

REF 2029 Code of Practice

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg ac yn Saesneg | This document is available in Welsh and English

Institution name: University of Wales, Trinity Saint David

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Part 1. Introduction

1. Purpose and Scope

This Code of Practice sets out the University of Wales Trinity Saint David's approach to participation in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2029. It establishes the principles and processes that will govern the identification of eligible employment contracts, the preparation of the University's REF submission, and the selection and allocation of research outputs.

The Code has been developed in accordance with REF 2029 guidance and applies to all relevant academic and research staff. It is intended to ensure that REF-related decisions are made in a manner that are fair, transparent, consistent, and inclusive, and that comply with equality legislation, the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Welsh Language Standards.

REF 2029 introduces significant changes to the assessment framework, including the decoupling of individuals from research outputs. UWTSD's approach reflects this change by focusing on institutional responsibilities and research environments, and by ensuring that REF processes are not used to assess individual performance. The Code has been developed through consultation with staff, will be made publicly available, and will be kept under review to ensure continued alignment with REF guidance and institutional policy.

1.2. Principles

This Code of Practice is underpinned by the following principles, which apply to all REF-related processes, including the identification of Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR), the determination of Research Independence (RI), the allocation of contracts and outputs to Units of Assessment (UoAs), and the selection of outputs for submission.

- a) **Robustness.** UWTSD will apply clearly defined, evidence-based and consistently applied criteria and procedures that are auditable and aligned with REF 2029 guidance and HESA reporting requirements. Decisions relating to SRR and RI are based on contractual responsibilities and role expectations. These criteria are applied systematically using auditable evidence drawn from role descriptors, activity profiles, and institutional records.
- b) **Transparency.** The criteria, processes and decision-making arrangements set out in this Code of Practice will be clearly communicated, readily accessible, and applied consistently. Staff will be informed of decisions that affect them, the basis for those decisions, and the routes available to request clarification or appeal.
- c) **Equality and Inclusion.** All REF-related decisions will be made fairly and impartially, with due regard to equality legislation and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The core areas in this regard are: decision-making on Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) and Research Independence (RI), allocating eligible contracts to UoAs, selecting outputs, and managing appeals processes. In respect of these areas, no individual or group will be advantaged or disadvantaged on the basis of protected characteristics, contractual status or working pattern. Part-time, fixed-term, and atypical working arrangements will be treated equitably. Equality impact assessments will be used to identify and mitigate any unintended adverse effects, prior to and at the point of decision making. Appeals and review mechanisms will be independent, timely, and accessible.
- d) **Welsh Language.** The Welsh language will be treated no less favourably than English, in line with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards. Individuals may use Welsh or English in all REF-related processes, and appropriate bilingual arrangements will be provided to ensure no disadvantage arises from language choice.
- e) **British Sign Language.** Individuals who require the use of British Sign Language will not be treated less favourably within REF-related processes. Appropriate support and reasonable adjustments will be provided to enable full and equitable participation.

1.3. Institutional Policies

This Code of Practice operates within the context of UWTSD's wider institutional strategies and policies, including its Strategic Equality Plan, Research and Innovation Strategy and the Welsh Language Standards. It reflects sector best practice in responsible research assessment, including the principles of DORA and the Leiden Manifesto, and emphasises expert peer review, qualitative judgement, and the recognition of diverse forms of research contribution and output.

The principles and approaches set out in this Code build on those adopted for REF 2021, maintaining continuity in transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity while reflecting changes introduced for REF 2029 and lessons learned from previous exercises. Actions taken since REF 2021 to address equality considerations are summarised later in this document and reflected in the Equality Impact Assessments that inform the policies and procedures described here.

1.4. Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken during the development of this Code of Practice, in accordance with UWTSD requirements and REF 2029 guidance. This is included in Part 6. An EIA is carried out alongside the drafting of all relevant policies and procedures, ensuring that equality considerations and Welsh language duties are embedded from the outset. The EIA directly informed the design of processes relating to Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR), Research Independence (RI), contract-to-UoA allocation, and output selection, providing assurance that the Code is fair, transparent, and compliant with statutory obligations. Parts 2, 3, 4 and 5 further detail actions that will be undertaken during key decision making process regarding the identification of staff with SRR (Part 2), the identification of staff with RI (Part 3), mapping contracts to UoAs (Part 4) and Output Selection (Part 5).

1.5. Update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Actions Since REF 2021

Since REF2021, the University has strengthened equality, diversity and inclusion for both staff and postgraduate researchers through a series of strategic developments. Through consultation, the 2024-2028 Strategic Equality Plan was developed and implemented. Support for student wellbeing has expanded significantly, with the creation of a dedicated Wellbeing Unit, increased resources, and the introduction of 24/7 mental-health provision for staff and students. For students, new trauma-informed policies, including the Cause for Concern framework, have improved reporting routes and support for those disclosing harm. Targeted initiatives such as the Period Dignity campaign have addressed barriers to participation and supported those experiencing hardship. Inclusive culture and community have been further developed through the CONNECT programme, unconscious-bias and Race Equity training, and the bronze award for the Advance HE Race Equality Charter in July 2025. The University has strengthened disability inclusion through Disability Confident Employer accreditation and improved leadership capability through a compassionate leadership development programme. The Institution has continued to invest in the development of its staff, in particular programmes that support progression of a diverse community. For example the Advance HE Aurora and Diversifying Leadership programmes, the Academi Wales Springboard Programme for women and the Academi Wales Navigator Programme for men. Staff engagement has been enhanced via pulse surveys, the Race Equality Charter staff survey and a new Employee Assistance Programme, while HR systems development have led to improved Management Information. Collectively, these actions have contributed to measurable progress, including a reduction in the mean gender pay gap from 9.7% in 2019 to 3.8% in 2025, and have enhanced the institutional environment for both staff and PGRs

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

2. UWTSD Policies and Procedures:

UWTSD is a teaching-led university that undertakes research, innovation, and knowledge exchange in alignment with the four missions set out in its Research and Innovation Strategy (2030). Most academic staff are employed on teaching and research contracts, with duties allocated annually through the Academic Staff Activity Profile. Approximately 17% of these staff are expected to undertake significant research activity each year. Within this strategic and operational context, contractual status alone does not therefore reliably identify those staff with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR). This section of the Code of Practice sets out the University's criteria, processes, decision-making tests, and equality measures for identifying staff whose contracts include SRR. Criteria for staff on research-only contracts are set out in Part 3, where the assessment is based on Research Independence rather than SRR.

2.1. Identifying SRR contracts

Staff with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) are those whose role includes an explicit expectation to undertake independent research, supported by a clear allocation of time and resources. This expectation forms a recognised and substantive component of the individual's contracted duties. For staff on Teaching and Research contracts, SRR status will be reviewed annually with reference to each individual's Academic Staff Activity Profile. The criteria and indicators set out in Tables 2.1 - 2.5 will be applied consistently and transparently in identifying SRR. Indicators are not treated as minimum thresholds, and staff may be identified as having SRR without meeting all indicators, provided the gateway requirement is met.

Gateway threshold:

- a) At least 10% of annual contracted hours must be explicitly allocated to research activity, as set out in Table 2.1. This threshold is consistent with the approach adopted for REF 2021.

Once the gateway threshold is met, a staff member will be deemed to have SRR where they meet at least one additional indicator in each of the following categories, as set out in Table 2.2:

- b) Expectation of the job role
- c) Independent research activity

Example 1	1.0 FTE	
SRR threshold (minimum)	10.00%	
	Total Productive Hours	Research Allocation
Academic Hours (productive)	1584	158
Weeks (productive)	42.5	4.3
Average Weekly Research Hours	3.7	
Example 2	0.5 FTE	
SRR threshold (minimum)	10.00%	
	Total Productive Hours	Research Allocation
Academic Hours (productive)	792	79
Weeks (productive)	21.25	2.15
Average Weekly Research Hours	1.9	

Table 2.1. Methodology for determining 10% of annual productive hours

The detailed methodology for calculating the gateway threshold and applying the additional indicators is set out in Tables 2.2–2.5.

Criteria	Indicator	Gateway Threshold
Explicit time and resources are made available for research	A specific proportion of time allocated for research, as determined in the context of the institution's practices and applied in a consistent way through research allocation in a workload model or equivalent.	Research allocation in Activity Profile at a minimum of 10% of annual contracted hours.
Criteria	Indicator	Test
An expectation of the job role	Current research responsibilities as indicated in expectations of research by role.	Indicated in job descriptions, employment contract, activity profile and / or appraisals and career or research development plans or stated objectives.
To engage actively in independent research	Eligibility to apply for research funding as the Project Lead, Project Co-Lead, or Research and Innovation Associate.	Have a PhD or other relevant professional experience. Research and Innovation Associates as defined by UKRI would be expected to lead a work package within a clearly defined programme of research (as set below).
	Leading a research group or a substantial work package within a clearly defined programme of research	Review of research objectives and expected outputs. Clear and audited responsibility for research leadership responsibilities.
	Significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research.	Review of research programme or project. Auditable evidence significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research, through for example sole or co-authored research outputs and joint grant applications .
	Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement.	Review of terms and condition of eligibility and the award. Research Fellowships demonstrating research independence for REF 2029 volume measure – REF 2029

Table 2.2. Criteria for staff with significant responsibility for research

2.2. Decision-Making, Transparency and communication

The University is committed to ensuring that the application of Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) criteria is inclusive, fair, and non-discriminatory. All criteria will be applied consistently and transparently across the University, without bias, to promote equality and inclusion within the UWTSD research community. A single, institution-wide process will be used, with no local variation.

The approach to identifying contracts with SRR is broadly aligned with the principles set out in the University's REF 2021 Code of Practice, with minor revisions to reflect changes in the REF 2029 assessment framework and lessons learned from REF 2021. As a result, the process will

be familiar to academic staff, who have also had opportunities to provide feedback during the development of the REF 2029 Code of Practice.

Following approval by Medr, the policy will be published on a dedicated REF 2029 intranet page and will be accessible to all UWTSD staff. This will be supported by a programme of staff briefings explaining the principles and implementation of the SRR process.

2.3. Process: Academic Staff Activity Profile

For the purposes of identifying contracts with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR), the University applies the following process:

- a) The University uses a standardised Academic Staff Activity Profile, completed annually by the relevant Academic Director (as line manager) and approved by the Institute Dean. Profiles are set at the beginning of each academic year and communicated to staff in line with established workload management processes within each Institute.
- b) The Institute Dean will provide the REF Manager with a list of staff whose Activity Profiles meet the gateway threshold of at least 10% of annual contracted hours explicitly allocated to research activity.
- c) The REF Manager will review those staff to determine whether they meet the criteria relating to (i) expectation of the job role and (ii) independent research activity. Where necessary, the REF Manager may consult the staff member, Academic Director, Institute research leads, Human Resources, or other relevant parties to ensure an accurate assessment of current research expectations and activity. A clear record of the decision and its rationale will be retained.
- d) The resulting data will be reviewed and quality assured by the REF Management Group. The HR Department contributes to compiling the annual HESA staff return and will confirm eligibility in line with REF2029 requirements. Only staff on 'teaching and research' contracts with SRR, and 'research-only' contracts meeting the test for Research Independence (RI), will be included in the REF2029 volume measure. Staff on 'teaching-only' contracts will be excluded, even where elements of SRR or RI criteria are met. Additional REF-specific checks will be applied to staff who are hourly paid work partly or wholly overseas, or hold multiple contracts.
- e) The REF Manager will write to all staff individually to confirm the outcome of the process and the basis on which they have been identified as having, or not having, SRR. This communication will include details of the appeals process.
- f) While Activity Profiles are set prospectively at the start of the academic year, SRR status is reported retrospectively to HESA during the subsequent reporting period (September–November). Prior to submission, the REF Manager will reconfirm SRR classifications with the relevant Institute Dean to ensure accuracy and alignment with duties carried out over the academic year. Any change to SRR status will be communicated to the affected staff member.
- g) Although research allocations are generally stable year-on-year, adjustments may arise due to changes in workload, resourcing, working patterns, or agreed career aspirations through the University's PDR process (see Section 2.22), or other operational requirements. Such changes may result in allocations falling below the gateway threshold or the removal of SRR status. Conversely, staff may move into SRR or receive increased research allocations in response to factors such as successful grant capture, project commitments, or leadership of strategic research and innovation initiatives. All changes are determined by the strategic and operational needs of the Institute and the University.

2.4. Equality, diversity, and inclusion

Monitoring for any unintended consequences related to equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) will be carried out using the process described in **Part 6**, and an appeals process is outlined in Section 2.19 and 2.20.

2.5. Individual Staff Circumstances

Individual Staff Circumstances are not a feature of REF 2029, significantly reducing the burden of the exercise. The decoupling of outputs and staff includes the removal of the requirement for all staff submitted to submit at least one output. The Code of Practice outlines the University's approach to screening for and addressing any adverse equality, diversity and inclusion consequences.

2.6. Criteria based on the Academic Staff Activity Profile

The University's Academic Staff Activity Profile allocates workload in four areas:

- **Section A.** Formal Scheduled Teaching and Supervision.
- **Section B.** Teaching Preparation, Assessment and Marking
- **Section C.** School / Faculty Administration
- **Section D.** Funded External Research, Commercial & External activity

All activity in Sections A and B is outside the scope of SRR and is not included in the calculation of 10% gateway threshold. In Section C, all activities listed as Programme Management, Committee Membership and Marketing and admissions Student Support are outside of Scope of SRR. Scholarly Activity in section C is generally related to its administrative functions, such as serving on the research related committees and is outside of Scope of SRR. Only those activities which meet the REF definition of research as 'a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared' should be recorded as within scope of SRR. For example:

Section C Activity	In SRR Scope	Notes
PGR (e.g. MPhil / PhD / EdD / ProfDoc) study	N	Study for research degree as CPD. Does not meet the independent research criteria.
Programme Management	N	Academic related administrative activity regardless of type and level of programme (e.g. Prof Doc, MRes)
Staff Development Week	N	CPD and scholarly activity. Does not meet REF definition or research
Peer Observation	N	CPD and scholarly activity. Does not meet REF definition or research
Conference attendance,	Y	Include if an academic conference involving the presentation of original research
Generating research monographs, articles and other outputs	Y	Include for time allocated to research outputs. Do not include time related to text books, consultancy or knowledge exchange activity if it does not embody original research
Authoring text books	N	Does not meet REF definition or research
Authoring knowledge transfer or consultancy reports	Conditional	Should only be included if they meet the definition of Applied Research, as set out in Table 2.6.
External Examination (e.g. PhD)	N	Scholarly activity rather than self-directed research.
PhD Viva Chair	N	Scholarly activity rather than self-directed research.
Faculty Research Days	N	Scholarly activity and CPD rather than self-directed research.
Workshops	N	Scholarly activity and CPD rather than self-directed research.
Peer Review College	N	Scholarly activity rather than self-directed research.

Table 2.3. Section C of the Academic Staff Activity Profile

Section D covers funded research, commercial & other external facing activity. Commercial and external activity are usually outside of the scope of SRR, unless they embody and generate new research materials:

Section D Activity	In SRR Scope	Notes
Research Excellent Framework 2029	Y	Time allocated to undertaking Academic or Applied Research that contributes directly to research activity or outputs.
External Project – Research	Y	Includes projects where the primary purpose is original research, consistent with the REF definition of research as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared. These will typically include Research Council, research charity, Horizon Europe, or Innovate UK research grants.
External Project - Knowledge Exchange	Conditional	Normally out of scope, where activity focuses on dissemination, training, regeneration, or application of existing knowledge. May be included where the project meets the University definition of applied research and involves the generation of new research insights.
External Project – Commercial	Conditional	Typically out of scope as knowledge exploitation or commercialisation activity. May be included where the activity demonstrably constitutes applied research and results in new research insights, as defined in Table 2.6.
Conference Presentations	Y	Included where the activity involves presenting original research findings at an academic conference. Attendance, training events, or non-research dissemination are excluded.

Table 2.4. Section D of the Academic Staff Activity Profile

2.7. Classification

Where there is any ambiguity or doubt, the following definitions should be referred to:

Activity	Threshold for SRR	Notes
Academic research. Also known as pure, basic, or fundamental research, involving exploratory investigation aimed at generating new knowledge or understanding without an immediate practical application.	10% of annual contracted hours	Staff above the threshold will have time and resources allocated to research in their annual Activity Profile. Staff below the threshold will be supported in their aspirations for research with clear targets. Staff may be supported to move up the 'research ladder' and advance to 'significant responsibility' in accordance with their annual activity profile.
Applied research and innovation A systematic, impact-driven inquiry integrating disciplinary and professional knowledge to address real-world challenges and generate new research insights.	10% of annual contracted hours	Staff above the threshold will have time and resources allocated to research in their annual Activity Profile. Staff below the threshold will be supported in their aspirations for research with clear targets. Staff may be supported to move up the 'research ladder' and

		advance to 'significant responsibility' in accordance with their annual activity profile.
Advanced scholarship. Including the scholarship of integration and application, involving synthesis or application of existing knowledge and leading to outcomes such as intellectual property.	Not included in threshold	No expectation of original research as defined by REF. Outputs may be produced based on existing knowledge. Where activity develops into applied research generating new insights, it may be reclassified accordingly.
Scholarship of teaching. Work that transmits knowledge and also transforms and extends it and involves critical reflection on teaching practice made public for review – leading to the development of, for example, new curricula and new programmes	Not included in threshold	No expectation of original research. Staff in this category will not usually have any research outputs, although there may be publications / presentations of other types.
Knowledge exchange / commercialisation: The creation of economically viable activity arising from the know-how of university staff or students which has been created through scholarship and / or research, leading to new streams of income generation.	Not included in threshold	Not normally an expectation of original research, although other types of output or impact may result from the processes of knowledge exchange and or commercialisation. Staff in this category may therefore have outputs of other types based on existing knowledge rather than new research. If the knowledge exchange generates new research insights then this aspect of the activity may be best viewed as 'applied research'.

Table 2.5. Academic activities and thresholds

2.8. Staff, Committees, and Training

The University is committed to ensuring accountability, transparency, consistency, and inclusivity in its planning for REF 2029. In support of this commitment, it has established clear functional responsibilities to ensure that procedures for: (a) appointing designated staff; and (b) constituting decision-making committees involved in identifying staff with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR), determining Research Independence (RI), and selecting research outputs, are fully documented and supported by appropriate terms of reference. The detailed roles, responsibilities, and procedures governing these bodies are set out below.

2.9. Strategic Equality Plan

The REF 2029 Code of Practice operates within the framework of the University's Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2024–28. From a governance perspective, the University Council holds ultimate responsibility for compliance with equality legislation. The Chair of the REF Management Group is responsible for ensuring that all staff involved in REF 2029 planning comply with the REF 2029 Code of Practice and that all procedures align with the SEP and Public Sector Equality Duty.

2.10. Decision making process.

The decision making process between the University's standing committees and boards, as governing the development and implementation of the Code of Practice is as shown in Figure 1.

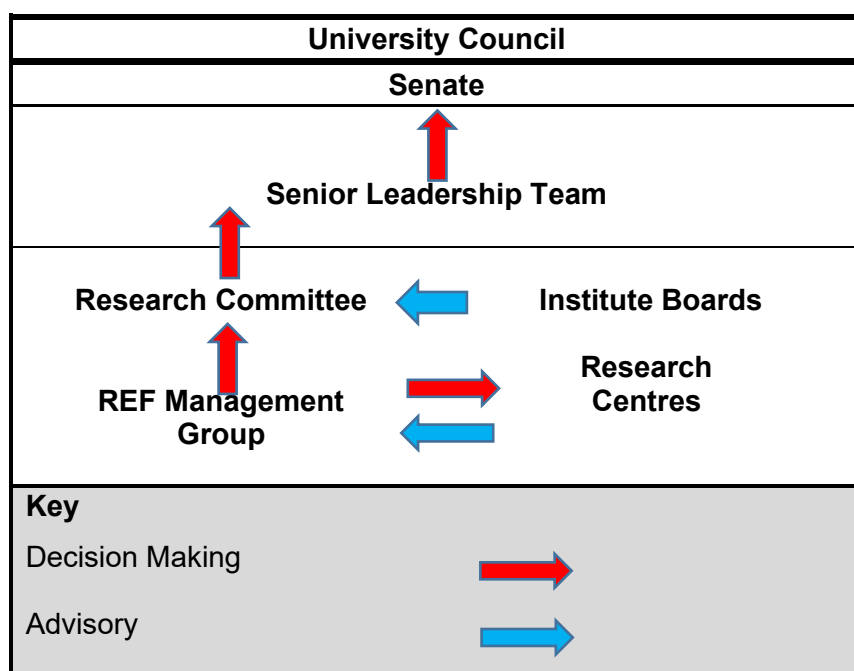


Figure 1. Decision making process.

2.11. Senate

Senate is the University's chief academic authority, responsible for academic governance, standards, quality, and strategic academic development across taught and research provision. Supported by Standing Committees and Institute Boards, it approves academic regulations, policies, awards, and the academic portfolio, including research and commercialisation activity, and considers matters referred by the Council or Vice-Chancellor. Senate is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) and comprises senior officers, Institute representatives, and student representation. The Research and Innovation Committee and the four Institute Boards are Standing Committees of Senate. For REF 2029, Senate has ultimate responsibility for compliance with equality legislation and the REF Code of Practice. It approves SRR, Research Independence, and output selection processes, receives assurance on compliance, equality impacts, and appeals, and provides strategic oversight to ensure consistent application across the University.

2.12. The Institutes

The University is organised into four Institutes, each responsible for clusters of academic provision, research, and innovation. Quality oversight is led by Assistant Deans, supported by Academic Directors and Programme Managers. Each Institute has an Institute Board with responsibility for quality, enhancement, and research and innovation activity, reporting directly to Senate.

2.13. Institute Boards

Institute Boards provide strategic leadership within their Institutes and ensure compliance with the University's regulatory and quality assurance framework. They oversee quality and enhancement, learning and teaching, student experience, research and innovation,

partnerships, and staff development, and report annually to Senate. Boards are chaired by the Dean or Head of Institute (or nominee) and include senior Institute representatives, student representatives, and professional services staff. In relation to REF 2029, Institute Boards receive reports on Institute-level research planning and performance.

2.14. Research and Innovation Committee

The Research and Innovation Committee (RIC) provides strategic leadership for research and innovation and oversees the development and implementation of the University's Research and Innovation Strategy, policies, and performance monitoring. It reports annually to Senate on effectiveness and compliance. In relation to REF 2029, RIC oversees compliance with REF requirements for identifying staff with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR), determining Research Independence (RI), and selecting outputs for submission. It approves and monitors related policies, reviews equality impact assessments, oversees appeals, and receives assurance reports from the REF Management Group to ensure decisions are fair, transparent, and consistently applied in line with equality legislation.

2.15. REF Management Group

The REF Management Group is a working group of the Research and Innovation Committee; its members being drawn from and appointed by that committee. The REF Management Group reports to the Research and Innovation Committee on strategic and operational planning and has overall responsibility for the creation and implementation of planning and delivery for the University's submission to REF 2029. It has decision making powers in respect of this responsibility as detailed in the Terms of Reference. Its membership is drawn from each of the University's Institutes as represented on the Research Committee, and the REF Manager.

The REF Management Group is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Equality Act (2010) and the REF 2029 Code of Practice throughout the planning process. Its duties include determining whether staff meet the threshold for Significant Responsibility for Research based on explicit time and resource allocation against the criteria of job role expectations and research independence, as outlined above. The REF Management Group will follow appropriate University policies in relation to following appeals outcomes and any actions that are required following Equality Impact Assessments. It agrees the selection of research outputs for submission, oversees the identification and monitoring of research impact and environment quality, reviews draft REF templates and supporting audit evidence, and approves final versions for submission. Additional responsibilities include reviewing and approving final data on research income and PGR students, receiving reports from the REF Institutional Contact on assessment framework development, approving external assessor appointments, running mock REF exercises, and ensuring technical infrastructure is in place for REF data collection. Membership and composition of the REF Management Group, based on staff roles, expertise, and committee affiliations, is approved by the Research and Innovation Committee, which also authorises any changes as required.

2.16. Members of the REF Management Group

Membership of the REF Management Group has been reviewed in the Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment detailed in Part 6 while steps taken to ensure that members are well informed about their own and the University's legal obligations regarding equality, including any relevant training are detailed below.

Chair.
REF Manager
Head of INSPIRE
Institute & CAWCS UoA Leads

Deans
Director of the Centre of Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies
Doctoral College representative
IS / LLR representative (tbc)
Co-opted Members (as required)

2.17. Staff Development: Equality & Diversity

The University recognises that staff development and training enhances the knowledge, understanding and skills of staff so that they can more readily discharge their responsibilities to develop and sustain a culture of equality in the working and learning environment. The University delivers equality training which include Equality and Diversity, Challenging Unconscious bias and Race Equity to ensure continued awareness in these areas. The REF Manager attended AdvanceHE equality and diversity training in April 2019, the Research England workshop in Feb 2019 and also that run by the ECU during the REF 2014 exercise (March 2012). He will also attend any further training should it be scheduled by the REF team for REF2029. All members of the REF Management Group will undertake REF-specific Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training during the period September to December 2026, regardless of prior training. This mandatory provision will ensure a consistent understanding of REF 2029 equality requirements and will cover key areas including the application of equality legislation in REF processes, unconscious bias in decision-making, and the fair and equitable treatment of research outputs. Training will be delivered through a combination of workshops, online materials and/or briefings, with updates provided as required.

2.18. Appeals Process

The University is committed to managing its REF 2029 preparations in a transparent, consistent, accountable and inclusive manner. All appeals will be concluded in advance of the final REF submission. Staff involved in considering appeals will be independent of the original decision-making process.

Stage 1: Informal Review

Staff may request an informal review by emailing the Chair of the Research Committee. The Chair of the Research Committee will review the decision using:

- The Academic Staff Activity Profile
- SRR criteria (including role expectations, allocation of time and resources, and research independence where applicable)
- Any other relevant supporting documentation and information.

The outcome of the informal review will be communicated in writing. Where appropriate, remedial action may be recommended and referred to the REF Management Group for confirmation.

Stage 2: Formal Appeal

If the matter is not resolved informally, staff may submit a formal appeal in writing via email to Associate Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Enhancement) clearly stating the grounds for appeal. The appeal will be considered by an **Appeals Panel** comprising:

- A senior academic with no prior involvement in the decision
- A senior professional services representative
- An HR Business Partner to ensure correct procedure has been followed.

The panel will review whether the REF 2029 Code of Practice and relevant equality legislation have been correctly applied. The panel may uphold the original decision or recommend corrective action. The outcome of the formal appeal will be provided in writing and will be final within the REF 2029 process.

This appeal process is specific to the correct application of the REF2029 Code of Practice and is separate from other appeal processes, e.g. those incorporated in the University's Grievance or Disciplinary procedures and is covered by Dispute Resolution legislation.

2.19. Eligible grounds for appeal

Grounds for both informal and formal appeal for staff on 'teaching and research' contracts include:

- a) Breach of the Equality Act 2010. The Act protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation.
- b) Material procedural error or failure to apply the REF 2029 Code of Practice correctly.
- c) An incorrect decision regarding the verification of thresholds for Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR), contrary to the REF 2029 Code of Practice, including:
 - Incorrect determination of the allocation of time and resources for research;
 - Incorrect determination of the expectation of research within the employment role;
 - Incorrect determination of Research Independence;
 - Incorrect determination of contractual status.
- d) Factual or administrative error that materially affected the decision.

Appeals cannot be used to challenge academic judgement.

2.20. Communicating the appeals process.

The University will ensure that all staff are made aware of the REF 2029 appeals process. To support this, the process will be:

- a) Published on the University intranet, with hard copies available from academic units, Human Resources, INSPIRE, for staff without regular IT access or those newly joining the University;
- b) Made available in alternative and accessible formats, where required;
- c) Published bilingually and distributed across the University;
- d) Communicated during departmental induction to all academic staff and others involved in REF 2029 preparations;
- e) Special arrangements will be made to ensure that staff who are absent from work are appropriately informed. Following adoption of the Code of Practice, Human Resources will identify academic staff who are absent due to reasons including ill health, maternity or paternity leave, gender reassignment-related procedures, secondment, disciplinary suspension, or other extended absence. In such cases, a hard-copy version of the appeals process will be sent directly to the staff member.

2.21. Performance and Development Review (PDR)

The University is committed to ensuring that decisions relating to Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) and Research Independence (RI) are made in a transparent, consistent, and equitable manner. Alongside the formal REF 2029 appeals process, the annual Performance and Development Review (PDR) provides a structured and inclusive opportunity for staff to discuss career aspirations and research ambitions.

Through PDR, staff may articulate their objectives to develop as independent researchers or to hold significant research responsibility, which may inform future Academic Staff Activity Profiles. These discussions are guided by principles of equity and inclusion and support staff progression regardless of career stage, contract type, or protected characteristics. Where appropriate, agreed objectives may be supported through development planning or adjustments to workloads and resources.

This approach ensures that Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) and Research Independence (RI) decisions are not solely administrative but are embedded within a broader developmental framework. The University will monitor these arrangements through equality impact assessment and periodic review to safeguard against unintended bias. Appeals remain independent of PDR discussions and original decision-making processes, and will be clearly communicated and accessible to all staff, including those on leave or working remotely.

2.22. Support for fixed-term, part-time and contract research staff

The University is committed to ensuring that fixed-term, part-time, and contract research staff are treated equitably and are not disadvantaged in relation to equality, diversity, or inclusion in REF 2029 processes. All REF-related procedures as set out within this Code of Practice, including those for identifying Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR), determining Research Independence (RI), and selecting outputs, are applied consistently regardless of contract type or working pattern.

Staff on fixed-term or part-time contracts, including contract research staff, have access to the same support, guidance, and opportunity to engage in REF-related activity as staff on open-ended contracts, where this is appropriate to their role. Research expectations and eligibility are assessed on the basis of contractual duties, allocated time, and role responsibilities, rather than contract duration or full-time equivalence.

The University recognises that contract research staff may experience particular career and structural challenges and ensures that decisions relating to REF 2029 take account of their working arrangements and career stage. Equality considerations are embedded throughout REF planning and decision-making. Communication, guidance, and access to training are provided to ensure that fixed-term, part-time, and contract research staff are appropriately informed and supported in relation to REF 2029.

2.23. Annual Equality Impact Assessment of SRR Determinations

Beginning with the 2025/26 academic year, the University will undertake an annual Equality Impact Assessment of all Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) determinations. This assessment will analyse the HESA-verified SRR dataset alongside protected characteristic data, workload allocations, and Institute-level contextual information to ensure that SRR decisions are fair, transparent, and compliant with the Public Sector Equality Duty and Welsh Language Standards. The assessment will examine representation, identify any differential impacts or structural barriers affecting particular groups, and evaluate whether mitigation is required. Findings will be reported to the REF Management Group and will inform ongoing refinements to the Code of Practice. Conducting this EIA annually ensures that equality considerations are integrated at the point of decision-making, in line with REF2029 expectations.

Methodology:

1. Purpose of the Assessment	To assess whether the annual identification of staff with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) results in any adverse impact on staff with protected characteristics or Welsh-language engagement, and to determine whether the process aligns with the Public Sector Equality Duty and Welsh Language Standards.
2. Evidence Base	Each annual SRR EIA will draw on: a) HESA-verified SRR classifications for the relevant academic year.

	b) Protected characteristic data (age, race / ethnicity, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, pregnancy & maternity, marriage & civil partnership) held in HR datasets. c) Contractual and workload allocation data, including research allocation (gateway threshold) and evidence of job-role expectations. d) Institute-level operational information, including workload distribution patterns and research environment context. e) Qualitative evidence from staff, HR, REF Management Group, and Institute research leads. f) Any adverse impact on the ability to use the Welsh language .
3. Assessment Method	For each protected characteristic and for Welsh language considerations, the following analysis will be conducted: a) Representation analysis. Compare proportion of staff with SRR to the proportion of academic staff. . Identify over- or under-representation beyond expected variation. b) Longitudinal comparison. Compare AY 2025/26 results to REF2021 patterns and subsequent years, to identify emerging trends. Monitor whether mitigation actions reduce previous patterns of disparity. c) Welsh language. Assess whether Welsh-medium researchers have equal access to SRR.
4. Interpretation and Mitigation	Where any adverse differential impact is detected, mitigation actions may include: • Adjusting workload allocation practices. • Providing targeted development routes via PDR. • Reviewing evidence requirements for SRR demonstration. • Strengthening transparency and communication. • Consulting affected groups for further insight. • Ensuring bilingual access to processes and communication
5. Reporting and Governance	Assessment carried out by: REF Manager, with advice provided by the HR Equality Lead, with review by the Welsh Language Standards Lead. Findings will be submitted to the REF Management Group and noted in any updates to the Code of Practice where required. SRR EIA findings will inform the cumulative institutional EIA published after submission.
6. Annual Review Cycle	Conducted annually, beginning with AY 2025/26 SRR dataset (February–March 2026). Repeated each academic year in line with activity profile setting and HESA reporting cycles.

Part 3: Determining Research Independence

3. Introduction.

The REF assessment framework sets different eligibility rules that apply to staff on 'research only' contracts and those on 'teaching and research' contracts. The majority of the University's academic staff are employed on teaching and research contracts and will follow the process outlined in Part 2 of this Code of Practice. For staff employed on research only contracts, the gateway threshold for demonstrating a significant responsibility for research (SRR) does not apply. This is because such staff do not normally hold teaching responsibilities or non-research-related administrative duties, and their contracts define research as the primary focus of their role. Consequently, the criteria relating to the allocation of time and resources for research, and to research being an expectation of the job role, are considered to be contractually satisfied. For these staff, eligibility for REF submission is therefore assessed solely against the criterion of Research Independence (RI).

3.1. Research Independence for research only staff

For the purposes of REF 2029, an independent researcher is defined as an individual who undertakes self-directed research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme. Being named on research outputs alone does not necessarily qualify a contract for inclusion. The indicators of Research Independence and their tests are listed in Table 3.1 below.

Criteria	Indicator	Test
To engage actively in independent research	Eligibility to apply for research funding as the Project Lead, Project Co-Lead, or Research and Innovation Associate.	Have a PhD or other relevant professional experience. Research and Innovation Associates as defined by UKRI would be expected to lead a work package or area of work within a clearly defined programme of research (as set below).
	Leading a research group or a substantial work package within a clearly defined programme of research	Review of research objectives and expected outputs. Clear and audited responsibility for research leadership responsibilities.
	Significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research.	Review of research programme or project. Auditable evidence significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research, through for example sole or co-authored research outputs and joint grant applications .
	Holding an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship where research independence is a requirement.	Review of terms and condition of eligibility and the award. Refer to: Research Fellowships demonstrating research independence for REF 2029 volume measure – REF 2029

Table 3.1. Research Independence

3.2. For the purposes of identifying contracts with Research Independence (RI):

- The University's HR Department will provide the REF Manager with a list of qualifying Research Only contracts.
- The REF Manager will provide each Institute Dean and the Director of CAWCS with contract details within their Unit, as well as any previous determinations of Research Independence, these relating to REF 2021 and REF 2014 where there is continued or

previous employment. It is noted in this regard that Research Independence should be considered persistent, and only in exceptional cases should independence be removed.

- c. The Institute Dean and the Director of CAWCS will evaluate contacts and the role of the respective staff against the Research Independence criteria in Table 3.1, consulting with Academic Directors and research leads as appropriate. A judgement of Research Independence will be made, and the basis of the judgment recorded.
- d. The REF Management Group will review these judgements to ensure that they are accurate, consistent, objective, fair and applied in a transparent way. A record of Research Independence determinations will be maintained on an annual basis.
- e. The REF Manager will write to all staff individually informing them of the outcome of the process and the basis upon which they have been identified as having / not having Research Independence, in accordance with the criteria and tests for Research Independence (RI). The communication will inform staff of the appeals process.
- f. As RI is considered to be persistent, this communication for staff meeting the RI status will be made once only. For all others, it will be communicated annually.

3.3. Exceptional cases for research assistants

Research assistants are primarily employed to support another individuals' research rather than pursuing independent research. They are usually funded from research grants or contracts from Research Councils, Innovate UK, charities, the European Union (EU) or other commercial enterprises, but they may also be funded from UWTSD's own funds. In exceptional cases, the contracts of research assistants may meet the definition of an independent researcher, and such contracts can be included. An explicit justification and evidence based on Table 3.1 will be required for inclusion. This could include details of the funding source and grant application, evidence of research designs, roles and responsibilities.

3.4. Equality, diversity, and inclusion

Monitoring for unintended equality, diversity, and inclusion consequences will be carried out using the process described in Part 6 and an appeals process is outlined in Section 2.17.

3.5. Staff, committees and training

The University's procedures for identifying designated staff and committees for determining Research Independence is as detailed in Sections 2.11 – 2.17. This provides information on role descriptions for individuals and terms of reference for the Research Committees and REF Management Group, Details of training provided to individuals and committees involved in identifying staff, the timescale for delivery, and content are provided in Section 2.18

3.6. Appeals

The feedback and appeals process for staff on research only contracts are as detailed in Sections 2.19 and 2.20.

3.7. Eligible grounds for appeal for 'research only' staff

Grounds for both informal and formal appeal for 'research only' staff include:

- a) Breach of the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act 2010 makes sure that people with protected characteristics are protected from discrimination. These protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment (transgender), marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation.
- b) Incorrect determination of contractual status
- c) Incorrect determination of Research Independence for the member of staff appealing, this being based on evidence of duties, expectations of duties, and past RI status.
- d) Factual or administrative error that materially affected the decision.

Appeals cannot be used to challenge academic judgement.

3.8. Annual Equality Impact Assessment Equality of Research Independence

To ensure that decisions relating to Research Independence (RI) are made in a fair, transparent, and evidence-based manner, the University will apply a structured annual methodology consistent with the principles used for determining Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR). This methodology draws on validated HR and HESA data, contractual information, and documented research activity to assess research-only staff against the indicators of independent research leadership outlined in Table 3.1. Decisions will be subject to institutional quality assurance, consistent application across Institutes, and direct communication with staff. The RI dataset will be reviewed annually and assessed through an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and Welsh Language Standards, and to monitor whether the process has any differential impact on protected groups.

Methodology

1. Purpose of the Assessment	To assess whether the annual identification of staff with Research Independence (RI) results in any adverse impact on staff with protected characteristics or Welsh-language engagement, and to determine whether the process aligns with the Public Sector Equality Duty and Welsh Language Standards.
2. Evidence Base	Each annual RI EIA will draw on: a) HESA-verified RI classifications for the relevant academic year. b) Protected characteristic data (age, race / ethnicity, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, pregnancy & maternity, marriage & civil partnership,) held in HR datasets. c) Contractual and workload allocation data, including research leadership evidence. d) Institute-level operational information and context. e) Qualitative evidence from staff, HR, REF Management Group, and Institute research leads. f) Any adverse impact on the ability to use the Welsh language
3. Assessment Method	For each protected characteristic (and for Welsh language considerations), the following analysis will be conducted: a) Representation analysis. Compare proportion of staff with RI to the pool of academic staff. Identify over- or under-representation beyond expected variation. b) Process impact analysis. Test whether RI decisions correlate with structural factors (workload distribution, contract type, career stage) that may indirectly disadvantage specific groups. Assess where qualitative evidence indicates possible barriers to fair participation. c) Longitudinal analysis. Comparison against previous RI determinations. Compare AY 2025/26 results to REF2021 patterns and subsequent years, to identify emerging trends. Monitor whether mitigation actions reduce previous patterns of disparity. d) Welsh-medium: review of Welsh-medium research considerations. Assess whether Welsh-medium researchers have equal RI status.
4. Interpretation and Mitigation	Where differential impact is detected, mitigation actions may include:

	• Adjusting workload allocation practices or expectations • Supporting clearer pathways to RI demonstration. • Reviewing evidence requirements for determining RI. • Strengthening transparency and communication. • Consulting affected groups. • Ensuring bilingual access to processes & communication.
5. Reporting and Governance	Assessment carried out by the REF Manager with advice provided by the HR Equality Lead,, with review by the Welsh Language Standards Lead. Findings will be submitted to the REF Management Group .
6. Annual Review Cycle	Conducted annually, beginning with AY 2025/26 RI dataset (April 2026). Repeated each academic year in line with activity profile setting and HESA reporting cycles.

Part 4: Allocating Contracts to UoAs

4. Overview

This section sets out UWTSD's policy and process for allocating eligible employment contracts to Units of Assessment (UoAs) for REF 2029. Under the REF 2029 framework, staff are fully decoupled from research outputs. This means that individual staff are not submitted, and outputs do not need to follow the contractual home of their authors. The funding bodies will calculate each UoA's Volume Measure using verified staff data supplied by UWTSD through the annual HESA return. The allocation of contracts to UoAs therefore affects only the size of each submission; it does not determine which outputs or impact case studies are included (see Part 5).

4.1. Volume Measure

The Volume Measure determines the number of research outputs and impact case studies required for each UoA. For REF 2029, that Volume Measure is calculated as:

- Average FTE of contracts with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) and/or Research Independence (RI) across Academic Years 2025/26 and 2026/27 $\times 2.5$.

Only contracts verified as meeting SRR (as defined in Part 2) or RI (as defined in Part 3) contribute to the Volume Measure. The allocation of a contract to a UoA supports this calculation but does not constrain where outputs or impact case studies are submitted.

4.2. Principles Guiding Allocation

UWTSD will allocate eligible contracts to UoAs in line with the following principles:

- a) Compliance and robustness:** Decisions will be based on clear evidence, consistent with REF 2029 guidance and HESA staff-record rules.
- b) Transparency and consistency:** Criteria and processes will be clearly documented, communicated, and applied consistently across Institutes.
- c) Fairness and inclusion:** Decisions will be objective and non-discriminatory, with due regard to equality legislation and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) will be considered throughout the process.
- d) Strategic coherence:** Allocations will reflect UWTSD's research structures and strategic priorities, enabling coherent and competitive submissions.
- e) Proportionality:** Processes will minimise unnecessary administrative burden while maintaining accuracy and auditability.

4.3. Methodology

UWTSD will apply this methodology annually for REF 2029 and is expected to continue doing so thereafter, as funding bodies intend to calculate the volume measure on an ongoing basis using HESA data from the 2027–28 academic year onwards. The University may also be required, through audit, to justify any significant differences between the HESA data used for the REF 2029 volume measure and the 2027–28 HESA Staff Record.

4.4. Data preparation and eligibility

- a)** The University's HR Department compiles a validated list of contracts meeting SRR (Part 2) or RI (Part 3), including FTE and relevant contractual details, according to the processes set out in 2.3 and 3.2.
- b)** The REF Manager prepares a provisional mapping of eligible contracts to draft UoA structures. These are presented to the REF Management Group.

4.5. Mapping criteria

Contract-to-UoA mapping will normally remain stable across years unless substantive changes to role, activity, institutional resources or structures, justify review. In assigning eligible contracts

to UoAs, the REF Management Group will consider:

- a) The primary subject area(s) and disciplinary alignment of the role and its associated research activity
- b) The fit with the research environment of the proposed UoA, including research groups, centres, and supervisory structures
- c) The contract holder's position within UWTSD's strategic research missions and challenge areas
- d) The importance of maintaining coherent and well-balanced submissions and avoiding fragmentation that could weaken strategic alignment or increase administrative complexity.

4.6. UoA allocation

Recognising the centrality of interdisciplinary and mission-oriented research, UWTSD will:

- a) Allocate contracts to the UoA that best reflects the predominant disciplinary home of the supporting research environment
- b) Submit outputs to the UoA where they make the strongest academic contribution, regardless of contractual allocation (see Part 5)
- c) Use REF cross-referral mechanisms where appropriate and adjust processes in line with updated REF guidance on UoA boundaries, panel criteria and guidance on submissions when these are published
- d) Avoid creating multiple very small submissions where this would increase burden, reduce strategic coherence or overall submission quality, while ensuring that areas of excellence remain visible.

4.7. Quality Assurance

UWTSD will ensure that all contract-to-UoA allocations are accurate, compliant, transparent, and free from unintended equality impacts. A structured quality assurance and oversight process will be applied prior to confirming final submissions, whereby:

- a) The REF Management Group reviews provisional allocations for consistency, robustness of rationale, and any unintended equality, diversity, or inclusion (EDI) impacts.
- b) The University's HR Department validates data accuracy and confirms alignment with HESA and statutory reporting requirements.
- c) Final allocations are approved through UWTSD's established institutional REF and HESA governance frameworks. Queries or concerns about process (including data accuracy, mapping rationale, or EDI considerations) will follow the procedures set out in Parts 2 and 3, providing a clear route for staff to raise issues or lodge procedural appeals.
- d) UWTSD will maintain comprehensive and auditable records of eligibility determinations (SRR/RI), contract-to-UoA mappings, QA checks, approvals, and EIA findings to ensure transparency and accountability.

Note: At the point of submission for approval (May 2026) Panel Criteria and Working Methods and Guidance on Submissions remain unpublished or incomplete. This means that key points on the REF Framework remain undecided, most notably **i)** UoA descriptors, **ii)** specific sub-panel approaches to cross referral and **iii)** small unit exceptions. The Code of Practice has been developed on the assumption that points **i**, **ii** and **iii** will be broadly similar to REF2021. If subsequently published decisions materially affect UWTSD's submission intentions, through for example, forcing a higher number of small submissions, we will seek to amend the Code of Practice and / or adjust the contract-to-UoA mapping in the 2025/26 HESA return, where this is permitted.

4.8. Staff, Committees, and Training

The University's procedures for identifying designated staff and committees for determining Research Independence is as detailed in Sections 2.11 – 2.17. This provides information on role descriptions for individuals and terms of reference for the Research Committees and REF Management Group, Details of training provided to individuals and committees involved in identifying staff, the timescale for delivery, and content are provided in Section 2.18.

4.9. Appeals

The feedback and appeals process for staff on research only contracts are as detailed in Sections 2.19 and 2.20. This provides information on how the appeals process has been communicated to staff, details of the process, including how cases are submitted, details of those involved in hearing any appeals (demonstrating their independence from earlier decision processes), timescales and how decisions are being communicated to staff.

4.10. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA):

This assessment evaluates whether the allocation of eligible contracts to Units of Assessment (UoAs) results in any adverse impact on staff with protected characteristics or Welsh-language engagement, ensuring alignment with the Public Sector Equality Duty and Welsh Language Standards. This accounts for Volume Measure calculations only, and not the consideration and allocation of outputs to Units of Assessment, which is where the risks of negative equality impacts are more likely, and which are covered in Part 5.

1. Purpose of the Assessment	To assess whether contract-to-UoA mapping decisions create differential impacts across protected groups and whether the process is fair, transparent, and compliant.
2. Evidence Base	Evidence includes: a) HESA-verified SRR/RI classifications; b) Protected characteristic data (age, race / ethnicity, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, pregnancy & maternity, marriage & civil partnership,) held in HR datasets c) Institute-level operational information and context relating to research activity, strategy and output. d) REF 2029 rules and guidance.
3. Assessment Method	For each protected characteristic, including Welsh language considerations, the following analysis will be conducted: a) Representation analysis: Compare the proportion of staff mapped to UoA to the proportion of academic staff by protected characteristic and Welsh-medium considerations. Identify over or under-representation beyond expected variation. b) Process impact analysis: test whether UoA mapping decisions correlate with structural factors (workload distribution, contract type, career stage) that may indirectly disadvantage specific groups. c) Longitudinal Analysis: review where there are variations in contract mapping, to ensure substantive changes are based on operational or strategic factors, and do not adversely affect those with protected characteristics or Welsh Medium considerations

4. Interpretation and Mitigation	Mitigation actions include • Review of mapping rationale • Improved transparency, and communication of the 'decoupled' framework for Volume Measure calculations
5. Reporting and Governance	Assessment conducted by REF Manager, with advice from HR Equality Lead, reviewed by Welsh Language Standards Lead and reported to RMG.
6. Annual Review Cycle	Conducted annually beginning AY 2025/26 aligned with HESA cycles.

Part 5: Selecting outputs

5. Introduction.

A central feature of REF 2029 is the full **decoupling** of research outputs from individual staff / authors. The University will therefore submit a portfolio of research outputs, rather than individual staff and their outputs. The selected outputs will be representative of the research undertaken in a given area, and will take account of a diversity of output types. Outputs may be drawn from across the institution, provided that a **substantive link** to UWTSD can be demonstrated. As research outputs are completely decoupled from staff, there will be **no minimum output requirements** for individual staff members. To ensure that the research outputs submitted are representative of the work of the Unit of Assessment as a whole, the University must justify if it submits more than five outputs which are associated with a single author (which REF defines as a 'substantive link').

5.1. Substantive link

A substantive link is defined as a demonstrable relationship between UWTSD and the research submitted, whereby the University has enabled the research leading to the output. This must be evidenced through an **eligible employment relationship** with an author (or equivalent) who has made a significant research contribution to the output. An eligible employment relationship is one where the individual was employed by UWTSD at a minimum of 0.2 FTE for at least 12 months of continuous employment, with an explicit expectation of research activity within their role. The employment relationship must have occurred either at the point the output was first made publicly available, or during the period in which the research leading to the output was carried out.

For the avoidance of doubt, this process of selecting outputs is separate from the processes and criteria set out in Parts 2, 3 and 4, which are concerned with the identification of employment contracts designated as meeting UWTSD's thresholds for Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) and Research Independence (RI) which then determine the how many outputs (and impact case studies) the University has to submit (known as the '**volume measure**'). Under REF 2029 rules, outputs authored by staff without SRR and IR may be selected for submission, in any relevant UoA, as long as the rules and tests set out in detail below are met. In summary:

5.2. Core requirements of eligible outputs

Each output included in the submission must:

- a) Be the product of research, briefly defined as a process of investigation, leading to new insights, effectively shared.
- b) 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.
- c) Have a substantive link to UWTSD.
- d) For outputs within scope of the REF Open Access policy, meet the requirements of that policy.

5.3. Contractual eligibility

To be eligible for submission:

- a) An eligible employment relationship must have existed with an author (or equivalent) who has made a significant research contribution to the output.
- b) The employment relationship should normally involve at least 0.2 FTE for a minimum of 12 months with an explicit expectation of research activity in the **role descriptor**.

- c) The employment relationship must have existed at the point the output was first made publicly available, or during the period when the research leading to the output was carried out.
- d) This means (with some expectations for longform publications, see 5.11) that outputs are no longer 'portable'. Those published prior to employment at UWTSD cannot be included in UWTSD's submission, although the previous university employer, who enabled the research, may do so.
- e) Outputs that are made available in the public domain after an employee has left the University's employment are eligible for submission within two years for shortform and five years for longform and extended process outputs (assuming a suitable employment relationship was in place). There is no additional requirement to demonstrate that UWTSD enabled that research. This does not apply where a compulsory redundancy took place (see 5.6 and 5.12).

5.4. Decoupling.

Decoupling is intended to remove pressure on individuals to produce a fixed number of outputs over a REF period and to ensure submissions reflect a more inclusive and diverse portfolio of research excellence, and that submissions are representative of the research undertaken within the submitting unit. This means that in addition to the outputs produced by staff with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) and / or who are Independent Researchers (RI), outputs produced by others may be eligible for submission, as long as:

- a) It is a product of research, briefly defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared.
- b) Has entered the public domain between 1 Jan 2021 and 31 Dec 2028.
- c) Meets open access requirements (where applicable).
- d) There is a substantive link to the UWTSD, where the author's **role descriptor** has an explicit expectation to carry out or enable research. While this is tested at the level of the employment contract and role descriptor, this means that the research was conducted at UWTSD, and that UWTSD provided the environment, funding, or infrastructural support for the research. The contracts listed in 5.5 however, do not constitute such an substantive link.

5.5. Excluded Contacts

Outputs produced in the following circumstances will not be eligible:

- a) Outputs authored by staff in an eligible employment relationship that occurred after the point at which an output was first made publicly available (as UWTSD did not enable the research).
- b) Outputs authored by postgraduate research students (including PhD theses).
- c) Outputs authored by visiting or honorary staff (see exceptions 5.14)
- d) Outputs authored by staff on teaching only contracts (see exceptions 5.13)
- e) Individuals employed on academic or other contracts with no explicit expectation of research within the job role (see exceptions 5.14).

5.6. Compulsory redundancy

In addition:

- a) An output will be **ineligible** for submission if the author was subject to compulsory redundancy and the substantive link occurred **before** the output was made publicly available (e.g. appeared in the public domain after the redundancy). This shall not apply when the redundancy occurred as the result of the conclusion of a fixed-term contract of employment (see 5.12).

Process for selecting research outputs

5.7. Collection of bibliographic data for research outputs.

All staff will be required to submit a complete and up-to-date record of their research outputs to the REF Management Group. This information will require bibliographic details of research outputs in the public domain between 1st Jan 2021 and 31st Dec 2028.

5.8. Output eligibility

The REF Management Group will undertake an initial review of research outputs to determine if each output reaches the REF definition of research. The review will determine:

- a) If the output falls within the output eligibility period (publicly available between 01/01/21 and 31/12/2028).
- b) If the output meets the assessment framework's definition of research.
- c) If the output is open access compliant (if 'within scope'). If it is not compliant it may be considered for submission under an exemption rule (as determined by Panel Criteria).

5.9. Substantive Link

The REF Manager or his / her designate will liaise with a HR Business Partner and determine if a 'substantive link' between the output and the University exists. They will determine:

- a) If an eligible employment relationship existed with an author (or equivalent) who has made a significant research contribution to the output.
- b) If the employment relationship existed at the point the output was first made publicly available, or during the period when the research leading to the output was carried out. For clarity, it is noted that an output may first be made publicly available **at any point during the eligible employment relationship** (e.g. on day 1), or in the case of members of staff who have left the University's employment (other than through compulsory redundancy), before the submitted output was first made publicly available, when the research resulting in the output was carried out (see 5.10). For staff appointed during 2028, the full minimum of 12 months contracted employment can extend beyond the end of REF period (31st Dec 2028).
- c) The basis of the employment relationship. This should normally involve at least 0.2 FTE for a minimum of 12 months with an explicit expectation of research activity in the role descriptor. Continuous employment may be demonstrated by a sequence of consecutive contracts (as defined by Section 210 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 (ERA 1996)).
- d) The role descriptor must include 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.

5.10. Time Limit Periods

The REF Manager will consider the time limit period for outputs, where an eligible employment relationship must have occurred *either*:

- a) At the point at which the submitted output was first made publicly available (e.g. at any point **during** the eligible employment relationship), *or*,
- b) **Before** the submitted output was first made publicly available, when the research resulting in the output was carried out. This relates to members of staff who have left the University (other than through compulsory redundancy), and whose outputs are subsequently published. Main Panels have defined the time-limited period **prior to the date of the output first being made publicly available** (during which research resulting in the output was carried out) as two years for the majority of outputs and five years for long-form and extended process outputs. There is no additional requirement to demonstrate that UWTSD enabled that research.

5.11. Longform and extended process exceptions (portability)

The funding bodies consider that it is appropriate there is an exception in place in REF 2029 to the requirement for an eligible employment relationship to have occurred either **during** or **before** the point at which an output has been made first publicly available. This exception will apply to long-form and/or extended process outputs only, and will allow the submission of these output types in REF 2029 where an eligible employment relationship occurs **after** the point that the output is first made publicly available, for a time-limited period. In such cases the REF manager will:

- a) Identify long-form and/or extended process outputs published **before** an eligible contract commenced with UWTSD (but during the REF period of January 2021 to December 2028).
- b) Confirm with a HR Business Partner that the staff member's eligible employment relationship with UWTSD commenced within 5 years of the a long-form and/or extended process 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.
- c) Prepare an exception request. Outputs meeting these parameters can be submitted under an exception request, which will require a 100-word justification of long-form/extended process designation.
- d) Long-form outputs are defined as outputs of extended scale or scope. Extended process outputs are the culmination of a substantial, discrete research endeavour which, due to the nature of the approach or methodology, involved intense activity, sustained over a period of time, usually of five years or longer.

5.12. Selecting outputs where the substantive link is via former staff:

Under the REF 2029 decoupling approach, the University is not required to submit staff as part of its REF submission. Eligibility of outputs is instead determined by the existence of a substantive link between the output and the University, either at the point at which the output was first made publicly available or during the period in which the underpinning research was carried out. In cases where the substantive link is with a former member of staff, the REF Manager will determine output eligibility by reference to the nature of the staff member's departure and the timing of the output in relation to the eligible employment relationship:

- a) **Compulsory Redundancy.** Outputs where the substantive link occurred **before** the submitted output was made publicly available, will **not** be eligible for submission where the author was subject to compulsory redundancy (e.g. if the output is published after the termination of employment by that means). Outputs that were made publicly available at any point **during** the eligible employment relationship will be eligible for submission, in cases where the author was subsequently made compulsory redundant.
- b) **Voluntary redundancy or severance.** Outputs that were made publicly available at any point during the eligible employment relationship will be eligible for submission. Outputs that were enabled by the University through a substantive link will be eligible for submission, subsequent to voluntary redundancy or severance, where the time limits set out in 5.10 are met.
- c) **Retirement.** Outputs that were made publicly available at any point during the eligible employment relationship will be eligible for submission. Outputs that were enabled by the University through a substantive link will be eligible for submission following retirement where the time limits set out in 5.10 are met.
- d) **Expiration of fixed term contracts.** Outputs that were made publicly available at any point during the eligible employment relationship will be eligible for submission. Outputs that were enabled by the University through a substantive link will be eligible for

submission following the expiration of fixed-term contracts, where the time limits set out in 5.10 are met. This includes those on fixed-term contracts which result in a redundancy at their conclusion.

- e) **Resignation.** Outputs that were made publicly available at any point during the eligible employment relationship will be eligible for submission. Outputs that were enabled by the University through a substantive link will be eligible for submission subsequent to a resignation and the end of the employment, where the time limits set out in 5.10 are met.

5.13. Outputs authored during an excluded contract

Outputs authored by individuals while on an excluded contract may be eligible 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, which will be confirmed by the REF Manager in Liaison with a HR Business Partner:

- a) The contracts were both held at UWTSD and meet the definition of continuous employment (as defined by Section 210 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 (ERA 1996))
- b) All other eligibility criteria for an eligible employment relationship are met within the REF period (1 January 2021 to 31 December 2028)
- c) In such instances the REF Manager and HR Business Partner will prepare an explanatory statement setting out the details of the employment and role descriptor, the SRR and or RI status, and any other information that is relevant to the case. The REF Management Group will review the eligibility under REF 2029 rules. This approach will be constantly applied and the outcome communicated to the staff member concerned. The only grounds for not accepting the eligibility of an output, will be non-compliance with REF 2029 rules.
- d) Once the eligibility of the output is confirmed, it will be entered into the output pool, and steps 5.15 – 5.19 will apply to determine if it is included in UWTSD's submission.

5.14. Other exceptional contracts

In exceptional, clearly justified and pre-cleared cases, outputs sole-authored by staff on teaching-only, honorary emeritus contracts, or other non-research contracts may be submitted. This is only the case where UWTSD has provided allocated time and funding to support that specific research activity. Such cases must be cleared by the REF Director (i.e. based at Research England) for submission. In such instances:

- a) The REF Manager and HR Business Partner will liaise with those concerned (including but not limited to the relevant Dean, Academic Director, Research Lead and Professional Services) to prepare an explanatory statement setting out the details of the time and resources which were made available to the author for the research to be carried out and prepared for publication. This shall only apply to cases where there is a sole-authored output from the individual concerned.
- b) The REF Management group will review the eligibility under REF 2029 rules.
- c) The REF Manager shall seek approval for eligibility for submission from the REF Director.
- d) This approach will be constantly applied. The only grounds for not accepting the eligibility of an output, will be non-compliance with REF 2029 rules, and / or a subsequent denial of eligibility from the REF Director.
- e) Once the eligibility of the output is confirmed, it will be entered into the output pool, and steps 5.15 – 5.19 will apply, to determine if it is included in UWTSD's submission.

5.15. Output Pool

Upon completion of the process and checks detailed in 5.7 – 5.14, a final output pool will be generated. The output pool will:

- a) Confirm that a substantive link has been established to the output.

- b) Confirm open access status.
- c) Confirm output type.
- d) Confirm publication status, date and relevant bibliographic data / metadata.
- e) Confirm if any restrictions apply (e.g. confidentiality).
- f) Detail the thematic designation of the research according to the UWTSD Research and Innovation Strategy.

5.16. Assignment of outputs to UoAs.

In REF 2029, the allocation of outputs to UoAs will follow a revised approach that reflects the decoupling of contracts and outputs. This means that outputs are not tied to specific researchers and can be submitted by UWTSD if a substantive link can be evidenced. Where an author's contract has been associated with a UoA in the HESA staff record (e.g. for those with SRR or IR), there is no requirement for the output to be submitted to the same UoA. UWTSD is therefore responsible for mapping outputs to the UoAs for submission.

The following shall apply:

- a) **Principles.** The allocation of research outputs to Units of Assessment (UoAs) will be conducted in a manner that is fair, transparent, consistent and non-discriminatory, in accordance with REF 2029 guidance and UWTSD's commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion. Decisions will be based on the intellectual content, methodological orientation, and primary disciplinary or interdisciplinary contribution of each output, and the extent to which it is within the bounds of the UoA descriptor, rather than on the contractual home, funding source, or personal circumstances of the author(s). No member of staff should be adversely impacted by the process of output allocation.
- b) **Welsh Language and British Sign Language Outputs.** Welsh-language and British Sign Language (BSL) outputs will not be treated less favourably than English-language outputs. Welsh-language research outputs will be assessed in Welsh against the same REF criteria of originality, significance and rigour as English-language outputs, with no adjustment of standards or expectations based on language of publication. The language of an output will not be used as a proxy for quality, reach, audience or impact, nor as a factor in determining its suitability for submission. Decisions on the inclusion, allocation and internal rating of Welsh-language and BSL outputs will be based solely on their academic merits and contribution to the Unit of Assessment.
- c) **Eligibility and Responsibility.** All research outputs in the output pool will be considered for submission. Responsibility for the allocation of outputs to UoAs rests with the University exercised through the REF Management Group. The REF Management group may consult with research staff as part of this process, and in such cases their disciplinary judgement and preferences will be given due regard. Final decisions on allocation will remain a REF Management Group responsibility to ensure coherence and alignment with the University's submission strategy.
- d) **Criteria for Allocation.** Outputs will be allocated to the UoA that best reflects their primary academic and research contribution. In making allocation decisions, the following criteria may be considered:
 - The research questions, theoretical frameworks, and methodologies employed.
 - The disciplinary or interdisciplinary field(s) to which the output makes a substantive contribution.
 - The intended scholarly or professional audience.
 - The publication outlet and its positioning within relevant research communities.
 - The relationship of the output to the research environment and strategy of the proposed UoA and UWTSD's Research and Innovation Strategy.
- e) **Interdisciplinary and Cross-UoA Outputs.** UWTSD recognises the importance and value of interdisciplinary research. Outputs that span multiple disciplines or research areas will be allocated to the UoA where they are judged to make their most significant

and coherent contribution, taking into account the strength of alignment with the submitting UoA's research environment.

- f) **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Considerations.** The allocation process will be conducted in a way that promotes equality and mitigates the risk of direct or indirect discrimination. In particular:
- Outputs will not be allocated in ways that adversely impacts individuals due to protected characteristics, career interruptions, or atypical career pathway;
 - Decision-makers will receive appropriate guidance and training on equality considerations relevant to REF processes;
 - Allocation decisions will be monitored at institutional level to identify and address any unintended bias or disproportionality as set out in Part 6 and below.
- g) **Transparency.** The REF Management Group will maintain appropriate records of allocation decisions to demonstrate consistency, transparency and compliance with REF requirements.

5.17. Output selection

The University is committed to submitting the highest quality research across all disciplines in which it is active. To support this, it will operate a structured and transparent output selection and internal review process, led by the REF Management Group, to enable consistent, evidence-based judgements in advance of submission. Outputs will be reviewed against REF assessment criteria, informed by appropriate disciplinary expertise and external benchmarking where available, while ensuring that submissions remain representative of the research undertaken within each Unit of Assessment (UoA) and align coherently with the University's Research and Innovation Strategy, as set out in section 5.16. The REF Management Group will oversee the consistent application of this process across UoAs, embedding equality, diversity and inclusion considerations throughout, and will use review outcomes to inform output selection, allocation and risk management, with feedback provided to UoA Leads to support final submission decisions.

- a) **Identification and Initial Screening of Outputs.** The REF Management Group has a designated lead for each UoA. The UoA leads will identify a pool of eligible research outputs, and undertake an initial screening to confirm that the pool reflects the breadth of research activity within the unit, including disciplinary diversity, output types, and collaborative research. At this stage, staff may provide contextual information to support understanding of the output's contribution, including interdisciplinary dimensions or intended audience. This will inform the Statement of Representation (detailed in 5.19).
- b) **Welsh Language Outputs.** Staff will be able to submit outputs and all supporting contextual information entirely in Welsh or English, according to individual preference. Guidance, templates and communications relating to output submission will be provided bilingually, ensuring that Welsh-speaking staff are not disadvantaged at the point of entry into the output pool. Welsh-medium outputs will be clearly flagged within the output pool to enable appropriate reviewer assignment and quality assurance.
- c) **British Sign Language Outputs.** The University will ensure that outputs produced in British Sign Language (BSL) are supported and assessed fairly within REF 2029 processes. Appropriate support and reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure equitable consideration, which will be actively monitored.
- d) **Internal Peer Review.** Outputs will be subject to internal peer review by reviewers with appropriate disciplinary expertise. Reviewers will be briefed on how to apply REF assessment criteria consistently, focusing on originality, significance and rigour, and to avoid bias. Where appropriate, reviewers may be drawn from across UWTSU to ensure independence from the submitting unit. Internal peer review will generate indicative quality assessments and qualitative feedback, which will be recorded using a standardised review template to ensure consistency across UoAs. Welsh-language outputs will be reviewed by reviewers with appropriate Welsh-language competence and disciplinary expertise, to ensure fair and informed assessment. Where a suitably

qualified Welsh-speaking reviewer is not available within the University, external Welsh-medium reviewers will be appointed to ensure parity of scrutiny. Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that BSL outputs are reviewed appropriately to ensure fair and informed assessment. All internal reviewers will undertake REF specific Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training. This provision will ensure a consistent understanding of REF 2029 equality requirements and will cover key areas including the application of equality legislation in REF processes, unconscious bias in decision making, and the fair and equitable treatment of research outputs. Training will be delivered through a combination of workshops, online materials and/or briefings.

- e) **External Review and Benchmarking.** To support robustness and calibration of quality judgements, a subset of outputs may (if there are uncertainties) be reviewed by external experts, selected for their disciplinary standing and REF experience. If engaged, external reviewers will be provided with clear guidance on REF criteria, confidentiality, and equality considerations. External review will be used for benchmarking purposes only, to inform but not determine, institutional judgements. Where they are engaged, the balance between internal and external review will be determined by the REF Management Group to ensure proportionality and consistency across UoAs. Where Welsh-language outputs are externally benchmarked, reviewers will be selected who are both disciplinary experts and Welsh-language competent, or equivalent arrangements will be made to avoid linguistic disadvantage. External review will not be omitted for Welsh-language outputs solely due to language considerations. Where BSL outputs are externally benchmarked, reviewers will be selected who are BSL competent, or equivalent arrangements will be made to avoid linguistic disadvantage. External review will not be omitted for BSL outputs solely due to language considerations. All external reviewers will undertake REF specific Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training. This provision will ensure a consistent understanding of REF 2029 equality requirements and will cover key areas including the application of equality legislation in REF processes, unconscious bias in decision making, and the fair and equitable treatment of research outputs. Training will be delivered through a combination of workshops, online materials and/or briefings.
- f) **UoA-Level Discussion and Recommendation.** UoA Leads will convene meetings, informed by internal and external review outcomes, to consider the developing profile of outputs for their unit. These discussions will focus on academic quality, coherence of the submission, interdisciplinary contributions, and alignment with UoA and institutional research strategies. UoA Leads will make recommendations on output selection and allocation to the REF Management Group, ensuring that decisions are evidence-based and documented. Welsh-language and BSL outputs will be allocated to Units of Assessment based on intellectual and disciplinary fit, and not redirected, clustered or excluded for linguistic reasons. Outputs in Welsh or BSL will be considered equally alongside English-language outputs when assessing the coherence, balance and representativeness of each UoA submission
- g) **Institutional Oversight and Final Decision-Making.** The REF Management Group will oversee the consolidation of output reviews and recommendations across all UoAs. It will ensure that:
 - Review processes have been applied consistently.
 - Decisions are aligned with the University's Research and Innovation Strategy.
 - Equality, diversity and inclusion considerations have been appropriately addressed.
 - The final output selections reflect appropriate inclusion of Welsh-medium research, where such research forms part of the Unit's activity.
 - The overall submission is balanced, representative and evidence-led.
- h) **Sign-off.** Final decisions on output selection and allocation will be subject to formal approval through the University's REF governance structures.

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

To mitigate concerns that full decoupling may lead to the under representation of research areas and research groups, all Unit (UoA) submissions are required to represent the subject range and diversity of research activities undertaken during the REF 2029 cycle, as described in the outline of research activity within the submitting unit, and to discuss this within the **statement of representation** which will be submitted to REF. In particular, submissions will reflect the breadth and diversity of research activity within each unit, including research themes, output types, collaborations, partnerships and intellectual contributions, and will be consistent with the unit's research structures, priorities and strategic objectives. For each UoA, the REF Management Group will prepare an analysis and statement or representation outlining:

- a) An overview of research activity and the academic framing of the submitting unit, including any discrete subject structures, research groups and/or areas of specialised academic endeavour.
- b) How the submitting unit's outputs and associated reserve list align with the context, research strategies, structures and changes to the academic organisation as set out.
- c) The extent to which the submitted outputs and associated reserve list collectively represent the range and diversity of research activity and output types produced in a submitting unit over the REF assessment period, including contributions to large-scale research programmes or networks, national/global initiatives or discrete areas of specialised academic endeavour.
- d) Reflection on the extent to which different and diverse types of research are included in the submission (see 5.17).
- e) The rationale for any instances where the maximum of 5 outputs associated with a single substantive link is exceeded.
- f) Reflection on the extent to which Welsh-medium research activity is represented, where relevant to the disciplinary context of the Unit.
- g) The rationale for any area of research activity not represented.
- h) Reflection of the specific circumstances, strengths and any changes in the scale of research areas.
- i) An explanation where there is a disproportionately low concentration of outputs relating to the given context and strategy.
- j) The growth and degrees of maturity of research areas, including the introduction of new or emerging areas that have yet to produce research outputs.
- k) An explanation of where restructuring and changes within the University and UoA have led to disinvestment and impacted on the capacity of the submitting Unit (or parts of the Unit) to produce outputs during the REF period.
- l) Where Welsh-language research activity exists but is not reflected in the final submission, the rationale will be documented, and language will not be the determining factor in that decision.

5.19. Procedures for supporting diversity of outputs

UWTSD's Research and Innovation Strategy 2030 prioritises co-designed, mission-led research which is delivered within real-world contexts to generate economic and societal impact. This approach integrates our distinctive disciplinary heritage with applied research outputs, ensuring outcomes that are academically rigorous, relevant to industry, and beneficial to communities. Within this strategic context, due regard will be given to recognising and submitting 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, considered in our output selection process, will include (but not be limited to), as appropriate to each UoA:

- a) Non-textual (e.g. artefacts, audio, visual, multi-modal, films, videos and broadcast media)
- b) Creative, performance and practice-led outputs (e.g. exhibitions, artefacts, installations, curated works, music, theatre, dance, compositions)
- c) Creative writing (e.g. novels, poetry, scripts)
- d) Translations and critical editions
- e) Designs (engineering, architectural, graphic, etc.)
- f) Software, code and technical outputs (e.g.. apps and tools)
- g) Datasets and databases
- h) Reagents
- i) Multi-component outputs
- j) Reviews and research synthesis
- k) Policy summaries and analyses
- l) Different types of reports

5.20. Policies and procedures and responsible research assessment practice

The principles and procedures set out in the Code of Practice reflect and reinforce UWTSd's commitment to fair, transparent and inclusive research assessment for REF 2029. These are aligned with the principles of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and the Leiden Manifesto whereby research quality is assessed primarily through expert peer review, recognising the diversity of research contributions, disciplines, methodologies, output types and career pathways. Quantitative indicators will be used only where appropriate, transparently and in context, and never as proxies for the quality of individual researchers or outputs. Journal-based metrics will not be used in REF decision-making. REF-related policies and procedures are clearly documented and communicated, with equality, diversity and inclusion embedded throughout. All staff involved in REF processes receive appropriate training on these issues, on unconscious bias and REF requirements.

5.21. Staff, Committees, and Training:

The University's procedures for identifying designated staff and committees for REF decision making are as detailed in Sections 2.11 – 2.17. This provides information on role descriptions for individuals and terms of reference for the Research Committees and REF Management Group. Details of training provided to individuals and committees involved in identifying staff, the timescale for delivery, and content are provided in Section 2.18

5.22. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA):

The Equality Impact Assessment for Part 5 evaluates the University's processes for identifying, reviewing and selecting research outputs for REF 2029. Within the fully decoupled REF framework, where attention shifts from individuals to the collective contribution of each Unit of Assessment, the EIA examines whether any stage of the output pipeline, from forming the eligible pool through peer review to final institutional sign-off, could create an adverse impact for staff with protected characteristics or for Welsh-medium researchers. It ensures that processes uphold the principles of fairness, transparency, consistency, equality and Welsh-language parity set out in the REF 2029 Code of Practice, and that mitigation strategies are embedded so that quality judgements remain grounded in REF criteria and the final selection reflects the breadth and diversity of research within each submitting Unit. Any disproportionate attrition of Welsh-language outputs at review or selection stages will trigger formal investigation and mitigation by the REF Management Group. Findings relating to Welsh-language parity will be reviewed by the Welsh Language Standards Lead and reported alongside protected-characteristic analysis.

Methodology

1. Purpose of the Assessment	The purpose of this EIA is to assess whether the University's REF 2029 Output Selection processes create any adverse impact on staff with protected characteristics, or in relation to Welsh language use, and to ensure that the output selection methodology: a) Is fair, transparent and consistent, as required by REF 2029 and the CoP. b) Complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) by identifying and mitigating potential discrimination, barriers to participation, or structural disadvantages. c) Ensures that decisions are based purely on the quality and contribution of outputs, and not personal circumstances, protected characteristics, or staff contractual categories other than those set by REF rules. d) Supports the production of submissions that are representative of the full breadth of research activity undertaken across UWTSD's Units of Assessment (UoAs)
2. Evidence Base	Quantitative evidence a) Outputs, bibliographic and metadata records for all outputs submitted to the output pool (2021–2028). b) Protected characteristic data from HR systems, including sex, race/ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion/belief, pregnancy/maternity, marriage/civil partnership and gender reassignment. c) HESA-verified SRR/RI classifications used in earlier parts of the REF process, and other documentary evidence of REF-defined 'eligible employment relationships' for output authors. d) UoA-level demographic patterns, including distribution of outputs associated with staff from under-represented groups. Qualitative evidence e) Internal peer-review reports, reviewer comments and moderation records. f) UoA-level statements of research strategy, people, environment (SPRE) and draft 'statements of representation'. g) Feedback, concerns and appeals raised by staff regarding output review or allocation. h) Input from Institute Research Leads, RMG, HR Equality Lead, and Welsh Language Standards Lead. Institutional context i) UWTSD REF 2029 Code of Practice j) UWTSD Strategic Equality Plan (2024–2028). k) UWTSD Research and Innovation Strategy (2025-30) l) Welsh Language Standards and Medr guidance for bilingual research handling
3. Assessment Method	Representation Analysis.: a) Whether outputs produced by staff across all protected groups are proportionately represented within the output pool.

	b) Whether specific groups with protected characteristics appear disproportionately absent from the output pool or final selection. c) Whether disciplinary or UoA-specific structures disadvantage researchers in fields with uneven demographic profiles (e.g., gendered disciplines, under-represented minorities in STEM). d) If patterns of under-representation exceed what would reasonably be expected by chance or disciplinary composition, further investigation is triggered. Process Impact Analysis This stage examines whether any aspect of the output selection process could indirectly disadvantage any protected group. Areas to be assessed include: e) Initial identification of eligible outputs: whether all staff (including part-time, fixed-term, and research-only staff) had equal opportunity to register outputs. f) Whether Welsh-language research receives equitable, expert peer review and are not disadvantaged by reviewer availability or methodological misunderstandings.
4. Interpretation and Mitigation	Mitigating actions to be considered where unintended consequences are identified, or anticipated include: a) Monitoring whether outputs from under-represented groups cluster at “borderline” quality categories disproportionately. b) Adjusting reviewer assignment or moderation where consistent skew is detected. c) Mandatory training for reviewers in REF criteria, unconscious bias, and disciplinary fairness. d) Balanced assignment of reviewers to reflect methodological and disciplinary diversity. Welsh-Language Mitigations e) Ensuring Welsh-medium reviewers are available for Welsh-language outputs. f) Providing parallel-language guidance and review forms. g) Ensuring that all staff can engage in the process entirely in Welsh or English. h) Ensuring that Welsh language is treated “no less favourably” than English in all REF processes. Representativeness: i) Review by the REF Management Group to confirm that final selections reflect the breadth and diversity of research activity. j) Inclusion of explanations in the Statement of Representation where diversity is not fully present, with mitigations for future cycles. British Sign Language k) The University will monitor whether outputs in British Sign Language are equitably represented within the output pool

	and final submission, and whether any barriers arise in review, assessment or selection.
5. Reporting and Governance	Responsibility for implementing and monitoring this EIA lies with: • REF Manager: operational oversight of the selection process. • REF Management Group: institutional oversight, moderation and approval. • HR Equality Lead: monitoring protected characteristic data, advising on PSED compliance. • Welsh Language Standards Lead: oversight of bilingual processes. Findings will be incorporated into: • Annual REF EIA reports (Parts 2–6). • Annual monitoring of the Strategic Equality Plan within the Annual Equality and Diversity Report.
6. Annual Review Cycle	Consistent with Part 6 of the CoP, output selection EIAs will be conducted: • Sept–Dec 2027: EIA based on the first full selection cycle, incorporating output pool data and reviewer outcomes. • May 2028: Final pre-submission EIA based on the final selection outcomes. At each stage, the EIA will: • Analyse representation and process impact. • Identify structural or emerging risks. • Recommend mitigation and adjustments. • Feed findings back into CoP updates and UoA-specific planning. • All changes will be recorded and incorporated into the final institutional EIA submitted to REF.

Part 6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 Purpose and Legal Context

As a participating institution in REF2029, the University is required to complete and submit an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) as a core component of the Code of Practice. The EIA demonstrates how the University has given due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010 when designing and applying all REF-related policies, processes, and decision-making activities. It ensures that institutional REF processes are fair, transparent, inclusive, and do not result in unjustified disadvantage for individuals or groups who share protected characteristics.

The University recognises that, under the PSED, equality considerations must be integrated **before and at the point of decision-making**, not retrospectively. The EIA therefore forms an integral part of REF planning, operation, and review. It examines the equality implications of institutional decisions and identifies where adjustments, mitigations, or alternative approaches may reduce or eliminate potential disadvantage.

6.2 Principles of the University's EIA Approach

The University adopts an EIA approach that is:

- **Anticipatory:** EIAs are conducted at the point decisions are being developed, not after they have been made.
- **Evidence-informed:** Both quantitative and qualitative data are used, including protected characteristic data, staff consultation, and contextual information.
- **Proportionate and rigorous:** Assessments are appropriately scaled to the significance of each decision, recognising that even technical processes (e.g., SRR decisions) can have meaningful equality implications.
- **Transparent:** Findings, mitigations, and justifications are recorded and published.
- **Ongoing:** EIAs are revisited whenever REF-related policies or processes evolve.

6.3 Scope of the EIA

The EIA covers the **entire Code of Practice**, including but not limited to:

- Identification of staff with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR)
- Determination of Research Independence (RI)
- Allocation of eligible contracts to Units of Assessment
- Output selection processes
- Appeals and review mechanisms
- Any subsequent revision of REF-related policies or procedures

The EIA focuses on **institutional processes**, rather than individual circumstances, reflecting the decoupling of outputs from individuals in REF2029.

6.4 Core EIA Questions

At each assessment point, the University will evaluate potential impacts using the following three statutory and REF-aligned lenses:

A. Eliminating Unlawful Discrimination

- Could the process disproportionately disadvantage staff with protected characteristics?
- Are any criteria indirectly discriminatory (neutral in design but unequal in effect)?
- Have reasonable adjustments been considered?
- Are any legacy practices potentially disadvantageous?

B. Advancing Equality of Opportunity

- Have barriers to participation or contribution been identified and addressed?
- Do all groups have fair access to the process?
- Have decisions been tested with disaggregated data?
- Are there opportunities to design approaches that proactively support inclusion?

C. Fostering Good Relations

- Have relevant staff groups or networks been engaged or consulted?
- Has the process been clearly, transparently communicated?
- Could the approach improve confidence and trust in fairness?

6.5 Linguistic Inclusion

As a Welsh institution, the University will additionally consider potential equality implications related to language, including the internal handling of outputs in Welsh. While these are not protected characteristics under REF2029, the institutional processes surrounding them may, if poorly designed, lead to indirect disadvantage. Guidance issued by Medr will be consulted alongside REF guidance to ensure alignment with Welsh-specific expectations.

6.6 EIA Process and Responsibilities

EIAs will be conducted jointly by the REF Manager and a designated member of Human Resources. Findings will be reported to the REF Management Group. Each EIA will document:

- The decision or process assessed
- The data considered
- Potential positive and negative impacts
- Mitigations or alternative options considered
- Monitoring arrangements
- Any actions taken to eliminate or minimise disadvantage

The final EIA following REF 2029 completion will be published on the University's website in the interests of transparency and good practice.

6.7 EIA Schedule

The University will undertake EIAs at each of the required REF2029 decision points, as follows. Timings reflect REF2029 guidance and institutional planning cycles:

REF Decision Area	Timing of EIA	Notes
Development of the REF 2029 Code of Practice	March 2026	EIA must accompany Code of Practice submitted to Medr for approval.
SRR and RI decisions	Annually. First EIA March 2026, and then annually from Oct–Nov 2026	Based on academic activity profiles and institutional tests for job-role expectation, allocation of resources and independence.
Contract allocation to Units of Assessment	Annually, Aug – Sept 2026	Aligns with HESA return schedule.
Output selection processes	Initial EIA March 2026 (process only); first selection cycle Sept – Dec 2027; final selection May 2028	Initial EIA on CoP only, second and third EIA based on data generated through the output selection process.
Appeals mechanisms	Annually, October- Nov	Follows SRR and UoA allocation decisions and communications.
Any subsequent REF-related policy or process revisions	Ongoing	EIAs revisited when policies change or evidence of differential impact emerges.

6.8 Final EIA Submission

Following the REF submission deadline, the University will produce a final, summative EIA incorporating:

- Analysis of protected characteristic data for SRR and RI decisions
- Analysis of characteristics of staff included in the submission
- Analysis of the distribution of selected outputs
- Summary of equality-related mitigations and their effectiveness
- Identification of practices that positively supported equality

The final EIA following REF 2029 completion will be submitted to REF and published as a matter of institutional transparency and good practice

Appendix 1. Definition of research for the REF2029.

For the purposes of the Research Excellence Framework (REF), research is defined as a process of investigation that leads to new insights and ensures these are effectively shared.

This also includes:

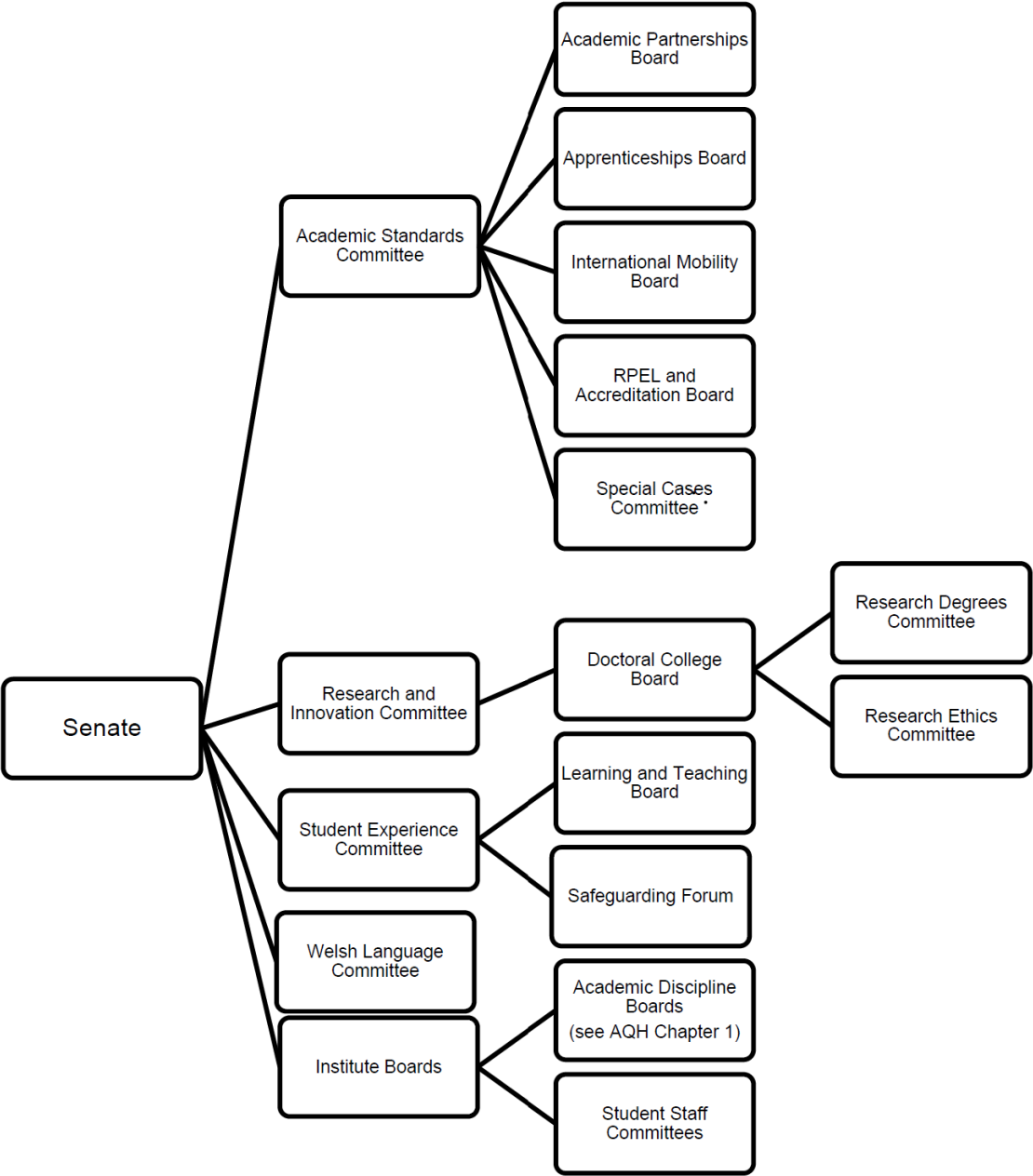
- Work of direct relevance to commerce, industry, culture, society, and the public or voluntary sectors.
- Scholarship, defined as the creation, development, and maintenance of the intellectual infrastructure of subjects and disciplines (e.g., dictionaries, scholarly editions, catalogues, major research databases)
- The invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts, and designs that result in new or substantially improved understanding.
- The application of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or significantly enhanced materials, devices, products, and processes, including design and construction.

Effective sharing encompasses outputs that are published, disseminated, or made publicly available, including confidential reports.

Exclusions: Routine testing and analysis for maintenance of standards, and the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research.

Diversity of Outputs: Research practices produce a wide range of outputs, including but not limited to journal articles, monographs, conference papers, artefacts, creative and practice-led works, reviews, software, datasets, translations, reagents, multi-component outputs, and policy analyses. All outputs will be assessed equitably on originality, significance, and rigour, regardless of format, methodology, or language.

Appendix 2. UWTSD Organisation Chart



Code of Practice author(s):

Dr Matt Briggs. Head of Research Development.

Document version control

Version No:	Reason for change:	Author:	Date of change:
1	Draft, Research and Innovation Committee. Parts 1-4.	MB	14 th Jan 2026
2	Draft, Research and Innovation Committee. Parts 1-5	MB	5 th March 2026
3	Draft for consultation. Parts 1-5	MB	21 th April 2026
4	Draft incorporating consultation responses	MB	8 th May 2026
5	Draft for Medr review and approval	MB	12 th May 2026
6	Revised draft for Medr review and approval	MB	15 th June 2026
7	Approved Code with revisions	MB	6 th Aug 2026

Current status of Policy: approved

Is the Policy applicable to: FE

Date ratified: 06 / 08 / 2026

Date effective from: 06 / 08 / 2026

Policy review date: 01/ 12 / 2029

For publication: on UWTSD website

Approval

The policy will be formally considered and approved in accordance with Committee Terms of Reference outlined in the Academic Quality Handbook.

If the policy affects staff, advice should be sought from HR at the outset to ascertain if consultation is required at JCC. HR will also provide advice on the most appropriate stage to consult with JCC and on whether approval by Council is required

ALL policies submitted for approval must be accompanied by a completed:

- [Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment](#)
- [Institutional Impact Assessment](#)
- [Data Protection Impact Assessment](#)

Prior to submission to committee, authors are asked to consult the Policy and Planning Team who will check that the document complies with University requirements. The Policy and Planning Team will complete the section below.

For completion by the committee secretary

Please tick to confirm the following:

An institutional Impact Assessment has been completed ☒

An EIA and Welsh Language Assessment has been completed ☒

A DPIA has been completed ☒

Matters requiring consideration by the approving committee:



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David