



# Equality Impact Assessment

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The purpose of this assessment is to establish whether there is any likely impact that will require a full equality impact assessment to be undertaken. It is aimed at staff and managers who are responsible for planning and developing policies and strategies and will be involved in undertaking equality impact assessments.

This form is to be used when undertaking an initial screening of a policy, strategy, project, procedure or practice.

<b>Name of: policy, strategy, project, procedure or practice to be assessed.</b>	Birkbeck Code of Practice on Selection of Staff for REF 2014
<b>Person responsible</b>	Pro-Vice Master Research (Professor Stephen Frosh)
<b>Equality Impact Assessment Team</b>	Pro-Vice Master Research (Professor Stephen Frosh), College Secretary (Keith Harrison), Director of HR (Naina Patel), Head of HR Services (Annette Groark), Equalities Manager (Patricia Crampton) and REF Working Party
<b>Date started</b>	10.2.14
<b>Date completed</b>	27.2.14
<b>Date of review</b> (this is applicable for existing 'policies or strategies' that are being reviewed)	

## **POLICY, STRATEGY, PROJECT, PROCEDURE OR PRACTICE TO BE ASSESSED**

(Policy, strategy, project, procedure or practice will subsequently be referred to as 'policy or strategy'.)

**Please describe what are the main aims, objectives, purpose and intended outcomes of the assessment'.**

To undertake an equality impact assessment of the selection process of staff for submission to the REF 2014 and to determine whether there was any differential impact identified. To further ensure that the process was fair and equitable and measures were put into place to address or mitigate any likely impact.

**Please state if there is any other associated policy, strategy, project, procedure or practice?**

The College's Research Strategy 2010-2013  
Formal statement of Quality Threshold (approved July 2012), specifying the quality criteria for REF 'outputs' necessary for staff to be selected for inclusion to the 2014 Research Excellence Framework.

**Who is involved or responsible for implementing the 'proposals, policy or strategy'?**

- Pro-Vice Master Research – Professor Stephen Frosh
- Master – Professor David Latchman
- REF Working Party – Assistant Deans (academic staff members) responsible for research in each School of the College, with additional representatives from several of the Schools
- REF Support Group – chaired by the College Secretary and including representatives from the various administrative Departments (HR, Library, Registry) plus a representative of REF Co-ordinators (administrators within Schools)
- Academic Registrar and Deputy Academic Registrar
- Academic Leads
- Administrative Leads

**Please state if this is a new or existing 'proposal, policy or strategy'.**

The Code of Practice is an existing document that was developed in 2012 to inform/guide on the selection of staff for the College's REF submission, and to ensure a transparent, consistent, accountable and inclusive process.

## **Evidence, data and consultation**

**Please note:** Evidence refers to any anecdotal, qualitative or quantitative analysis available to know more about the 'policy or strategy' and gauge any

potential impact. Please consider all information that is available in determining whether the 'policy or strategy' could have a differential or likely impact. Please use this section to provide examples of monitoring information, research or consultation reports in support of this assessment.

**What monitoring or other information do you have in support of the 'policy or strategy'? These may be attached as supporting documents.**

1. Monitoring of selection rates (i.e. inclusion and exclusion statistics) for staff covered by protected characteristics: gender, age, ethnicity, disability.
2. The Individual Staff Circumstances (ISC) process through which staff reported confidentially on personal/individual circumstances that might have impacted on their research activity, under the following headings:

**Clearly defined circumstances**

- Qualifying as an Early Career Researcher (ECR)
- Part time and fixed term working
- Clearly defined periods of leave
- Maternity, paternity or adoption leave
- Career breaks or secondments outside of the HE sector that may not have required undertaking academic research

**Complex circumstances**

- Disability that may be physical or mental
- Caring responsibilities (children, disabled and older people)
- Constraints relating to pregnancy or maternity in addition to a clearly defined period of leave
- Gender reassignment
- Any other exceptional circumstances related to the equality protected characteristics

**What methods of consultation are proposed or have been undertaken in support of this assessment?**

(These can cover surveys, interviews, formal and informal meetings for interest groups i.e. staff\students)

An initial Equalities Impact Assessment on provisional selection processes (using data from the 'dry runs' of assessment of research outputs) was carried out in August 2013. The results of this were presented formally to the REF Working Party and discussed there, and the continuing significance of equality issues was highlighted with Executive Deans, UoA Leads and Senior Academic staff members.

Presentations were made to the College's Strategic Planning Committee and Academic Board Executive Committee.

A REF website on the College's staff intranet was accessible to all members of staff.

A wide range of discussions and meetings were held, including:

- Open meetings for academic and administrative staff
- REF Working Party discussions
- REF Support Group (Administrators) discussions

- Discussions with individual members of staff concerned about their situation. Many staff members took advantage of this facility, holding personal discussions with the Pro-Vice Master Research, REF UoA Leads, the Academic Registrar and staff in HR

The Academic President of the Birkbeck branch of UCU was actively involved in discussions and was a member of the REF Working Party.

**Please list any other information that will assist you in carrying out this impact assessment where applicable**

REF 2014 data analysis capturing equality protected characteristics and a range of other considerations

## **Impact of Policy, Strategy, Project, Procedure or Practice**

**Please assess the potential or likely impact of the ‘policy or strategy’ on each of the protected equality characteristics below.**

The impact could be positive, negative or neutral. If you assess a negative impact for any of the groups then you will need to assess whether that impact is low, medium or high. Please refer to any evidence used in support of this assessment.

The College’s approach on the eligibility of staff has been based on an agreed set of principles and selection criteria with the continued emphasis on a high quality threshold but at the same time taking into consideration factors that might impinge on staff outputs. Staff were encouraged to declare any individual circumstances that might have impacted on their ability to produce 4 outputs or work productively during the assessment period. All eligible staff were asked to participate in this process, whether to declare relevant individual circumstances or to confirm that there were no such circumstances to declare. The response rate for the exercise was 95%. This fed into the College’s commitment to ensure a positive and inclusive approach to the REF process.

Principles for selection and criteria for submission:

- Eligibility of staff for submission;
- Ensuring that all eligible staff who wished to be included were given clear guidance on what they needed to achieve;
- Mentoring schemes within departments;
- Individual staff circumstances policy, supporting discreet consideration of clearly defined and complex circumstances, with an emphasis on ensuring that detailed cases were only considered by a small group and details were not disseminated more widely;
- Assessment of outputs during mock (‘dry run’) exercise. All eligible staff were involved and their publications assessed. Those deemed “at risk” were given feedback identifying what they needed to do to give themselves a chance of selection and where possible additional support (e.g. study leave) was offered;
- Communication of individual circumstance processes to support staff in reporting circumstances;
- External reviews were undertaken in many UoAs to inform the decision making;
- Continuous communication of the process (including those on maternity leave, adoption/paternity leave and sickness leave) was sent out through all-staff emails and by the UoA Leads to ensure staff were kept informed;
- REF specific equality and diversity training sessions were run for staff involved in the process. There was good take up: the Master, the Pro-Vice

Master Research, the Vice Master (who had responsibility for dealing with any appeals), Executive Deans and UoA Leads, as well as other staff working on the REF, attended.

### **Impact Assessments:**

These have been carried out on all protected and ISC characteristics, with the following results.

#### **Gender**

The submission rates for male and females were very similar, with 17% of males and 18% of females not being submitted.

Whilst relating to only a small group of staff (31), it was noted that 32% of the female staff who had part time contracts during the REF accounting period were not submitted, compared to 9% of males. We believe this may reflect an issue around re-starting of research activities for women returning from maternity leave, but further work is required to examine this more closely.

#### **Ethnicity**

Of the 435 staff eligible for submissions, 56 recorded their ethnicity as BME of whom 52 were submitted (14% of the total submission). 7% of the staff submitted had not declared their ethnicity. Thus, only 7% of BME staff were not submitted compared to the College average of 17.5%.

#### **Disability**

17 staff formally declared their disability, of whom 12 were submitted to the REF. Within that group a further breakdown showed that 5 were male and 7 were female. Of the 5 not submitted, 2 were female and 3 were male. In addition there were a number of people who declared a disability for REF purposes with the caveat that they did not wish that to be recorded for wider organisational purposes; most of these were included in the REF. Consequently, we do not believe that there are any discriminatory effects in this data, but we will continue to monitor the situation closely and make active use of our equality policies and information to promote the interests of members of staff with disabilities.

#### **Age**

There was no general trend between likelihood of inclusion in the REF and age. However, dividing the sample between academic staff members aged under 50 and those over 50 did produce a statistically significant difference, with the older group having a higher proportion of non-selected eligible members.

It appears that there is good support for younger researchers to produce sufficient high quality research to facilitate inclusion in the REF. It is unclear at this stage why there is a lower rate of inclusion in the older age group; further analysis will be carried out to examine whether any systemic issues apply.

### **Individual Staff Circumstances**

The College sought to mitigate any potential differential impact by establishing processes and systems to consider individual circumstances on a case by case basis to ensure that the maximum number of candidates could take part in the process.

Of the 118 staff with ISCs submitted, 75 were female and 43 were male. The higher level of submissions from female staff is accounted for in the main by the maternity submissions.

### **Maternity**

In some instances within the ISC process, women who had been on maternity leave but had 4 quality outputs chose not to draw on their maternity leave under the clearly defined circumstances provision. 36 female staff included maternity in their ISC submissions; 30 (83%) were included in the REF, 6 (17%) were not included.

### **Early Career Researchers**

62 out of 67 (92.5%) staff were submitted with ECR status, of whom 58 had included it as part of their ISC declaration and were submitted with less than 4 outputs. (In the case of four Early Career Researchers it was also decided not to use the ISC provision but to submit 4 outputs.) Of the 58 staff, 30 were male and 28 female.

### **Part-time contracts**

18% of part time staff were excluded from the REF, compared to 17.5% of full time staff. There is consequently no evidence that part time staff were discriminated against in this process.

### **Complex circumstances**

8 staff out of 10 who declared complex circumstances were submitted.

### **Appeals process**

There were no formal appeals lodged. Issues and concerns were resolved at local and informal level.

The monitoring and review process ensured that if people's circumstances changed it was picked up and responded to.

<b>Has the likely impact on the different equality 'protected characteristics' already been considered in the initial development of this 'policy or strategy' and the on-going development of this 'policy or strategy'?</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
The likely impact on the different equality protected characteristics was a key consideration in the development of the Code of Practice and the selection process of staff eligible for submission to REF 2014 and remained integral throughout the process.	Yes	

An equality impact assessment was undertaken at an earlier stage of the REF (after the College's 'dry runs') to determine if there was any likely adverse impact.		
<b>Are there other policies in place that will help mitigate any potential differential impact of this 'policy or strategy'?</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<p>There was a greater emphasis on capturing equality and diversity in the REF 2014. The ISC process was a driver in ensuring that the College applied a fair, equitable and consistent approach; in the support of staff who had clearly defined or complex circumstances which might have had an impact on the number of outputs they could submit.</p> <p>REF was a standing item on the Equalities Committee and the Acting Pro-Vice Master Research at the time attended an Equalities Committee to provide an update on the process.</p> <p>Initially individuals were slow to respond to the request to complete ISCs. Presentations were made to Assistant Deans and UoA Leads and this encouraged staff to respond and increased participation to over 95%. A number of staff submitted multiple ISC applications as their circumstances changed during the REF reporting period.</p> <p>In order to create a safe and confidential environment, HR on behalf of the ISC Group liaised closely with colleagues who submitted an ISC form.</p>	Yes	

**Please note:** on completion of this section the impact identified will determine if you need to undertake a Stage 2 - full equality impact assessment.

<b>Monitoring and Review of Policy, Strategy, Project, Procedure or Practice</b>
<b>How is the impact of the 'policy or strategy' on the different equality groups being monitored?</b>
In addition to staff\students this can also include outside agencies and public sector bodies.
There was regular and continuous monitoring of the selection process for the REF 2014 by the Pro-Vice Master Research and the REF Working Party as it was a standing item on the agenda. Any issues raised were addressed by the REF Working Party, the UoA Leads and HR. REF related issues were also raised at the College Strategic Planning, Research, HR Strategy & Policy and Equalities Committees.





Who is responsible for monitoring the application and implementation of the 'policy or strategy'? How or where is this done?		
The Pro-Vice Master Research and the REF Working Party have overall responsibility for monitoring the application and implementation of the REF 2014 at Birkbeck.		
Are the results of this monitoring reported on and has action been taken as a result of the monitoring?	Yes	No
Monitoring, application and implementation of the REF Code of Practice has been undertaken and disseminated through the College Committee structure. As a consequence of consideration at College Committees, working groups may be set up to investigate specific areas of the REF submission.	Yes	

Summary of assessment and conclusions:
Are there any other recommendations or outcomes from this initial assessment?
There are no major systemic inequalities revealed by the EIA. Two minor issues have been observed (rates of exclusion for female part time members of staff being higher than for male part time colleagues; and older staff members being more likely to be excluded than younger on a categorical '50 and over/under 50' differentiation). These issues will be examined in more detail. The learning points that have come from the REF submission process will be considered to ensure they are well understood and changes in policy can be put in place where necessary. Key actions and requirements for further analysis of the data to inform possible action have been identified and these have been captured in the action plan.

Action Plan		
Action identified	Date or timescale for implementation	Person responsible for action
<p><b>Age:</b> To look closely at the possible reasons for the submission rates being lower in the age group 50 and over.</p> <p><b>Disability:</b> To continue to promote an enabling environment whereby staff feel confident to declare their disability so that they are supported in the workplace by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring reasonable adjustments are in place</li> <li>• Reviewing what informal and formal support should be provided to disabled staff</li> </ul> <p><b>Ethnicity:</b> To continue to encourage staff to self-declare their ethnicity; this will improve data held on</p>		

<p>staff which will benefit planning and inform policy development.</p> <p><b>Gender:</b> To investigate further the possible reasons behind the difference in rates of submission for female and male part time staff.</p> <p><b>Individual Staff Circumstances</b> To consider ways of formally identifying staff that join the College in the future and meet the ECR criteria to ensure they receive the support that is relevant to their career development.</p> <p><b>Part time contracts:</b> To examine the dataset of part time women who were excluded from the REF to identify any trends.</p>		
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<b>Equality Impact Assessment Sign Off:</b>		
<b>Signed by EIA Lead or Responsible Officer</b>		<b>Date:</b> 28.2.14
<b>Countersigned by HR Manager – Equalities</b>		<b>Date:</b> 28.2.14