

ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR SUBMISSION TO THE RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2029

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Arts University Bournemouth recognises the importance of providing resources in a way that is accessible to all audiences. If you need this document in large print or any other accessible format, please contact the Research Office researchoffice@aub.ac.uk

REF 2029 policy documents can be found at <https://2029.ref.ac.uk/guidance/>

REF 2029 Glossary

Assessment criteria	The panels will use the following criteria to assess the quality of each element of the submission: • Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding – ‘originality, significance and rigour’ • Engagement and Impact – ‘reach and significance’ • Strategy, People and Research Environment – ‘vitality and sustainability’
Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding (CKU)	The assessment of a pool of submitted research outputs. These can be either written or practice research.
Codes of practice	Codes of practice outline how HEIs will make key decisions about their submission to REF 2029. These decisions concern identifying contracts that contribute to the REF volume measure, allocation of contracts to UoAs, research independence and selection of research outputs for submission to the REF.
Double-weighting	Institutions may request that outputs of extended scale and scope such as a book be double-weighted (count as two outputs) in the assessment.
Expert panels (main and sub-panels)	In each of the 34 UoAs an expert sub-panel will conduct a detailed assessment of submissions. The sub-panels will work under the leadership and guidance of four main panels.
HESA	Higher Education Statistical Agency
Impact	An effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia.
Impact Assessment	Impact is assessed in terms of ‘Reach and Significance’.
Impact period	Impact must have occurred between 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2028.
Output	The product of research as defined by the REF (see below). An underpinning principle of the REF is that all forms of research output and research practice will be assessed on a fair and equal basis.
Output Assessment	Outputs are assessed in terms of ‘Originality, Significance and Rigour’.
Publication period	Research outputs submitted to REF 2029 must have been first made publicly available between 1 January 2021 and 31 December 2028.
Research	For the purposes of REF 2029, research is defined as ‘a process of investigation, leading to new insights, effectively shared’.

Quality profile/sub-profile	The overall quality profile for the REF comprises of the scores for the three sub-profiles: Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding (55% weighting), Engagement and impact (25% weighting), and Strategy, People, and Research Environment (20% weighting).
Research Independence (RI)	Staff with research independence undertake self-directed research, rather than primarily carrying out another individual's research programme.
Significant responsibility for research (SRR)	Staff with significant responsibility for research are those for whom explicit time and resources are made available to engage actively in independent research, and that is an expectation of their job role.
Strategy, People and Research Environment (SPRE)	SPRE comprises an Institutional-level Statement and a Unit-level Statement comprising four sections: Context, mission and strategy; People; Income, infrastructure and facilities; Collaboration, engagement and impact.
Strategy, People and Research Environment (SPRE) Assessment	SPRE will be assessed against 'Vitality and Sustainability'.
Submission	A submission comprises a complete set of data in respect of Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding, Impact and Engagement, and Strategy, People, and Research Environment, returned by an HEI to one or more of the 34 UoAs.
Substantive link	The relationship between an HEI and research, submitted in the form of an output. The HEI must have enabled the research leading to an output. The link is evidenced through an eligible employment relationship with an author who has made a significant research contribution to the output.
Underpinning research activity	Impact described in the impact case studies must be based on research activity produced in the UoA during the period 1 January 2008 and 31 December 2028.
Unit of Assessment (UoA)	Submission in REF 2029 will be made in 34 discipline-based 'units of assessment' or UoAs. There is an expert sub-panel for each UoA.

1.0 Part 1: Introduction

1.0.1 This Code of Practice sets out the processes that will govern the preparation of the REF 2029 submission of the Arts University Bournemouth. The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the system for assessing the excellence of research in UK higher education institutions (HEIs) conducted by the four UK higher education funding bodies¹.

1.0.2 The aims for REF 2029 are to create a research system which:

- Delivers high-quality, rigorous research: REF 2029 aims to ensure that research outputs are not only high quality but also open to all.
- Fosters inclusivity and collaboration: REF 2029 emphasises an inclusive, diverse and collaborative research system, which supports a wide range of ideas, institutions, research methodologies, outputs and activities.
- Drives an engaged and impactful research system: REF 2029 will foster the connection between research and societal impact, seeking to encourage high quality research with tangible benefits for society and the economy.

1.0.3 The objectives of the REF are to:

- Inform the allocation of around £2billion of public funding for universities' research via block-grants based on research quality.
- Provide accountability for public investment in research and produce evidence of the benefits of this investment.
- Provide insights into the health of research in HEIs in the UK.

1.1 Assessment

1.1.1 The assessment is carried out by 34 expert subject-based Units of Assessment (UoAs), or sub-panels, under the guidance of four main panels. For each submission to a UoA, three distinct elements are assessed: Strategy, People and Research Environment (SPRE); Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding (CKU); Engagement and Impact (E&I).

1.1.2 For the purposes of REF 2029, research is defined as *a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared*.

1.2 Purpose of the Code of Practice

1.2.1 AUB's REF 2029 Code of Practice sets out the procedural framework that underlies the University's REF submission.

1.2.2 The primary purposes of the Code are:

- To set out the policies and procedures for identifying Significant Responsibility for Research for 'teaching and research' contracts.
- To set out the policies and procedure for identifying Research Independence for 'Research only' contracts.
- Set out the process for the selection of outputs and impact case studies.
- To define roles, responsibilities, terms of reference and criteria, and to ensure appropriate equality and diversity training, for all committees, groups and individuals involved in REF preparation and decisions.

¹ Research England; the Scottish Funding Council; Medr, Wales' Commission for Tertiary Education and Research; and the Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland.

- To provide an appeals procedure for the review of decisions on which contracts hold Significant Responsibility for Research and Research Independence.
 - To ensure that the university's REF processes and criteria are clearly communicated and widely disseminated in accessible forms across the university, including to staff who may be on leave of absence.
- 1.2.3 AUB is committed to ensuring that our processes and REF 2029 submission accords with the university's purpose, mission and values as well as with all relevant legislation.

1.3 Development of the Code of Practice

- 1.3.1 The Code of Practice was developed in consultation with staff using appropriate staff representation mechanisms.

1.4 Communication to AUB staff

- 1.4.1 A programme of communication to AUB staff will ensure that all staff are fully aware of this Code of Practice and how it underpins AUB's REF 2029 planning timetable and activities.
- 1.4.2 HR Partners will identify all staff on leave of absence including maternity or paternity leave and ensure they are contacted individually and referred to the Code as appropriate.
- 1.4.3 Once approved, an up-to-date version of the Code of Practice will be published and made available via a dedicated REF page on the AUB website. The Code will be included in induction materials for new starters. Information about where and how to access the Code will be disseminated via various communication channels (including AUB Communications to all AUB staff and posted on the university's Intranet; and REF training events and fora). The Code is available in alternative formats on request.

1.5 Equity and inclusion

- 1.5.1 The Code of Practice is underpinned by the important obligation that the university has to ensure that decisions about submissions are fair and impartial supporting a diversity of people and research, where contributions are valued and supported.
- 1.5.2 AUB's policies and procedures for developing our submissions do not discriminate unlawfully against, or otherwise have the effect of harassing or victimizing, individuals because of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, because they are pregnant or have recently given birth, or any other protected characteristic or because they are employed part-time or on fixed-term contracts. This applies to both academic researchers and research outputs.
- 1.5.3 The university wishes to emphasise its recognition of the invaluable contribution made by staff across the institution to its mission, including those for whom research activity is not a part of their current workload allocation. This includes technical, professional services and academic staff.
- 1.5.4 The Code supports the principles of:
- Robustness: submissions should be an accurate reflection of research undertaken at AUB.

- Transparency: people should understand how decisions about submissions are made and that fair process is followed.
 - Equity and Inclusion: decisions about submissions should be fair and impartial, supporting a diversity of people and research.
- 1.5.5 AUB aims to support fixed-term, part-time staff, and contract research staff on an equal basis with full-time and open-ended contract employees.
- 1.6 Equalities training**
- 1.6.1 All staff involved in REF processes will receive training on equality, diversity and inclusion, tailored to REF processes where applicable.
- 1.7 Contextualisation within Institutional Policies:**
- 1.7.1 The Code of Practice has been informed by the following key policies and guidance which feed into the broader equality, diversity and inclusion aims of the university:
- Agile Working
 - Dignity at Work
 - Equality at Work
 - Flexible Working
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Maternity, Parental and Shared Parental Leave Policies
 - Recruitment
- 1.7.2 Other policies and procedures in support of Strategy, People, and Research Environment and responsible research assessment include:
- Code of Ethics and Ethical Investment Principles
 - Data Protection and Data Management Policies
 - Environment
 - Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)
 - Open Access
 - Whistleblowing (Public Interest Disclosure Policy)
 - Research Ethics Policy
 - Misconduct in Research
- 1.8 Update on Actions Since REF 2021:**
- 1.8.1 The period since REF 2021 has seen a marked culture change within the university, with a new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team appointed consisting of an HR EDI Partner and a Senior Officer for EDI.
- 1.8.2 A new EDI Plan published in 2024, outlines five key goals for AUB in relation to equity, diversity and inclusion:
- Allyship: Create a strong community of advocates and allies where everyone is confident to speak up in support of others
- Belonging: Foster a sense of belonging for everyone in AUB's community, regardless of background, and to eliminate any barriers which may inhibit this.
- Equity: To promote equity, providing according to individual need and circumstance to ensure everyone in our community has the right tools and support in place to perform their best.
- Representation: To increase diversity across our staff and student populations so everyone feels represented and has a positive role model within the community.

Voice: Establish effective channels for staff and student voice which encourages everyone to understand their contribution towards AUB's success and engage in open dialogue.

- 1.8.3 Our REF 2021 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) identified that relatively few staff had shared their diversity data with the University. This limited our ability to ensure that REF submissions were drawn from a diverse pool of researchers and accurately reflected the diversity of our workforce.
- 1.8.4 To address this, we updated our Diversity Monitoring Form and, in 2024, introduced new self-service functionality within our HR system. This enables staff to anonymously update their diversity data whenever their circumstances change. As a result, workforce diversity data is now updated more regularly, providing a more accurate baseline against which our EDI targets and objectives can be measured.
- 1.8.5 Improved data accuracy has enabled the University to acknowledge that people of colour remain underrepresented within our workforce. While targets for recruiting people of colour into the workforce and Senior Leadership Team have been met, the EDI Plan sets further targets to increase representation, particularly among academic staff. A key challenge in building an inclusive research community is the limited diversity of the local area, which can make it more difficult to attract people of colour into academic roles unless candidates are willing to relocate. In response, the university has updated recruitment advertisements to explicitly encourage applications from people of colour and disabled candidates, and now routinely advertises vacancies on diversity-focused job boards.
- 1.8.6 To support an inclusive culture, the university participates in events to promote awareness of EDI including National Inclusion Week, Disability History Month, Pride Month, Black History Month, International Women's Day and Neurodiversity Celebration Week. Human Library events have been held to explore lived experiences of faith, LTBTQ+ experiences, and neurodiversity.
- 1.8.7 AUB has an established EDI Staff Collaboration Group and an LGBTQ+ Staff Network, both of which are open to all staff regardless of personal characteristics. The EDI Staff Collaboration Group provides a forum for sharing best practice, offering feedback on University proposals, and raising issues affecting colleagues and students. The LGBTQ+ Staff Network creates a space for staff and allies to share lived experiences and raise awareness of contemporary issues across the AUB community. The EDI team works closely with both groups to ensure effective employee voice and that the perspectives of underrepresented groups inform our EDI activity.
- 1.8.9 In 2024, the University conducted a large-scale employee engagement survey, enabling analysis of the differing experiences of staff across protected characteristics. Feedback from this survey, alongside input from the EDI Collaboration Group and staff networks, is considered by the EDI Committee before decisions are implemented in response to societal, legislative, or internal diversity, equality and inclusion issues.
- 1.8.10 The University's most recent Gender Pay Gap report shows that the Senior Leadership Team now comprises 56% women and 44% men, demonstrating a strong commitment to gender equality at senior levels. This has contributed to a reduction in the gender pay gap within Professional Services and an increase in female

representation in the upper and upper-middle pay quartiles. Overall, the University has achieved a 7.88% reduction in the median gender pay gap across the workforce.

- 1.8.11 Equality and diversity training is mandatory for all staff. This includes training on *Diversity in the Workplace* and *Unconscious bias* which must be retaken every three years. A new Learning and Development website provides additional EDI resources designed to support an inclusive culture and range of learning styles. New e-learning courses cover inclusive recruitment, race in the workplace, neurodiversity, trans awareness and gender equality.
- 1.8.12 AUB is committed to the Student Minds Mental Health Charter and Mental Health First Aid training is available to all staff. To date over 300 employees have been trained as Mental Health First Aiders.
- 1.8.13 In 2024, AUB was awarded the Inclusive Employers Standard Silver Accreditation becoming the first UK university to achieve this recognition. The Inclusive Employers Standard is a globally recognised, evidence-based accreditation that assesses and benchmarks an organisation's commitment to inclusion and diversity. This accreditation is testament to the university's ongoing commitment towards improving workforce diversity and fostering an inclusive culture.

1.9 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was conducted and included in our Code of Practice Submission.
- 1.9.2 The aim of this was to confirm that AUB has given due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in its decision-making related to REF, and whether policies and procedures:
- Are designed and implemented in a way that aligns with the three aims of the PSED (identify where policies, processes, or criteria may further advance equality of opportunity; assess the potential for discrimination; provide documented evidence of “conscientious, rigorous and open-minded consideration” of equality issues).
 - Avoid unjustified disadvantage, particularly where less discriminatory alternatives may be available
 - Reflect an anticipatory, transparent, and evidence-informed approach to equality.
 - 1.9.3 The EIA was completed during the development of the Code of Practice, as processes were designed. AUB will conduct and refresh EIAs on our policies and practices as decisions are taken for all the following areas:
Identifying staff contracts with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR)
 - Determining Research Independence (RI).
 - Allocating eligible contracts to Units of Assessment.
 - Selection of outputs (including identifying substantive link, allocating outputs to UOAs and ensuring that submissions are representative. .
 - In relation to appeals and review mechanisms.
 - At any subsequent point where institutional REF-related policies or procedures are substantively revised.
- 1.9.4 EIAs will be informed through engaging, consulting or involving staff from protected groups.

- 1.9.5 A final EIA will be published after the submission deadline.
- 1.9.6 Support for the development of the EIA will be provided by the EDI Team, and considered by the REF Steering Group, Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

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

2.0 How the Volume Measure (or number of outputs/impact case studies) will be calculated

- 2.01 REF 2029 will use staff data recorded by the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA) to determine the volume (or number) of research outputs and impact case studies required for each Unit of Assessment (UoA). It will not rely on the staff list and census date used for REF 2014 and 2021.
- 2.02 The volume measure will be determined using the percentage of full-time equivalent (FTE) of eligible contracts i.e. those that meet the following criteria:
- Academic staff: the contract belongs to a member of staff whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'teaching and research' (ACEMPFUN 3) or 'research only' (ACEMPFUN 2).
 - Payroll and REF period: the staff member is on the payroll of AUB within the REF period (i.e. academic year 2025-26 to 2026-27).
- AND** the contract holds either
- **Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR)**: for 'teaching and research' contracts OR
 - **Research Independence (RI)**: for 'research' only contracts.
- 2.03 Note: 'Teaching only' (ACEMPFUN 1) contracts cannot be included in the volume measure calculation.
- 2.04 The contracts of staff on fixed-term or part-time contracts, including externally funded research contracts will be included in the volume measure where they hold eligible contracts.

2.1 Calculation

- 2.1.1 The volume measure will be calculated by averaging the FTE of volume contributing contracts across the two academic years 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 and multiplying this number by 2.5.

For example:

- An average FTE of 10 would require AUB to submit 25 outputs ($10 \times 2.5 = 25$).

2.2 Staff Consultation and Training

- 2.2.1 Staff were consulted on the processes for identifying significant responsibility for research and research independence using appropriate staff representation mechanisms.
- 2.2.2 All staff involved in CoP processes have received training on equality, diversity and inclusion, tailored to REF processes.

2.3 Process for identifying contracts that hold Significant Responsibility for Research

- 2.3.1 As a specialist institution, AUB (HE) academic staff are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds, bringing experience of professional practice and industry expertise to the university.
- 2.3.2 Most (HE) academic staff are employed on 'teaching and research' contracts (ACEMPFUN3). However, not all such contracts hold an expectation of Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) for whom explicit time and resources are made available to engage actively in independent research, and that is an expectation of the job role.
- 2.3.3 Therefore, AUB will use the Academic Workload Planning Framework (AWPF) to be introduced from summer 2026, to determine which 'teaching and research' contracts hold SRR for AUB's HESA return in September 2026 and 2027.
- 2.3.4 Under the AWPF all staff on 'teaching and research' contracts are given a standard allocation of 100 hours within their contract for Research and Scholarly activity.
- 2.3.5 Staff can request additional research hours to the standard allocation through the academic planning framework. Requests will be considered and approved annually by the Academic Workload Allocation Committee. The contracts of all staff given **additional** hours of institutionally supported research time will be considered to hold SRR and will contribute to the volume measure for REF 2029.
- 2.3.6 Identification of SRR is not persistent and will be reviewed annually *within* the AWPF process.
- 2.3.7 Staff on contracts identified as holding SRR are expected to:
- Be undertaking research activity that meets the REF definition of research i.e. *A process of investigation leading to new insights effectively shared.*
 - Be engaging actively in independent research and be producing high-quality research outputs (written or practice research) of at least 2*/3* quality (internationally recognised/internationally excellent as described by REF criteria) with an expectation of at least two outputs over a three-year period. (Pro-rata for part-time staff).
 - Be bidding for external research grants to help support their programme of activities or be working on externally funded research projects

And in addition, be contributing to the research environment, by undertaking some or all of the following:

- Be disseminating their research at peer reviewed conferences or similar.
- Be participating in research-related enabling activities, for instance adding value to a cross-disciplinary network, editing/reviewing peer reviewed research publications, assessing external grant funding applications.
- Be contributing to research degree supervision and AUB Confirmation and Examinations.
- Be engaged in research dissemination/impact/public engagement activities resulting from their research.

2.4 Process for confirming SRR

- 2.4.1 Staff will submit a request for an additional research allocation of hours on an annual basis using a template for clarity and consistency. Requests will be considered by an Academic Workload Allocation Committee and hours agreed collectively. Approved allocations will then be entered into the Academic Workload Planning System. Contracts of Staff awarded an additional research allocation will be considered to hold SRR. Staff will be notified of the decision.

2.5 Appeals

- 2.5.1 Staff wishing to appeal the SRR decision can do so within 10 days of receiving the notification by notifying the research office researchoffice@aub.ac.uk. All appeals will be considered by the University Secretary/Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) (or other nominated members of staff outside of Line Management Structures).

Part 3: Determining Research Independence

3.0 How AUB will identify which Research only contracts hold Research Independence.

- 3.0.1 AUB employs a few staff on Research only contracts (ACEMPFUN 2) including staff at Professorial level, Research Fellows and Post Doctoral Research Assistants (PDRAs).
- 3.0.2 The university defines research independence as an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme. As per REF 2029 guidance, a member of staff is not deemed to be an independent researcher only on the basis that they are named on one or more research outputs.
- 3.0.3 Staff members on research only contracts will be considered on a case-by-case basis to assess whether they satisfy the indicators of research independence provided in the REF Guidance. Each indicator may not individually demonstrate independence and where appropriate multiple factors may need to be considered.
- 3.0.4 Contracts typically exhibiting research independence (RI) are those where staff members:
 - Act as lead applicant on externally funded research projects.
 - Hold an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship requiring research independence.
 - Lead a research group or a substantial/specialised work package.
 - Where research independence is an inherent expectation of a contract.
 - Being named as a co-applicant on an externally funded research grant/award.
 - Having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research.

3.1 Process for identifying contracts that hold Research Independence (RI)

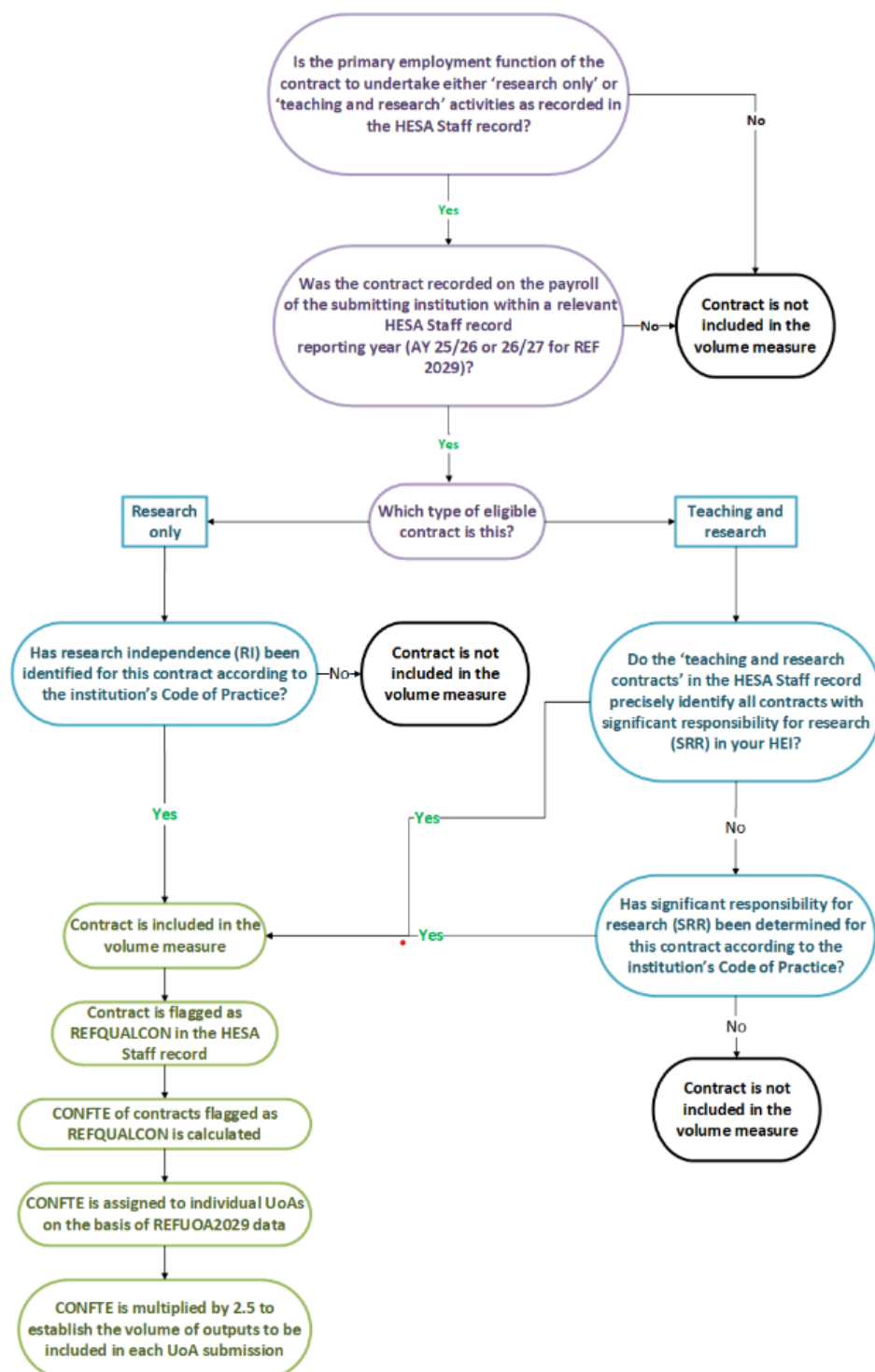
- 3.1.1 All staff on Research only contracts will be identified by HR and asked to complete a Research Independence form which will ask them to identify whether they qualify for research independence or not.
- 3.1.2 Responses to the Research Independence form will be reviewed and status of staff confirmed by the Academic Workload Allocation Committee.
- 3.1.3 Final decisions will be confirmed to staff on their status in relation to Research Independence by the end of August 2026 and 2027 to meet the timetable for HESA. The RI form is included in Appendix 5.
- 3.1.4 Research Independence, once confirmed, will be considered persistent.

3.2 Appeals

- 3.2.1 Research only staff not deemed to be an independent researcher, but who believe they are undertaking independent research may appeal the decision.
- 3.2.2 Eligible grounds for appeal may include meeting any of the indicators of research independence provided in the REF guidance and highlighted above. It should be noted that, as per REF 2029 Guidance, each indicator may not individually demonstrate independence and where appropriate, multiple factors may need to be considered.

- 3.3 Staff wishing to appeal the RI decision can do so within 10 days of receiving the notification. All appeals will be considered by the University Secretary/Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) (or other nominated members of staff outside of Line Management Structures).

3.4 Diagram to give an overview of the process of identifying volume measure contributing contracts for REF 2029.



Part 4: Allocating Contracts to UoAs

4.0 How AUB will allocate contracts to UoAs.

- 4.0.1 The specialism and size of AUB mean that the university expects to submit to two units of assessment i.e. UoA 32: Art and design: history, practice and theory and UoA 33: Music, drama, dance, performing arts, film and screen.

4.1 Staff who hold SRR

- 4.1.1 The allocation of contracts to UoAs will be based on the academic structure of the university. All contracts associated with the Bournemouth Film School will be assigned to UoA 33 and all other contracts (i.e. those associated with the other Faculty: Fashion and Creative Industries Management, Art, Design and Architecture to UoA 32. All staff on Teaching and Research contracts (ACEMPFUN 3) are on generic contracts with job titles that detail the course and Faculty in which they are based.
- 4.1.2 The university recognises that some contracts could be coded to other UoAs. However, there are currently insufficient numbers of research outputs published that meet the eligible employment relationship requirements (see section 5) and/or research activity undertaken whilst at AUB to realise an impact case study(s) to support a REF submission in those UoAs.

4.2 Staff who are RI

- 4.2.1 AUB has few staff who are RI. Contracts for staff considered to be RI will be assigned to the UoA that most closely aligns to the disciplinary focus of the funded Research Centre in which they are based. Any RI staff that are not aligned to a funded Centre, will be coded into a UoA by association through the disciplinary focus of their research.

Part 5: Policies and Procedures for the Selection of Outputs

5.0 Principles and Approach

- 5.0.1 AUB's submission to REF 2029 is intended to be the optimal presentation of the university's overall research. AUB's process for selecting outputs will be based on making the strongest possible submission that is representative of the disciplines and inclusive of a diverse range of output types within each UoA it submits to.
- 5.0.2 AUB will adopt REF's underpinning principle that all forms of research output and research practice will be assessed on a fair and equal basis. It will not regard any particular form of output as of greater or lesser quality than another per se, and all subject matter will be assessed equally without bias.
- 5.0.3 AUB is committed to the principles of responsible research assessment as set out in the Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA) and the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA); these principles (of equality, fairness and transparency) have guided the Code of Practice. AUB will not use any quantitative indicators in its decision making.
- 5.0.4 Outputs do not need to be submitted to the UoA associated with the author's contract of employment. Therefore, AUB will submit outputs to UoAs where they best align with the UoA descriptors set out in the Panel criteria and working methods policy (see Appendix 8) requesting cross-referral to another sub-panel for advice where appropriate.
- 5.0.5 AUB will support staff in developing 300-word statements and portfolios to support the submission of a diverse range of output types including practice research.
- 5.0.6 The university will select outputs for submission in a transparent, consistent and inclusive manner demonstrating clear accountability for its actions.

5.1 Policy

- 5.1.1 AUB will consider for submission all outputs deposited in AUB's Institutional Repository (AUBREI), and confidential reports and forthcoming outputs notified to the Research Office. All outputs that meet the core eligibility criteria listed below will be considered for submission:

- Have first been brought into the public domain during the publication period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2028, or if a confidential report, lodged with the body to whom it is confidential during this same period.
- Meet the requirements of the REF 2029 Open Access Policy (i.e. Journal articles and conference proceedings with ISSN only).
- Have a substantive link to the University. AUB must have enabled the research leading to the output. This is evidenced through an eligible employment relationship (see below) with an author who has made a significant research contribution to the output.

Note: Outputs that were delayed due to the impact of Covid-19 but submitted to REF 2021 are not eligible.

- 5.1.2 Eligible employment relationships are defined as:

- A minimum of 0.2 FTE for at least 12 months continuous employment.
- The role descriptor includes an explicit expectation of research activity (in line with the REF definition of research) within the role. 'Research activity' is not restricted by profession and an eligible employment relationship may be with any staff member who undertakes, enables or supports research.

5.2 Eligible employment relationships and the point outputs are made publicly available.

5.2.1 An eligible employment relationship must have occurred, either:

- i) At the point at which the submitted output was first made publicly available (i.e. published at any point during the eligible employment relationship) OR
- ii) Before the submitted output was first made publicly available, when the research resulting in the output was carried out.
 - For most outputs this time-limited period will have occurred between January 2021 to December 2028.
 - This time-limited period may be extended prior to January 2021 providing that the output was published during the REF publication period.
 - The time-limited period will be longer for long-form or extended process outputs.
 - Eligible employment relationships that occur after the point at which an output was first made publicly available cannot constitute a substantive link (with the exception of some long-form/extended process outputs as set out below).

5.3 Number of outputs associated with substantive link

5.3.1 AUB will identify the eligible employment relationship between an individual author (or equivalent) and the university through the inclusion of a HESA Staff Identifier for each output submitted.

5.3.2 The expectation is that no more than five outputs are associated with a single substantive link within a submission at UoA level.

5.3.3 This is intended to ensure that submissions are representative of the full range of research within the UoA and are not unfairly disproportionate.

5.3.4 Where this number is exceeded, the UoA should explain the rationale within the Statement of Representation (to be submitted in the SPRE section).

5.4 Time limited period

5.4.1 The time limited period prior to the date when the output was first made publicly available, during which the research resulting in the output was carried out is:

- Two years for the majority of outputs
- Five years for long-form and extended process outputs.

5.5 Exclusions

5.5.1 Outputs sole-authored by or where the **only** substantive link to AUB is through the following groups, will not be eligible for submission:

- Postgraduate research students (including PhD theses)
- Visiting or honorary staff
- Staff on teaching only contracts (i.e. those returned to the HESA Staff record as ACEMPFUN 1)
- Individuals employed on academic or other contracts with no explicit expectation of research within the job role, technical teaching or support only contract.

5.6 Outputs authored during an excluded contract

5.6.1 Outputs authored by individuals while on an excluded contract will be considered for submission if the individual subsequently moved to a Teaching and Research or Research only contract during the REF period, subject to the following conditions:

- The contracts were both held at the same institution and meet the definition of continuous employment.

- All other eligibility criteria for an eligible employment relationship are met within the REF period (1 January 2021 to 31 December 2028).

5.7 Exceptional circumstances

- 5.7.1 Outputs that are sole-authored by staff on teaching-only, honorary emeritus contracts, or other non-research contracts may be considered for submission where AUB has provided allocated time and funding to support that specific research activity. Where this is applicable, clearance for submission will be sought from the REF 2029 Director.

5.8 Exception for long-form outputs

- 5.8.1 Where a researcher is employed on a contract that constitutes an eligible employment relationship at AUB at the point the REF submission is made, long-form and/or extended process outputs published before this contract commenced will be eligible to be considered for submission if:

- They were first made publicly available during the REF period (1 January to 31 December 2028) and
- The staff member's eligible employment relationship with the submitting institution commenced within five years of the output first being made publicly available.
- The researcher does not need to have had an eligible employment relationship with another institution at the point the output was first made publicly available.

5.9 Reserve outputs

- 5.9.1 Reserve outputs will be ranked in order of submission and will be selected in order as required. They will not be associated with a specific output within the submission.

- 5.9.2 The reserve list will be used for the following types of outputs:

- Outputs with delayed publication i.e. not made publicly available before 31 December 2028.
- If a request for an output to be double-weighted (count as two outputs) is declined.

5.10 Outputs published from former staff

- 5.10.1 AUB will consider for selection, on an equal basis, all outputs via former members of staff that meet the eligibility criteria set out above. This includes outputs from:

- Staff who have resigned.
- Staff selected for voluntary redundancy or severance.
- Staff who have retired.
- Staff leaving after the expiry of a fixed-term contract.
- Staff subject to compulsory redundancy except i) where the substantive link occurred before the submitted output was made publicly available (i.e. the output was published after the member of staff stopped working for AUB).

5.11 Languages

- 5.11.1 AUB expects the majority of outputs to be submitted in English. Where not, the university will take measures to ensure they are not treated less favourably to outputs in English. A 100-word statement setting out the research in English will be requested and outputs referred to internal or external assessors with relevant expertise.

5.12 Procedures

5.12.1 Selection Process

- 5.12.2 Staff will be reminded to deposit all research outputs in the institutional repository AUBREI or to notify the Research Office of forthcoming and any confidential outputs on an annual basis.
- 5.12.3 The selection of outputs will be based on a four-stage process as summarised below.
1. Outputs gathered and checked for eligibility by the Research Office
 2. Outputs scored and allocated to UoA
 3. Output selection
 4. Outputs reviewed by REF Steering Group before final submission confirmed.

5.13 Stage One – Eligibility Review by Research Office

- 5.13.1 The Research Office will gather and check outputs against REF policy as outlined above to identify outputs that meet the core eligibility criteria and can therefore be considered for submission. As part of this, it will identify a HESA Staff Identifier for each output submitted to monitor the number of outputs associated with a single substantive link.

5.14 Stage Two – Outputs scored and allocated to UoA

- 5.14.1 The assessment of the quality of research outputs will be judged using internal peer review. Reviewers will be selected based on appropriate research expertise from staff identified as holding SRR within each UoA.
- 5.14.2 External review may be sought where AUB is unsure of the grading or to benchmark its own scoring. This is likely to be for more diverse output types (see Appendix 2).
- 5.14.3 Each eligible output will be:
- Scored by one reviewer, with the output reviewed and score confirmed by a second reviewer.
 - Scored on a 12-point scale against REF assessment criteria and quality levels. (see Appendix 6)
 - Flagged for double weighting.
 - Aligned to one or more UoAs.
 - Flagged for cross-referral where submission to the most appropriate UoA requires input from another area.
- 5.14.4 Where scores differ substantially between internal reviewers (by one or more whole grading points), a third assessment will be sought to reach a final indicative score.

5.15 Stage Three: Output Selection

- 5.15.1 The data from the scoring process will allow each internal UoA to build quality submissions by selecting the best outputs up to the quota required for the submission plus a list of outputs identified and ranked in order of submission for the reserve list.
- 5.15.2 The initial selection will be analysed in terms of how representative it is in terms of the following indicators to:
- Reflect the research strategies and structures of the submitting unit over the REF period, including contributions to large-scale research programs, networks, or national/global initiatives.
 - Reflect the diversity of research outputs, including both written and practice research, produced within the unit.

- Reflect contributions from multidisciplinary collaborations and institutional partnerships, supporting sustainable contributions to knowledge and understanding.
- 5.15.3 All instances where a maximum of five outputs associated with a single substantive link within each UoA is exceeded will be reviewed and a rationale for this provided, the selection adjusted or, for co-authored outputs, linked to another HESA ID if appropriate.
- 5.15.4 All instances where outputs do not align with the UoAs that AUB is returning to, will be reviewed. Where there is no genuine alignment with the UoA descriptors, these outputs will be excluded from selection.
- 5.15.5 Selection decisions may change if it is possible to make the submission more inclusive without a diminution of quality. Where decisions need to be made between outputs scoring the same, then considerations of representativeness will apply.
- 5.15.6 A statement of representation will be submitted in the unit level disciplinary statement (under Strategy, People and Research Environment section) providing an overview of research activity and including any discrete subject structures, research groups and/or areas of specialised academic endeavour. The statement will explain the rationale for including more than five outputs associated with a single substantive link.

5.16 Stage Four – Review (to be undertaken for each UoA)

- 5.16.1 The REF Steering Group will consider the final proposed list of outputs, scores and a record of any adjustments made to ensure representation. It will also review the list of 'reserve' outputs.
- 5.16.2 The REF Steering Group will approve the final selection for submission and list of reserve outputs.
- 5.16.3 The academic judgement of the panels is final.

5.17 Data protection and confidentiality

- 5.17.1 Research England and AUB will collect, store and process all personal data submitted by HEIs to the REF in accordance with current data protection legislation – the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 5.17.2 All those involved are bound by confidentiality undertakings in respect of all information contained in submissions.

5.18 Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was conducted on the draft Code of Practice including SRR identification, Research Independence, allocation of eligible contracts to UoA and selection of outputs.
- 5.8.2 The following changes were implemented into the Code submitted to Research England as a result of EIA findings:
- i) Statement added to address language and linguistic inclusion which was missing from Code.
 - ii) The section on outputs from former staff was re-written to make it explicit which outputs can be considered and that they will be considered on a fair and equal basis with outputs from current staff.

Part 6 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Definition of Research

REF 2029 defines Research as *a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared*.

This includes:

- work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, culture, society, and/or to the public and voluntary sectors.
- scholarship, which is defined for the REF as the creation, development and maintenance of the intellectual infrastructure of subjects and disciplines, in forms such as dictionaries, scholarly editions, catalogues and contributions to major research databases.
- the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights.
- the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction.

Effectively shared includes research that is published, disseminated or made publicly available in the form of assessable research outputs and confidential reports.

Exclusions from the definition of research

The definition of research excludes:

- the routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes such as for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques.
- the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research.

Exclusions

Editorships of journals and other activities associated with the dissemination of research findings should not be submitted.

Appendix 2: Diverse Outputs Taken from REF 2021 Guidance – update when REF 2029 Panel Criteria and Working Methods Policy Module is released.

Research involves a diverse set of research practices, which lead to a wide range of diverse outputs.

Diversity of output forms refers to the representation and recognition in each REF 2029 UoA and main panel of a broad range of research outputs, expressed in the most appropriate way for the research itself and its audiences and partners.

Such outputs may include innovative formats, accessible reporting formats, and modes of expression that may depart from historical conventions within specific fields and contexts. Examples of diverse output types include but go well beyond, journal articles, conference papers, monographs and book chapters, to include as appropriate to each UoA:

- non-textual (artefacts, audio, visual, multi-modal)
- creative, performance and practice-led outputs
- reviews and research synthesis
- software and code
- datasets
- translations and critical editions
- reagents
- multi-component outputs
- policy summaries and analyses
- different types of reports

The assessment of diverse outputs will recognise rigorous, significant and original research across multiple purposes, designs, methodologies, analytical approaches and modes of communication.

Appendix 3: List of protected characteristics as recognised by the Equality Act 2010

- Age: a person belonging to a particular age (for example 32 year olds) or range of ages (for example 18 to 30 year olds).
- Disability: a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- Gender Reassignment: where a person undergoes, or proposes to undergo, a process for the purpose of reassigning their sex.
- Marriage and Civil Partnership: marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourable than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).
- Pregnancy and Maternity: pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breast feeding.
- Race: a race is a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship) ethnicity or national origins. A racial group can be made up of more than one distinct racial group, such as Black British.
- Religion or Belief: religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
- Sex: a man or woman.
- Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

AUB also endeavours to include caring responsibilities and socio-economic status, although these are not currently protected under the Equality Act.

Appendix 4: Terms of Reference and Membership of AUB Key REF 2029 Committees and Panels.

REF 2029 Steering Group

The REF Steering Group is responsible on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor for guiding and supporting the university's internal preparation process and final submission to REF 2029. The Steering Group reports to Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.

Terms of reference

- To be the primary decision-making Committee for AUB's REF 2029 submission.
- To monitor the implementation of AUB's Code of Practice in informing AUB's approach to REF 2029.
- To collate and interpret intelligence gathered on the format and operation of REF ahead of submission deadlines.
- To review Institutional level and Unit level statements, including statements of representation, and approve AUB's return to SPRE.
- To review the selection of outputs and approve AUB's return to CKU.
- To review impact case studies and approve AUB's return to E&I.
- To consider equality and diversity aspects of the REF submission including equality impact analysis monitoring.
- To review results/outcomes from REF 2029 and critically evaluate strategy, planning and decision-making to inform AUB's preparations for future research assessment exercises.
- To make any other strategic decision that needs to be taken in the context of REF 2029.

Membership

- Director of Research and Innovation (chair)
- Senior EDI Officer
- UoA Leads
- Up to four members of Academic Staff drawn from members of the Professoriate and/or with contracts with Significant Responsibility for Research, and reflective of different career stages. Within the panel there will be expertise of diverse outputs.

Secretary (Research Manager)

Frequency of meetings: Two/Three times a year.

Any member of the Panel declaring a conflict of interest including having outputs considered for selection shall be required to withdraw from discussion of the relevant items.

UoA Panels

The UoA Panels are responsible for guiding and supporting UoA internal preparation processes. The UoA Panels report to the REF Steering Group.

Terms of Reference

With reference to the REF 2029 Code of Practice and REF 2029 policy modules:

- i) Rank outputs in order of quality as per the working method outlined in Part 5.
- ii) Review the proposed selection to ensure they represent the subject range and diversity of research activities undertaken during the REF 2029 cycle.

- iii) Confirm the order for submission of the remaining outputs.
- iv) Confirm the order for submission of any reserve outputs.
- v) Review impact case studies to identify which represent the strongest in terms of 'Reach and Significance' and recommend to the REF Steering Panel which case studies should be submitted.
- vi) Review the information given in the unit level SPRE statement to ensure that this describes the excellence of the unit including the Statement on the Research Community and the Statement of Representation.

Membership

- UoA Lead
- Up to four members of academic staff drawn from members of the Professoriate and/or doctoral holding staff representative of the academic framing of the UoA. Within the panel there will be expertise of both written and practice-based research.

Secretary (Research Manager)

Any member of the Panel declaring a conflict of interest including having outputs considered for selection shall be required to withdraw from discussion of the relevant items.

Academic Workload Allocation Committee

The Academic Workload Allocation Committee is responsible for reviewing requests for an additional allocation of hours for research and confirming which contracts will hold Significant Responsibility for Research.

Terms of Reference

- i) To review all applications for an additional allocation of hours for research.
- ii) To confirm the allocation of hours.
- iii) To confirm which contracts will therefore hold Significant Responsibility for Research.

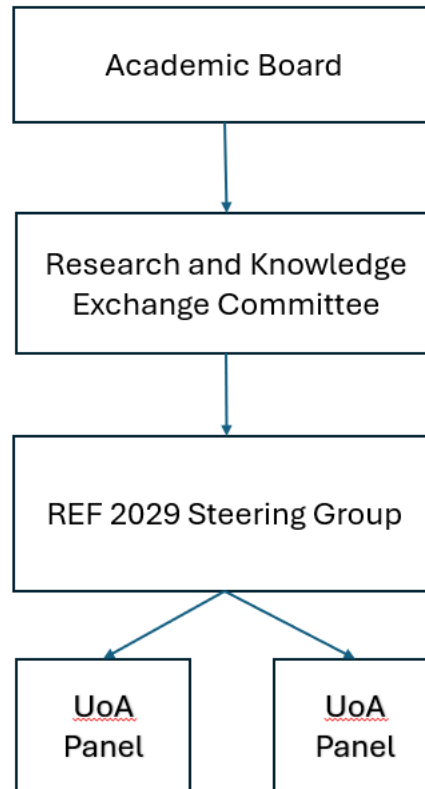
Membership

- Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (chair)
- Director of Research and Innovation
- Academic Deans
- Head of Knowledge Exchange
- Research Manager

Secretary (tbc)

Any member of the Panel declaring a conflict of interest shall be required to withdraw from discussion of the relevant items.

Diagram of reporting structure



Appendix 5: Additional Research Allocation Template and RI Form



Academic Workload Planning - Application for Additional Hours

Please use this form if you would like to request additional hours for Research, Knowledge Exchange, Creative Agency and Educational Innovation, in addition to the 100 hours standard allocation for research and scholarly activity. You can apply for up to a maximum of 300 hours.

Please pick the academic year that relates to when you will undertake the work.

This request is for work in a particular academic year. Future academic years will be made available in time for the planning cycle for those years. If work is split over multiple academic years, then the hours must be requested for each year separately.

2. Please pick the area of additional hours you wish to apply for.

- Research
- Knowledge Exchange
- Creative Agency
- Educational Innovation

Research

Please detail the research activities you plan to undertake in the coming year. You only need to complete the sections relevant to your research plan. Questions come in pairs and ask you to describe the activity you want to undertake and then specify the number of hours required.

3. Process of investigation - Brief details of activity proposed

(Such as: primary research / data gathering / analysis / project development).

4. Process of investigation - hours requested

(Maximum tariff of hours guidance (full-time/pro-rata part-time): 40 - 170 hours).

5. Producing Outputs - Brief details of activity proposed

(Such as: written/practice research - e.g. journal article/exhibit in an exhibition (30hrs), book/substantial curated exhibition (100hrs))

6. Producing Outputs - hours requested

(Maximum tariff of hours guidance (full-time/pro-rata part-time): 40 - 120 hours).

7. Grant writing and application - Brief details of activity proposed

8. Grant writing and application - hours requested
(Maximum tariff of hours guidance (full-time/pro-rata part-time): 40 - 100 hours).
9. Grant delivery - Brief details of activity proposed
(Dependent on grant awarded (if time not bought out))
10. Grant delivery - hours requested
11. Research dissemination - Brief details of activity proposed
(Conference / public engagement / Impact case study development).
12. Research dissemination - hours requested
(Maximum tariff of hours guidance (full-time/pro-rata part-time): 40 hours).
13. PhD Study - Brief details of activity proposed
14. PhD Study - hours requested
(Maximum tariff of hours guidance (full-time/pro-rata part-time): 175 hours).
15. Academic Service / Discipline Activity - Brief details of activity proposed
(e.g. AUB PhD confirmation/examination, journal editing, network chair)

Research Independence Form

Please complete the form below if you are on a 'Research only' contract. This will enable us to determine if you are an independent researcher. The university defines research independence as an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme.

Forms will be reviewed by the Research Allocation Committee. If you are considered to hold Research Independence, your contract will be eligible to contribute to the volume measure for REF 2029. However, the de-coupling of outputs from staff in REF 2029 means that your research outputs can be considered for return to the REF irrespective of whether you hold research independence or not, provided they are eligible.

Research Independence, once confirmed, is considered persistent. The form will be revisited annually with staff who are not considered to hold research independence.

Please refer to the AUB REF 2029 Code of Practice for information about research output eligibility and selection <https://intranet.aub.ac.uk/research/Pages/ref.aspx>

Name	
Faculty/Department	

Section A

Please complete the following.

If YES, please complete section B. If no, please go to section C.

I consider that I hold research independence	YES/NO
--	--------

Section B

Please provide information on possible indicators of independence in the relevant boxes:

Indicator of independence Please note that each indicator may not individually demonstrate independence and, where appropriate, multiple factors may need to be considered.
<u>Act as lead applicant on externally funded research projects</u>

<i>Please provide details of research project, funder, dates, title, dates</i>
• <u>Hold an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship requiring research independence</u> <i>Please provide details of fellowship: funder, dates, title</i>
• <u>Lead a research group or a substantial/specialised work package</u> <i>Please provide details of research project, funder, dates</i>
• <u>Where research independence is an inherent expectation of a contract</u> <i>Please provide details</i>
• <u>Being named as a co-applicant on an externally funded research grant/award</u> <i>Please provide details of research project, funder, dates, title</i>
• <u>Having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research.</u> <i>Please provide details as appropriate</i>

Section C

Please confirm by ticking the box provided, that:

- The information provided above is a true and accurate description as of the date below.
- I realise that the information will be used for REF purposes only.
- I realise it may be necessary to share the information with the Research England's REF Team.

I agree ☐

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Decision: <u>To be completed by XX</u>	
Provide a statement and reasoning confirming either (delete as appropriate):	
1. The individual named above does meet the definition of an independent research, or: 2. Following consideration of the information provided, the individual does not meet the definition for an independent researcher as set out in our Code of Practice.	
Reason:	
Name	
Signature of X	
Date	

Acknowledgment of staff member

I acknowledge that for the reasons stated above (delete as appropriate):	
1. I currently do meet the definition of an independent researcher and my contract will contribute to the Volume measure for REF 2029. 2. I currently do not meet the definition of an independent researcher and therefore my contract will not contribute to the Volume measure for REF 2029.	
Name	
Signature of individual	
Date	

The final completed form should be returned to researchoffice@aub.ac.uk as a record of the decision in case of appeal by the individual or audit by the Research England REF 2029 team.

APPENDIX 6: Assessment criteria and Quality Levels

AUB REF 2029 Internal Scoring Criteria

AUB will use the following matrix to score research outputs to inform the selection of outputs.

REF Score		Score	REF Quality Level
4*	High	12	Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
	Medium	11	
	Low	10	
3*	High	9	Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence
	Medium	8	
	Low	7	
2*	High	6	Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
	Medium	5	
	Low	4	
1*	High	3	Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
	Medium	2	
	Low	1	
	Unclassified	0	Quality that falls below the standard of nationally recognised work. Or work which does not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of this assessment.

REF 2029 Scoring Criteria (Taken from REF 2021 Guidance – to be updated when REF 2029 Panel Criteria and Working Methods when Policy Module is released).

The University's return to REF 2029 will be considered by Main Panel D and its sub-panels who will look for evidence of originality, significance and rigour and apply the generic definitions of the starred quality levels as follows:

- **Originality:** will be understood as the extent to which the output makes an important and innovative contribution to understanding and knowledge in the field. Research outputs that demonstrate originality may do one or more of the following: produce and interpret new empirical findings or new material; engage with new and/or complex problems; develop innovative research methods, methodologies and analytical techniques; show imaginative and creative scope; provide new arguments and/or new forms of expression, formal innovations, interpretations and/or insights; collect and engage with novel types of data; and/or advance theory of the analysis of doctrine, policy or practice, and new forms of expression.
- **Significance:** will be understood as the extent to which the work has influenced, or has the capacity to influence, knowledge and scholarly thought, or the development and understanding of policy and/or practice.
- **Rigour:** will be understood as the extent to which the work demonstrates intellectual coherence and integrity, and adopts robust and appropriate concepts, analyses, sources, theories and/or methodologies.

The assessment will be made using the quality levels below. The terms 'world-leading', 'international', and 'national' will be taken as quality benchmarks within the generic definitions of the quality levels. They will relate to the actual, likely or deserved influence of the work. There will be no assumption of any necessary international exposure in terms of publication or reception, or any necessary research content in terms of topic or approach.

- Four star** Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour. Sub-panels will expect to see evidence of or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics across and possibly beyond its area/field:
- a primary or essential point of reference
 - of profound influence
 - instrumental in developing new thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences
 - a major expansion of the range and the depth of research and its application
 - outstandingly novel, innovative and/or creative
- Three star** Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence. Sub-panels will expect to see evidence of or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics across and possibly beyond its area/field:
- an important point of reference
 - of considerable influence
 - a catalyst for, or important contribution to, new thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences
 - a significant expansion of the range and the depth of research and its application
 - significantly novel or innovative or creative
- Two star** Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour. Sub-panels will expect to see evidence of or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics across and possibly beyond its area/field:
- a recognised point of reference
 - of some influence
 - an incremental and cumulative advance on thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences
 - a useful contribution to the range or depth of research and its application
- One star** Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour. Sub-panels will expect to see evidence of the following characteristics within its area/field:
- an identifiable contribution to understanding without advancing existing paradigms of enquiry or practice
 - a useful contribution of minor influence
- Unclassified** A research output will be graded 'unclassified' if it is either:
- below the quality threshold for one star; or
 - does not meet the definition of research used for the REF

APPENDIX 7: REF 2029 Units of Assessment

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is a process of expert review, and institutions will be invited to make submissions into units of assessment (UoAs). The submissions are assessed by an expert sub-panel for each UoA, working under the guidance of four main panels.

Main Panels

Main Panel A: Medicine, Health and Life Sciences (UoAs 1 to 6)

Main Panel B: Physical Sciences, Engineering and Mathematics (UoAs 7 to 12)

Main Panel C: Social Sciences (UoAs 13 to 24)

Main Panel D: Arts and Humanities (UoAs 25 to 34)

Units of Assessment (UOA)

Main Panel A – Medicine, Health and Life Sciences

1. Clinical Medicine
2. Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care
3. Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy
4. Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience
5. Biological Sciences
6. Agriculture, Food and Veterinary Sciences

Main Panel B – Physical Sciences, Engineering and Mathematics

7. Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences
8. Chemistry
9. Physics
10. Mathematical Sciences
11. Computer Science and Informatics
12. Engineering

Main Panel C – Social Sciences

13. Architecture, Built Environment and Planning
14. Geography and Environmental Studies
15. Archaeology
16. Economics and Econometrics
17. Business and Management Studies
18. Law
19. Politics and International Studies

- 20. Social Work and Social Policy
- 21. Sociology
- 22. Anthropology and Development Studies
- 23. Education
- 24. Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism

Main Panel D – Arts and Humanities

- 25. Area Studies
- 26. Modern Languages and Linguistics
- 27. English Language and Literature
- 28. History
- 29. Classics
- 30. Philosophy
- 31. Theology and Religious Studies
- 32. Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory
- 33. Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies
- 34. Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management

APPENDIX 8: Unit Descriptors

(Taken from REF 2021 Guidance – to be updated when REF 2029 Panel Criteria and Working Methods Policy Module is released).

Unit of Assessment 32 - Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory

The sub-panel will assess research from all aspects of the history, theory and practice of art and design, and disciplines where these relate to visual, material and spatial cultures. The sub-panel will consider outputs, in whatever genre or medium, that meet the definition of research. The sub-panel acknowledges and welcomes a diverse range of methods and approaches to research, and therefore adopts an inclusive definition of its remit.

It is anticipated that outputs will span a range of texts, edited publications and creative practices, as well as artefacts, events and curatorial outputs. The sub-panel expects to evaluate research that encompasses analytical, applied, ethnographical, experimental, historical, pedagogical, scientific, technological and theoretical approaches to the widest domains of the history, theory and practice of art and design, and covers the broadest understanding of the subject disciplines within any cultural, geographical or historical context.

Unit of Assessment 33 - Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies

The sub-panel will assess research from all areas of music, drama, dance, theatre, performance, live and sonic art, film, television and screen studies. It anticipates that outputs will span a range of artefacts, creative practices, curatorial outputs, edited publications, recordings and writings. The sub-panel expects to evaluate research that encompasses analytical, applied, critical, ethnographical, historical, interdisciplinary, pedagogical, practice-based, scientific, technological and theoretical approaches to all of the subject areas indicated above. It covers the broadest understanding of the subject disciplines within, between and across any cultural, geographical or historical contexts.

ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

Equality Impact Assessment Form

Completion date: 20/10/25

Question 1.

Please give the name of the Faculty /Directorate responsible for the Policy, Practice, Project or Service being assessed:

Select School/Department

If you selected Other, please specify:

Research and Innovation/ Directorate of External Engagement

Question 2.

Please give the name of the Policy, Practice, Project or Service that is being assessed.

REF 2029 Code of Practice

Question 3.

Is this a new or existing Policy, Practice, Project or Service?

New Policy

Question 4.

EIA review team – list of staff members and positions

Valerie Lodge – Research Manager
Dr David Lund, Senior Lecturer, BA (Hons) Modelmaking
Dr Emma Shercliff, Associate Professor in Textiles and Participatory Making

Question 5.

What are the aims, objectives and outcomes of the Policy, Practice, Project or Service?

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the system for assessing the excellence of research in UK higher education institutions (HEIs). AUB will submit to REF 2029 in November 2028.

The objectives of the REF are to:

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

Any Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) wishing to make a submission to REF 2029 must have a Code of Practice (CoP) approved by the funding bodies responsible for REF (including Research England).

AUB's CoP written in line with REF 2029 policy provided by Research England outlines how the university will make key decisions about its submission to REF 2029. AUB cannot change Research England's policies but can take decisions concerning its own processes and procedures for the following:

- i) Identifying staff contracts with significant responsibility for research
- ii) Determining research independence
- iii) Allocating eligible contracts to UoAs
- iv) Selection of outputs (including identifying substantive link, allocating outputs to UoA and ensuring that submissions are representative).

The CoP was developed by the Code of Practice Working Group and in consultation with staff. Policy and processes are intended to apply equally to all colleagues including those on fixed-term and part-time contracts. All AUB staff that are involved in REF 2029 decision-making processes are expected to be fully conversant with the equal opportunities' issues and the legislative environment and will have appropriate training on equality and diversity principles.

An Equality Impact Assessment is required as part of the CoP. AUB is required to include the EIA when submitting the CoP for approval; to update the EIA during the REF preparation period and complete a final EIA on the submission for external publication.

REF processes are public functions and decisions around the four core areas fall within the scope of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and must therefore be assessed for their potential equality impacts. The focus is on institutional process, not individual inclusion. REF 2029 de-couples outputs from individuals, the EIA should examine whether the design and operation of institutional REF processes align with the requirements of the PSED.

Question 6.

Who is affected by the Policy, Practice, Project or Service?

Current Staff:

Academic Staff on T&R contracts

Academic Staff on R only contracts

Academic Staff on T only contracts

Professional Services Staff

Prospective Staff

If you selected Other, please specify:

Question 7.

Have any other departments been involved in the development of the EIA

No

Question 8.

How has equality been considered in the development or review so far?

The REF Code of Practice Working Group has supported the development of the CoP. Membership was drawn from staff with openly declared disabilities, different career stages, different genders and with research that spans different Units of Assessment (UoAs).

Question 9.

Does, or could, the Policy, Practice, Project, or Service help to promote equal opportunity for members of equality groups? Please note: A few policies actively promote one aspect of equality (for example the Maternity Policy), while other policies may have clauses which actively promote equality for one or more protected characteristic (e.g. for the most part the Car Park Policy actively promotes equality for people with disabilities and those who are pregnant as they may receive differential treatment in order to 'level the playing field'), and others may not contain any specific aspects for particular groups but nevertheless have a positive impact for one or more groups (e.g. recruitment policy which ensures consistency in approach).

Please check the appropriate boxes	YES – Promotes equality	NO – does not promote equality	Neutral – Neither promotes nor does not promote	Unknown
	Yes	No	Neutral	Unknown
Age	☐	☐	x	☐
Disability	x	☐	☐	☐
Gender Reassignment	☐	☐	x	☐
Marriage/Civil Partnership	☐	☐	x	☐

Pregnancy/Maternity	x	☐	☐	☐
Race	☐	☐	x	☐
Religion/Belief	☐	☐	x	☐
Sex	☐	☐	x	☐
Sexual Orientation	☐	☐	x	☐
Caring Responsibilities	x	☐	☐	☐
Socio Economic Status	☐	☐	x	☐

Question 10.

Does or could the Policy, Practice, Project or Service have an adverse/negative effect on members of an equality group?

Please check the appropriate boxes	YES – has adverse/negative impact	NO – does not have adverse/negative impact	Neutral – Neither has nor does not have an adverse/negative impact	Unknown
	Yes	No	Neutral	Unknown
Age	☐	☐	x	☐
Disability	x	☐	☐	☐
Gender Reassignment	☐	☐	x	☐
Marriage/Civil Partnership	☐	☐	x	☐
Pregnancy/Maternity	x	☐	☐	☐
Race	☐	☐	x	☐
Religion/Belief	☐	☐	x	☐
Sex	☐	☐	x	☐
Sexual Orientation	☐	☐	x	☐
Caring Responsibilities	x	☐	☐	☐
Socio Economic Status	☐	☐	x	☐

Question 11.

As a policy holder it is imperative you use your knowledge of the policy to consider the possible impacts it has on each protected characteristic. It is important to think broadly about the indirect and unintended effects of the proposal as well as the direct intended ones. A thorough EIA will identify both positive and negative impacts. This question gives an open box response for you to really consider all potential or actual effects on those with protected characteristics.

Identifying staff contracts with significant responsibility for research

The Code sets out how AUB will identify staff contracts with significant responsibility for research and which will contribute to the volume measure. This is only applicable to staff on T&R contracts.

Previous REF exercises have linked outputs to individuals, requiring the university to submit a staff list on a census date close to the final submission date to determine the eligibility of staff and their outputs to be returned to that REF exercise. For the last REF exercise, REF 2021, staff on the list had to have a least one output. Where circumstances were such that the member of staff had not been able to realise an output, they had to declare their circumstances and have this approved. Any missing outputs would be scored as unclassified.

REF 2029 has de-coupled outputs from individuals completely. Instead, staff contracts identified as being eligible to contribute to the REF volume measure will be coded into HESA over a two-year period (25/26 and 26/27) to determine the number of outputs and impact case studies that AUB must return for each UoA it makes a submission.

This means that the contracts of staff with circumstances that might have affected their ability to produce research (likely to be those with a disability, having time out for paternity/maternity leave or with caring responsibilities) can still be considered to contribute to the REF volume measure.

Not having to declare circumstances is for the most part a welcome change. However, declaration did mean that the university was made aware of factors that had impacted on an individual's ability to conduct research that it might not otherwise have known and offer the opportunity for reasonable adjustments to be made.

In line with the Code of Practice, all staff on T&R contracts will be identified as either having significant responsibility for research or not having significant responsibility for research. AUB will use the Academic Workload Planning Framework to identify those who hold responsibility. The criteria used is set out below. Personal characteristics are not considered as part of the identification of staff as holding SRR, the approach is intended to apply to all colleagues equally.

Staff on contracts identified as holding SRR are expected to:

- Be undertaking research activity that meets the REF definition of research i.e. *A process of investigation leading to new insights effectively shared.*
- Be engaging actively in independent research and be producing high-quality research outputs (written or practice research) of at least 2*/3* quality (internationally recognised/internationally excellent as described by REF criteria) with an expectation of at least two outputs over a three-year period. (Pro-rata for part-time staff).
- Be bidding for external research grants to help support their programme of activities or be working on externally funded research projects

And in addition, be contributing to the research environment, by undertaking some or all of the following:

- Be disseminating their research at peer reviewed conferences or similar.

- Be participating in research-related enabling activities, for instance adding value to a cross-disciplinary network, editing/reviewing peer reviewed research publications, assessing external grant funding applications.
- Be contributing to research degree supervision* and AUB Confirmation and Examinations.
- Be engaged in research dissemination/impact/public engagement activities resulting from their research.

Although past performance cannot be used to determine SRR, there is a risk is that staff with protected characteristics who may face more challenge in realising outputs may not be identified as having Significant Responsibility for Research. This is mitigated by the criteria for SRR being consulted on and agreed with staff and with clear expectations set via the Framework. Staff can appeal against decisions, with the appeal being considered by staff independent of the decision-making process and outside of the Academic Faculties and Line Management structure.

Determining Research Independence

As AUB is not a research-intensive university, there are few staff with R only contracts but these include staff at professorial level, research fellows and post doctoral researchers. The criteria for RI is set out below:

All staff on Research only contracts will be identified by HR and asked to complete a Research

Independence form which will ask them to identify whether they qualify for research independence or not

against a set of indicators (based on those provided by the REF) including:

- Act as lead applicant on externally funded research projects
- Hold an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship requiring research independence
- Lead a research group or a substantial/specialised work package
- Where research independence is an inherent expectation of a contract
- Being named as a co-applicant on an externally funded research grant/award
- Having significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research.

Each indicator may not individually demonstrate independence and, where appropriate, multiple factors may need to be considered.

Research Independence, once confirmed, will be considered persistent.

Personal characteristics are not considered as part of the identification of staff as holding RI, the approach is intended to apply to all colleagues equally. The risk is that staff may not be identified as holding research independence. This is mitigated by the criteria for RI being agreed with staff and with staff able to demonstrate activity against the criteria themselves. Staff can appeal decisions, with the appeal being considered by staff independent of the decision-making process and outside of the Academic Faculties and Line Management structure.

Allocating eligible contracts to UoAs

Eligible contracts must be allocated to a UoA in HESA to determine the volume measure. AUB will only submit to two units of assessment because it does not have the volume of eligible outputs or underpinning research activity to realise impact case studies to submit to other UoAs. Contracts will therefore be allocated by Faculty with only a few contracts, where roles sit outside of the Academic School structures allocated by research disciplinary focus.

Whilst most contracts align to the two UoAs that AUB will return to, i.e. UoA 32 Art and Design: History, Theory and Practice and UoA 33 Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies, there are a few contracts that might better align to other UoAs but will not for the reasons given above. This may mean that some outputs will not be eligible for return and be excluded from submission because they will not align to either of the unit descriptors.

AUB has sought guidance from the REF team about this challenge and has been advised that more guidance will be forthcoming in the Panel Guidance Policy due autumn 2026. AUB will seek links between the research and the units that AUB will return to, requesting cross referral where possible, in order to include such outputs.

Selection of outputs (including identifying substantive link, allocating outputs to UoA and ensuring that submissions are representative)

For REF 2021, staff and outputs were coupled, meaning that staff on the Staff list on the census date had to be returned with a minimum of one and maximum of five outputs. This ensured that all staff on the Staff List were returned to REF with a minimum of one output, ensuring that outputs reflected the research of all staff submitted to the REF including those with circumstances that might have affected their ability to produce research (likely to be those with a disability, having time out for paternity/maternity leave or with caring responsibilities).

The de-coupling of staff from outputs for REF 2029 means that outputs are no longer allocated against individuals. This is a positive move in that it now allows eligible outputs from a wider pool of staff, and not just those whose contracts contribute to the volume measure. This means that, in principle, a greater number of outputs can be considered for selection than in previous REF exercises. And, most importantly, that staff no longer have to disclose individual circumstances.

However, there is a potential tension between AUB's aim to maximize the quality of its REF return whilst ensuring that submissions are representative – both of research activity and output type. The risk is that outputs may only be selected from a few staff and from a narrow output type and academic disciplinary band.

Where staff have circumstances that have impacted on their ability to produce research, they may have fewer outputs to contribute to the output pool. Also, given the nature of practice research (e.g. exhibitions/films) where the research may not be evident from the output or the output not captured sufficiently at the time the item is being assessed, written outputs (e.g. books/journal papers etc) that are complete at the time of the assessment might be favoured.

There are also potential tensions between how many outputs from former staff should be included in a submission when the Strategy, People and Research Environment section is judged on 'Vitality' and 'Sustainability' and will consider metrics on outputs from former staff. There is potential bias that outputs from former staff may not be treated on a fair and equal basis.

REF have partially mitigated against potential biases highlighted above by confirming that outputs must be linked to a staff member (substantive link) and that a contract may (normally) have no more than five substantive links to outputs.

Also, that submissions must include a statement of representation explaining how the submitted output and associated reserve outputs collectively represent the range and diversity of research activity and output types over the REF assessment period.

AUB has also considered this in the development of its CoP and tried to mitigate the risk in the following ways:

- Confirmation that all outputs will be considered on a fair and equal basis, regardless of output type or place of publication and will not rely on metrics.

- All outputs will be scored by one person with the scores reviewed by a second, with additional review sought if the scores do not align.
- The process will be transparent with scores recorded so they can be made available on request.
- Oversight of the selection process from the REF Steering Panel.
- Mitigating measures taken to ensure that there is representation across output types and disciplines by asking panels to review output selections and the statement of representation.
- Support for staff to develop practice research outputs so that they can be considered on an equal basis with written outputs.
- Confirming that outputs from former staff will be considered on a fair and equal basis and rewriting the section on outputs from such staff to ensure clarity.
- The Research Office will run reports to consider output types and discipline from outputs that are eligible for submission against those selected to be returned to inform reviews of submissions.

The Code did not initially reference language inclusion, as most outputs will be written in English but this has now been addressed. There is potential for bias in the consideration of such outputs, mitigated by AUB confirming that such outputs will be considered on a fair and equal basis, that outputs will be referred to internal or external assessors with relevant expertise, and 100-word statements setting out the research invited.

Managing appeals processes

The Code sets out AUB's appeals processes for staff identified as holding Significant Responsibility for Research and Research Independence.

The risk is that staff may be unclear on how to appeal, or that those involved in the appeals process may not be independent. We have considered this when drafting the CoP and have set out the following measures:

- All staff on relevant contracts will be informed of the decision as to SRR or RI with the appeal mechanism included on that communication.
- Appeals are considered by staff independent of the decision-making process and outside of the Academic Faculties and Line Management structure.
- Giving sufficient time to raise an appeal.

Question 12.

What evidence is used to see if the Policy, Practice, Project or Service really has an effect? Evidence may include: Internal Data: - Equality monitoring reports – Staff/student surveys – Complaints and grievances. External Data: - Data collected by UCAS and HESA relating to students and staff - Research undertaken by the Equality and Human Rights Commission – Census data – Labour force data – Consultation: - a working group with other staff, particularly those who hold the protected characteristic you may be concerned about. If no evidence was available at this time, what evidence will you seek to collect over the next 12 months?

Please include some of the evidence relied upon to support how your conclusions were made. See guidance document for examples.

Data analysis has been undertaken based on a report run against the HESA return for T&R and R only staff against those identified as holding SRR. Given that the University went through a major restructure in summer 2025, the data returned to HESA, based on staff working at AUB during AY 2024/25 does not reflect the current structure. Therefore, live data (as at February 2026) was used instead, based on the same report. A few staff had not been allocated to a UoA and these were removed from the analysis.

However, the process for identifying which staff hold SRR is under review as part of a new Academic Workload Planning Framework, to be introduced in summer 2026; further analysis will be conducted when the new process is implemented.

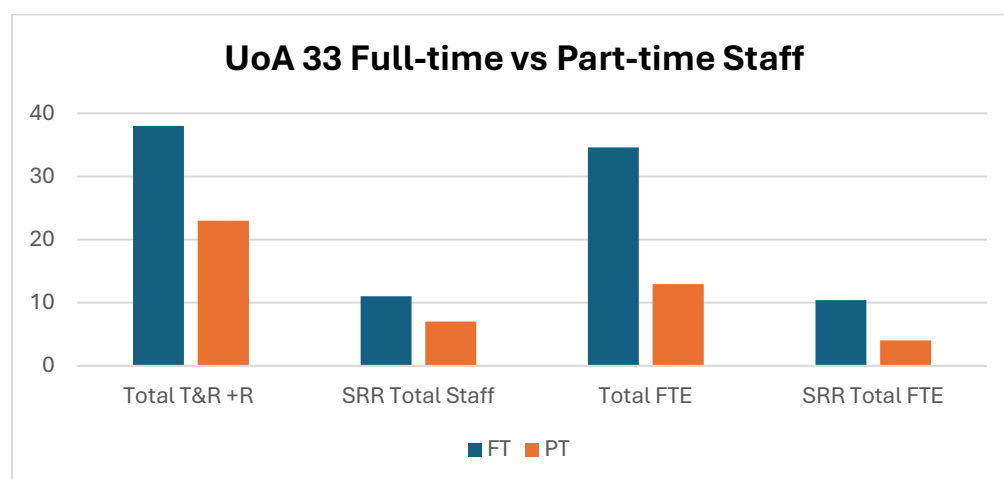
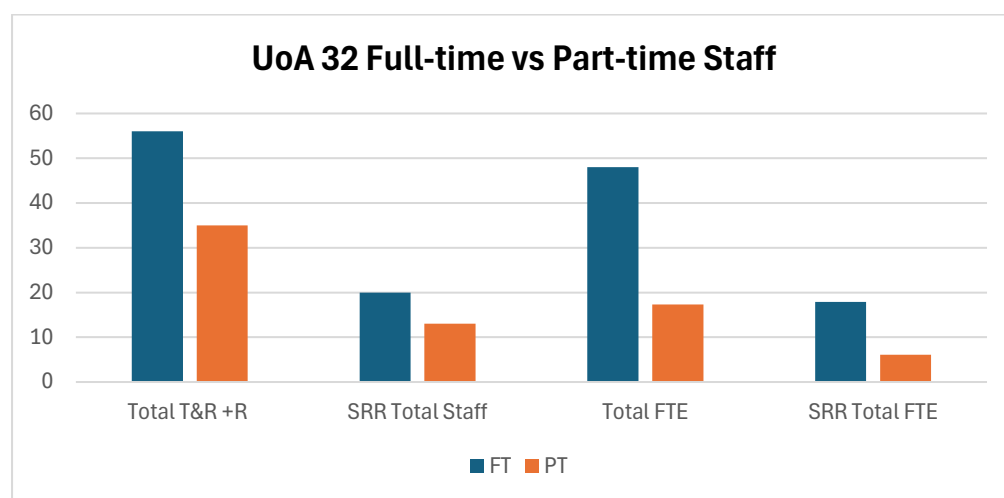
The data showed a big improvement in the disclosure of protected characteristics compared to REF 2021, with around 50% of staff on T&R and R contracts completing the monitoring form. This made it possible to look at statistics against:

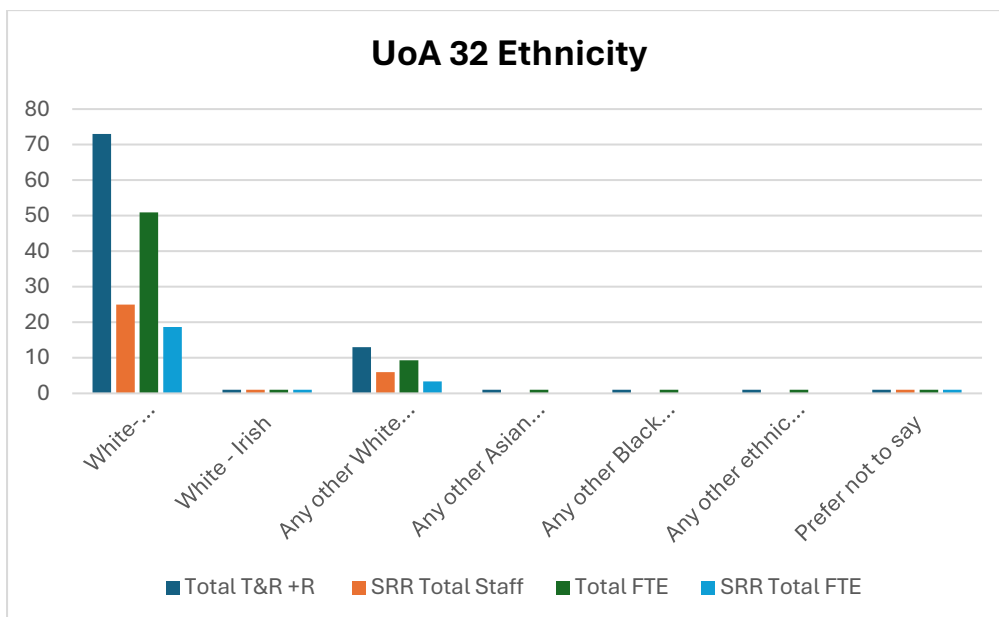
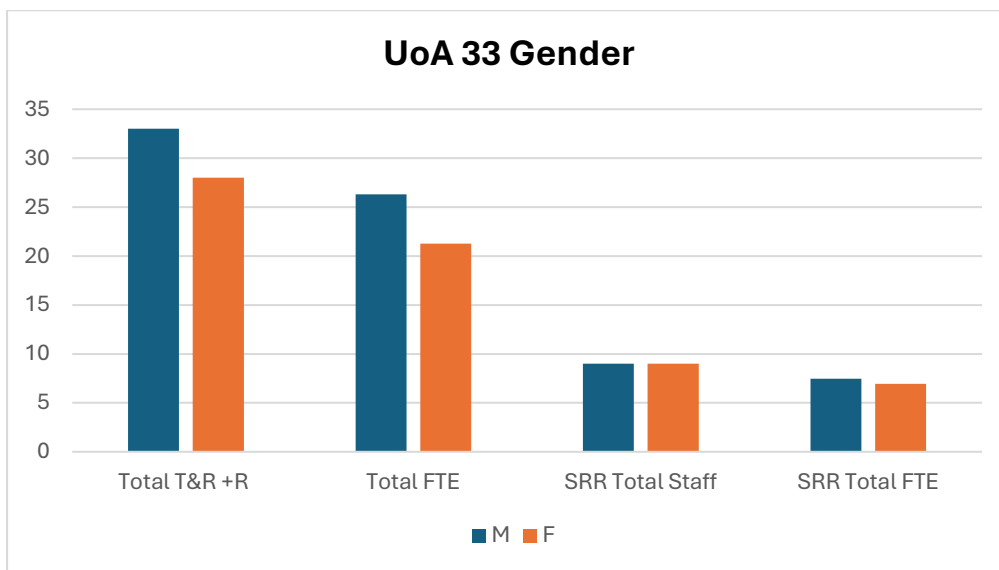
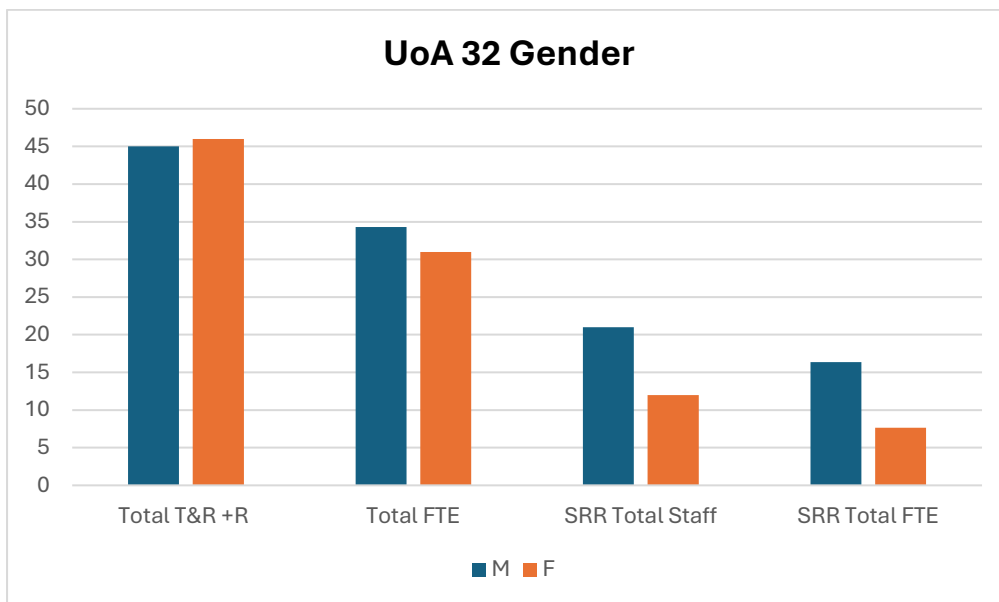
- Gender
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Full and Part-time working

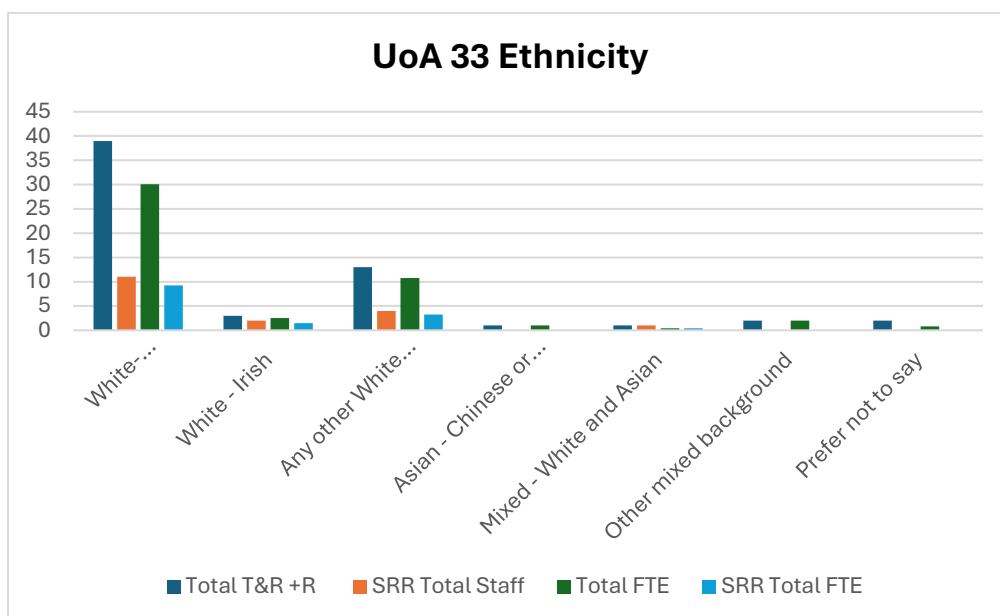
Data charts are included below. Disclosures against Sexual Orientation, Disability and Religion being too few to be statistically significant. Given that (anecdotally), a high percentage of staff report as neurodiverse, very few staff reported a disability.

The data for full and part-time working shows that there are fewer female's holding SRR for UoA 32. Reasons for this will need investigating, if a similar pattern emerges under the new framework. This is not currently mirrored for UoA 33.

In respect of ethnicity, the data is illustrative of the low representation of people of colour on 'T and R' and 'R' only contracts.







Over the next 12 months we will collect evidence to monitor:

- The profile of staff coded into HESA 25/26 to see if there are emerging issues such as inclusion across contract types and any emerging patterns in SRR/RI.

Addressing any impact

Question 13.

Having considered the potential or actual effect that the Policy, Practice, Project or Service will have on equality, an informed decision about 'next steps' can be made. There are four main steps that you can take:

No Major Change – The Policy, Practice, Project or Service is robust and there is no potential discrimination

Pass the Policy despite adverse impact – There may be some potential discrimination but there are good reasons why this is acceptable (e.g. government policy)

Adjust the Policy – Evidence suggests that the Policy, Practice, Project or Service may need to be amended

Stop the Policy – The Policy, Practice, Project or Service is discriminatory and should be stopped

Pass the Policy

Justifying

Question 14.

What is the justification for the decision made in Question 13?

The EIA has set out some areas where there may be potential discrimination and these are mitigated as far as possible by the Code of practice. AUB has no control over the 'rules' of the REF, only how it will respond to those rules through its processes and procedures.

Question 14a

Actions/Next steps

What actions will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts to those with protected characteristics and to also promote any positive impacts.

AUB will continue to conduct EIAs as AUB prepares for REF 2029 monitoring the identification of staff who are SRR and RI and contributing to the volume measure, the selection of outputs, and the allocation of staff to UoAs.

Question 15.

When will this Policy, Practice, Project or Service be reviewed along with the EIA. The expectation is that all policies and EIA's will be reviewed for relevance every three years or sooner if changes were made to the existing policy, Practice, Project or Service.

This EIA was completed during the development of the Code of Practice. The EIA will be updated:

- Concurrently with decisions on the identification of staff with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) and Research Independence (RI)
- Concurrently with decisions on the allocation of eligible contracts to UoAs
- During the design and implementation of output selection processes
- In relation to appeals and review mechanisms
- Where AUB's REF-related policies and procedures are substantively revised