

Code of Practice template

Institution name: Birmingham Newman University

Date of submission: 11-15 May 2026

Part 1: Introduction

1.1 Code of Practice Principles

1. Birmingham Newman University will conduct its preparation for the Research Excellence Framework 2029 in a transparent, responsible, inclusive, fair and consistent manner in accordance with its values and its existing policies and codes of practice, including equality and diversity policies. The policies and processes set out in this Code of Practice, including consultation and appeals processes, have been designed and internally agreed to reflect reliably the responsibilities of staff in terms of contracts identified for the purpose of their contribution to the volume measure of REF 2029. Diversity, in terms of people and research, is valued and the diversity of contributions will be fairly and impartially supported in decision-making. The University is committed to fair and responsible research assessment. We are committed to assessing the quality of research fairly and transparently in line with the [DORA](#) principles and approaches advocated by the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment ([CoARA](#)).
2. This Code of Practice applies to all members of Birmingham Newman University staff involved in REF processes and to any external advisors engaged by the University, all of whom are accountable for adherence to the principles of robustness, transparency, equity and inclusion. This is a living document that will be subject to annual review. It addresses specific matters concerned with the preparation of the University's submission to REF 2029, including the selection of research outputs for inclusion in the submission.
3. This Code of Practice does not replace any of Birmingham Newman University's existing policies or codes of practice other than that for REF 2021, whose Equality Impact Assessments inform the development of this Code.

Robustness

4. The policies and processes set out in this Code ensure that contracts identified as contributing to the volume measure reliably reflect the responsibilities of staff. As set out in Part 2 of this Code, these policies and processes for identifying contracts with significant responsibility for research mirror those used for the identification of staff with significant responsibility for research for REF 2021.

Transparency

5. Coordinators of Units of Assessment, nominated on the Expression of Interest form and agreed by the relevant Head of School(s), will be responsible for communicating with regard to the draft submission within their Unit of Assessment. An item on the preparation for the submission will be placed on the agenda for meetings of the Research Committee, whose minutes are published. The Code of Practice,

which includes information on the processes for developing the REF submission and for appeals, will be placed on the University's webpages for consultation and be available in hard copy format. Information about the Code of Practice and the consultation process will be included on a regular basis in the internal news Bulletin that is provided to all staff. Human Resources will communicate by post with members of staff who, through absence or any other reason, do not have access to the Bulletin or intranet. Comments concerning the Code of Practice can be sent to the Research Office: research@newman.ac.uk. The final Code of Practice will be published on the Birmingham Newman website.

6. In developing submissions, coordinators of Units of Assessment or the Steering Group may wish to seek the opinions of external advisors with the appropriate knowledge and experience of research assessment or impact. After consultation with Unit of Assessment Coordinators, the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor will approve the commissioning of external advisors. External advisors will be considered on the basis of their subject expertise and their familiarity with excellent research in their field. External advisors will be invited to provide their views on the quality of potential research outputs and impact case studies in the submissions, or parts of submissions, on the basis of the published REF criteria. They may be invited to assign ratings to individual outputs and advise about the relative quality of outputs or case studies.

Equity and inclusion

7. Consultation has been undertaken with Units of Assessment, Human Resources, and members of the Research Committee, leading to revisions and iterations of the Code. Sign-off of the Code and its processes, including evidence of consultation, has been made by Research Committee, reporting to Senate.
8. The Code of Practice and the selection criteria have been developed through the senior committee with responsibility for research, which reports to Senate. All staff are consulted through notification of the Code in the all-staff Bulletin with an invitation to comment to a bespoke email address. Ongoing communication about the Code will be made through the staff Bulletin. The principles governing the Code are consistent across the University, with no exceptions and no variations across Units of Assessment. Ultimate responsibility for the REF process sits with the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor, while key responsibilities also sit with designated Unit of Assessment Coordinators, the Research Committee, the appeals panel, and staff identified in this Code. The processes in the Code promote diversity and the University takes an inclusive approach to the REF, seeking to ensure a diversity of outputs is included across Units of Assessment. Decisions about inclusions will be communicated via Unit of Assessment Coordinators and made in line with the timetable at the end of this Code.

1.2 Contextualisation with Wider University Policies

9. Birmingham Newman University has legal responsibilities as an employer and as a public sector organisation under equality law. As an employer, the University needs to ensure that its policies do not directly or indirectly discriminate against its employees on the grounds of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or if they are pregnant or have recently given birth. These obligations apply to REF procedures.
10. Under the Equality Act 2010 Birmingham Newman University has a duty to have due regard for the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people

who share a relevant characteristic and people who do not. There is also a need to ensure that the REF processes are assessed for their impact on different protected characteristics by gathering data on staff in relation to protected characteristics.

11. Birmingham Newman University also recognises that under the fixed-term employee and part-time workers regulations, fixed-term employees and part-time workers have the right not to be treated by the University any less favourably than it treats a comparable 'permanent' employee. The relevant regulations are:
 - Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
 - Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002.
12. Equality, diversity and inclusion at Birmingham Newman is overseen by the Equality and Diversity Committee, Chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, which reports to Senate. The draft of this code approved by the Research Committee will be forwarded to the Equality and Diversity Committee, and any recommendations for modification incorporated prior to submission.

1.3 Update on Actions Since REF 2021

Since REF 2021, and after reviewing EIAs from both previous REF exercises, Birmingham Newman University has taken steps to improve its culture of inclusion. Key examples are given below:

- Inclusive Staff networks/groups created
- Reduced gender pay gap
- Reduced ethnicity pay gap
- Diversity and awareness training for all staff

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

2.1 Policies and Procedures

13. Information on individuals no longer forms part of the REF submission, and instead the FTE of eligible contracts is used to measure research volume. At Birmingham Newman University, all staff on a teaching and research contract have a responsibility to undertake research or scholarly activity, which includes activities variously understood as research, scholarship, practice, knowledge exchange, and/or other non-teaching duties. For the purposes of the REF, staff on contracts with 'significant' responsibility for research are those 'for whom explicit time and resources are made available to engage actively in independent research, and that is an expectation of the job role.' The REF definition of research is as follows: 'research is defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared'. It includes research that is published, disseminated or made publicly available in the form of assessable research outputs, and confidential reports.
14. At Birmingham Newman, contracts with 'significant responsibility for research' are those for members of staff who meet at least two of the following criteria, one of which must be the first:
 1. Contractually allocated time by the University for research and scholarship for the relevant HESA data submission period;
 2. Approved as eligible to be an Advisor, Supervisor or Director of Studies on a supervisory team for research degrees.
 3. Received financial resources devolved from the research committee to support individual research as defined by the REF;
15. The first criterion above is specified in contracts, which staff should check if in doubt. The second and third are approved through documented procedures and communicated by the Research Administrator in the Graduate School Office. Any staff member in doubt whether they are approved as eligible to be an Advisor, Supervisor or Director of Studies on a supervisory team for research degrees or received financial resources to support individual research may consult the lists maintained by the Research Administrator in the Graduate School Office at any time.
16. The stages of identification of contracts with 'significant responsibility for research' status are as follows:
 1. The Unit of Assessment Coordinator will identify which contracts meet the criteria above for inclusion, checking against the lists for criteria 2 and 3 held by the Graduate School Office and, for criterion 1, Human Resources, for final verification.

2. Any staff member who has a contract that is not identified as having significant responsibility for research may use the appeal process to claim that their contract meets the core eligibility criteria and that they are research active (they have been allocated both time and resources 'to engage actively in independent research, and that it is an expectation of their job role.').

Governance arrangements

17. The REF Steering Group will determine Birmingham Newman University's submission strategy and approve the contents of the final submission to REF 2029. The REF Steering Group is composed of the Unit of Assessment Coordinators and the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor (Chair).
18. Unit of Assessment Coordinators, supported by line managers, are responsible for overseeing the development of the draft submission in their Unit of Assessment.
19. The Research Committee will advise on strategy and policy.

Equality impact assessment (EIA)

20. This Code of Practice has been developed after examination of the Equality Impact Assessments carried out for REF 2021. These did not identify a specific issue for the Research Excellence Framework Code of Practice in relation to equity and inclusion at the University. No appeals against the processes used or decisions made in REF 2021 were received by the University and these processes remain the basis for REF 2029. Changes in this Code from that applicable for REF 2021 have been made to reflect differences in REF 2029 policies and processes and the University has taken actions to enhance its culture of inclusion as outlined in 1.3 above.
21. Detailed in Appendix A, Equality Impact Assessments for REF 2029 have been carried out to assess impacts of the process of identification of contracts with significant responsibility for research, allocating contracts to UoAs, and selecting outputs for submission (in terms of eligibility, assigning to UoAs, diversity and representation), in order to ensure there is no differential impact on particular groups. The Equality Impact Assessments have been informed by the data (at summary level) on protected characteristics provided by Human Resources. The Code and the submission will be reviewed if at any point the assessments raise concerns over differential impact on particular groups. Revisions to the Code of Practice and/or the submission may be made as a result. Birmingham Newman University has used information gained through consultation with all staff, including staff from protected

groups to inform the preparation of this Code. Please see Part 6 Appendix 1 for more information.

Complaints

22. The University will attempt to resolve any complaints as quickly as possible. Any member of staff who wishes to complain of potential discrimination or who feels that they have not been dealt with in accordance with this Code of Practice should in the first instance raise the issue informally with the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor, who will investigate and attempt to resolve it. After this, the appeals process below may be used.

Appeals

23. The appeals process is part of the Code of Practice and has been communicated via the staff Bulletin sent to all members of staff.

24. Members of staff have the right to appeal the decision with regard to any part of the University's REF submission. In the first instance, this should be an informal appeal to the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor, who will attempt to resolve it, or to the Vice Chancellor if it concerns the role and responsibilities of the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor.

25. Formal appeals will normally be considered by an Appeals Panel within two months of being received, and in any case before the final submission is made. Formal appeals should be made in writing to the University Secretary at any time before the end of May 2028.

26. The Appeals Panel will not include anyone who has been otherwise involved in the selection processes. The Appeals Panel will be chaired by the University Secretary and comprise one member of the Equality and Diversity Committee (who shall not be a member of any of the University's Units of Assessment) and one member of Human Resources.

27. The purpose of the Appeals Panel is to consider appeals and to make judgements based on its assessment of each case taking into account the grounds stated.

28. The Appeals Panel will refer to the criteria and processes established by the REF 2029 team and the Guidance on Codes of Practice, as well as the Guidance on Submissions.

Equality and diversity training

29. All members of the REF Steering Group, and Coordinators of Units of Assessment, will be trained on the equality and diversity implications of the submission to REF 2029.

30. The development of this Code of Practice, and subsequent training will draw on the following resources:

The REF 2029 CoP guidance:

[Section 8 – Code of Practice guidance – REF 2029](#)

The final EIA report on Equality and Diversity in REF 2021: <https://2021.ref.ac.uk/media/1315/ref-eia-updated-march-2020.pdf>

Guidance from REF 2029 Code of Practice Webinar: <https://2029.ref.ac.uk/news/town-hall-recording-published-on-the-updated-code-of-practice-guidance/>

31. The training will focus on relevant legislation to this Code of Practice and will be in addition to any training members of staff may have received in relation to other roles (for example recruitment and selection).

32. The training will be in place by September 2026.

Part 3: Determining Research Independence

33. Independent researchers are those who conduct self-directed research by having a significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research, rather than carrying out another individual's research programme.
34. Staff on 'teaching and research' contracts are considered to be independent researchers.
35. Birmingham Newman University does not employ staff on 'research only' contracts. Should staff on research-only contracts be employed before the submission date the code will be updated to include a further process for identification and verification of contracts with research independence. Until such a time no further process is required.

Training, Appeals, Equality Impact Assessment

36. Please see Part 2 above.

Part 4: Allocating Contracts to UoAs

37. Contracts must be allocated to a UoA to enable accurate calculation of the volume measure for each. This will be in alignment with the relevant UoA descriptor in the REF guidance. Contracts will be allocated to the most appropriate UoA with which the contract is associated. The University's organisational units (Schools and subjects) generally align with UoA descriptors, meaning that in many cases the UoA associated with a contract is clear. Where this is not the case, additional evidence used will normally be UoA membership reports to Research Committee, otherwise Research Centre membership and Graduate School lists of doctoral student supervisory teams as well as discussion with the researcher as to which UoA best fits their research activity.
38. Decisions will be taken by the REF Steering Group following discussion with Coordinators of Units of Assessment, in consultation with staff. UoA allocation may change between annual returns, reflecting the evolving nature of research and substantive connections. Decisions and communications will be made in Autumn 2026 by Coordinators of Units of Assessment and the appeals process will apply. Staff may request confirmation of the allocation of their contract by emailing the research administrator in the Graduate School.

Training, Appeals, Equality Impact Assessment

39. Please see Part 2 above.

Part 5: Selecting outputs

40. Outputs will be decoupled from individual staff in REF 2029 and output submissions are welcome from all eligible research staff. There is also no requirement for staff whose contracts are included in the REF volume measure to submit a research output. REF 2029 requires the submission of 2.5 outputs multiplied by the average volume measure for staff with contracts whose role includes a Significant Responsibility for Research returned in a Unit of Assessment for the two included years of the HESA Staff record (2025-26 and 2026-27). As outputs have been decoupled from staff, they do not have to be returned to the UoA with which a staff contract is principally associated. Outputs will be assigned to UoAs based on disciplinary fit with the UoA descriptor.
41. To be eligible, an output must be the product of research, must have been brought into the public domain during the allowed publication period, have a substantive link to the University, and meet the scope of the REF 2029 open access policy where applicable.
42. Coordinators of Units of Assessment will assess any outputs that are eligible for submission to the REF in the UoA via a substantive link to the University as identified in the REF guidance. A substantive link is demonstrated through an eligible employment relationship held by the author during the REF period. Eligible employment relationships are those lasting at least 12 continuous months (minimum 0.2FTE) in which the role descriptor includes an explicit expectation of research activity. HR contract data is used to determine the timing and nature of the employment relationship. Outputs authored solely by teaching-only or other non-eligible contracts such as postgraduate research students, or visiting or honorary staff are not included. The University does not intend to use the 'exceptional situations' permission route to submit outputs solely authored by such staff.
43. UoA coordinators will recommend a representative selection of those outputs, with reserves, based on their overall quality in terms of originality, significance and rigour as judged by internal and external peer review. Outputs can be recommended for inclusion in the submission to more than one UoA as outputs may be submitted to multiple UoAs provided they are deemed to be in-scope by the REF guidance for each UoA. There is an exception for substantive link for long-form or extended process outputs published before the eligible employment relationship, which will be considered as appropriate.
44. In order to represent the full diversity of research, Coordinators of Units of Assessment will include in their consideration of this selection any eligible work where the substantive link is via former members of staff. These will be considered equally alongside those of current staff on the same basis. However, where the output is published without explicit affiliation to Birmingham Newman, the University will not submit outputs whose sole substantive link is to contracts for previous members of staff, including those who retired, took voluntary

severance, or left at the end of fixed term contracts unless it is with their written agreement. The University will not include outputs by former staff whose contracts were terminated by compulsory redundancy.

45. In agreement with the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor, each Unit of Assessment will draw on the expertise of one or more formally engaged external critical advisors in arriving at quality judgements in relation to outputs, and these should not rely on quantitative indicators in decision making, even if informed by them. Journal-based metrics, publication venue, format or language will not be used as a surrogate measure of quality.
46. In line with principles of responsible research assessment, each output will be assessed against the REF criteria of originality, significance and rigour. Expert review is the primary basis for assessment. Quantitative indicators such as citation data will be used only to inform judgements, and only where meaningful and appropriate indicators can be identified. Limitations inherent in quantitative data are explicitly acknowledged. Journal-based metrics, publication venue, format or language will not be used as a surrogate measure of the quality or impact of outputs. Reviewers apply criteria in ways that reflect disciplinary norms and expectations, using the most up-to-date REF panel guidance available.
47. The REF Steering group will be responsible for establishing in conjunction with Human Resources that a substantive link with an author (or equivalent) who has made a significant research contribution to any output selected for submission is present via eligible employment, ensuring the research was enabled, supported, or produced by staff while employed at the University.
48. Decisions on research outputs to be included will be taken by the REF Steering Group following discussion with Coordinators of Units of Assessment. Interdisciplinary research will be valued equally alongside all other research. UoA coordinators will be required to provide to the Steering Group robust statements on how they have included principles of equality, fairness, and transparency in order to develop representative submissions that reflect the diversity of research outputs within the submitting unit in preparation for the Disciplinary Level Statement (DLS) to be developed for submission. Submitted outputs must be reflective of the research strategies and structures of the submitting UoA over the REF period and appropriately reflect multidisciplinary collaborations and interdisciplinary work, supporting sustainable contributions to knowledge and understanding.
49. The REF Steering Group will review the combination of selected outputs for the Unit of Assessment to assess whether a different combination may be more representative of the breadth and diversity of the UoA without significantly reducing the overall quality of the submission. This will be undertaken in the light of EIAs such that adjustments to the submission, and to this Code, may be made as a consequence. The REF Steering Group will be responsible for ensuring:

- there is a substantive link to outputs selected
- that outputs selected where the substantive link is via former staff meet the eligibility criteria, are agreed with the former staff member, and fit with the representativeness of the submission
- that selected outputs are allocated/assigned to appropriate UoAs
- that the selected outputs represent a diversity of outputs in each UoA, are representative of the research undertaken during the REF period, that the output selection adheres to the principles of robustness, fairness, transparency, equity and inclusion, and that outputs in British Sign Language (in England, Wales, and Scotland) and Welsh (in Wales) are not treated less favourably in output selection.

50. Outputs that meet the definition of an 'in-scope' output for the REF are expected to meet the open access requirements for REF 2029.

51. The final decision on the case studies to be included will also be taken by the REF Steering Group on the advice of Coordinators of Units of Assessment. In this process, the REF Steering Group will base its decisions on the quality of proposed case studies, as defined by the REF guidance, while aiming for a submission of case studies that are representative of the breadth and diversity of the UoA.

Compliance

52. The REF Steering Group will be responsible for checking that submissions are developed in line with the declared selection procedures and criteria.

Training, Appeals, Equality Impact Assessment

53. Please see Part 2 above.

54. Review of the Code of Practice

This Code of Practice is a live document that will be kept under review. Comments concerning the Code of Practice can be sent to the Research Office: research@newman.ac.uk.

Version 2.0 May 2025 (revised March 2026)

Part 6: Appendices

1. Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

The EIA is a mandatory component of the REF 2029 CoP, ensuring Higher Education Institutions uphold their legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. REF 2029 is a public process, and all decisions must be assessed under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) for potential equality impacts. The University has conducted an EIA for the CoP alongside the development of the following processes: Identifying staff contracts with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR); Allocating contracts to Units of Assessment (UoA); Selecting outputs (eligibility and allocation, responsible research assessment, diversity and equality); Managing appeals and review processes. As with the CoP, this EIA is a living document. It facilitates consideration of equality issues whilst developing policy and processes, both at the point of decision making and at any point when substantive changes are proposed to the CoP. We will perform quantitative analysis once data is available. This EIA has been developed in collaboration with Human Resources and the associated CoP developed in consultation with relevant University Committees and all staff. Consultation processes have included staff with protected characteristics.

Preparing the REF 2029 submission requires substantial effort across the University. To support equality of opportunity, we will monitor the diversity and representativeness of decision-makers involved in REF 2029 preparations, including the composition of relevant committees and roles such as UoA Coordinator.

1. Identifying Staff Contracts with Significant Responsibility for Research

<i>Question</i>	<i>Response</i>
<i>1. Process Name</i>	<i>Identifying Contracts with SRR</i>
<i>2. Purpose of Process</i>	<i>To define how the University will identify contracts with SRR in order to inform the Volume measure as reported via the HESA staff return and accurately reflects the University's research capacity.</i>
<i>3. Summary of Process</i>	<i>At Birmingham Newman, contracts with 'significant responsibility for research' are those for members of staff who meet at least two of the following criteria, one of which must be the first:</i>

	- Contractually allocated time by the University for research and scholarship for the relevant HESA data submission period; - Approved as eligible to be an Advisor, Supervisor or Director of Studies on a supervisory team for research degrees. - Received financial resources devolved from the research committee to support individual research as defined by the REF;
4. <i>Is there potential for a negative or positive impact on people who have a protected characteristic?</i>	<i>No positive or negative impact. Whether or not a contract contributes to the volume measure does not affect whether outputs or impacts associated with those contracts will be submitted to REF 2029, nor does it influence any processes beyond REF.</i>
5. <i>What are the other risks or potential unequal outcomes and how will these be mitigated?</i>	<i>There is a risk that bias within wider University processes impacts whether individual staff members are approved as eligible for supervisory teams or supported through the research committee, and therefore whether they are considered to have SRR. To assess whether this risk creates potential unequal outcomes, the following data will be monitored and reviewed for trends:</i> • <i>Profile of staff eligible for supervisory teams vs not eligible.</i> • <i>Profile of staff supported to undertake individual research through the research committee and look at trends in numbers and profile. This review will focus on protected characteristics and part-time working. Results will be analysed at School level or university level where numbers are too small for meaningful analysis or could risk identifying individuals. If trends are identified through this analysis, steps will be taken to mitigate these impacts. The first review of data will be in 2026 on HESA Pilot year data.</i>

2. Allocating Contracts to Units of Assessment

Question	Response
1. Process Name	Allocating Contracts to UoAs

2. Purpose of Process	<i>The purpose of this process is to ensure that the University applies a fair, transparent, and consistent process when assigning contracts to the appropriate disciplinary units for research assessment. This process is used to determine the volume measure and does not affect other elements of the REF submission, e.g. to which UoA outputs will be returned.</i>
3. Summary of Process	<i>The process sits within the University's established processes for maintaining accurate HESA staff data. Initial allocation of contracts to UoA is based on subject affiliation within Schools. Where the allocation is not the clear, additional evidence used will normally be UoA membership reports to Research Committee, otherwise Research Centre membership and Graduate School lists of doctoral student supervisory teams as well as discussion with the researcher as to which UoA best fits their research activity.</i>
4. Is there potential for a negative or positive impact on people who have a protected characteristic?	<i>No positive or negative impact. As contracts (not individual staff members) are assigned to UoAs based on the disciplinary alignment, there are no REF decision-making processes that could have a positive or negative impact.</i>
5. What are the other risks or potential unequal outcomes and how will these be mitigated?	<i>The approach of assigning contracts not individuals to UoAs aligns with the REF 2029 policy to decouple outputs from individuals. This removes the risk of potential unequal outcomes as there is no impact on an individual from this process.</i>

3. Selecting Outputs - Eligibility

Question	Response
1. Process Name	<i>Selecting Outputs - Eligibility</i>
2. Purpose of Process	<i>The purpose of this process is to ensure that the research submitted by the University for assessment is representative, high-quality, and fairly selected.</i>
3. Summary of Process	<i>The process covers:</i>

Identifying eligible outputs For an output to be eligible for the REF submission, it must be the product of research, must have been brought into the public domain during the allowed publication period, have a substantive link to the University, and meet the scope of the open access policy where applicable.

Identifying substantive link to outputs The University identifies a substantive link between an output and the institution in line with the REF guidance. HR contract data is used to determine the timing and nature of the employment relationship. Outputs authored solely by teaching-only or other non-eligible contracts such as post-graduate research students, or visiting or honorary staff are not included. The University does not intend to use the 'exceptional situations' permission route to submit outputs solely authored by such staff. There is an exception for substantive link for long-form or extended process outputs published before the eligible employment relationship which we will consider as appropriate.

Selecting outputs where the substantive link is via former staff To represent the full range of research undertaken within the REF period, outputs from former staff will be considered on the same basis as those authored by current staff, with the following additions to the policy and procedures for outputs published after the staff member left: if the staff member left due to compulsory redundancy, or is published without a Birmingham Newman affiliation and does not give written agreement for their output to be submitted, their output will not be eligible for submission.

Determining significant research contribution The University expects that all individuals credited on the output as authors will have made a substantial or significant contribution to the output.

4. <i>Is there potential for a negative or positive impact on people who have a protected characteristic?</i>	<i>No positive or negative impact. As eligibility is based on the research produced not on individuals, there are no REF decision-making processes that could have a positive or negative impact.</i>
5. <i>What are the other risks or potential unequal outcomes and how will these be mitigated?</i>	<i>There is a risk related to the interpretation of what is research as it can vary widely between disciplines and judgements could disfavour certain methodologies or approaches. This will be mitigated by ensuring that peer reviewers have the right expertise for the discipline.</i> <i>There is a risk that eligible outputs are missed if they are not recorded in the University's research repository. To mitigate this targeted communication will be produced (via the staff Bulletin) to encourage all outputs by all research-contributing staff, to be flagged to UoA coordinators.</i> <i>For outputs without a Birmingham Newman University affiliation relating to former staff there is a risk that there is a reason the academic has not linked the output to Newman which may cause potential conflict. To mitigate this risk consent to submit the output will be sought from the former staff member where necessary.</i>

4. Selecting Outputs – Assigning Outputs to UoAs

Question	Response
1. <i>Process Name</i>	<i>Selecting Outputs – Assigning Outputs to UoAs</i>
2. <i>Purpose of Process</i>	<i>The purpose of this process is to ensure that the research submitted by the University for assessment is representative, high-quality, and fairly selected.</i>
3. <i>Summary of Process</i>	<i>Outputs will be assigned to UoAs based on disciplinary fit with the REF UoA descriptors. Initially, outputs will be reviewed within the UoA that best aligns with the internal author's School and sub-</i>

	ject. For staff based outside of the Schools, output topic will be used to identify the appropriate UoA for review. We will review outputs in multiple UoAs as appropriate. Output fit and potential for cross-review in different UoAs will be checked at multiple points, including via requests to staff to self-identify UoAs for individual outputs, UoA Lead and Faculty reviews, or peer review. Outputs are decoupled from individuals, and whether the staff members with the substantive link have their contracts in the same UoA will have no bearing on the decision. The University will submit outputs to more than one UoA where this represents the excellence of interdisciplinary and collaborative research at the University.
4. Is there potential for a negative or positive impact on people who have a protected characteristic?	No positive or negative impact. As eligibility is based on the research produced not individuals, and outputs and individuals are de-coupled, there are no REF decision-making processes that could have a positive or negative impact.
5. What are the other risks or potential unequal outcomes and how will these be mitigated?	There is a risk that the process leads to UoA submissions not being representative of the research staff aligned to the UoA by contract. To mitigate this risk the protected characteristics of staff linked to outputs will be monitored and any significant variation with protected characteristics of staff linked to the UoA by contract. Adjustments to UoA submissions to ensure representativeness will be considered and decisions made by REF Steering Panel.

5. Selecting Outputs – Responsible Research Assessment

Question	Response
1. Process Name	Selecting Outputs – Responsible Research Assessment
2. Purpose of Process	The purpose of this process is to ensure that the research submitted by the University for assessment is representative, high-quality, and fairly selected in line with our responsible research assessment principles

<i>3. Summary of Process</i>	<i>Where the volume of eligible outputs prevents a review of all outputs, individuals will be asked to selfnominate outputs for assessment. The purpose of the review process is to identify the strongest outputs to include in the University's submission. Each output is assessed against the REF criteria of originality, significance and rigour. Expert review is the primary basis for assessment. Quantitative indicators are used only to inform judgements, and only where meaningful and appropriate indicators can be identified. Limitations inherent in quantitative data are explicitly acknowledged. Journal-based metrics, publication venue, format or language are not used as a surrogate measure of the quality or impact of outputs. Reviewers will apply criteria in ways that reflect disciplinary norms and expectations, using the most up-to-date REF panel guidance available.</i> <i>Output selection will be based on assessments with the aim of submitting a portfolio that is both high-quality and representative of the research undertaken within each disciplinary area. UoA Leads will make selection decisions to support the strongest overall submission for their UoA. Output selection for each UoA will go through the following approvals process: • UoA level selection and recommendation by UoA Lead • REF Steering Panel review and decision</i>
<i>4. Is there potential for a negative or positive impact on people who have a protected characteristic?</i>	<i>No positive or negative impact. As eligibility is based on the research produced not individuals, there are no REF decision-making processes that could have a positive or negative impact.</i>
<i>5. What are the other risks or potential unequal outcomes and how will these be mitigated?</i>	<i>There is potential risk of bias (conscious and unconscious) within the peer review process, and a lack of representativeness. This will be mitigated by: ensuring representativeness of reviewers and panels are monitored, and the use of external reviews.</i>

6. Selecting Outputs – Diversity and Representativeness of Outputs

Question	Response
1. Process Name	<i>Selecting Outputs – Diversity and Representativeness of Outputs</i>
2. Purpose of Process	<i>The purpose of this process is to ensure that the research submitted by the University for assessment is representative, high-quality, and fairly selected.</i>
3. Summary of Process	<i>The University encourages the inclusion of diverse outputs, recognising differences in disciplinary research practices and methods for sharing within and beyond the profession.</i> <i>Eligible outputs can include a wide range of formats, such as:</i> • Journal articles, monographs, book chapters. • Creative works, performances, artefacts. • Software, datasets, translations, critical editions. • Policy reports, reviews, research syntheses. • Outputs in languages other than English (with abstract requirements). <i>The University will aim to maximise the quality of its REF submission while ensuring that the selected outputs are representative of the research within each UoA. Output quality will be the primary consideration and representativeness will be considered alongside. Selections will reflect the range of research and researchers within each disciplinary area. Staff whose outputs may be eligible, where research forms part of their duties and aligns with descriptors of UoAs to which the University will make a submission, will be encouraged via the staff Bulletin to propose their outputs according to guidance provided.</i>
4. Is there potential for a negative or positive impact on people who have a protected characteristic?	<i>No positive or negative impact. As eligibility is based on the research produced not individuals, there are no REF decision-making processes that could have a positive or negative impact.</i>
5. What are the other risks or potential unequal	<i>Potential risk due to bias (conscious and unconscious) and representativeness of peer reviewers</i>

<i>outcomes and how will these be mitigated?</i>	<i>and review panels. This is mitigated by monitoring representativeness of reviewers and panels.</i>
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7. Managing Complaints and Appeals Processes

<i>Question</i>	<i>Response</i>
<i>1. Process Name</i>	<i>Managing Complaints and Appeals Processes</i>
<i>2. Purpose of Process</i>	<i>To ensure that staff have routes through which they can raise concerns.</i>
<i>3. Summary of Process</i>	The University will attempt to resolve any complaints as quickly as possible. Any member of staff who wishes to complain of potential discrimination or who feels that they have not been dealt with in accordance with this Code of Practice should in the first instance raise the issue informally with the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor, who will investigate and attempt to resolve it. After this, the appeals process may be used. Members of staff have the right to appeal the decision with regard to any part of the University's REF submission. In the first instance, this should be an informal appeal to the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor, who will attempt to resolve it, or to the Vice Chancellor if it concerns the role and responsibilities of the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor. Formal appeals will normally be considered by an Appeals Panel within two months of being received, and in any case before the final submission is made. Formal appeals should be made in writing to the University Secretary at any time before the end of May 2028. The Appeals Panel will not include anyone who has been otherwise involved in the selection processes. The Appeals Panel will be chaired by the University Secretary and comprise one independent member of the Equality and Diversity Committee and one member of Human Resources.
<i>4. Is there potential for a negative or positive impact on people who</i>	<i>No positive or negative impact. Any member of staff will be able to raise a concern through the process described and the CoP has been widely</i>

<i>have a protected characteristic?</i>	<i>circulated as described in part 3 of this document.</i>
<i>5. What are the other risks or potential unequal outcomes and how will these be mitigated?</i>	<i>There is a risk that concerns raised may highlight a negative impact that has not yet been considered and needs to be addressed. The number and nature of concerns will be examined alongside the methods used to resolve them, and although numbers may be small we will monitor for any emerging patterns in terms of concerns raised.</i>

8. Overall Equality Impact Assessment of Code of Practice



Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Employment Related Assessment Form

Please use this form to conduct an equality impact assessment on a workplace policy, provision, criterion, practice, or activity. You can access an example of a completed form [here](#).

1. Briefly describe the policy, provision, criterion or activity (referred to as a "policy/practice" through this form).
REF 2029 Code of Practice

2. Which area/team has responsibility for the policy/practice?
Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Research Committee

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3. What is the reason for carrying out the equality impact assessment or defines or defined the policy/procedure and who implements it?	Choose ONE option
The introduction of a new policy/practice is proposed/planned.	
A significant change to an existing policy/practice is proposed/planned.	X
An existing policy/practice is being reviewed (for example as part of a regular review cycle).	
Other reason (please specify below):	

4. What are the purposes and expected outcomes of the policy/practice?
The Research Excellence Framework (REF) Code of Practice (CoP) governs how institutions identify eligible research staff, determine research independence, and select high-quality outputs, aiming to embed equality and diversity while avoiding discrimination. It ensures that universities' submissions are transparent, consistent, accountable, and inclusive.

5. What sources have been used for this equality impact assessment? Please consider collecting information from external research and surveys; internal workforce data; feedback from individual line managers and employees; legal advice received; and your team's department's own expertise, knowledge, and experience.
Birmingham Newman Policies and Guidance https://newman.ac.uk/disclose-and-support/policies-and-guidance/ The REF 2029 CoP guidance: Section 8 – Code of Practice guidance – REF 2029 The final EIA report on Equality and Diversity in REF2021: https://2021.ref.ac.uk/media/1315/ref-eia-updated-march-2020.pdf Guidance from REF 2029 Code of Practice Webinar: https://2029.ref.ac.uk/news/town-hall-recording-published-on-the-updated-code-of-practice-guidance/

6. Does the information collected suggest any potential impact on individuals with any of the following protected characteristics? If Yes, please give detail	
A. Age	No

B. Disability	No
C. Race	No
D. Religion and belief	No
E. Marriage and civil partnership	No
F. Pregnancy and maternity	No
G. Gender Reassignment	No
H. Sex	No
I. Sexual orientation	No
J. Gender reassignment	No

7. Apart from individuals with any of the following protected characteristics set out in Question 6 above, are any other groups potentially impacted (whether positively or negatively)?

Birmingham Newman University also recognises that under the fixed-term employee and part-time workers regulations, fixed-term employees and part-time workers have the right not to be treated by the University any less favourably than it treats a comparable 'permanent' employee.

8. Could the policy/practice result in any of the following? If Yes, please give details under each heading below.	
A. Direct discrimination: : Less favourable treatment against anyone because of any of the nine protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation).	No
B. Indirect discrimination: An apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice that puts employees who share a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation - pregnancy and maternity is excluded from the definition) at a disadvantage and that cannot be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim	No
C. Harassment: Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation - marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy or maternity are excluded from the definition), which has the purpose or effect of violating an employee's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. It also includes harassment of a sexual nature and less favourable treatment based on an employee's rejection of, or submission to, sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment.	No
D. Victimisation: Being subjected to a detriment for making, or supporting, a complaint of discrimination made in good faith under the Equality Act 2010.	No

9. What steps will be taken following the completion of this equality impact assessment to reduce the negative impact?
<i>There remain risks, or potential unequal outcomes, which will be mitigated as follows.</i> <i>There is a risk that bias within wider University processes impacts whether individual staff members are approved as eligible for supervisory teams or supported through the research committee, and therefore whether they are considered to have SRR. To assess whether this risk creates potential unequal outcomes, the following data will be monitored and reviewed for trends: • Profile of staff eligible for supervisory teams vs not eligible. • Profile of staff supported to undertake individual research through the research committee and look at trends in numbers and profile. This review will focus on protected characteristics and part-time working. Results will be analysed at</i>

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School level or university level where numbers are too small for meaningful analysis or could risk identifying individuals. If trends are identified through this analysis, steps will be taken to mitigate these impacts. The first review of data will be in 2026 on HESA Pilot year data.

There is a risk that the output selection process leads to UoA submissions not being representative of the research staff aligned to the UoA by contract. To mitigate this risk the protected characteristics of staff linked to outputs will be monitored and any significant variation with protected characteristics of staff linked to the UoA by contract. Adjustments to UoA submissions to ensure representativeness will be considered and decisions made by REF Steering Panel.

There is potential risk of bias (conscious and unconscious) within the peer review process, and a lack of representativeness. This will be mitigated by: ensuring representativeness of reviewers and panels are monitored, and the use of external reviews.

To support equality of opportunity, we will monitor the diversity and representativeness of decision-makers involved in REF 2029 preparations, including the composition of relevant committees and roles such as UoA Coordinator.

There is a risk that concerns raised may highlight a negative impact that has not yet been considered and needs to be addressed. The number and nature of concerns will be examined alongside the methods used to resolve them, and although numbers may be small we will monitor for any emerging patterns in terms of concerns raised.

This Code will be reviewed again when quantitative data sets from proposed analyses described above are available.

10. Equality impact assessment completion and sign-off

Equality impact assessment completed by

Name: Peter Childs

Designation: SDVC

Date: 17/3/2029

Signed:

Peter Childs

11. Next Equality Impact Assessment (if part of a regular review cycle, this should typically be no more than [three] years after this assessment)

Date: This is a live document and will be under review accordingly.

2. Referenced material in the CoP

Appendix 2. Referenced Material in the CoP

Birmingham Newman Policies and Guidance

<https://newman.ac.uk/disclose-and-support/policies-and-guidance/>

The REF 2029 CoP guidance:

[Section 8 – Code of Practice guidance – REF 2029](#)

The final EIA report on Equality and Diversity in REF2021: <https://2021.ref.ac.uk/media/1315/ref-eia-updated-march-2020.pdf>

Guidance from REF 2029 Code of Practice Webinar: <https://2029.ref.ac.uk/news/town-hall-recording-published-on-the-updated-code-of-practice-guidance/>

Employment law guide: Public-sector equality duty <https://hrcentre.uk.brightmine.com/employment-law-guide/public-sector-equality-duty/166866/>

Employment law guide: Discrimination law - the protected characteristics <https://hrcentre.uk.brightmine.com/employment-law-guide/discrimination-law-the-protected-characteristics/166721/>

Timeline

April 2026	Institutional consideration at committee meetings of final draft REF code of practice.
May 2026	Final opportunity for institutions intending to make submissions to the REF to submit their codes of practice.
September 2026	Equality and diversity training complete.
Autumn 2026	REF 2029 Final Guidance on Submissions and Panel Criteria and Working Methods published. Decisions regarding contracts allocated to UoAs made and communicated. Outcome of any appeals.
Late 2026	REF Special requests process launched.
April 2027	Collation of provisional UOAs.
Spring/summer 2027	Survey of submissions intentions.
October 2027	UOAs submit first draft submission to Senior DVC. Initial decisions on selection of outputs.
30 November 2027	Deadline for any appeals arising from first draft submissions.
December 2027	Feedback to UOAs on first draft submissions and report to Steering Group.
December 2027	Outcome of any appeals.
March 2028	UOAs submit revised drafts. Any revised decisions on significant responsibility for research, independence, and selection of outputs communicated to staff.
May 2028	Feedback to all UOAs on second draft
31 May 2028	Final deadline for any appeals arising from second draft submissions
July 2028	Data finalised for: • research impacts • research environment • research income • research doctoral degrees awarded

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Autumn 2028	Steering Group approves final text of submission. Third EIA completed.
Autumn 2028	Closing date for submissions
31 December 2028	End of publication period for outputs