

Research WAM Categories Guidance for Colleagues and Managers

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This document provides a unified overview of the research workload allocation categories used within Edinburgh Napier University's [Academic Workload Framework \(AWF\)](#).

It defines and explains all research categories (R1–R4, including R2D), describes how they are allocated and governed, and clarifies the distinction between categories requiring local judgement and those derived from institutional systems (e.g. PGR records and Worktribe), supporting consistency, auditability, and alignment with external reporting requirements such as TRAC, HESA, and REF.

The aim is to promote consistency, transparency, and alignment across Schools by ensuring that all research workload allocations are understood, accurately recorded, and appropriately monitored.

1.2 Scope

This guidance applies to all academic staff and all Schools within the University. It covers the following WAM research categories:

- R1 – Research Support and Scholarship
- R2 – University-Funded Research
- R2D – University-Funded Research Development
- R3 – Postgraduate Research Supervision
- R4 – Externally Funded Research

The document identifies the purpose, source, and governance route for each category and clarifies the relationship between these categories and the University's determination of Significant Responsibility for Research (SigRes).

1.3 Context

Under the Academic Workload Framework, research workload allocations support the University's strategic objectives in research, knowledge exchange, and innovation. The research categories ensures that developmental and active research are clearly distinguished, allocations are based on evidence and aligned with School and University plans, and research time is appropriately monitored for external reporting (HESA and REF2029).

The introduction of R2D in 2025 provided a clearer developmental pathway within this structure, allowing the University to support researchers at all stages of their career while maintaining accurate SigRes reporting.

2. Research WAM Categories – Overview

Category	Allocation Type	Description	Source / Governance	SigRes Inclusion
R1 – Research Support and Scholarship	Discretionary	Time associated with specific roles or contributions to the research environment.	Allocated to relevant postholders within School.	No
R2 – University-Funded Research	Discretionary	Research funded by the University where measurable outputs are expected.	Determined via MyContribution discussions between the academic and line manager, with ADRI and Dean oversight.	Yes
R2D – University-Funded Research Development	Discretionary	Developmental research activity designed to build capability or prepare for future outputs.	Determined via MyContribution, with oversight from ADRI and Dean. Governed by the R2D Policy.	No
R3 – Postgraduate Research Supervision	Automatic	Supervision of postgraduate research students, calculated according to standard allowances.	Populated automatically from the PGR database based on supervisory records.	Yes
R4 – Externally Funded Research	Automatic	Research activity funded by external bodies and recorded and	Drawn automatically from WorkTribe and validated	Yes

		approved through WorkTribe.	through project data.	
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3. Application of Research Categories

This section explains how each research category operates within the Workload Allocation Model (WAM), including how allocations are determined, recorded, and reviewed.

R1 – Research Support and Scholarship

R1 recognises time allocated to formal roles and activities that contribute to the University’s research environment, culture, and governance.

Typical Activities: Research Lead duties, ethics representation, REF coordination, membership of School or University research committees, internal peer review, research mentoring.

Allocation:

- Allocated automatically to designated role-holders based on pre-agreed values.
- The amount is set by the School (Dean and ADRI) and should be visible in WAM.
- Adjustments are made only where the scale of the role changes.

Monitoring: Confirmed annually by ADRI as part of the School workload submission to AWSG.

SigRes Contribution: Excluded.

Allocations typically range from **10–130 units**, depending on the scope of duties (aligned with AWF norms for support and leadership activities).

R2 – University-Funded Research

R2 captures University-funded research activity that is expected to generate measurable outputs or outcomes.

Typical Activities: Conducting research projects, writing and publishing outputs, applying for funding (where the academic has a track record), generating demonstrable impact, and contributing to the wider development of the University’s research portfolio.

Purpose and Focus: University-funded research time is provided to enable academics to deliver research outputs and impacts that stimulate future externally funded activity.

As outlined in the Academic Workload Framework (2019), such activity is intended to "pump prime externally funded research" and contribute to a sustainable research base, rather than serve as a permanent allocation.

Allocation: Determined through MyContribution discussions between the academic and their line manager.

Oversight provided by the ADRI and Dean.

Allocations are based on evidence of planned deliverables, previous outcomes, and School priorities.

Recording: Entered into MyContribution and reflected in WAM.

Monitoring: Reviewed mid-year and at the end of each cycle to assess progress and outcomes.

SigRes Contribution: Included.

As per the AWF (2019), an individual should not normally have more than 325 units allocated for University-funded research, although exceptionally this can be set at school level with input from Dean, ADRI and relevant Head of Subject based on overall staff workload. This should be carefully balanced between the research ambitions of the school/university.

R2D – University-Funded Research Development

R2D provides time for developing research capability or preparing for future research outputs, without an immediate expectation of results.

Typical Activities: Writing grant proposals without prior track record, conducting pilot or preliminary studies, developing collaborations, or engaging in research training.

Allocation:

- Agreed through MyContribution with the line manager.
- Oversight from ADRI and Dean to ensure alignment with career development and School priorities.

Recording: Logged in MyContribution as developmental objectives and categorised as R2D in WAM.

Monitoring: Reviewed annually; Schools are expected to track progression from R2D to R2 where appropriate.

SigRes Contribution: Excluded.

Additional guidance can be found [here](#)

R3 – Postgraduate Research Supervision

R3 covers the supervision of postgraduate research (PGR) students, including doctoral and masters by research programmes.

Allocations: Automatically calculated based on the number and type of PGR students supervised, using University-standard allowances (as set out in the AWF).

The total allocation is divided among the supervisory team as agreed between supervisors.

Standard AWF allowances apply:

- **PhD/DBA:** 65 units per student per year (maximum 195 over 3 years full-time).
- **MPhil:** 65 units per year (maximum 130 over 2 years full-time).
- **MRes:** 65 units per year (normally over 1–2 years).

Typical Activities: Supervision meetings, progress reviews, examination preparation, and research mentoring.

Recording: Data drawn from the PGR student database and confirmed by supervisory teams.

Monitoring: Verified annually by line managers.

SigRes Contribution: Included.

R4 – Externally Funded Research

R4 covers all externally funded research activity aligned to approved research grants and contracts.

Typical Activities: Research delivery, project management, data collection and analysis, reporting to funders, and dissemination of findings.

Allocation: Academics are responsible for ensuring the data on WorkTribe accurately reflects their role and time commitment.

Recording: Populated from WorkTribe and cross-checked with RIE and School WAM coordinators.

Monitoring: Updated continuously in WorkTribe and reviewed quarterly for accuracy.

SigRes Contribution: Included.

There is no maximum limit, although staff on teaching and research contracts must normally contribute at least **20% of workload to teaching** (as per AWF).

4. Governance Principles

1. Transparency and Consistency – All Schools must apply the same definitions and allocation principles.
 - In line with the Academic Workload Framework (AWF), Schools may retain reasonable flexibility to reflect disciplinary or structural differences, provided that any variation is transparent and can be clearly justified in their annual submission to the Academic Workload Steering Group (AWSG).
2. System Alignment – Where research time is drawn automatically from systems, those sources are authoritative. (i.e. where staff consider automatically allocated R WAM to be inaccurate, it should be correct at a system-level and not simply adjusted in the WAM software)
3. Managerial Oversight for Discretionary Categories – R2 and R2D allocations must be evidence-based.
4. Fairness and Inclusion – Allocations must align with equality and diversity principles.
5. Clarity of Responsibility – Roles and responsibilities must be defined.
6. Integration with MyContribution – MyContribution is the primary mechanism for recording R2 and R2D objectives.
7. The amount of time associated with both R2 and R2D objectives that is recorded in MyContribution must be transferred into the WAM system in a timely manner in each School.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

<i>Responsibility Area</i>	<i>Academic Staff</i>	<i>Line Managers</i>	<i>Associate Deans for Research and Innovation (ADRI)s</i>	<i>Deans of School</i>
MyContribution (R2/R2D)	Engage in discussions and agree objectives	Discuss and agree allocations with staff	Oversee consistency of approach	Ensure compliance with AWF
Recording Research Activity	Maintain accurate records (Worktribe, systems)	Promote equity and transparency	Support accurate capture of R1	Assure data quality in submissions
R1 (Research Roles)	Ensure roles are correctly reflected in WAM	Support accurate recording	Ensure consistency across School	Maintain oversight of balance
R2/R2D Allocation & Progression	Align objectives with development plans	Agree and monitor allocations	Approve allocations and monitor progression	Maintain fairness across categories
R3 (PGR Supervision)	Agree supervision splits and ensure accuracy	Verify allocations	—	—
R4 (Externally Funded Research)	Ensure Worktribe data is accurate	Support verification	Oversee system alignment	Ensure correct institutional reporting
Final Assurance & Submission	—	—	Confirm WAM accuracy (R1–R4)	Endorse submission to AWSG
Strategic Alignment	Align activity with School/University priorities	Reinforce alignment in discussions	Promote consistency	Ensure strategic compliance

6. Interaction with Significant Responsibility for Research (SigRes) Classification

The University reports research volume through the Significant Responsibility for Research (SigRes) measure, as defined for HESA and REF2029 reporting purposes.

Only R2 (University-Funded Research), R3 (Postgraduate Research Supervision), and R4 (Externally Funded Research) allocations contribute to the research volume measure. R1 (Research Support and Scholarship) and R2D (Research Development) are excluded.

According to the current Code of Practice (under review), staff whose combined allocation across R2, R3, and R4 represents 20 per cent or more of their target workload are counted toward the University's research volume measure (SigRes).

Being included in the SigRes research volume measure or not does not influence selection of an individual's outputs or impact case studies for submission to REF. REF2029 has fully decoupled the research volume measure from individual staff submission decisions. The measure exists purely to represent the institution's overall research capacity and activity level.

7. Monitoring, Review, and Reporting

- Annual Review:
 - ADRIs and Deans must review WAM allocations annually.
 - R2D Progression Tracking: Schools should monitor progression from R2D to R2.
 - Institutional Monitoring: AWSG reviews trends and ensures REF/HESA alignment.
 - Continuous Improvement: Feedback informs updates.

8. Governance and Approval

This guidance is owned by the Research and Innovation Committee (RIC) and administered by the Academic Workload Steering Group (AWSG). Any amendments will be developed with HR, Planning, and School ADRIs before reissue.