistant or Senior Research Assistant. These members of staff are employed primarily to work on another individual's research programme and therefore do not meet the definition of research independence.

Decision-Making and Communication

3.7 The Research Excellence Team informs Associate Deans (Research and Enterprise) about research-only staff contracts in their School three times a year.

3.8 Associate Deans (Research and Enterprise), in consultation with Heads of Research Centre and/or Heads of Department or Research Group Leads, agree which members of staff employed on these contracts (if any) demonstrate research independence. Deans of School are consulted, with final approval given by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise).

3.9 The Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise) writes to each staff member employed on a research-only contract to advise if they are considered to be an independent researcher. The communication explains the definition and indicators of research independence, how the decision has been reached and concludes with an invitation to discuss the decision with their Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise) if they have any questions or concerns.

3.10 The decisions are communicated to the Research Excellence Team by the Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise). The Research Excellence Team ensures that the final decisions are recorded accurately in the online HR system. Decisions are usually taken by August each year.

3.11 In line with the REF2029 guidance, the University usually considers research independence to be persistent.

2. **Staff, Committees, and Training:**
    - *If this section is the same as Part 2, please just refer to the earlier text.*
    - **Roles and Responsibilities**: Define roles and responsibilities of individuals and committees, distinguishing between advisory and decision-making roles.
    - **Training**: Detail training provided.

See paragraphs 2.17 – 2.27.

3. **Appeals:**
    - Clearly outline how staff can appeal decisions about research independence, with appropriate links and contact details.
    -

3.12 In accordance with the REF2029 guidance we have implemented a query process (paragraph 3.9) as more than 90% of the staff employed on research-only contracts have job roles of Research Assistant or Senior Research Assistant and are employed for the primary purpose of supporting the research of others. However, staff may use the SRR appeals process described in paragraphs 2.28 – 2.36 should they be dissatisfied with the outcome of the query process.

4. **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**:
    - **EIA Integration**: Demonstrate how EIA informed research independence determination and policy/procedure development. Provide information on data, findings, and actions taken.

3.13 The number of research-only staff at the University of Hertfordshire impacted by the research independence determination is very small, with no more than 50 members of staff employed on research-only contracts in any one year in the current REF cycle, and with more than 90% of those contracts belonging to staff employed for the primary purpose of supporting the research of others.

3.14 The 2024/25 HESA Staff Record identified fewer than 10% employed on research-only contracts for purposes other than supporting the research of others. Any analysis would risk disclosure of the identities of individuals. Such a small number would significantly affect percentages in statistical data, and it would be impossible to draw any equality considerations. Therefore, no such analysis has been conducted.

Part 4: Allocating Contracts to UoAs
(Required for all participating institutions)

1. **Policies and Procedures**:
    - **Criteria and Evidence**: Clearly outline criteria and evidence used to allocate contracts to UoAs
    - **Decision-Making and Communication**: Describe the process, roles, and timelines.

Criteria and Evidence used to allocate contracts to UoAs

4.1 The REF2029 Volume Measure Guidance requires institutions to link each REF-eligible contract, both volume-contributing and non-volume-contributing, to the UoA to which it is principally associated. This allocation will be done using the REFUOA2029 field in the annual HESA Staff Records for 2025/26 and 2026/27. UoA allocation may change between annual returns, reflecting the evolving nature of research and substantive connections.

4.2 Our policy and procedure for allocating volume-contributing contracts to UoAs will consider the research activities and focus of the individual holding the contract; the disciplinary areas defined by UoA descriptors set out in the Panel Criteria, and the University's REF2029 submission strategy.

4.3 Our policy and procedure for allocating non-volume-contributing contracts to UoAs will consider the teaching activities and focus of the individual holding the contract and HESA Cost Centres.

Decision-Making – Process, Roles and Timeline

Contracts eligible for inclusion in the REF2029 volume measure

4.4 Prior to submission of the HESA Staff Records for 2025/26 and 2026/27, the Research Excellence Team will share the list of contracts eligible for inclusion in the REF2029 volume measure and the relevant sub-panel descriptors with Associate Deans (Research and Enterprise).

4.5 Associate Deans (Research and Enterprise), in consultation with Heads of Research Centre and/or Heads of Department and/or Research Group Leads and/or Unit of Assessment Coordinators, will determine the most appropriate 'fit' for each contract, based on their combined in-depth knowledge of each individual's research activities, the sub-panel descriptors and the University's REF2029 submission strategy.

4.6 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) will give final approval to the proposed

UoA allocations.

4.7 The Research Excellence Team will ensure that the approved UoA allocations are entered correctly into the HESA Staff Records for 2025/26 and 2026/27 (and subsequent HESA Staff Records if required) before submission in October each year.

Contracts ineligible for inclusion in the REF2029 volume measure

4.8 Prior to submission of the HESA Staff Records for 2025/26 and 2026/27, the Research Excellence Team will share the list of contracts ineligible for inclusion in the REF2029 volume measure with Associate Deans (Research and Enterprise), having provisionally assigned these contracts to UoAs using HESA Cost Centre information.

4.9 Associate Deans (Research and Enterprise) will review the provisional UoA allocations and discuss any HESA Cost Centre queries with their HR Business Partner, following which they will confirm the allocations to the Research Excellence Team.

4.10 The Research Excellence Team will ensure that the confirmed UoA allocations are entered correctly into the annual HESA Staff Records for 2025/26 and 2026/27 (and subsequent HESA Staff Records if required) before submission in October each year.

Communication – Process, Roles and Timeline

4.11 UoA allocations will be confirmed before submission of the HESA Staff Record in October each year. When confirmed, the Research Excellence Team will send Unit of Assessment Coordinators confirmation of the staff contracts allocated to their UoA. Unit of Assessment Coordinators will be responsible for ensuring staff employed on contracts contributing to the REF2029 volume measure are informed about their UoA allocation.

2. **Staff, Committees, and Training:**
    - *If this section is the same as Part 2, please just refer to the earlier text.*
    - **Roles and Responsibilities**: Define roles and responsibilities of individuals and committees, distinguishing between advisory and decision-making roles.
    - **Training**: Detail training provided

See paragraphs 2.17 – 2.27.

3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**:
    - **EIA Integration**: Demonstrate how EIA informed allocation of contracts to UoAs and policy/procedure development. Provide information on data, findings, and actions taken.

4.12 Our baseline EIA on the allocation of contracts to UoAs and policy and procedure development includes quantitative analysis on the data submitted to the 2024/25 HESA Staff Record and qualitative interpretation of the data and information provided by the EIA focus group to consider whether patterns reflect the REF process itself or wider workforce structures.

4.13 The quantitative analyses are designed to be repeatable and will be conducted again during the preparation phase of the HESA Staff Records for 2025/26 and 2026/27, in accordance with the requirement that EIAs should be developed at the point decisions about our REF submission are made.

Part 5: Selecting outputs

1. **Policies and Procedures**:

5.1 In REF2029 each output included in the submission must be the product of research, have first been brought into the public domain during the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2028, have a substantive link to the institution making the submission, and for outputs within scope of the Open Access Policy[6] meet the requirements of that policy. The substantive link describes the relationship between an institution and the submitted output, which must be evidenced through an eligible employment relationship with an author or equivalent who has made a significant research contribution to the output.

5.2 As stated in Part 1, paragraph 1.3, it is our intention to make the highest-quality representative submission possible to REF2029 using a fair and transparent process for the selection of outputs based on external peer review to mitigate the risk of bias. It is our intention that all outputs included in the final submission to REF2029 will have been reviewed by two external reviewers.

5.3 Independent external REF Advisors have been appointed for each UoA. The appointments have been based on individuals' previous REF2021 experience where possible, together with appropriate discipline expertise. Our REF Advisors have attended inductions facilitated by our Director of Research Culture and Environment to support their understanding of the REF2029 requirements, the University of Hertfordshire's plans and ambitions for REF2029, and our expectations regarding their contribution to our preparations. Our REF Advisors will review draft impact case studies and SPRE statements in addition to outputs.

5.4 Our first mock review of outputs took place in 2025, with at least two more scheduled before final decision-making on the selection of outputs for inclusion in our submission to REF2029. The processes used in our first mock review, set out below, will be utilised in future mock reviews:

(a) Staff with significant responsibility for research were invited to nominate up to 3 outputs for review.

(b) Unit of Assessment Coordinators (UOACs) were provided with reports from our Research Information System (RIS) containing the details of all eligible outputs, who consulted with Heads of Research Centres and/or Heads of Department and Associate Deans (Research and Enterprise) to identify eligible outputs that should be sent for review, taking into consideration

[6] Journal articles and conference contributions with an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN).

both the output nominations and outputs which had not been nominated. This will continue in future mock exercises to ensure that final submissions are representative of the research undertaken within the UoA over the REF period.

(c) Our external REF Advisors were asked to give a grade and a written comment on each output. (In future mock reviews our REF Advisors may be supplied with citation data to support their grading, which will be provided in alignment with our commitments to DORA and CoARA and with the guidance published in the Panel Criteria).

(d) Grades and comments were collated by the Research Excellence Team for review by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise), the Unit of Assessment Coordinator and the Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise).

(e) Individual feedback was shared with the relevant members of staff by Unit of Assessment Coordinators for their information and personal development.

(f) The range of data generated from the mock exercises will be used by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise), the Unit of Assessment Coordinators and the Associate Deans (Research and Enterprise) to reach a judgement on the highest quality outputs in order to maximise the overall quality profile for each Unit's submission.

(g) Paragraphs 5.10 - 5.14 below set out our process for finalisation of the list of outputs to be included in our submission to each UoA.

- **Identifying substantive link to outputs**

5.5 The Research Excellence and the Research and Scholarly Communications Teams will use information in our RIS and our HR system to ensure that all the outputs selected for inclusion in the final submission comply with the substantive link requirements:

(a) RIS output records include acceptance and publication dates. Additional checks will be conducted to verify these dates are correct. If the date of imprint on a publication lies outside the publication period, but the actual date of appearance is within the publication period, evidence of the actual date on which it became available will be collated via requests to publishers for confirmation letters.

(b) Information in our HR system on contract start and end dates for HESA Staff Identifiers associated with outputs will be utilised to ensure eligible employment relationships apply to all the outputs selected for inclusion in the final submission.

(c) Checks will be made to ensure that usually no more than 5 outputs are attributed to each HESA Staff Identifier in each UoA in the final submission, to help ensure that our UoA submissions are representative of the full range of research within each. However, this guideline could be

breached if outputs from the reserve list are drawn into assessment (for example, if a sub-panel were to refuse a request for double-weighting).

- **Selecting outputs where the substantive link is via former staff:** covering compulsory redundancy, voluntary redundancy or severance, retirement, expiration of fixed term contracts

5.6 Eligible outputs where a substantive link is via former staff, including instances of compulsory redundancy, voluntary redundancy or severance, retirement or the expiry of fixed-term contracts, may be selected for inclusion in the final submission if they enhance the quality profile of the UoA, in line with the portability rules in the REF guidance[7].

- **Assigning outputs to UoA/s:** Considering interdisciplinary research and submitting an output to multiple UOAs.

5.7 The content of outputs selected for inclusion in the final submissions will be reviewed by Unit of Assessment Coordinators to ensure alignment with the disciplinary areas defined by UoA descriptors set out in the Panel Criteria. Outputs which align with the disciplinary areas of more than one UoA descriptor may be included in the submissions of two UoAs (but no more than two). Cross-referral requests will be submitted when deemed appropriate, for example, for aggregated submissions incorporating work from more than one discipline, or for interdisciplinary outputs.

- **Procedures for supporting diversity of outputs**

5.8 Staff are encouraged to produce outputs in the most appropriate format (including British Sign Language (BSL) and Welsh) and provided with guidance on how to present non-text outputs. The nomination process used in our first mock review encouraged staff to nominate diverse output types which were included in the review, and this process will continue in future reviews. All output types identified as the highest quality will be considered for inclusion in the final submission. Where outputs in BSL or Welsh are identified, external assessors with BSL or Welsh fluency will be engaged.

- **Procedures for ensuring submissions are representative of the research undertaken within the submitting unit during the REF period:** Outlining the processes that will be undertaken to ensure that submitted outputs are reflective of the research strategies and structures, the diversity of research outputs, and contributions, collaborations and partnerships of the submitting unit and the unit's research strategies.

[7] Contributions to Knowledge and Understanding Guidance, paragraph 6.7.2.

5.9 UoA research strategies and structures are discussed and minuted at annual business planning meetings for each School. These meetings are chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and attended by the members of Research and Enterprise Executive, the Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise), and the Dean of School.

5.10 When compiling their proposed list of outputs for inclusion in the final submission, Unit of Assessment Coordinators and Heads of Research Centre and/or Heads of Department will consider alignment with School and Unit research strategies and whether the proposed lists are representative of the research undertaken by staff in the unit over the REF2029 period. As stated in 5.4(b), our processes for the selection of outputs do not rely solely on staff nomination. Unit of Assessment Coordinators are provided with regular reports on eligible outputs drawn from our Research Information System which are used to aid decision-making. These processes help to ensure comprehensive coverage and mitigate equality risks.

5.11 Consideration will be given to the inclusion of outputs sole-authored by staff on honorary emeritus contracts, if published within six months of retirement, and there is evidence that the University provided allocated time and funding to support the research. Any such outputs would only be included with the author's agreement. In accordance with the REF2029 guidance, clearance would be sought from the REF Director for the inclusion of these outputs.

5.12 The proposed list of outputs for inclusion in the submission of each UoA will be analysed from an EDI and representativeness perspective.

5.13 A meeting will be held with each UoA, chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise), attended by the Director of Research Culture and Environment, the Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise), the Unit of Assessment Coordinator, and the Head of Research Excellence, to review the proposed list against their knowledge of the Unit's population. The Unit of Assessment Coordinator and Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise) will present a short narrative to explain how the selected outputs are representative of the research undertaken within the UoA over the REF period, following which the lists will be finalised.

5.14 The final submission, and selection of outputs, will be considered and approved by the University Executive Team on the advice of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise).

- **Policies and procedures and responsible research assessment practice**

5.15 We are committed at institutional level to DORA principles and are an active member of CoARA. Our external advisors are required to provide reviews based on the content of the output and not the place where it was published, and to use metrics only in line with REF principles. Decisions about the final submission will be based on expert qualitative assessment informed by metrics in accordance with the stated practices of the REF sub-panels set out in the Panel Criteria.

2. **Staff, Committees, and Training:**
    - *If this section is the same as Part 2 or 3, please just refer to the earlier text.*
    - **Roles and Responsibilities**: Define roles and responsibilities of individuals and committees, distinguishing between advisory and decision-making roles.
    - **Training**: Detail training provided.

See paragraphs 2.17 – 2.27.

3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**:
    - **EIA Integration**: Demonstrate how EIA informed the selection of outputs and policy/procedure development. Provide information on data, findings, and actions taken.

5.16 Our baseline EIA on the selection of outputs and policy and procedure development includes quantitative analysis on data from our first mock exercise and qualitative interpretation of the data and information provided by the EIA focus group to consider whether patterns reflect the REF process itself or wider workforce structures.

5.17 The quantitative analyses are designed to be repeatable and will be conducted again after mock reviews and when the final selection of outputs is in progress as stated in paragraphs 5.10-5.14, in accordance with the requirement that EIAs should be developed at the point decisions about our REF submission are made.

5.18 A final EIA will be conducted after submission, in accordance with the REF guidance.

Part 6: Appendices

1. Equality Impact Assessment

1. Introduction

1.1. This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been conducted as part of the Code of Practice (CoP) submission to the Research Excellence Framework 2029 (REF2029) for the University of Hertfordshire, with the intention of investigating whether policies or practices outlined in the Code of Practice may have a different impact on groups with protected characteristics, or other relevant characteristics, and informing any necessary adaptations or interventions.

1.2. The assessment is informed by comprehensive analysis of 2024-2025 Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) staff data and through consultation with staff from protected groups. The EIA Focus groups included staff with all protected characteristics and other relevant characteristics, as defined in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2.

1.3. This is an initial intermediary EIA which will be reviewed periodically following the finalisation of each HESA return and mock output review between now and the REF2029 submission, with the intention of informing the CoP.

1.4. If new issues arise, they will be addressed through amendment to the CoP and an interim updated EIA, where appropriate.

2. Scope of EIA

2.1. This EIA investigates whether the University of Hertfordshire complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set out in the Equality Act 2010 within REF2029-related decision-making processes. The three aims of the PSED are to:

- Put an end to unlawful behaviour that is banned by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equal opportunities between those with and without protected characteristics
- Foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those without

2.2. Therefore, our EIA aims to ensure that our REF2029 policies and procedures avoid any unjustified disadvantage and have an evidence-informed approach to equality.

2.3. The following REF2029 procedures are assessed:

- Determining Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) and Research Independence (RI)
- Allocation of eligible contracts to Units of Assessment (UoAs)
- Selection of outputs
- Appeals and review processes

3. Characteristics included in the analysis

3.1. Protected characteristics have been outlined in the Equality Act 2010 as follows:

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

3.2. We have also included analysis on certain characteristics that are not protected under the Equality Act 2010, to understand whether these staff groups experience discrimination. This included nationality and part-time working patterns. Caring responsibilities were also considered in the EIA Focus Group meetings.

3.3. Institutional level analysis has been conducted on all the characteristics outlined in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2. More in-depth analysis was then undertaken focusing on the characteristics of age, disability, ethnicity, sex and working pattern as these characteristics had the most robust data in the Human Resources system. Data were not robust enough to provide reliable outcomes for all other characteristics listed above and therefore statistical determination of significance could not be determined but qualitative insights are provided.

4. Populations included in analysis

4.1. According to the 2024-2025 HESA data, the University of Hertfordshire employed 1477 members of staff with teaching and research contracts (ACEMPFUN 3) or research-only contracts (ACEMPFUN 2) on 31st July 2025. Of this total, 355 members of staff had SRR or RI.

5. Actions from the REF2021 EIA

5.1. In the final EIA conducted by the University of Hertfordshire for REF2021, two key recommendations were made:

- To develop interventions to improve the under-representation of women, Black, Asian and disabled staff within our REF submission
- To focus on ensuring a thriving, inclusive and impactful research culture

5.2. The CoP for REF2029 outlines the actions that have been taken to address these recommendations, including the development of targeted initiatives such as the Black Women in Research Collective, membership to the national 100 Black Women Professors NOW programme, and the introduction of Research Culture and Integrity Champions.

5.3. Table 1 illustrates comparative analysis of staff data between REF2014, REF2021 and the current data for REF2029. This indicates that as a whole, there has been an increase in representation of Black and Asian staff with SRR or RI, although these changes are not statistically significant. While there is an increase in representation of female staff between REF2014 and REF2029, a small decline can be observed between REF2021 and REF2029. Notably, the increase in representation of disabled staff between 2014 and 2025 is statistically significant, demonstrating progress in this area over this longer timeframe. We believe this increase in representation reflects the University's sustained overarching focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and increased staff confidence in declaring a disability. It is important to distinguish this finding from paragraph 6.5, which shows that staff with a declared disability are less likely to have SRR in relation to staff with SRR without a declared disability in the 2024-2025 HESA staff data, whereas Table 1 demonstrates the difference in representation over time (between 2014 and 2025) in the proportion of disabled staff in the academic population.

Table 1: Comparison of representation of protected characteristics between REF2014, REF2021 and 2024-2025 HESA data in preparation for REF2029

		Difference in SRR between 2014-2025 (%)	Difference in SRR between 2021-2025 (%)
Gender	Female	6.79	-0.51
	Male	-7.07	0.23
Ethnicity	White		-6.99
	Asian		1.79
	Black		2.23
	Mixed		
	Other		-0.96
Disability	Yes	7.04	2.44
	No		-2.08
	Prefer not to say		-0.36

Increase in SRR allocation

Decrease in SRR allocation

Data not available or not directly comparable

6. Determining SRR and RI

6.1. The University of Hertfordshire's Code of Practice (CoP) submission to REF2029 sets out in detail the process for identifying staff with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR), including the eligibility criteria that must be met within a staff contract and the expectations of roles with SRR. Fewer than 10% of staff employed on REF-eligible contracts were identified as having RI for purposes other than supporting the research of others in the 2024-25 HESA staff return, therefore as explained in the CoP (CoP paragraphs 3.13-3.14) it would not be possible to draw any equality considerations from such small numbers.

6.2. Feedback from the EIA Focus groups highlighted variation in how Schools in the University might interpret the expectations for SRR allocation, with some potentially allocating SRR only when all the expectations were met, whereas others might allocate SRR based on meeting just some of the expectations. To address this, the CoP has been amended to clarify that "one or more" of the expectations are required to be met. Additional clarification has also been provided regarding the expectation to make a "significant independent contribution on a peer-reviewed output as an author", addressing concerns that the previous wording did not specify which types of output would be acceptable. The CoP now also confirms that leadership of other researchers, including research students, meets one of the expectations for SRR allocation, with supervision of research students now shown separately, in line with the University's workload allocation modelling. A footnote has been added to the CoP to define "significant input", ensuring that staff employed on another researcher's programme who design, conduct or interpret specific programme elements or conduct their own research independently of their work on the programme are appropriately recognised.

6.3. Focus group discussions revealed some staff were uncertain about whether they had SRR or were eligible for SRR status. To address this, internal communications on the University intranet have been strengthened to enable staff to access this information. Furthermore, a table summarising the SRR process has also been added to the CoP (CoP paragraph 2.16) to improve clarity. This may also be a more accessible format for this information. As stated in the CoP (paragraph 2.3) new guidance on research allocations, including that associated with SRR, can be accessed by staff and managers on the University intranet. This will cover a broad range of ways that staff can seek support to include a research allocation in their workload.

6.4. Importantly, the EIA focus groups were instrumental in the University clarifying its approach to mitigating circumstances, with the inclusion of two new paragraphs in the CoP (CoP paragraphs 2.4 and 2.11). Focus group participants emphasised the need for clearer guidance on mitigating circumstances that could impact people with protected characteristics, such as parental leave, and caring responsibilities. The University's established policy stipulating that staff with SRR returning from parental or long-term sick leave are entitled to a 4-week period in which they can restart their research before other duties recommence has been added to the CoP (CoP paragraph 2.4). Additionally, a statement has been added encouraging staff to confidentially disclose any mitigating circumstances that may impact their capacity to work productively, which can then be addressed with their line manager to consider reasonable adjustments (CoP paragraph

2.11). This aligns with the decoupling of outputs introduced for REF2029, which Research England's EDI report identified as an important mechanism to recognise the effect of equality-related circumstances on research productivity.

6.5. Table 2 compares the characteristics of staff with SRR to the wider academic population employed on REF-eligible contracts. This indicates that staff with SRR are not fully representative of the University's academic and research staff. Statistically significant differences (based on 95% confidence intervals) were identified across several characteristics, including working pattern, sex, age, ethnicity, disability status and nationality. These findings, highlighted in red, suggest that certain groups such as part-time staff, women, younger staff, Black staff and staff with a declared disability are proportionately less likely to have SRR compared to all academic and research staff. This aligns with the findings in paragraph 5.3 in which staff from protected groups are more likely to have SRR now than in 2014, but not necessarily in comparison to the overall academic and research staff population in 2025. This pattern is consistent with sector-wide findings reported by Research England, which noted improvement in female representation between 2014 and 2021, with some improvement for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff.

6.6. Several protected characteristics, including pregnancy and maternity leave, some categories of religion, sexual orientation and gender identity could not be included in this analysis of representativeness due to very small numbers; these are highlighted in yellow. As disclosure of these characteristics is optional, low response rates limit the ability to conduct meaningful analysis. The University regularly requests that staff update their personal information on the Human Resources system, including protected characteristics which has led to an increase in disclosure rates for certain characteristics but not all. Increasing staff confidence in disclosure may be an area for future development.

6.7. It is important to note that statistical significance does not necessarily represent meaningful differences. Larger sample sizes produce narrower confidence intervals, which increases the likelihood of statistically significant differences even if they do not reflect change. Conversely, smaller sample sizes do not allow for meaningful analysis, which should be considered when interpreting the results. These results will inform ongoing monitoring and targeted actions to address any barriers to participation in research.

Table 2: Profiles of staff with SRR compared to whole staff population from HESA return 2024-25

Characteristic		All academic and research staff (Total 1477)	Staff with SRR as of 31st July 2025 (Total 355)
		% of total	% of total
Working pattern	Full time	66.82	76.34
	Part time	33.18	23.66
Sex	Female	53.01	41.69
	Male	46.85	58.03
Age	25 and under	0	0.18
	26-35	13	6.2
	36-45	29.65	33.24
	46-55	28.44	28.73
	56-65	21.73	21.13
	>66	7.04	10.7
Ethnicity	White	65.47	69.01
	Asian	17.47	18.59
	Black	7.92	4.23
	Mixed	3.18	3.1
	Other	3.79	2.54
Disability	Declared disability	9.41	7.04
	No declared disability	87.61	90.42
Nationality	UK	72.71	65.92
	EU/EEA	11.65	16.62
	International	15.64	17.46
Sexual orientation	Bisexual/Gay/Lesbian	4.81	5.92
	Heterosexual or straight	77.79	68.45
	Other sexual orientation	1.02	0.56
Gender identity	Different to Birth	1.15	0.28
	Same as Birth	79.49	69.3
Religion	Any other Religion or Belief	3.59	3.1
	Buddhist	N/A	1.69
	Christian	31.08	23.38
	Hindu	3.05	2.82
	Jewish	N/A	1.13
	Muslim	9.28	7.04
	No Religion	31.75	35.77
	Sikh	N/A	0.85
Pregnancy and maternity	Staff on maternity leave	1.56	1.41

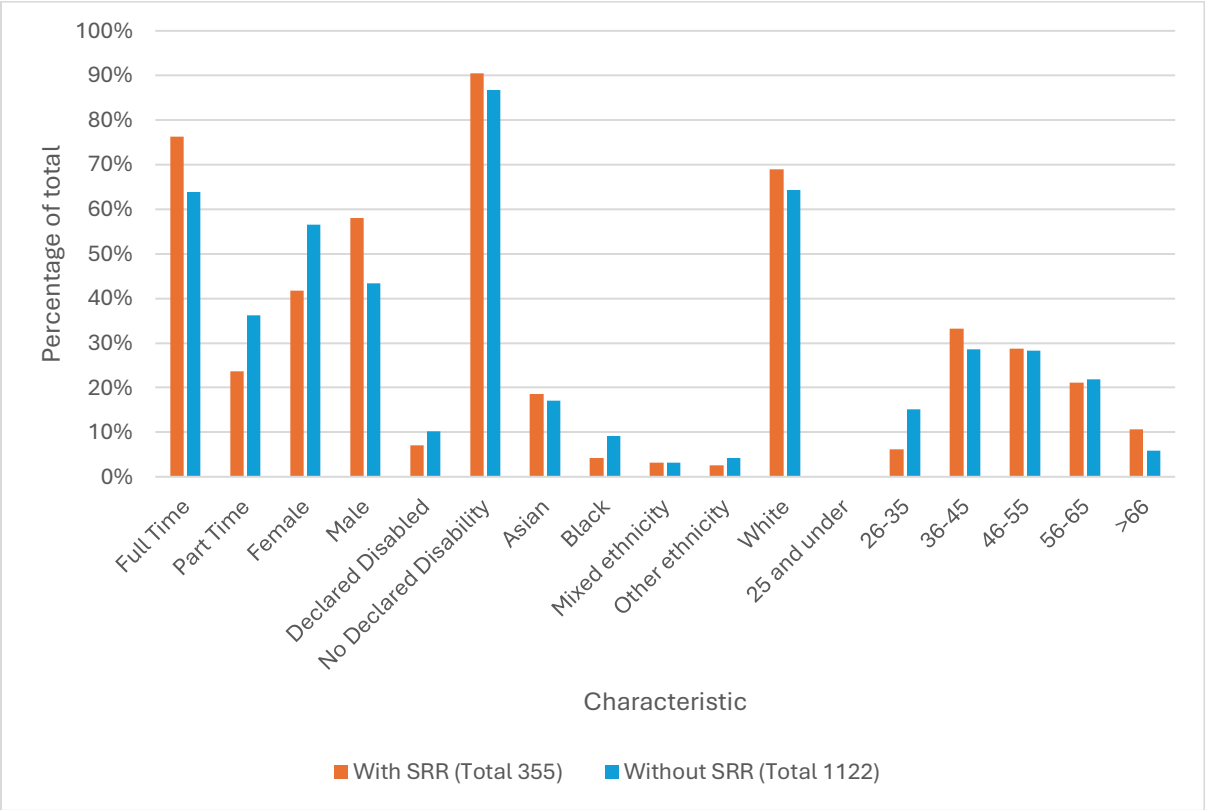
6.8. Figure 1 demonstrates analysis comparing staff with SRR and eligible staff without SRR and indicates that staff with SRR are statistically more likely to be full time than part time. Staff with SRR are also more likely to be male. The proportion of men with SRR is higher than men without SRR and higher than the proportion of men in the wider academic population (Table 2).

6.9. There are directional trends for other protected characteristics that warrant monitoring despite not being statistically significant. Staff with a declared disability appear to be under-represented in the staff population with SRR, compared to those without a disability (see paragraph 6.5).

6.10. The highest overall proportion of SRR allocation goes to White staff. Staff with SRR appear proportionally more likely to be White or Asian, and there is a higher proportion of Black, mixed ethnicity and other ethnicity staff without SRR. The University of Hertfordshire demonstrates comparatively strong representation of Asian staff in comparison to the rest of the sector and the University has implemented interventions to increase the representation of Black and female staff including the establishment of our Academic Women's Action Group, Network of Women+ Professors, Black Women Research Collective, and joining the national 100 Black Women Professors Now programme (CoP paragraphs 1.27 and 1.28).

6.11. SRR allocation shows a higher directional trend towards staff aged 36-55 having SRR status, which reflects typical career stages for more research-active roles. Younger staff appear to be less represented, whereas staff above the age of 66 may appear to be over-represented but this reflects the demographic characteristics of research-active staff at the University and is consistent with findings in our 2025 Culture, Employment and Development of Academic Researchers Survey (CEDARS) report, also indicating higher representation in this age group. The highest proportion of SRR allocation goes to staff aged 36-45.

Figure 1: Bar chart demonstrating staff with SRR in comparison to staff without SRR



7. Allocation of eligible contracts to UoAs

7.1. The CoP states that contracts eligible to contribute to the volume measure are those identified as having SRR or RI.

7.2. In the focus groups, it was noted that non-volume contributing contracts often include disabled staff or staff with caring responsibilities, which may disproportionally impact their ability to contribute to the volume measure or UoA. As mentioned in paragraph 6.4, the introduction of a mitigating circumstances statement in the CoP aims to support staff with equality-related circumstances which may affect their research capacity.

7.3. Table 3 presents the proportion of staff with protected characteristics in each UoA. UoAs in the School of Physics, Engineering and Computer Science reflect disciplinary differences with a greater proportion of male than female staff. In contrast, UoAs in the School of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences have a higher proportion of female staff, which is a positive deviation from sectoral norms. A similar pattern is observed in the School of Creative Arts, where the higher proportion of male staff contrasts with the predominantly female profile seen at sector level.

Table 3: Indication of staff with protected characteristics allocated to each UoA

UoA	Principal academic department	Female staff	Male staff	Declared disability	BAME
3	School of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	64.13%	35.87%	6.52%	29.35%
4	School of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	60%	40%	20%	20%
6	School of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	53.57%	46.43%	10.71%	21.43%
9	School of Physics, Engineering and Computer Science	16.33%	83.67%	6.12%	14.28%
11	School of Physics, Engineering and Computer Science	20.59%	79.41%	2.94%	38.23%
12	School of Physics, Engineering and Computer Science	23.53%	76.47%	1.96%	62.74%
17	Hertfordshire Business School	33.33%	66.67%	4.76%	33.33%
23	School of Law and Education	66.67%	33.33%	11.11%	0%
27	School of Creative Arts	48.39%	51.61%	6.45%	16.13%
*28	School of Creative Arts	35.71%	57.14%	21.43%	0%
32	School of Creative Arts	45.45%	54.55%	9.09%	9.09%
Average		42.52%	56.83%	9.19%	22.23%

** Percentages in this Unit of Assessment are derived from small staff numbers, thus may represent only a few individuals so should be interpreted with caution.*

8. Selection of outputs

8.1. The CoP outlines an output selection process which is based on external peer review to mitigate the risk of bias, with the intention that all outputs included in the final submission to REF2029 will receive review from two external assessors. The EIA focus groups highlighted a need for enhanced unconscious bias training for all staff involved in REF-related advisory or decision-making roles. As a result, the University has sourced additional external training with a focus on unconscious bias and fair and inclusive research assessment practices to supplement the existing internal mandatory EDI and Unconscious Bias training all staff are required to undertake. As stated in the CoP (CoP paragraph 5.15) the University is committed to DORA principles and is an active member of CoARA, and therefore metrics will only be used to inform decision-making in line with REF principles.

8.2. The CoP also commits to undertaking an EDI analysis of the output selection process. This intention was welcomed by the EIA focus groups, but the detail of what this will entail in practice was questioned. The University has since committed to analysing anonymised protected characteristic data for output authors after each mock review. This will help to identify any patterns and consider adjustments to the mock review should the data indicate that outputs authored by staff from specific groups may be disadvantaged.

8.3. Out of the entire academic and research staff population employed on 31st July 2025 (total 1477), 367 members of staff were authors on outputs included in the first mock review. Of these, 275 staff had SRR status, and 92 did not. Table 4 outlines comparison of the outputs included in the first mock review with the profile of the authors at the institutional level. This suggests that staff with a declared disability, Asian staff and most age groups appear proportionally represented among those with outputs included in the first mock review; however, these are directional interpretations as the difference is not statistically significant.

8.4. At the institutional level, there is evidence of statistically significant under-representation of outputs authored by part-time staff, Black staff and female staff in the first mock output review reflecting the demographics of staff with SRR status, which may reflect structural and sectoral inequalities in research participation. However, Table 3 demonstrates that there are variances at a more granular level, as females may be well represented depending on the discipline e.g. UoA 3 (Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy). Conversely, full-time staff, male staff, White staff and staff over the age of 66 seem to be over-represented in the outputs included in the first mock review. These patterns indicate that targeted attention may be necessary in future mock reviews to promote fairness and inclusivity.

8.5. Focus group members also raised concerns about whether the University's group of external REF Advisors (c. 30 in total) who are asked to review outputs in mock reviews have had appropriate training on EDI matters and relevant lived experience. They were reassured that all external advisors have had appropriate training and that there is a good overall gender split and a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and ages.

Table 4: Comparison of the characteristics of the total academic population and staff with outputs assessed in the mock review of outputs for REF2029

		All academic and research staff (Total 1477)	All staff (total outputs received 367)
		% of total	% of total
Working pattern	Full time	66.82	74.93
	Part time	33.18	24.80
Sex	Female	53.01	46.59
	Male	46.85	53.41
Age	26-35	13	8.45
	36-45	29.65	35.97
	46-55	28.44	25.07
	56-65	21.73	21.53
	>66	7.04	8.99
Ethnicity	White	65.47	69.21
	Asian	17.47	16.08
	Black	7.92	4.90
	Mixed	3.18	2.18
	Other	3.79	3.81
Disability	Declared disability	9.41	8.45
	No declared disability	87.61	88.28

9. Appeals and review processes

9.1. The CoP stipulates that any member of staff can appeal decisions about SRR if there are errors in the use of evidence to inform decision-making, production of new evidence which could not be provided previously, or irregularities within the agreed process. The stages of the appeals process are outlined clearly, ensuring transparency and consistency in how appeals are considered.

9.2. No appeals have been received at the time of writing this EIA, but this will be monitored.

10. Conclusion

10.1. This EIA demonstrates that the University of Hertfordshire continues to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. We have given due regard at the point of decision-making and the design of REF-related policies and procedures. We have taken steps to promote fairness and good relations through the consultation with the EIA focus groups. We have also utilised the data available to us to consider whether processes disproportionally affect staff with protected characteristics. We have considered all equality issues that we can, within the limits of the data available to us, whilst bearing in mind that some inequalities are sector-wide and longstanding including the representation of females and Black staff within research and REF.

10.2. Our next steps will focus on implementing feasible actions identified from the EIA focus groups and monitoring their impact through regular review. These include refining the language used in the CoP and annually collecting and analysing HESA and other data to inform ongoing decision-making. We aim to consider intersectionality in future EIAs, which was not possible based on the format of data provided by Human Resources for this baseline EIA. The University will continue to monitor the diversity of staff contributing to Impact Case Studies and to consider representation and inclusion when recruiting to REF2029 roles such as Unit of Assessment Coordinators.

Appendix 2a: Consultation Process

Date	Who
10/03/26	REF Stakeholder Group
23/03/26	Academic Leadership Group
31/03/26	Research Committee (email to members)
31/03/26	All University Staff
14/04/26	Trade Union (UCU)
15/04/26	REF Management Group
16/04/26	EIA Focus Group 1
20/04/26	Pro Vice-Chancellor Update Session
22/04/26	EIA Focus Group 2
22/04/26	Research Development Group (email to members)
05/05/26	REF Stakeholder Group
06/05/26	University Executive Team (approval)
12/05/26	Research Committee (approval)

Appendix 2b: Constitution of the University Executive Team

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATION EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE TEAM

A CONSTITUTION

The University Executive Team (UET) is a formal committee within the University's executive governance structure, established on the authority of the Vice-Chancellor.

B PURPOSE

UET oversees the day-to-day management of the University and provides in-depth and confidential advice to the Vice-Chancellor. It acts upon and within powers granted to the Vice-Chancellor under the terms of the Articles of Government (UPR GV01). UET is the primary body for consideration of matters under the Vice-Chancellor's responsibilities, including urgent and confidential matters.

The University Strategy Group (USG) and two Leadership Groups, the Operational Leadership Group and Academic Leadership Group, all with their own Terms of Reference, report into UET as sub-groups, supporting its executive decision-making, strategic oversight and enabling prompt action to achieve strategic objectives.

C TERMS OF REFERENCE

C.1 Advisory and Decision-making
C.1.1 To advise the Vice-Chancellor in their decision making on matters falling within the authority of the Vice-Chancellor as prescribed in the Articles of Government (UPR GV01):

- Making proposals to the Board of Governors about the educational character and mission of the University and implementing the decisions of the Board of Governors.

- The organisation, direction and management of the University and leadership of the staff.

- The appointment, assignment, grading, appraisal, suspension, dismissal and determination of pay and conditions of service of staff other than holders of senior posts.

- Determination of the University's academic and other activities.
- Preparing annual estimates of income and expenditure and managing budgets within approved estimates.

- Maintenance of student discipline.

UET replaces the Chief Executive's Group (CEG) and the Vice-Chancellor's Executive (VCE), incorporating their responsibilities into a single unified body.

C.2 Additional Responsibilities

C.2.1 To support the effective management and strategic oversight of the University through the consideration of key operational, regulatory, and institutional matters:

- Terms and Conditions of Staff Employment
- Internal Controls and Risk Management
- Efficiency, effectiveness and Value for Money measures
- Financial performance monitoring

- Regulatory Compliance and Legislative changes, including obligations set by the Office for Students (OfS), the CUC HE Code of Governance and sector groups, while ensuring ethical integrity in decision making.

- Health and Safety, Security, Environmental and Estates matters
- Infrastructure (Digital and Physical)
- Education and Student Experience, Research, Enterprise and Global Engagement

- Any other matter, within the scope of the Vice-Chancellor's authority, that requires the consideration or decision of the University Executive Team.

C.3 Monitoring

C.3.1 To monitor the University's performance against strategic plans and targets and referring to the University's Strategy Group where relevant.
C.3.2 To oversee the work of any sub-committees

C.4 General

C.4.1 To create non-decision-making sub-committees to assist with specific areas and issues, and to exercise other responsibilities as assigned by the Vice-Chancellor.

C.5 Freedom of Speech

C.5.1 The University is committed to the promotion and protection of freedom of speech, within the law (in line with the provisions of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023) and the University fully supports the need to maintain freedom of speech and academic freedom without unwarranted interference in all institutions of learning. The University endorses the view that to yield upon this basic freedom is to betray one of the fundamental principles upon which all institutions of learning should be founded. In discharging its responsibilities, UET will have due regard to the University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech (UPR FS01) and any impact on the University's compliance with its free speech duties.

D COMPOSITION

The Chair of UET will be the Vice-Chancellor.

Meetings shall be chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and, in the absence of the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, and then successively, the Secretary and Registrar, and the Group Finance Director (each in the absence of the previous individuals).

If a member is unable to attend a meeting a nominated representative may attend on their behalf, with the consent of the Chair.

Category

1 Vice-Chancellor, who shall be Chair 1
2 Deputy Vice-Chancellor who, in the absence of the Vice-Chancellor, will normally be Chair 1
3 Secretary and Registrar 1
4 Group Chief Financial Officer 1
5 Pro Vice-Chancellors 2
6 Chief Marketing Officer 1

Officers in Attendance

Clerk Head of Vice-Chancellor's Secretariat
Other officers of the University may attend as necessary to advise USG on such matters as may be under consideration.

E QUORUM

One third of the members rounded up (3), one of which shall be the Vice-Chancellor, (or appropriate representative as specified in section D), will constitute a quorum.

F OPERATION OF THE COMMITTEE

F.1 UET will:

i Conduct its business in accordance with the University's Governance Principles, the OfS E2 principles on good governance, the CUC Higher Education Code of Governance, and guidance from Governance Services.

ii Note its terms of reference, composition, and membership at the first meeting of each academic year and any changes.

iii Review its terms of reference, composition, and membership at the last meeting of each academic year.

iv Review its terms of reference, composition and membership (and those of any of its sub-committees) at the last meeting of each academic year;

v Meet weekly. Formal minutes will be taken and circulated by the Clerk.

vi Annually review the effectiveness of its work and its relationship with the University Strategy Group, Academic Leadership Group and Operations Leadership Group to ensure effective decision-making and good governance.

F.2 Committee records

Records of this committee's business will be stored on the University's Electronic Document Records Management System in accordance with the protocols determined by the Head of Governance Services. The Clerk is responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the records, which will conform with the requirements of any guidance issued by Governance Services.

Appendix 2c: Terms of Reference of the University Research Committee

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE OF THE ACADEMIC BOARD

RESEARCH COMMITTEE
(Amendments to the version published previously are shown in italics.)

It is implicit that in exercising the powers delegated to it, or discharging the responsibilities assigned to it by the Academic Board, that within the limits of its authority, a committee or board of the Academic Board may require action to be taken by another committee or board of the Academic Board.

A **QUORUM: 8**

B **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

B.1 To be responsible to the Academic Board and to advise and make recommendations to the Academic Board on all matters relating to research in the University, taking due cognisance of the responsibilities of the Research Degrees Board and the Academic Development Committee of the Academic Board.

B.2 To establish, in close liaison with the relevant Officers, procedures for managing any returns that the University is required to make in connection with any national process of research assessment or evaluation.

B.3 To consider the implications for the University of resource needs for research, including both revenue and capital funds, physical infrastructure, learning resources, computer resources and research staff establishment, and to advise the Vice-Chancellor and the Academic Board on the requirements for research.

B.4 To advise the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) on research, research funding and financial allocations.

B.5 To have oversight of research activity and to foster research activity *that drives and responds to the Research and Enterprise commitments, t*o promote *an inclusive* culture of research and advanced scholarship throughout the University, and to facilitate the dissemination of research findings within and outside the institution.

B.6 To have oversight of procedures for research grant and contract applications including electronic submissions, and to monitor research applications and awards.

B.7 To monitor research income and activity in the Schools and to evaluate achievements.

B.8 To approve the establishment of Research Centres within the institution.

B.9 To have oversight of all publicity and marketing relating to research, research degree programmes and the recruitment of research students.

B.10 To work in close liaison with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and the Director of the Doctoral College[8] and to receive the non-confidential minutes of the Research Degrees Board of the Academic Board and the Ethics Committee for Studies Involving the Use of Human Participants of the Academic Board.

B.11 To be responsible to the Academic Board for ensuring that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure optimum synergies between research and commercial activity.

B.12 To ensure that reports and information concerning research activities within the University are published internally and externally (as appropriate).

B.13 To support the production of reports on research activity as required by external agencies.

B.14 To respond appropriately to national initiatives in research policy and research funding.

B.15 To identify staff development needs for action by HR Development.

B.16 To make a report to the Academic Board concerning the business discharged by the Committee at each meeting.

B.17 To prepare and present an Annual Report to the Academic Board.

B.18 The University is committed to the promotion and protection of academic freedom of speech, within the law (in line with the provisions of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023). The University endorses the view that to yield upon this basic freedom is to betray one of the fundamental principles upon which all institutions of learning should be founded. Therefore, all academic staff shall have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing themselves at risk of being adversely affected by losing their jobs or privilege at the University or experiencing a reduction in the likelihood that they would secure a promotion or different job at the University.

C **COMPOSITION**

C.1 The Chair of the Committee will be appointed by the Vice-Chancellor.

Category

1	Chair appointed by the Vice-Chancellor	
	(Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise))	1
2	Director of the Doctoral College[1]	1
3	Associate Deans of School (Research and Enterprise)	4
4	Director of Research Culture and Environment	1
5	Director for Education	1

[8] The Director of the Doctoral College is also the *Director of Research Ethics, Governance and Integrity*

6	Director of Marketing and Communications (or named alternate)	1
7	Chief Information and Digital Officer (or named alternate)	1
8	Group Finance Director (or nominee)	1
9	Two (**2**) representatives of the contract/early career research staff	2
10	Director of Research and Enterprise (or Deputy)	1
11	Head of Research Excellence	1
12	Head of Research Grants	1
13	A member from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Office (or named alternate)	1
14	*Chair of the Researcher Development Group*	1
		18

Officers in attendance

Open Research Manager
Finance Manager (Research)
Clerk appointed by the Head of Governance Services

D GOVERNANCE AND OPERATION OF THE COMMITTEE

D.1 The Research Committee:

i is a committee of the Academic Board and will conduct its business in accordance with the Standing Orders of the Academic Board;

ii will note the Standing Orders of the Academic Board at the first meeting of each academic year and any subsequent changes to these;

iii will meet not less than three (**3**) times in each academic year (normally once each term) and formal minutes of the Committee's proceedings will be published and circulated by Governance Services;

iv will note its terms of reference, composition and membership at the first meeting of each academic year and any subsequent changes to these.

D.2 **Committee records**

A Governance Record shall be maintained by the Clerk to the Board, containing the minutes and all associated documentation relating to the proceedings of the Board. The Governance Record shall be stored electronically on the University's Electronic Document Records Management System in line with the protocols set from time to time by the Head of Governance Services.

Appendix 2d: Terms of Reference of REF Stakeholder Group

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

REF2029 Stakeholder Group

A CONSTITUTION

The REF2029 Stakeholder Group is a working group created on the authority of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) as part of preparations for submission to REF2029.

B TERMS OF REFERENCE

B.1 To provide input into the University's REF2029 Strategy.
B.2 To contribute to REF2029 consultations.
B.3 To agree which Units of Assessment the University will submit to.
B.4 To report on progress of REF preparations in Unit of Assessments.
B.5 To monitor:
- potential new additions to the list of staff with SRR[1] status;
- the fair, equitable and sustainable allocation of SRR status;
- the allocation of time to staff with SRR status ensuring compliance with the University's definition as stated in its REF Code of Practice.

B.6 To ensure best practice is followed in the assessment of outputs across Units of Assessment.
B.7 To make recommendations on the selection of outputs for assessment in mock exercises and on the final selection for inclusion in the University's REF 2029 submission.
B.8 To work collaboratively with the Head of Research Impact to oversee the production of impact case studies and impact and engagement statements.
B.9 To oversee the drafting of the Unit-level PCE statements and contribute to the institutional PCE statement.
B.10 To sense-check the Unit-level PCE data provided by the central UH REF Team.
B.11 To make recommendations to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) on the final Unit of Assessment submissions.
B.12 To exercise such other responsibilities as may be assigned to it from time-to-time by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise).
B.13 To formulate and make recommendations to, and in conjunction with the **REF2029 Management Group**. To report to **Research Committee** and **Research and Enterprise Executive** any concerns relating to REF2029.

C COMPOSITION

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) (Chair)
Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise) (School of Creative Arts)
Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise) (Hertfordshire Business School) Joint Unit of Assessment Coordinator for UoA17
Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise) (Schools of Law and Education)

Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise) (School of Physics, Engineering and Computer Science)
Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise) (School of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences)
Joint Unit of Assessment Coordinator for UoA3
Joint Unit of Assessment Coordinator for UoA3
Unit of Assessment Coordinator for UoA4
Unit of Assessment Coordinator for UoA9
Unit of Assessment Coordinator for UoA11
Unit of Assessment Coordinator for UoA12
Joint Unit of Assessment Coordinator for UoA17
Unit of Assessment Coordinator for UoA27
Unit of Assessment Coordinator UoA28
Director of the Doctoral College and Director of Research Ethics, Governance and Integrity
Director of Research Culture and Environment
Head of Research Excellence
Open Research Team Manager (Research Support)
Director of Research and Enterprise Services
REF Administrator (Clerk)

D OPERATION

REF2029 Stakeholder Group will meet four times per year, noting that submission to REF2029 is expected to be in November 2028.

Appendix 2e: Terms of Reference of REF Management Group

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATION
REF2029 Management Group

A CONSTITUTION

The REF2029 Management Group is a working group created on the authority of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) as part of preparations for submission to REF 2029.

B TERMS OF REFERENCE

B.1 To oversee and administer the processes required for the University's submission to REF2029.
B.2 To be responsible for the preparation and submission of the University's responses to REF consultations.
B.3 To produce and publish the University's Code of Practice, ensuring compliance with REF2029 requirements.
B.4 To create and manage the University's timeline to submission, ensuring REF preparations keep on track.
B.5 To monitor the allocation of staff to Units of Assessment.
B.6 To organise and administer REF mock exercises, liaising with Associate Deans, Unit of Assessment Coordinators and external REF Advisors as necessary.
B.7 To monitor and ensure compliance with REF open access and exceptions policies.
B.8 To provide HR with the required REF-related data for the annual HESA Staff returns.
B.9 To collate the income, doctoral awards and any other data required for the REF submission.
B.10 To coordinate the production of impact case studies and impact and engagement statements.
B.11 To coordinate the production of the People, Culture and Environment Statements.
B.12 To make other arrangements as required to expedite a high-quality submission.
B.13 To exercise such other responsibilities as may be assigned to it from time-to-time by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise).
B.14 To formulate and make recommendations to, and in conjunction with the REF2029 Stakeholders Group.
B.15 To report to Research Committee and Research and Enterprise Executive any concerns relating to REF2029.

C COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP

C.1	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise), Chair
C.2	Director of Research Culture and Environment, Deputy Chair
C.3	Director of Research and Enterprise Services
C.4	Head of Research Excellence
C.5	REF Manager
C.7	Senior Research Impact Facilitator

C.8	Open Research Team Manager
C.9	Open Research Team Information Manager
C.6	REF Administrator**,** Clerk

D OPERATION

The REF Management Group will meet every six weeks, noting that the REF submission date is expected to be December 2028. Minutes of the Group's proceedings will be published and circulated by the Clerk.