

Oxford Brookes University: Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances

This document is being sent to all Category A staff whose outputs are eligible for submission to REF2021 (see [‘Guidance on submissions’](#), paragraphs 117-122). As part of the university’s commitment to supporting equality and diversity in REF, we have put in place safe and supportive structures for staff to declare information about any time when their ability to research productively during the assessment period (1 January 2014 – 31 July 2020) has been affected by equality-related circumstances, and particularly their ability to produce research outputs at the same rate as staff not affected by equality-related circumstances.

The purpose of collecting this information is threefold:

- To enable staff who have not been able to produce a REF-eligible output during the assessment period to be entered into REF where they have:
 - circumstances that have resulted in an overall period of 46 months or more absence from research during the assessment period, due to equality-related circumstances (see below)
 - circumstances *equivalent* to 46 months or more absence from research due to equality-related circumstances
 - two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave (as defined by Annex L of Guidance on Submissions REF 2019/01).
- To recognise the effect that equality-related circumstances can have on an individual’s ability to research productively, and to adjust expectations in terms of expected workload/production of research outputs.
- To establish whether we have any Units of Assessment where the proportion of declared circumstances is sufficiently high to warrant a request to the higher education funding bodies for a reduced required number of outputs to be submitted.

Applicable equality-related circumstances

- Qualifying as an Early Career Researcher (ECR) (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016)
- Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside of the HE sector
- Qualifying periods of family-related leave
- Junior clinical academics who have not gained a Certificate of Completion of training by 31 July 2020
- Disability (including chronic conditions)
- Ill health, injury or mental health conditions
- Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of the standard allowances
- Caring responsibilities
- Gender reassignment

Total months absent between 01-01-2014 and 31-07-2020	Output pool may be reduced by up to:
Fewer than 12 calendar months	0
At least 12 calendar months but fewer than 28	0.5
At least 28 calendar months but fewer than 46	1
46 calendar months or more	1.5

If your ability to research productively during the assessment period has been constrained due to one or more of the above circumstances, you are requested to complete the attached form. Further information can be found in paragraph 160 of the Guidance on Submissions (REF 2019/01). Completion and return of the form is voluntary, and individuals who do not choose to return it will not be put under any pressure to declare information if they do not wish to do so.

This form is the only means by which the University will be gathering this information; we will not be collecting data from HR, although any information you provide will be audited against HR records.

You should therefore complete and return the form if any of the above circumstances apply and you are willing to provide the associated information.

The decoupling of staff and outputs in REF 2021, as summarised in paragraph 152 of the Guidance on Submissions (REF 2019/01) is intended to provide us with increased flexibility in building the portfolio of outputs or 'output pool' for submission. There are many reasons why an excellent researcher may have fewer or more outputs attributable to them in an assessment period. We do not, therefore, expect that all staff members will be returned with the same number of outputs attributed to them in the return that we make.

The decoupling principle means that submitting units may choose not to apply for any output reductions because they already have a sufficient quantity of outputs to return to REF2021. As we do not want to ask for information that we do not need to know, we are asking you only to declare the minimum information about your circumstances in the first instance. Only once we know that the submitting unit wishes to pursue output reductions, will we ask for additional information, should this be needed.

Illustrative case study:

Margot was on statutory maternity leave for a period of time that fell substantially within the period 01-01-2014 to 31-07-2020. She felt that this had affected her ability to research productively and requested an output reduction. REF 2021 allows an output reduction for this personal circumstance of 0.5 outputs for the relevant Unit of Assessment, however, Margot must still return the minimum of 1 output attributed to her.

Peter completed his PhD in 2012 and had a series of post-doctoral posts since then. On 1 September 2016 he secured a lectureship post. This post signalled the start of his status as an independent researcher. He wished to apply for a personal circumstances reduction as an Early Career Researcher, and REF 2021 allows an output reduction for this personal circumstance of 0.5 outputs for the relevant Unit of Assessment (output reductions for Early Career Researchers vary depending on the date on which independence was confirmed). Peter must still return the minimum of 1 output attributed to him.

The Unit of Assessment requests these two output reductions from the REF Team and instead of having to provide an output pool of 40 outputs, it can now return on output pool of 39 outputs.

Ensuring Confidentiality

Please see the Oxford Brookes University REF 2021 Data Collection Statement included as Appendix A which explains what data is being collected and why and the process that is being followed.

Changes in circumstances

The university recognises that staff circumstances may change between completion of the declaration form and the census date (31 July 2020). If this is the case, then staff should contact the Research Support Director to provide the updated information.

Oxford Brookes University

Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances Form

To submit this form you should email it to ref2021staffcircs@brookes.ac.uk

In order to allow the University to consider responses fully and, if appropriate, respond to the REF Team initial deadline, please submit by 1 February 2020

Name: [Click here to insert text.](#)

Department: [Click here to insert text.](#)

Do you have a REF-eligible output published between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2020?

Yes

No

Please complete this form if you have one or more applicable equality-related circumstance (see above), which you are willing to declare. Please provide requested information in relevant box(es).

Circumstance	Time period affected
<p>Early Career Researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016).</p> <p><i>Date you became an early career researcher.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter a date.</p>
<p>Career break or secondment outside of the HE sector.</p> <p><i>Dates and durations in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter dates and durations.</p>
<p>Family-related leave;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • statutory maternity leave • statutory adoption leave • Additional paternity or adoption leave or shared parental leave lasting for four months or more. <p><i>For each period of leave, state the nature of the leave taken and the dates and durations in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter nature of leave as well as dates and durations.</p>
<p>Disability (including chronic conditions)</p> <p><i>To include only: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>

<p>Ill health, mental health conditions or injury</p> <p><i>To include only: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Constraints relating to family leave that fall outside of standard allowance</p> <p><i>To include only: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Caring responsibilities</p> <p><i>To include only: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Gender reassignment</p> <p><i>To include only: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Any other exceptional reasons e.g. bereavement.</p> <p><i>To include only: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>

Please confirm, by ticking the box provided, that:

- The above information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances as of the date below
- I realise that the above information will be used for REF purposes only and will be seen, in the first instance, by the Research Support Director and a Support Officer in the Research and Business Development Office, in preparing the anonymised data for consideration by the panel (as described in section 4 of the OBU REF 2021 Data Collection Statement) as to whether to apply for output reductions or not
- That the dates provided will need to be checked against the HR record, for audit purposes
- That any further information requested will need to be shared with the staff responsible for preparing the REF submission for the submitting unit
- I realise it may be necessary to share the information with the REF team, the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs.

I agree

Please also confirm that you have read the data collection statement which explains what data will be collected about you and why

I confirm

Name: Print name here

Signed: Sign or initial here

Date: Insert date here

I give my permission for the Research Support Director to contact me to discuss my circumstances, and my requirements in relation this these, should additional information be required from me

I give my permission for the details of this form to be passed on to the relevant contact within my department/faculty/centre. (Please note, if you do not give permission your department may be unable to adjust expectations and put in place appropriate support for you).

I would like to be contacted in the first instance by:

Email Insert email address

Phone Insert contact telephone number

November 2019

Oxford Brookes University REF 2021 Data Collection Statement

1 Staff Data Collection Statement for the REF 2021

The purpose of the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF 2021) is to assess the quality of UK research and to inform the selective distribution of public funds for research by the four UK higher education funding bodies. The REF is managed by the REF team, based at Research England (RE), on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies. RE is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and under this arrangement UKRI has the role of ‘data controller’ for personal data submitted by us to the REF.

If you are a researcher who has been included as part of our submission to the REF 2021, in 2020 we will send some of the information we hold about you to UKRI for the purpose of the REF 2021. The information will not be in coded form and your name and details such as your date of birth, research groups, and contract dates will be provided along with details of your research. If you are returned with individual circumstances that allow a reduction in the number of outputs submitted, without penalty, some details of your personal circumstances will be provided, as described below.

You can find further information about what data are being collected on the REF website, at www.ref.ac.uk in particular publication 2019/01, ‘Guidance on submissions’.

2 Sharing information about you

UKRI may pass your data, or parts of it, to any of the following organisations to inform the selective distribution of public funds for research and to carry out their statutory functions connected with funding higher education:

- Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland (DfE)
- Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)
- Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

Some of your data (Unit of Assessment, HESA staff identifier code and date of birth) will also be passed to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to enable it to verify coded data returned to it as part of our HESA staff return (see www.hesa.ac.uk). Data submitted to the REF will be linked to that held on the HESA staff record to allow UKRI and the organisations listed above to conduct additional analysis into the REF and fulfil their statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 (England, Wales and Scotland) or the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Northern Ireland).

UKRI and the organisations listed above will use the information to analyse and monitor the REF 2021. This may result in information being released to other users including academic researchers or consultants (commissioned by the funding bodies), to carry out research or analysis, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679). Where information not previously published is released to third parties, this will be anonymised where practicable.

UKRI will require that anyone who has access to your data, held in UKRI's records, paper or electronic, will respect its confidentiality and will only process it in accordance with instructions issued for the purposes specified by UKRI.

Parts of your data will be passed to the REF expert panels and the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (whose members are independent of UKRI) for the purpose of conducting a systematic evaluation of submissions, in accordance with predetermined criteria and methods. Panels will make judgements about the material contained in submissions and will not form quality judgements about individuals. All panel members are bound by confidentiality arrangements.

3 Publishing information about your part in our submission

The results of the assessment exercise will be published by UKRI, on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies, in December 2021. The published results will not be based on individual performance nor identify individuals.

Those parts of submissions that contain factual data and textual information about research activity will also be published by UKRI, on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies, and will be made available online. Published information is likely to include **information including impact case studies in which you may be referenced**. Your name and job title may be included in this textual information.

Other personal and contractual details, including your date of birth and all information about individual staff circumstances will be removed. In some circumstances, where the nature of the research is sensitive, we may amend the version for publication of the relevant Impact Case Study so that appropriate elements are redacted and this will be discussed with the submitting unit on a case-by-case basis. In some circumstances, where the nature of the research is very sensitive, we may request that the REF Team only share the Impact Case Study with Panel members who have national security vetting clearance and this will be discussed with the submitting unit on a case-by-case basis.

UKRI will also publish a list of the outputs submitted by us in each UOA. This data will not be listed by author name.

4 Data about personal circumstances

You may voluntarily disclose personal circumstances to your submitting unit, which could permit us to submit your information to the REF without the 'minimum of one' output requirement (without penalty), or to submit a reduced number of outputs without penalty. If (and only if) we apply either form of reduction of outputs, we will need to provide UKRI with data that you have disclosed about your individual circumstances, to show that the criteria have been met for reducing the number of outputs. Please see the 'Guidance on submissions' document (paragraphs 151-201) for more detail about reductions in outputs and what information needs to be submitted.

When we ask you if you wish to disclose personal circumstances, we will follow the following process:

- You will be asked to complete a form to indicate what type of circumstance(s) have affected your research productivity and the dates over which this occurred;
- You should then send this form to ref2021staffcircs@brookes.ac.uk or by hardcopy to Sarah Taylor, Research Support Director in RBDO, Buckley Building, Room BCK 1.03. The email address will be directed to Sarah Taylor and a Support Officer in RBDO. HR will be asked to check that the information in the form broadly matches data HR already hold, as all data we

provide to the REF may be verified by audit. If HR do not hold data on your circumstances, you may be contacted to provide more information, but the emphasis will always be on providing only such information as is needed to satisfy the REF needs.

- The information in the form will then be anonymised and allocated to the relevant Unit of Assessment. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Global Partnerships, the Associate Deans Research and Knowledge Exchange and the Director HR will review the anonymised requests and confirm whether the relevant Unit of Assessment wishes to request an output reduction from the REF Team. (Please also refer to the University's REF Code of Practice, which also describes this process).
- If the output reduction is to be requested by the Unit of Assessment, then data about your circumstances will be provided to the REF Team. This data will also be visible to those staff who are responsible for the REF return, where it is necessary that output reduction data is visible to them.
- If at the stage of requesting an output reduction from the REF Team more information is required from you, you will be contacted by Sarah Taylor to provide this, but the emphasis will always be on only providing such information as is needed to demonstrate the impact on research productivity.
- You will be advised if an output reduction is being sought or not. Your personal circumstances form will be held securely in a locked cabinet if in hardcopy or separate password-protected email folder if electronic until either it is known that no more audit requests will be made by the REF team or the results are announced (December 2021). Then both hard and soft copies will be destroyed.
- Submitted data will be kept confidential to the REF team, the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs. All these bodies are subject to confidentiality arrangements. The REF team will destroy the submitted data about individuals' circumstances on completion of the assessment phase.

As set out above, unless redacted, the information to be published by UKRI, on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies, will include a single list of all the outputs submitted by us. The list of outputs will include standard bibliographic data (including the author name) for each output, but will not be listed by author name.

5 Accessing your personal data

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR, you have the right to see and receive a copy of any personal information that UKRI holds about you. Further information about the Act and GRPR, and guidance on making a subject access request, can be found on the RE web-site at <https://re.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards/foi-data-protection/>

If you have any concerns about your information being used for these purposes, please contact:

Data Protection Officer
UK Research and Innovation
Polaris House
Swindon, SN2 1FL

Email: dataprotection@ukri.org

6 The University's Privacy Notice can be found at:

<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/hr/personaldata/Personal-data.html>

November 2019