

Section 8 – Code of Practice guidance

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REF 2029 guidance will be formally finalised in 2026 and therefore guidance modules may be subject to small revisions in the interim.

This policy is the latest version and any changes are listed in the [change log](#). To keep up to date on changes made to the guidance please subscribe to the [REF mailing list](#).

In this guidance we have highlighted areas where detailed guidance will be added at a later date. *These areas are shown in bold and italics and we have also made it clear in the text.*

We strive to make our website easy to use and navigate. If you have any feedback on the website design, the new format of the REF guidance, or ideas on how to improve navigation, please [email us](#). For other queries please see the [Contact page](#) for details of how to get in touch.

1. Overview

- 1.0.1. A Code of Practice (CoP) is a requirement for REF 2029. It sets a minimum standard for participation. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) wishing to make a submission to the exercise must have a CoP approved by the funding bodies. The definition of an HEI for the purposes of the REF is set out in section 1 of the [Overview of the assessment framework](#).
- 1.0.2. The REF 2029 CoP are a set of guidelines and procedures that HEIs must develop and implement. The CoP outlines how HEIs will make key decisions about their submission to the exercise. These decisions concern identifying contracts that contribute to the REF volume measure, and selecting research outputs for submission to the REF. More information

about the [REF Volume Measure](#) and [Contributions to Knowledge and Understanding](#) modules can be found in the associated guidance.

- 1.0.3. The CoP go beyond procedural and legislative compliance and aim to embed a framework of principles in the key decisions made by HEIs that shape their REF 2029 submissions. The REF 2029 CoP supports the following principles:
- **Robustness:** submissions should be an accurate reflection of the sector. This supports confidence in the outcomes of the REF and related funding.
 - **Transparency:** people should understand how decisions about submissions are made and that fair process is followed. Transparent processes help reassure the sector that the same rules are being followed everywhere.
 - **Equity and inclusion:** decisions about submissions should be fair and impartial, supporting a diversity of people and research. The CoP promotes inclusive research environments where diverse individuals and research contributions are valued and supported and recognises the wide range of research, roles and people that are essential to promoting an inclusive research environment and ensuring the vitality of the UK's vibrant research system.
- 1.0.4. The guidance for CoP was published in two modules and is now final:
- **January 2025 – Volume Measure:** this guidance has details of how to develop material in the Code of Practice relating to the identification of contracts with significant responsibility for research (SRR) and determining research independence (RI).
 - **June 2025 – Output selection module:** this guidance has details of how to develop material in the Code of Practice relating to the selection of outputs.
- 1.0.5. While the policy modules have been published separately, HEIs must submit their CoP once as a complete document, for approval by the UK funding bodies. There are two points at which your CoP may be submitted for approval. We aim for approvals to take a maximum of three months from receipt, dependent upon speed of response to feedback from the funding bodies. The two points at which a CoP may be submitted for approval are listed below. [Click here for full details of the submission windows and deadline dates/times.](#)
- 6 February 2026: aiming for approved CoPs by May 2026

- 11 May 2026: aiming for approved CoPs by August 2026

- 1.0.6. Full details of how to submit a CoP for approval can be found in the [CoP approvals process](#). It also contains contact details for any queries.
- 1.0.7. As an approved CoP is a condition of participation in REF 2029, institutions that are created later in the process (particularly if after 6 February 2026) should contact the REF team as soon as possible to discuss how to proceed.

2. Policy context

- 2.0.1. [REF 2029 Initial Decisions](#) set out the key developments for the exercise. These include:

- the move to calculate the volume measure for REF 2029 using data held in the HESA Staff record and the longer-term aim to move to continuous data collection
- breaking the link between individual staff members and submitted outputs
- the introduction of the REF 2029 Strategy, People and Research Environment assessment element (previously titled People, Culture and Environment)
- the retention of REF 2021 criteria for volume-contributing staff contracts and definitions of research independence and significant responsibility for research

- 2.0.2. Breaking the link between individuals and the REF submission and focussing on assessment in each disciplinary area means that REF 2029 has changed from previous exercises. The volume measure for REF 2029 will be based upon data held in the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Staff record, rather than the submission of staff lists with attributed outputs.

- 2.0.3. The longer-term aim is that for future research assessment, volume will be calculated continuously across an assessment cycle. This near-automatic calculation will be hardwired into existing processes and will reduce burden for the sector. HEIs will maintain an ongoing, accurate reflection of contracts with significant responsibility for research. Reliable and consistent data about the research and innovation sector has value beyond research assessment, contributing to evidence-based policy development and decision-making.

- 2.0.4. The move to continuous volume calculation, will change the nature of REF CoP, which will become living documents. More information about future maintenance and approval of CoP will be published in due course.
- 2.0.5. REF 2029 CoP requirements reflect the transition to a framework that separates individuals and outputs through:
- a greater reliance on existing HEI governance and processes to make key decisions for REF 2029, thereby minimising additional requirements and administrative burden
 - equality impact assessments that consider the definitions of significant responsibility for research (SRR) and research independence (RI) and the selection of outputs
 - removal of processes around individual staff circumstances. Breaking the link between individuals and outputs negates the need for processes around staff circumstances and saves substantial administrative burden for institutions
- 2.0.6. Please read the REF 2029 guidance on eligibility and the legislative context in the [Overview of the assessment framework](#). Codes of Practice (CoPs) form a key part of the funding bodies' mechanisms for discharging the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in this area, by supporting Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in ensuring their REF 2029 participation and processes are compliant with equality legislation, promoting fair, transparent, and inclusive processes for all staff regardless of protected characteristics or language preferences.

3. **Codes of practice and the Strategy, People and Research Environment assessment element**

- 3.0.1. The CoP and the Strategy, People and Research Environment (SPRE) element of REF 2029 are distinct but complementary aspects of the exercise. While they share a common goal of promoting positive and inclusive cultures, they have a different focus and serve different purposes within the REF.
- 3.0.2. CoP set a minimum standard for participation in the exercise, while excellence in SPRE is expected to extend beyond the minimum standard. While some aspects of the CoP may relate to and complement SPRE submissions, SPRE covers a wider range of indicators and subject matter.
- 3.0.3. The [full guidance on SPRE can be found here](#).

4. CoP guidance publication and approval schedule

4.0.1. The CoP guidance has been published in modules. The publication and approval schedule is:

- **CoP Volume Measure guidance** – published January 2025
- **CoP CKU guidance** – published June 2025 (updated December 2025)
- CoP submission points:
 - 2 Feb 2026 to midday 6 Feb 2026
 - 11 May 2026 to midday 15 May 2026
- Final approvals: 28 August 2026

The following CoP submission points were cancelled as a result of the REF pause, and a May window has been added in their place:

- 29 Sep 2025 to midday 3 Oct 2025
- 1 Dec 2025 to midday 5 Dec 2025

4.0.2. Full details of how to submit a CoP for approval can be found in the **CoP approvals process**. It also contains contact details for any queries.

4.0.3. CoP should be submitted in a clear and concise format and must use **the CoP template** at the bottom of this page.

4.0.4. An up-to-date CoP must be made publicly available for unrestricted access. All final CoP will be published on the REF website.

4.0.5. **Personal information must not be included in submissions as part of this process. Submissions that include personal data will be returned for amendment.**

5. Approval

5.0.1. The primary responsibility for approval lies with the funding bodies, with input from the **REF 2029 People and Diversity Advisory Panel** (PDAP) and **Research Diversity Advisory Panel** (RDAP).

5.0.2. Submitted CoP may be returned with required amendments or clarifications. Full details of how to submit a CoP for approval can be found in the **CoP approvals process**.

- 5.0.3. We anticipate that the overall approval process will take a maximum of 3 months. However, in most cases this is likely to be quicker.

6. Approach

- 6.0.1. The funding bodies understand that HEIs may need to begin implementing aspects of their CoP, particularly those related to staff identification and data collection, for the 2025 to 2026 academic year before receiving formal approval. To address potential misalignment between early implementation and final CoP approval, the following measures will be taken.

6.1. Extended submission window

- 6.1.1. Long submission and approval windows with multiple submission deadlines, are designed to accommodate the diverse needs of HEIs in preparing their CoP.

6.2. Flexibility in HESA data

- 6.2.1. Continued collaboration with HESA to explore the potential for a process which enables HEIs to amend REF-related fields in the HESA staff record after the 2025-26 data collection period, if necessary.

6.3. Proportionate approvals

- 6.3.1. CoP approval outcomes will be proportionate, considering burden on HEIs, potential impact on individuals, and the scale of impact on submissions.

6.4. Informal support

- 6.4.1. The funding bodies will provide further guidance on expectations before formal submission.

7. Audit and assurance

- 7.0.1. *The full audit guidance for REF 2029 is under development and may be subject to change. It will provide full details of measures employed to assure adherence to CoP. These are expected to include:*

7.1. Proportionate audits

- 7.1.1. *Such as targeted audits, focussed on areas of concern or risk, random sampling, data analytics.*

7.2. Complaints and investigations process

- 7.2.1. *The funding bodies will establish a complaints and investigations process for when individuals believe CoP have not been followed. The complaints and investigations process will have scope to take corrective actions on submissions.*

8. Queries

- 8.0.1. Please send any queries to info@ref.ac.uk with the title 'Query on Codes of Practice'.

9. Guidance for volume measure elements of CoP

- 9.0.1. This CoP volume measure guidance supports HEIs to develop a REF 2029 CoP outlining how decisions will be made for determining which contracts contribute to the REF volume measure.
- 9.0.2. This guidance should be read in conjunction with the [Volume Measure guidance](#).
- 9.0.3. There are two tests that will identify whether a contract is eligible for inclusion in the volume measure:
- significant responsibility for research for 'teaching and research' contracts
 - research independence for 'research only' contracts
- 9.0.4. Contracts which meet one of these two tests should be included in the volume measure.

10. Implications of calculating the volume measure across multiple years

- 10.0.1. The move to calculate the volume measure across academic year 2025-26 and academic year 2026-27 removes the unwanted incentives created by a single census date. Averaging volume across multiple years, takes a view over time that is less susceptible to variation and will reduce burden in the

longer term. This move requires that decisions made about determining which contracts contribute to the REF volume measure must be accurate in each year's HESA return.

- 10.0.2. HEIs will determine the most appropriate way to achieve this requirement, typically tying review into work planning and annual appraisals.
- 10.0.3. Institutions should plan for this requirement to remain in place on an ongoing basis, for research assessment and funding. More information about future maintenance and approval of CoP will be published later.

11. Guidance for output elements of the CoP

- 11.0.1. This CoP output selection guidance supports HEIs in developing a CoP that outlines how decisions will be made for selecting outputs to be submitted to REF 2029.
- 11.0.2. This guidance should be read in conjunction with the [REF Contributions to Knowledge and Understanding \(CKU\) guidance](#).
- 11.0.3. HEIs must demonstrate a substantive link to any submitted output within the REF period. A substantive link describes the relationship between an HEI and research, submitted in the form of an output.
- 11.0.4. Submissions should be representative of the research undertaken within the submitting unit during the REF period.
- 11.0.5. Representative output submissions for REF 2029 are submissions that reflect the range of research activity in a submitting unit over the assessment period and the unit's research strategies.

11.1. Requirements for output selection

- 11.1.1. In addition to addressing the selection of outputs for submission, these policies and procedures must include:
 - policies and procedures for identifying substantive link to outputs
 - policies and procedures for selecting outputs where the substantive link is via former staff
 - policies and procedures for allocating/assigning outputs to UoAs
 - procedures for supporting diversity of outputs
 - procedures for ensuring submissions are representative of the research undertaken within the submitting unit during the REF period

- policies and procedures for responsible research assessment practice
- procedures for ensuring that outputs in British Sign Language (in England, Wales, and Scotland) and Welsh (in Wales) are not treated less favourably in output selection. The procedures should also address how recognised languages (namely Scottish Gaelic, Scots, Ulster Scots, Irish, and Irish Sign Language) are treated in accordance with their legal status relating to protection and promotion, where required by the institution-specific legal context or relevant to research produced in collaboration with jurisdictions where such languages have protected status

12. CoP structure

- 12.0.1. REF 2029 has largely retained the CoP structure from REF 2021, updated in line with the key changes to REF 2029.
- 12.0.2. ***As set out above, a subsequent policy module will set out guidance in relation to output selection. The key requirements below will not be changed. There will be additional requirements specific to output selection.***
- 12.0.3. REF 2029 CoP **must** include the sections listed below. **[A CoP template with embedded guidance can be downloaded here](#)** (or see the bottom of this page).

12.1. CoP introduction

- 12.1.1. The introduction should discuss the CoP in the context of the principles of robustness, transparency and equity and inclusion as defined in the overview section of this guidance. In particular:
- **Robustness:** explain how the policies and processes set out in the CoP ensure that contracts identified as contributing to the volume measure reliably reflect the responsibilities of staff and how robust decisions will be made for selecting outputs.
 - **Transparency:** explain how policies and processes set out in the CoP will be communicated and available to all staff and made available in accessible formats. CoP should be published on HEIs external website. CoP should be clear as to how decisions are made.
 - **Equity and inclusion:** explain how decisions about submissions are fair and impartial supporting a diversity of roles (including career

stages), people and research and how diverse individuals and research contributions are valued and supported in submissions.

- 12.1.2. An outline of the HEI's challenges for an inclusive research community and other institutional policies concerning equality and diversity and inclusion, responsible research assessment and people, culture and environment.
- 12.1.3. An update on any relevant impact or outcomes of actions taken to improve inclusivity of their research community by the submitting institution since REF 2021, with reference to their 2014 and 2021 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), where appropriate.

12.2. Policies and procedures for identifying Significant Responsibility for Research

- 12.2.1. These are the policies and procedures for identifying Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) for 'teaching and research' (ACEMPFUN 3) contracts, in accordance with the [**Volume Measure guidance**](#).
- 12.2.2. All participating institutions are required to complete this section.
- 12.2.3. If an institution's 'teaching and research' (ACEMPFUN 3) contracts in their HESA Staff record precisely identify all contracts with significant responsibility for research (SRR), this should be simply stated in the CoP. No further elaboration is needed in this section.
- 12.2.4. Where an institution has more than one process for identifying contracts with a significant responsibility for research in the REF (for example, where employment practices vary at the submitting unit level due to disciplinary differences), this should be reflected in the CoP.
- 12.2.5. SRR criteria must be based upon job role expectations, not past performance.
- 12.2.6. Processes established to identify significant responsibility for research must be consulted on with staff, using appropriate staff representation mechanisms. Codes of practice do not need to describe the processes used.

12.3. Policies and procedures for identifying research independence

- 12.3.1. These are the policies and procedures for identifying research independence for 'Research only' (ACEMPFUN 2) contracts, in accordance with the REF guidance. All participating institutions are required to complete this section.
- 12.3.2. The code of practice should describe the fair and transparent processes for determining research independence.
- 12.3.3. The code of practice should also describe how data quality relating to research independence is assured, and the processes through which staff can flag inaccuracies in the data that is returned to the HESA Staff record.

12.4. Policies and procedures for the selection of outputs for submission

- 12.4.1. These are the policies and procedures for the fair and transparent selection of outputs for submission.
- 12.4.2. All participating institutions are required to complete this section.
- 12.4.3. As part of the policies and procedures involved in selecting outputs, the code of practice must outline the content set out in sub-sections 12.5. to 12.10.

12.5. Policies and procedures for identifying substantive link to outputs

- 12.5.1. A substantive link must be evidenced through an eligible employment relationship with the author (or equivalent).
- 12.5.2. HEIs will need to set out their approach to ensuring fair and transparent policies and procedures for identifying substantive link, including:
 - eligible employment relationships
 - expectations of research activity within the job role of authors (as per sub-section 6.3 of the CKU guidance)
 - exceptional situations where permission for outputs authored by staff on Teaching only (or other excluded) contracts to be submitted (as per sub-section 6.8 of the CKU guidance) will be sought, should be outlined if an HEI intends to use this route

12.6. Policies and procedures for selecting outputs where the substantive link is via former staff

12.6.1. Where the substantive link to an output exists via a former staff member (irrespective of when the output was published in relation to the eligible employment relationship), HEIs will need to set out their approach to ensuring fair and transparent policies and procedures for selecting outputs.

12.6.2. This must include outputs authored by:

- staff who have been made compulsorily redundant
- staff who have been selected for voluntary redundancy or severance
- staff who have retired
- staff leaving after the expiry of a fixed-term contract

12.7. Policies and Procedures for assigning outputs to UoA(s)

12.7.1. The code of practice should outline a fair and transparent process for assigning an output to a UoA or UoAs (as per [sub-section 12 in the CKU guidance](#)).

12.7.2. This must include the approach to interdisciplinary research and where relevant, the approach to submitting an output to multiple UoAs.

12.8. Procedures for supporting diversity of outputs

12.8.1. HEIs should outline how procedures have enabled and supported diverse output types in their disciplinary context and how these have been considered for selection (as per [sub-section 5.6 in the CKU guidance](#)).

12.8.2. This should include a description of the processes used to encourage and recognise diverse research outputs and how this reflects their commitment to responsible research assessment.

12.9. Procedures for ensuring submissions are representative of the research undertaken within the submitting unit during the REF period

12.9.1. The CoP should outline a transparent, robust and equitable and inclusive process for ensuring submissions are representative of the research

undertaken within the submitting unit during the REF period (as per **subsection 7 in the CKU guidance**).

- 12.9.2. Where there have been structural or strategic changes during the REF cycle, additional context may be included here.
- 12.9.3. **Indicators of representation of research activity:** the procedures outlined should address the following indicators.
- 12.9.4. Submitted outputs are reflective of 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.
- 12.9.5. Submitted outputs reflect the diversity of research outputs produced within the submitting unit including how different and diverse types of research are included in the submission.
- 12.9.6. Submitted outputs reflect contributions from multidisciplinary collaborations and institutional partnerships, supporting sustainable contributions to knowledge and understanding.
- 12.9.7. **COP and statement of representation:** The statement of representation will not be directly scored in the assessment. Rather, the statement will be used as a point of reference in the assessment of the wider unit-level statement within SPRE, providing important contextual information and evidence of the implementation of strategy. Further information can be found in the **CKU guidance** and **SPRE guidance**.
- 12.9.8. The CoP must focus on the robust, transparent and fair processes that balance the range of different research activity. In effect, this process will set out how the statement of representation element of the unit level SPRE statement will be developed for submission.

12.10. Policies and procedures and responsible research assessment practice

- 12.10.1. The funding bodies expect institutions to adopt responsible research assessment practices in the selection of outputs for submission.
- 12.10.2. While a specific approach is not prescribed, institutions should outline how their selection processes reflect principles of equality, fairness and

transparency and institutions are encouraged to consider established frameworks such as the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (COARA), noting that many UK higher education institutions are signatories to one or both.

- 12.10.3. Institutions should explain how they do or do not use quantitative indicators in decision making, and how this aligns with their broader research assessment values.

12.11. Referenced appendices

- 12.11.1. Any appendices referenced in the CoP may be included in this section.

13. Key requirements for REF 2029 Code of Practice

13.1. Policies and procedures

- 13.1.1. The CoP must outline the policies and procedures that the HEI will follow for identifying significant responsibility for research, research independence and selection of outputs.
- 13.1.2. Where policies and procedures are shared across the CoP sections (for example committees, EIAs), the CoP should state that this is the case rather than duplicating text.
- 13.1.3. Processes established to identify significant responsibility for research, research independence, and selection of outputs must be consulted on with staff, with appropriate staff representation mechanisms, but HEIs are not required to describe the processes used.
- 13.1.4. The CoP should include a statement about how the institution supports its fixed-term and part-time staff, including contract research staff, in relation to equality and diversity.

13.2. Staff, committees and training

13.2.1. Detailing staff and committees

- List the staff and committees involved in all CoP-covered processes, referencing their roles within the HEI and their place in the institutional management structure.

- Specify whether involved staff and committees have advisory or decision-making responsibilities.
- Consider using timelines or diagrams to illustrate committee/group structures, interdependencies, and processes.

13.2.2. Responsibilities of committees

13.2.3. For each committee with designated REF responsibilities (at any level – departmental, faculty, UoA, or central), you must detail in the CoP:

- the roles of committee members
- responsibilities, (advisory or decision-making), regarding SRR, research independence and selection of outputs determinations or policies
- steps taken to ensure members understand their legal obligations regarding equality, including any relevant training

13.2.4. Training on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Staff involved in CoP processes must receive training on equality, diversity and inclusion, ideally tailored to REF processes. HEIs are not required to provide detail on how this training will be implemented.

13.3. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

13.3.1. Further [guidance on conducting an EIA in REF 2029](#) has been developed. The guidance includes information about the relevant equalities legislation.

13.3.2. Mandatory EIA

- Funding bodies require all HEIs to conduct EIAs on their policies and practices for:
 - identifying staff contracts with significant responsibility for research (where applicable)
 - determining research independence
 - allocating eligible contracts to UoAs
 - selection of outputs (including identifying substantive link, allocating outputs to UoA and ensuring that submissions are representative)
- EIAs should be informed through engaging, consulting, or involving staff from protected groups

13.3.3. Analysis

- The EIA must be a systematic analysis to determine if policies/practices might have a different impact on groups based on protected characteristics. EIAs may also cover non-protected characteristics where particularly appropriate to its context for improving research inclusivity.
- EIAs should analyse data for all protected characteristics where available and compare between volume contributing and non-volume contributing populations.
- When dealing with small numbers that can significantly affect percentages in statistical data, EIAs should acknowledge this and highlight instances with a notable impact on specific groups.
- Consider the overall combined impact of policies/practices related to identifying volume contributing contracts.
- Consider the overall combined impact of policies/practices related to the selection of outputs, including the procedures for ensuring representative submissions.
- HEIs may use mock exercises and information from previous REFs to inform their EIA, identifying potential barriers and opportunities.
- Institutions must ensure that the EIA considers how outputs in British Sign Language (BSL) and Welsh are not treated less favourably than those in English, in line with the legal status of these official languages. Outputs in other recognised languages such as Scottish Gaelic, Scots, Ulster Scots, Irish and Irish Sign Language, the EIA should consider how the language is treated in accordance with the relevant legislative provisions that promote and protect their use. This includes outputs developed in collaboration with institutions elsewhere in the UK, where the legal recognition of languages may differ.

13.3.4. **EIAs should inform the CoP, therefore**

- EIAs should be reviewed during submission preparation and be available to all staff representatives included in the CoP outline of advisory and decision-making bodies.
- The CoP should clearly state the EIA findings and how the analysis shaped the final policies and procedures.
- Completed EIAs should be included in the CoP appendices. Care should be taken to ensure that the identities of individuals are not disclosed.

13.3.5. **Identifying discrimination and opportunities**

- EIAs help HEIs identify potential direct or indirect discrimination in REF processes and should identify and highlight policies or practices that have a positive impact on, or provide opportunities to, advance equality of opportunities and/or eliminate discrimination – in line with an HEI’s responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty (in England, Scotland, and Wales) or Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.
- If potential discrimination is found, HEIs must take action to change the policy/practice or justify retaining it within legal constraints.
- If a policy/practice has a positive impact, HEIs can consider applying it to other REF areas.
- Identified opportunities to advance equality should be seriously considered for implementation.

13.3.6. Submission and publication

- HEIs must submit a final EIA after the submission deadline, including final data analysis, actions taken, and outcomes. More information will be provided about this requirement.
- HEIs are expected to publish these final EIAs, including outcomes of actions taken. Full information should be published where significant impact is identified. Publication is a legal requirement in some regions if a policy/practice has a significant impact. Please see **Section 1 – Overview of the assessment framework** for further guidance.
- EIAs will be used by funding bodies and **PDAP** to evaluate the overall effectiveness of REF’s equality and diversity aspects and identify lessons for the future. PDAP will not formally review individual EIAs.

13.4. Feedback and appeals

- 13.4.1. Institutions must provide sufficient opportunity for staff to query or appeal decisions about significant responsibility for research and research independence.
- 13.4.2. A query or appeals process is not necessary in cases where the individual’s job description at the time of appointment, or where there has been no change in expectation, explicitly states a primary purpose of supporting the research of others or carrying out another’s research plan, such as can be the case with Research Assistants.

- 13.4.3. Where there has been change to the expectation of the role through promotion, progression, researching opportunities or change of contract that substantively alters the nature of their research responsibilities, institutions should consider whether an appeals mechanism is appropriate.
- 13.4.4. Appeal mechanisms should be independent of the original decisions and be made clearly available to staff in a timely fashion. The funding bodies generally expect this to be through existing mechanisms tied into workload allocation and appraisals, where those mechanisms meet these requirements, but acknowledge alternative arrangements may need to be made.

13.5. Joint submissions

- 13.5.1. Joint and multiple submissions will continue to be supported in REF 2029, full policy and process will be published in due course.
- 13.5.2. **Sharing CoPs:** institutions making joint submissions may share parts of their CoP across collaborating institutions.
- 13.5.3. **Maintaining adherence:** joint decision-making across institutions must not compromise adherence to each institution's CoP.
- 13.5.4. **Shared approach (optional):** collaborating institutions can agree on a shared approach, with one CoP approved and used on behalf of the other for managing the joint submitting unit. Where there are differences at a UoA level, HEIs are required to reflect this in the CoP. Joint submissions may be an example of this.

13.6. Complaints

- 13.6.1. **Formal complaint mechanism:** the funding bodies will establish a process for individuals to make formal complaints if they believe an institution is not following its approved CoP. The complaints process will include a requirement (where appropriate) to take corrective actions on submissions where a complaint is upheld.

13.7. CoP review

- 13.7.1. More information about future maintenance and approval of CoP will be published later in the REF cycle.

14. CoP template

14.0.1. The downloadable CoP template, below, summarises the layout and content required for the CoP.

15. CoP approvals process

15.0.1. Full details of how to submit a CoP for approval can be found in the [CoP approvals process](#). It also contains contact details for any queries.

16. Change log

16.0.1. This policy is the latest version and any changes are listed in the [change log](#).



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