

Code of Practice

Institution name: Leeds Trinity University

Date of submission: 13th of May 2026

Part 1: Introduction

1. Our CoP supports the principles of:

- **Robustness** – Leeds Trinity University (LTU) has several contract types in use across academic and professional services teams. This Code of Practice sets out a robust means of assessing research independence and Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR), to determine which of those on eligible contracts who have a substantive connection will contribute to each Unit of Assessment (Unit/UoA)'s Volume Measure. Also, a robust and inclusive process underpinning the selection of in-scope high-quality outputs from research active staff eligible to submit is established through this CoP, to ensure that what is submitted is representative of the research undertaken at LTU during the current REF cycle. Our Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) has oversight of research governance and assurance, including ethics and integrity, and REF. It receives reports from and decisions made by the REF Group and Panel (as per its Terms of Reference), including anonymised aggregate SRR/IR decisions, and reports to the University's Academic Board.
- **Transparency** – The processes for SRR/Volume Measure, and staff eligibility to submit are clearly documented in this Code of Practice, which was arrived at after an all-staff consultation. It and the Terms of Reference for the committees and groups established to support the CoP's processes have also been circulated for comment to the Early Career Research (ECR) Network and our institutional Staff Equity Networks prior to approval. Approval has included consideration by the Unions via the University's Joint Consultative Committee (JCC). The final Research England (RE) approved copy will be available on the intranet and the external webpages, to be accessible to staff on leave of absence or working outside the UK as well as regulators, partners and funders. It will also be a subject of in-touch days and/or return to work planning as appropriate, staff induction, staff briefings and in-house and externally provided training events.
- **Equity and inclusion** – This CoP has been written inclusively to be supportive of the breadth of research, engagement and impact undertaken at LTU, of different career stages and career mobility, and to enable those who are research-active across academic and professional services' teams to engage with the process. Advisory recommendations relevant to each member, and submissions as REF29 proceeds will continue to be shared with them. The opportunity to appeal final decisions to be taken by a senior panel including the Dean of Research, Research Manager, all Unit Leads and representatives from the Office of Institutional Equity, People and Culture and Trade Unions. The REF Group and Panel, and Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee, will have due regard for the potential impact of their deliberations, and of any decisions made, on the University's compliance with its free speech duties and its commitment to the principle, promotion, and protection of freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law.

2. **Contextualisation within Institutional Policies:**

Leeds Trinity University is a distinctive community of researchers, practitioners and learners who are guided by our Catholic heritage, mission and values. With our historical roots as a provider of teacher training, we have a longstanding commitment to inclusive professional, practice-based research and innovation, and we have continued to enhance the applied research and professional practice which has been embedded in our institution for sixty years. Having gained Taught Degree Awarding Powers and University status in 2012, with an excellent track record in both RAE and REF external research assessment exercises, Leeds Trinity has continued to develop its research environment. As a Cathedrals' Group institution, development of the whole person has been key since our foundation in 1966.

Our shared values express the distinctiveness of our community and act as a compass for our strategic direction:

- ***Dignity and care*** - We value the wellbeing, dignity, and contribution of each person by nurturing a community where students and staff can reach their full potential
- ***Solidarity and service*** - We promote the common good by widening opportunity and participation, forming outward partnerships, and by making a positive contribution to society
- ***Honesty and integrity*** - We uphold truth, honesty, and integrity, fostering personal and collective accountability by stewarding our resources well and cultivating an awareness of our responsibility for the environment and the communities around us.
- ***Respect and inclusivity*** - We demonstrate our inclusivity by promoting equality in the opportunities we offer, in the right of everyone to contribute and by cultivating a safe community rooted in a culture of mutual respect.
- ***Knowledge and excellence*** - We aspire to stimulate keen scholarship and the pursuit of academic excellence by providing the highest standards of teaching, learning and research and by continuously improving on our performance

The University Strategic Plan (2021-28) has four strategic pillars. The Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Sub-strategy is most closely aligned to Pillar 3 (Research, impact and innovation), research and knowledge exchange contribute to all four pillars:

Pillar 1 - Education and experience

Leeds Trinity's student experience will be unrivalled in the higher education sector. Our students will engage in depth with their learning. Our approaches will stimulate curiosity and inquiry.

Students who join us will always feel part of an extraordinary community. They will be a name not a number. They will flourish as individuals and in cross-disciplinary teams. They will partner with us to co-create the curriculum. They will challenge us to innovate in our teaching and learning.

Research will support student learning through enriching the curriculum and providing a student research pathway to develop and practice research skills and literacy and create a series of structured steps toward doctoral study.

Pillar 2 - People and sustainability

We care about our people. We know that professional development helps people to feel fulfilled. Personal growth increases health and wellbeing. This leads to better outcomes for our learners. It creates a caring community.

Our care for the environment means that our campus will be greener. The learning environments we offer, including through our partners, will put human connections first. This will happen through digital channels and through physical spaces. We will achieve all of this through being financially stable.

We will provide support to help our research community to grow and flourish and undertake research in an ethically informed and sustainable way. Our research and knowledge exchange will contribute to sustainability and social justice, and our income streams will be diversified across a greater range of external work.

Pillar 3 - Research, impact and innovation

We will advance knowledge to help people and society. Our social partners will challenge us to innovate and make an impact. We will enable our students to contribute to society through their own applied research, and our work will enrich our teaching. Our practice and our research will cross disciplinary boundaries as we collaborate. We will innovate as we grow our commercial partnerships.

We will inform public debate, engaging and helping communities to make sense of the changing world around us.

Our research and knowledge exchange will support our local and global influence and real-world impact.

Pillar 4 - Careers and enterprise

As a career-led university, our students will be sought by employers and society.

Our graduates and staff will shine through skills that mark them out as both local and global citizens.

They will be effective as social and cultural entrepreneurs as they build their careers.

Research and knowledge exchange skills development and practice in the curriculum will support the career aspirations and future impact of our learners and our research support will enhance the career development of our research community. Our students and graduates will have access to a range of research and knowledge exchange opportunities, including enterprise support.

REF 2029

Research Excellence Framework

LTU Strategic Objectives: As we seek to **“grow our local and global influence through the real-world impact of our knowledge and innovation”** we will evaluate our progress against seven strategic objectives:

- To grow and nurture our academic research community;
- To increase the volume, scope and quality of our research outputs;
- To increase the significance and reach of our research impact
- To increase and diversify our research and knowledge exchange income;
- To strengthen research in our taught programmes;
- To achieve Full Degree Awarding Powers; and
- To promote equality, diversity and inclusion in our research community.

Our pursuit of these objectives is supported by our [Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy](#), our [PGR Strategy](#) and a range of policies and processes including the [Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics and Integrity Policy](#), [Open Access Policy](#), our [Equity, Social Justice and Belonging Strategy](#) and [Freedom of Speech Code of Practice](#), with guidance for staff via our Code of Good Practice for Research. We align our research to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and conduct our research and research assessment according to external benchmarks such as the Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (as a signatory via GuildHE), the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) and the UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN). We recently signed the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and are progressing an action plan to guide our journey to net-zero. We were the first university in Yorkshire to be awarded Race Equality Charter (REC) Bronze, and in 2025/26 were the first in Yorkshire to be awarded REC Silver.

Between REF 2021 and REF 2029 there have been structural changes at LTU. A second, City-Centre, campus has opened in Leeds. There has also been the addition of new provision within the university: Construction and the Built Environment; Nursing and Allied Health, and Biomedical Science. Organisationally, supporting these developments, there has been a change from three 'Schools/Institute' in REF21, to three Faculties, and in 24/25 to five Schools: the School of Business and Law; the School of Health and Life Sciences; the School of Computing and Creative Industries; the School of Education and Childhood; and the School of Social Sciences. Each is supported by central services, including the Research & KE Office.

Research at LTU is governed by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) which is chaired by the Dean of Research (1 FTE) and reports directly to Academic Board. RKEC has two sub-committees: the University Research Ethics and Integrity Committee and the Research Degrees Sub-Committee; it has Working and Task-and-Finish Groups reporting to it, including the REF Group and Panel, and the Open Research/Science working group. Research culture and environment is supported by the University Research Lead (1 FTE) who liaises with School Research Leads, the Research and Knowledge Exchange Office which is managed by a full time Research Manager (1FTE), supported by Research and Knowledge Exchange Officers (3 FTE) and administrative staff (2 FTE). The Post Graduate Research (PGR) experience, assurance and relationship with University of Leeds which Accredits our research degrees, is managed by a Director of PGR (0.5FTE) and Deputy Director of PGR (0.3FTE) drawn from the Schools.

3. **Update on Actions Since REF 2021:**

Since the final Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was completed for REF21, Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) has continued to be addressed across the university, e.g. linked to Race Equality Charter (REC) Bronze, and later to successful REC Silver application. All key policies and processes for REF29 have had Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) completed using internal data, e.g. RKEC-specific EDI reporting that commenced Spring 2025, and sector-wide contextual materials (See Appendix).

Actions taken in response to the EIA in REF21, and reflection on impacts:

- Training, mentoring and (financially sustainable) initiatives enhancing career progression opportunities, such as career stage representation in research committee Terms of Reference and Membership, have sought to address staff researcher career development for staff moving from Early-Stage Researcher (ESR) to ECR, through to mid- and senior- researcher, for a healthy and sustainable research culture. The FTE of staff with SRR who will contribute to the Volume Measure REF29 grew from 43.6 in REF21 to 78 FTE in 24/25, increasing further to 90 FTE Volume Contributing SRR in 25/26: an indication both of success and of a more inclusive and representative research environment having resulted.
- For research-active staff, there has been a planned change to the UoAs to be returned this REF cycle. This encompasses additions of three Units, with the inclusion of (1) Computer Science, and Informatics, and (2) of Business and Management (both of which received small unit exemptions in 2021, as new fields of endeavour at LTU), and (3) the addition of Social Work and Social Policy to better capture research activity in that area. Strengthening the vitality and sustainability of research in Theology and Religious Studies has been key following REF21, to support the research-active staff in this area and to represent the research undertaken in it, which is foundational to our university. This team therefore now work closely with staff previously returned to Communication, Culture and Media Studies, Library and Information Management/ Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies, and with new research activity in Photography. Integration is bringing greater sustainability to these areas and underpins a new approach to engagement and impact that has the capacity to integrate practitioner and researcher activity. The overall number of UoAs has risen from 6 to 8 and offers a more inclusive route to submission.

- Opportunity to advance the diversity of the PGR as well as the research-active staff population has been an additional focus in our institution's broader research environment, which contributes to each unit's Strategy, People and Research Environment (SPRE). Integrated with the university's undergraduate Access and Participation Plan (APP), and the institution's REC action planning led by the Office for Institutional Equity (a new Directorate in the university in REF21), EDI work has included a 'whole' research career pipeline approach, with e.g. support for and review of earlier stages of career development for undergraduate and taught postgraduates, and enhanced research careers guidance up to and including Level 8 (a collaboration between RKEO, Centre for Excellence in Learning & Teaching, and the Careers teams). The university introduced EDI-ringfenced PhD stipends in 21/22 for UK-domiciled BAME entrants (1 in 4 university-funded stipends, in years when competitive stipends are offered); and enhanced career development opportunities for PGRs, e.g. linked to opportunities to represent PGRs on deliberative research committees, 'citizenship hours' for stipendiary PhDs, and co-created careers service support after extensive PGR-led mapping of the diversity of careers researchers went to and are interested in. Since REF21, the number of PGR live enrolments has grown by almost 50% in line with the PGR Strategy, and MbR and PhD completions have increased threefold from 30 to 95 to date. Resulting from EDI work, the gender balance of enrolled PGRs is even, and, proportionately, twice as many PGRs return to BAME classifications compared to past registrations.

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

LTU has several contract types in use across academic and professional services teams. Following the Research England Guidance on REF (Section 3, Section 6 and Section 8, and section 4, Para 6.3.1), eligible employment relationships are defined as at a minimum of 0.2 FTE for at least 12 months of continuous employment at Leeds Trinity University. This is not restricted by profession.

1. Policies and Procedures

Criteria for SRR:

- Academic staff in the Schools who are eligible for being allocated Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR), and whose contracts will therefore contribute to the 'Volume Measure' at Leeds Trinity, are those whose primary employment function is to undertake either 'teaching and research' or 'research only' who have Research Independence. Staff in Professional Services on eligible academic 'teaching and research' or 'research only' contracts, who have Research Independence, are equally eligible for consideration as holding SRR and therefore may also contribute to the Volume Measure of the Unit where they have a substantial connection, e.g. staff employed in the Centre of Excellence for Learning & Teaching (CELT) on academic contracts might be considered to hold SRR contributing to the Education Unit.
- Significant Responsibility for Research is recorded annually. It is a process for those who are research active, have an eligible employment contract with the University and have a substantive link to the Unit their research will normally be submitted to. For the purposes of the REF29 exercise, submission expected by December 2028, staff eligible for Significant Responsibility for Research, and therefore contributing to the HESA volume measure from 2025/26, will be employed, and have been on payroll, at least 0.2 FTE for 12 consecutive months.
- Staff whose primary, contracted employment function is teaching but not research (as in the case of 'University Teacher' contracts at LTU) will not be deemed as eligible for Significant Responsibility for Research, (i.e. do not contribute to the Volume Measure) nor be eligible to submit outputs, even where they may meet some of the Research Independence or Significant Responsibility for Research criteria.
- Staff classified as having SRR, and therefore volume contributing contracts, may submit 0 outputs.

Determining Significant Responsibility for Research

Significant Responsibility for Research Criteria

- Staff at LTU whose contractual status (teaching and research, or research only) makes them eligible for consideration for Significant Responsibility for Research, and may therefore contribute to the volume measure, may be expected to undertake a range of tasks including executive leadership, management, administration, teaching, research, professional practice, knowledge exchange and scholarly activity. For this reason, not all staff with an eligible contract will also meet the criteria for Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR).
- There are several institutional systems and processes which are involved in establishing role expectations, workload allocation, performance, appraisal, progression and promotion to determine if staff meet the criteria for SRR and therefore contribute to the volume measure.
- These systems include:
 - A formal process, including HERA, of establishing expectations in relation to research activity at the point of finalising a vacancy for recruitment of a new post which is agreed by a **Vacancy Review Panel (VRP)**.
 - **Job Descriptions** and **role descriptors**, which have a series of criteria that include expectations of research activity (undertaking research, research enabling or research supporting work) alongside other aspects of academic, or professional services work at LTU (e.g. leadership, management, policy, directorate, service and administration, teaching, knowledge exchange, professional practice and scholarly activity).
 - An annual **Performance and Development (PAD)** process in which staff discuss expectations for the coming year and review the past year with their line manager. This includes objective setting in relation to all aspects of their role, potentially including research activity, for which time will be allocated.
 - A **Workload Allocation Management and Monitoring (WAMM)** process. The WAMM allocates work tasks to academic staff in Schools and Departments in a series of agreed and transparent 'Work Packages', each of which has an illustrative set of expectations and hours. Workload allocation is agreed between individual academic staff and their line managers at annual meetings and revised throughout the year as circumstances change, and including time to undertake agreed research, or engagement and impact activities agreed in the PAD.
 - An optional **Annual Research Action Plan (ARAP)** may also be used to identify objectives, plans and support needs by staff, normally in the context of a School, Department, Directorate, or Centre's research strategy. Research-active staff who are on eligible contracts but are not part of the WAMM process, can benefit from using the ARAP alongside PAD to plan tasks and research work packages in relation to other work and support needs, so that their line manager can ensure research hours are managed equitably.

- An **academic progression process** that may allow accelerated progression within academic grades and between Grade 7 and Grade 8 on a research 'track'. This includes consideration of whether, and the extent to which, applicants for progression meet the Job Description criteria, including research criteria, assessed qualitatively.
- An **academic Promotions Process** which, when offered, has three pathways for potential promotion beyond Grade 8 (i.e. to Associate Professor/Reader (Grade 9) and Professor (Grade 10): (1) Research; (2) Teaching and Learning; (3) Professional Practice.

At LTU the REF criteria for Significant Responsibility for Research are aligned to the Guidance (8.4, Section 3): (1). It is also possible to engage in research activity that results in research effectively shared that is later eligible for submission, if the research has been undertaken in clear relationship with a UoA, and may be submitted in order to represent the full range of activity in that UoA.

The three criteria are:

- **Research activity meeting the REF criteria is an expectation of the job role.** This is determined in two ways. First, at Vacancy Review, managers proposing vacancies e.g. for new academic posts in a School are expected to determine whether the primary employment function of the post will be teaching only, teaching and research, or research only. They are also expected to indicate whether the post holder will initially/normally be expected to undertake research meeting the REF definition. Professional Services and other posts may also incorporate research activity (undertaking research, enabling or supporting research), which would be clear in Job Descriptions and role descriptors, analysed as part of the job evaluation process. Secondly, on an annual basis line managers determine whether each member of staff is set one or more research objectives in PAD, reviewed as required in year during catchup meetings.
- **Explicit time and/or other resources made available** All staff at LTU on 'academic' (T&R) contracts are allocated a specific Research and Scholarly Activity (RSA) Work Package in their WAMM which accounts for a minimum of 165 hours. Therefore, specific and clearly identified time allocation is available in the WAMM, for each T&R/R post in relation to engaging in research activity and for which explicit and specific research activity objectives have been set via the PAD system. In addition to it, all academic staff with an eligible contract can be allocated extra time for the academic year to engage in independent research meeting the REF definition of research activity. The WAMM has available a tariff of an additional 135 hours (pro-rata to FTE and proportion of academic year) on top of the standardised RSA Work Package. It is intended to enable research by facilitating the achievement of specific research objectives independent of Grade. Staff who do not complete WAMMs may alternatively complete an individual Annual Research Action Plan (ARAP) to identify appropriate resources and time linked to identified research objectives with Line Managers.
- **These expectations and resources are intended to facilitate engagement in research independence meeting the REF definition of research. Such activity might include, but is not limited to:**

- Producing original research for peer-reviewed publication or other output as a lead or co-author.
- Sharing research findings as a project lead or co-lead at a recognised subject association or similar conference.
- Applying for external research funding as lead or co-applicant.
- Accessing research leave or sabbaticals.
- Supervising research degree candidates as a lead supervisor (referred to as 'Model 1' under our validation agreement with the University of Leeds).
- Leading or co-leading a research centre or research group

For the purposes of LTU, independent, sustainable and responsible research activity will normally be expected to result in sharing through the production of high-quality outputs. It is understood that research investigations only recently commenced, in the year just before the REF submission deadline for example, may not yet be ready for final dissemination, e.g. via peer-reviewed publication. LTU encourages its researchers to use pre-print and pre-registration, where appropriate to the discipline.

Decision Making and Communication:

There is a six-stage process for determining Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) and potential to be included in the volume measure:

- 1) **Researcher initiates Research Objective Setting** – (Feb-March): All eligible staff set out their personal objectives for the following academic year. The timing is intended to feed into the annual PAD, WAMM and SRR processes where relevant. RI is required to be designated as holding a contract that might contribute to the volume measure.
- 2) **Line Managers Review Objectives and SRR Status** (March-June): As part of the annual objective setting and, where relevant, the WAMM process for the following academic year, line managers review the PADs of post-holders with eligible T&R/R contracts and consider necessary time and resource allocations. The questions line managers answer at this stage are '*does the member of staff have research objectives aligned to REF and are explicit resources (time) allocated for their achievement?*'. Those post-holders with eligible contracts for whom the answer to this question is 'yes' proceed to the next stage. A 'no' answer to these questions results in an immediate recommendation that the post-holder does not have SRR and will not contribute to the volume measure this time, but their outputs may be eligible to submit in the longer term (see following sections). Line managers are expected to answer these two questions consistently.
- 3) **UoA Leads Review the Status of Research Objectives** (June-July): The Units review the final data progressed from Stage 1. The question that UoAs need to answer for each member with RI on an eligible T&R/R contract at this stage is: '*Is there evidence that research objectives and/or resources (time) aligned to the REF definition of research have been agreed?*'. Where the answer to this

question is 'yes' the post-holder will receive a recommendation that they be included in the HESA return, and their contract will therefore contribute to the UoA's volume measure. Where the answer is 'no' the recommendation to the post-holder is that they will not therefore contribute to the volume measure this time, but that they may do so in future.

- 4) **Recommendation to Staff and Opportunity to Challenge** (July-September): recommendations from stages 2-3 are notified to all eligible staff who then have not less than three weeks and extending into the second week of September (to ensure that annual leave periods are not prohibitive) to appeal their individual recommendation. Recommendations are recorded, records held by the central research service (RKEO), and communicated by email using institutional email addresses. Appeals against this recommendation are submitted using a form.
- 5) **Decision Panel and Appeal** (September-October) – the REF Group Panel receives and makes final decisions on all recommendations and considers appeals. Appeal decisions by the REF Group Panel are limited to judgement on the criteria specified above, and according to the grounds below. Decision-making is by the REF Group. UoA Leads who made the original recommendation will not be decision-makers in the case of appeals. Aggregated decision-data is then made available to RKEC.
- 6) **Confirmation:** At the same time as setting forward looking objectives and time/resource allocations, staff, line managers and UoA Leaders are asked also to look back over the past year to confirm that those expectations, resources and activities planned for the year were undertaken. This step helps to ensure that the data returned to HESA in the autumn is accurate and provides scope for in-year plans to change according to individual, team and institutional circumstances, in time for review of the HESA return. It also ensures that the research returned to REF29 is representative.
 - Individual SRR status may be reviewed and changed, but this does not stop a member of research-active staff having their outputs submitted where they are/were on an eligible contract. Equally, staff who have contracts designated as SRR are not required to submit outputs for research assessment. The annual SRR process is not a process of performance management. LTU recognises that the process purely determines a Unit's Volume Measure, and the expected number of outputs and Impact Case Studies that will be required, in order for the research, engagement and impact returned to be representative of the UoA's endeavours.

Multiple Processes (if applicable): Not Applicable: consistent processes are used for different UoAs, supported by the central research service.

2. Staff, Committees, and Training:

Roles and Responsibilities:

- **All research-active staff** with eligible contracts must respond, where appropriate, to the SRR Decision Email in a timely manner. This includes maintaining an up-to-date knowledge of research in their discipline in order that they can assess the extent to which their research plans are likely to meet the REF definition of research.
- **Line Managers** are responsible for ensuring supportive and collegiate discussions with eligible research active staff for whom they are responsible, completion of the WAMM, PAD, and other tools as appropriate, and SRR decision process in a timely and fair manner. This includes making an *advisory recommendation* to the REF Group Panel that an individual post-holder meets the criteria of having research objectives and that they have time allocated for their achievement for the coming year. The University recognises that the SRR process can impact on the mental wellbeing of colleagues. Line managers have responsibility for oversight of the mental wellbeing of staff they manage, but staff can also separately access support resources including Health Assured, which offers all LTU colleagues a free 24/7 confidential helpline on 0800 028 0199.
- **Unit of Assessment Leaders** are responsible for checking and interpreting research objectives to ensure that they are aligned to the REF definition of research. This includes making an *advisory recommendation* to the REF Group Panel.
- **The REF Group Panel** is responsible for making final *decisions* on SRR status for all eligible post-holders, taking account of the recommendation of line managers and UoA Leaders and outcomes of staff appeals against those recommendations. The Panel is chaired by the most senior academic research leader (e.g. Dean of Research) or their nominee and constituted of all UoA Leaders, a representative of the People and Culture Directorate and a Trade Union representative. Research and Knowledge Exchange Office Staff may also attend to officiate.
- In discharging these responsibilities, there is a clear **distinction between advisory roles and decision making**. The REF Group Panel has collective decision-making authority, whereas individual UoA Leaders, line managers and members of staff operate in an advisory capacity when making recommendations or appeals to them. The Panel abides by the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#) (the Nolan principles).
- Any Panel member with a **conflict of interest** should declare this at the outset and the Chair and other members of the Panel may ask the individual to recuse themselves from discussion and decision making on which they are conflicted. Specifically, no member of the REF Panel should influence decision making in relation to themselves or relatives.
- LTU has a policy of reminding selection committee members of the importance of avoiding **conflicts of interest and bias** in staff recruitment, selection and promotion processes and this same statement will be used as a preface to REF Group Panel discussions.

Training:

- **Eligible research-active staff** can attend training related to REF, including EDI, and those who plan to participate in REF are required to engage with either in person or asynchronous online training sessions.

- **Line managers and UoA Leaders and others on the REF Group Panel** were involved in the development of this Code of Practice and have had training in the Code and its implications for their role and EDI in the REF, and EIAs, which includes knowledge of the Protected Characteristics, understanding and managing unconscious bias.

3. Appeals:

An individual member of staff with an eligible contract can appeal the recommendation to the REF Panel on the following grounds:

- 1) The answer to one of the three questions in the process is incorrect.
- 2) There is new or additional evidence not available to the line manager or UoA at the time they made the recommendation.
- 3) Appellants will be notified of the outcome of their appeal in writing by the Chair of the REF Group Panel, noting any reasons for upholding or rejecting their appeal.
- 4) The decision of the REF Group Panel is final.

Staff who wish to Appeal against a decision, as with a recommendation, can submit a form. The matter will then be brought to the REF Group Panel by the Secretary, who as a member of the central Research and Knowledge Exchange Office, is independent of recommendations and of decision-making roles re SRR. Staff may contact RKEO via the email research@leedstrinity.ac.uk

Individuals additionally have recourse to the full range of HR policies and processes such as the [Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy and process](#)

4. **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA):**

EIA Integration:

- An Equality Impact Assessment of this Code of Practice and underpinning processes (including ToRs) was undertaken during its creation (Appendix). This resulted in removal of legacy practices re SRR/IR, and clarification of there being a range of processes of research planning and resource management for research-active staff on eligible contracts, to address the need to accommodate staff not part of the WAMM process (only used in Schools). Clearer recognition that, to represent the full range of research being undertaken within the university's UoAs, those who are not returned as volume-contributing staff (with SRR standing) may still be eligible to submit high-quality outputs to REF29 where there is a substantial connection to the UoA and activity is aligned to the REF definition of research. Finally, in recognition that the process can impact the mental wellbeing of colleagues, signposting to available wellbeing support for staff, outside the line manager, given the line manager is included in the process.
- The data used has drawn on past EIAs for REF, work undertaken for the Bronze and then Silver REC applications, university-wide analysis of staff management processes regarding work loading, and sector-wide contextual data and reports re specific Protected Characteristics. Additionally, since AY24/25 LTU has begun an annual EDI in Research Report which is now part of the Research and Knowledge Exchange calendar of scheduled activities and reports. The report assesses several areas of research activity and resource allocation, comparing all staff with a variety of different groups of staff identified by equalities markers (gender, age, disability, ethnicity) in the HR database, including the following:
 - 1) Staff Grade;
 - 2) Staff SRR;
 - 3) Staff - distribution of any additional research support (not time but including conference or other funding);
 - 4) PGR enrolments, completions and withdrawals;
 - 5) PGR supervisors

Part 3: Determining Research Independence

(Required for all participating institutions)

1. Policies and Procedures

Criteria and Evidence:

- All staff with an eligible contract and holding a PhD or a Professional Doctorate are automatically determined to be independent researchers, unless they are on specific research only contracts e.g. Research Assistant positions (including Post-Doctoral) i.e. 'research only' (ACEMPFUN 2) contracts, where the role holder is explicitly not expected to carry out research independently. These staff are therefore assessed as to whether they meet the research independence criteria at the same time as the SRR process documented above. If they are judged to demonstrate independence, they are then considered eligible for the SRR process. Note, eligibility to submit to REF29 is not determined by SRR standing, i.e. contribution to the volume measure, it is sufficient to be determined to have Research Independence.
- Recognising the very small numbers of relevant contracts at LTU, RA and PDRA contracts, while HERA assessed are not currently standardised at LTU and may therefore vary by project. Expectations of research independence are usually established at the recruitment stage for these roles and would include appropriate recognition of this in the Job Description.
- Indicators of independence include those listed in the REF 2029 guidance, e.g. where post-holders:
 - act as lead applicant on externally funded research projects
 - hold an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship requiring research independence, as indicated by the list produced by Research England.
 - lead a research group or a substantial/specialised work package
 - for UoAs 13-34 this may also include:
 - are named as a co-applicant on an externally funded research grant/award
 - have significant input into the design, conduct and interpretation of the research, and dissemination

Decision-Making and Communication:

Research independence is judged as part of the same SRR process above, with independence assessed at the outset by the line manager. The only addition is that where the contract is 'research only', the line manager also answers the question 'is the member of staff an independent researcher?'. Where the answer is 'yes' the process proceeds as with the SRR process. The same process and time-line for notifying staff of the recommendation, appeal and for making decisions is followed.

2. **Staff, Committees, and Training:**

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** The individuals and committees, advisory and decision-making roles are the same as Part 2, please refer to the earlier text.
- **Training:** this is the same as Part 2, please refer to the earlier text.

3. **Appeals:**

- Where a relevant member of staff receives notice that the SRR/Independence process has indicated an initial recommendation that they do not have independence, they can challenge the recommendation in the same way as the for SRR process. They submit a form and this is considered by the REF Group Panel. They may contact the central research service, i.e. RKEO, which is independent of the recommendation and decision-making processes, via research@leedstrinity.ac.uk. Individuals additionally have recourse to the full range of HR policies and processes such as the [Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy and process](#)

4. **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA):**

- **EIA Integration:** An Equality Audit of this Code of Practice was undertaken during its creation and resulted in:
- Removal of legacy elements relating to this area. Clarification that eligibility to submit to REF29 is not determined by SRR standing/contribution to the volume measure, but by RI. Also, provision for Appeal independent of those involved in recommendation and final decision-making.
- EIA review of the RI policy and process included reflection on the findings of the first Annual EDI report, REF21 EIA conclusions, and contextual, sector-wide data and reporting. The Annual EDI in Research at LTU report covers staff grade, which includes Research Assistants on research only contracts where relevant.

Part 4: Allocating Contracts to UoAs

1. **Policies and Procedures:**

At Leeds Trinity we recognise the intrinsically collegiate, collective, and often collaborative, nature of the work involved in research, across career stages and the university's academic, professional services and technician communities. All staff, regardless of profession, who undertake, enable, or support research, are eligible to have their contributions to the university's research, engagement and impact activity considered for submission to the Research Excellence Framework, if they otherwise meet the REF eligibility criteria. The research returned to REF29 must be representative of the work undertaken in a Unit for the REF period, across the University, but may be interdisciplinary in nature, multi- or cross-disciplinary in ways that reflect the strategic aims of different Schools or research groups. Therefore, the work submitted may be undertaken by an eligible member of staff who e.g. has a HESA cost-code that differs to that of the UoA to which their work is submitted. Individual staff who have contributed to the volume measure may submit 0 outputs.

Criteria and Evidence:

To be identified with a particular UoA (without excluding the possibility of outputs being cross referred) staff will meet the following evidence and criteria:

- **Criteria and Evidence:** the eligible member of staff is active in research as a regular part of their role/job to a degree that is appropriate for their research career stage and research career development needs. This activity is aligned to the REF definition of research, and may include undertaking research, enabling research or supporting research. The member of staff will be expected to have RI, but will not be required to have SRR, as confirmed by the SRR/RI processes. **And** they will be able to provide evidence of a substantial link to a UoA, as below:

Evidence of contract *associated with the UoA* may include evidence derived from their contract in a particular discipline, research group/team, School or similar organisational unit at the university, that has a clear relationship to the UoA, e.g. via HESA cost code, or specific objectives in their PAD associated with the UoA's discipline/School research strategy

Or

Evidence of at least two of the following. (The list is of necessity indicative to a degree, when activity is aligned to the REF definition of research, in light of the range of potential types of outputs and research practices in different disciplines). While working at Leeds Trinity on an eligible contract, the member of staff

- Has been a member and actively participated, as appropriate for their research career stage, in service to e.g. a School-level or University-level committee connected to research, *and* to the discipline/UoA, e.g. as a Research Centre's, or School's research representative or as an ECR representative at RKEC, or as a peer-reviewer in an ethics committee, or as a committee member of RDSC, in the REF Group, etc;
- Has won competitive research funding, award, mobility or conference funding, to undertake and disseminate research that falls within the remit of the UoA, appropriate for their research career stage, e.g. as recorded

in Financial data reported to the UoA such as research grant income, successful award of internal research support funding from the UoA;

- Has consistently and actively participated in the development of external, submittable bids, to an appropriate level and type for the discipline and their research career stage, as per Research Centre, or School research KPIs, as recoded by the central research support service (RKEO);
- Has been supported by the UoA to disseminate research, individually or in a team, e.g. at a research or engagement and impact event (seminar, workshop, conference, screening, public lecture etc.) with external participation, as evidenced through a record on the University's Research Management System (PURE);
- Has been an active member (Mod 1 or Mod 2 Supervisor) of a PGR supervision team in the UoA at Leeds Trinity University (to the satisfaction of the standards specified in the PGR regulations);
- Has actively engaged in and delivered researcher career development in the UoA at Leeds Trinity University, at a level appropriate to the career stage, as recorded on their staff development record/other central records;
- Has had responsibility to deliver at least one KPI or SMART research objective associated with a School/UoAs strategy(ies), per year of eligible contract, appropriate for their research career stage, as evidenced in e.g. a PAD;
- Actively represented a subject area, discipline or field of research on an *external* committee, or delivered over time on another substantive role (including e.g. career-stage, research-enabling or technician representation) on an *external* learned society, disciplinary research network or similar body, as evidenced through a record on the University's Research Management System (PURE);
- Is a recognised contributor in publicly available (Open Access-compliant, where relevant) outputs linked to the UoA/its host School, at the point of dissemination and uploaded via the university's Research Management System (PURE); degree of contribution can be recognised through e.g. the Contributor Roles Taxonomy ([CRediT](#));

If in doubt, a researcher is encouraged to discuss evidence of their substantive connection with the UoA Lead in the first instance.

2. Staff, Committees, and Training:

Decision-Making and Communication: Timing, Roles and Responsibilities:

- **Researcher initiates Research Objective Setting** – (Feb-March): All relevant staff set out their personal research, engagement and impact objectives for the following academic year, linked to a primary UoA (recognising that many researchers will undertake multi-, trans-, or inter-disciplinary work that could be cross referred at review). The timing is intended to feed into the annual PAD, and WAMM processes where

- relevant. At this stage individual members of staff can explicitly request a change of prior primary UoA relationship by indicating this via their PAD.
- **Line Managers Review Objectives** (March-June): As part of the annual objective setting and WAMM process for the following academic year, line managers review the PAD objectives. If at this stage an individual member of staff has explicitly requested a change of prior primary UoA relationship, by indicating this via their PAD, the Line Manager must review this.
 - The questions line managers answer at this stage are (1) *'does the member of staff have good evidence of research objectives aligned to the requested UoA, and (recognising the possibility of new disciplines in formation not yet ready for submission/small unit exemptions)* (2) *is that UoA being returned to REF29 for Leeds Trinity in this REF cycle?*
 - Those post-holders for whom the answer to these questions is 'yes' proceed to the next stage.
 - A 'no' answer to question (1) results in a recommendation that the post-holder remains with their existing UoA; a 'no' to (2) results in the expectation that they will not necessarily be able to contribute submissions, e.g. outputs or ICS materials being assessed this year, but may still be eligible to submit in the longer term.
 - Line managers are expected to answer these two questions consistently. That is, if the post-holder has evidence that they have a research, engagement and impact objective consistent with the REF definition and a UoA, then it is expected that they can contribute outputs for qualitative peer assessment and potential selection by that UoA (see next Section).
 - **UoA Leader Reviews the Status of Research Objectives** (June-July): The Unit of Assessment Leader reviews the final research, or engagement and impact objectives that have been set for each post-holder who has been progressed from Stage 1. The question that UoA Leaders need to answer at this stage is: *'Is there good evidence that research objectives set are aligned to this UoA/School's research strategy?'*. Where the answer to this question is 'yes' the post-holder will receive a recommendation that they be included/continue to be included in the UoA. Where the answer is 'no' the recommendation to the post-holder is that they remain with their existing UoA, or expectation that they will not contribute submissions this time, but may be eligible to submit to the UoA in the longer term.
 - **Recommendation to Staff and Opportunity to Challenge** (July-September): Recommendations from stages 2-3 are notified to all eligible staff who then have not less than three weeks and extending into the second week of September (to ensure that annual leave periods are not prohibitive) to appeal their individual recommendation. Recommendations are communicated by email using institutional email addresses. Appeals against this recommendation are submitted using a form, and staff are able to contact the central research service (RKEO) who are independent of recommendations and decision-making if they wish via research@leedstrinity.ac.uk.
 - **Decision Panel and Appeal** (September-October) – the REF Group Panel considers all UoA Leaders' recommendations, including appeals. Appeal decisions are limited to

judgement on the criteria of whether there is evidence that objectives have been set in line with the UoA/School's research strategy.

Appeals:

- Appeal decisions are limited to judgement on the criteria of whether there is evidence that objectives have been set in line with the UoA/School's research strategy. An individual member of staff with an eligible contract can appeal the recommendation of the allocation of their contract to a UoA to the REF Group Panel on the following grounds:
 - There is new or additional evidence not available to the line manager or UoA Leader at the time they made the recommendation.
 - The full REF Group Panel will make a decision considering the new or additional evidence in the case made in appeal against the recommendation.
 - Appeal decisions are expected to be independent of Line-Management recommendation, with earlier decision-makers recused.
 - Appellants will be notified of the outcome of their appeal in writing by the Chair of the REF Panel, noting any reasons for upholding or rejecting their appeal.
- The decision of the REF Group Panel is final.
- Individuals additionally have recourse to the full range of HR policies and processes such as the [Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy and process](#)
- Line managers have responsibility for oversight of the mental wellbeing of staff they manage, but staff can also separately access support resources including Health Assured, which offers all LTU colleagues a free 24/7 confidential helpline on 0800 028 0199.

Training:

Training is provided to all relevant groups.

- **All Eligible research-active staff** can attend training related to REF, including dedicated EDI and EIA training, and those who plan to participate in REF are required to engage with either in person or asynchronous online training sessions.
- **Line managers and UoA Leaders and others on the REF Group Panel** are expected to attend training in the REF29 Code of Practice regarding staff allocation to UoA, its implications for their role, and inclusion re profession and EDI.

3. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA):

EIA Integration:

An Equality Audit of the Policy and Process for identification of contracts with UoAs in the Code of Practice was undertaken during its creation and resulted in:

- Clarity that research endeavours, engagement and impact are innately diverse activities and that eligibility to submit to REF29 is inclusive at LTU, so that those with research activity specified in PADs, who are otherwise eligible, may have

their work submitted to the UoA that is most appropriate for their research. It has been stressed that these discussions, at staff members' initiative, must be based on evidence linked to consideration of Unit/School strategy, collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research environment. As with the other policies and processes in this CoP, appeal decisions are expected to be independent of Line-Management recommendation and earlier decision-makers. Though it may be necessary in this instance to draw on UoA disciplinary expertise, which makes separation of decision-making between original REF Group Panel and Appeal in smaller UoAs, the University has employed separate, external research assessors for each discipline whose expertise may be drawn on if needed.

- Recognising that this is new to REF29, which also brings data limitations, EIA review of the allocation to UoA policy and process included reflection on the findings of the first Annual EDI report, REF21 EIA conclusions, and contextual, sector-wide data and reporting.

Part 5: Selecting outputs

1. Policies and Procedures:

UoA Panels will select outputs on the basis of quality assessment, in accordance with guidance issued by the subject panels, and best practice in the conduct of the research. We recognise that research activity is not restricted by profession, and that inclusion within a research team listed on an output, as set out in contributor taxonomies such as CRediT, as appropriate to a discipline, may encompass a range of determining features, including undertaking research, enabling and supporting research. Disciplinary knowledge is drawn on to inform these judgements, at Unit-level.

The research returned to REF29 must be representative of the work undertaken in a Unit for the REF period, across the University, and may be interdisciplinary, multi-, trans- or cross-disciplinary in nature, in ways that reflect the strategic aims of different Schools or research groups (without excluding the possibility of outputs being cross referred).

This section sets out the policy and process for the selection of outputs from Leeds Trinity University for assessment in the REF.

Assigning and allocating outputs to UoA/s:

- The outputs selected will represent the best quality, and be representative of the range of themes, types, methods and objectives of the research undertaken by a UoA.
- Assignment to UoA:
 - An eligible individual having SRR status does not suggest that outputs produced by that member of staff will necessarily be selected for submission for assessment in the REF. However, *unless explicitly identified as having had a change of prior primary UoA relationship* through the process outlined above, *contribution to the UoA's Volume Measure is evidence of a substantive link to a UoA*, and outputs will normally be so allocated.
 - Where an eligible member of staff has RI but their contract has not contributed to a Unit's Volume Measure, they will still be able to demonstrate a substantive connection to a UoA via HESA cost code where this is appropriate, and in these cases their outputs would be selected for submission to that Unit. *Unless explicitly identified as having had a change of prior primary UoA relationship* through the processes outlined above, *their individual HESA contract cost code will therefore be taken as evidence of a substantive link to the associated UoA* and their outputs will normally be so allocated.
 - *In all other instances where there is an eligible contract with LTU that evidences a substantive connection with the university, but not a School* e.g. when a research-active member of staff in Professional Services or a Directorate does not have a 'T&R' or 'R' contract linked to a discipline, but has research as a role expectation and has RI, their outputs will be *allocated based on an evidence-based recommendation by the UoA Lead which include:*

- Outputs must genuinely represent and reflect the research that has been undertaken in a Unit during the REF period, and it is expected that an associated research strategy (e.g. in the School, Research Centre, group or discipline) will offer guidance and enable researchers in this respect. Indicative evidence for UoL Lead recommendation will therefore be via *the research strategy* e.g. a clear link to any associated strategic themes, resulting in a prior decision by the UoA that the research underpinning an output, and/or its dissemination, be funded internally.
- and**
- Outputs are also expected to demonstrate a clear association with the Unit to which work is selected for return via the University's Research Management System (PURE), via the identifying unit in the record, e.g. 'Faculty', 'School', 'Department', 'Research Centre'.
- The outputs submitted by each UoA must be of the highest quality in and representative of the research themes, objectives, and types of research undertaken by eligible staff associated with that UoA during the census period.

Selecting outputs where the substantive link is via former staff:

- Those staff who were on contract 0.2 FTE, continuously for 12 months, but who have left the University through compulsory redundancy during the REF cycle will not have outputs submitted but may have been eligible for and/or had SRR and contributed to a UoA's volume measure prior to their redundancy.
- Outputs staff on contract 0.2 FTE, continuously for 12 months during the REF cycle, who have left the University at the conclusion of a fixed-term contract; or through retirement, early (including medical) retirement, voluntary severance e.g. VSS, or voluntary redundancy following a staff consultation process, may be considered eligible for submission to REF29 if the staff member had an eligible contract and had a demonstrably substantive link to a UoA during the census period, whether or not they held SRR and contributed to the volume measure. This work may be submitted if it meets the quality assessment criteria for selection of outputs. External individuals, such as those in these circumstances, will be able to access the CoP via the LTU website.

Procedures for supporting diversity of outputs:

- The meaning of research in the Research Excellence Framework is understood as "a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared". It is therefore normally expected that production of outputs will be an outcome of any independent research activity, in order that the research undertaken is effectively shared. The different forms of outputs that are recognised for REF vary across panels, depending on field.
- At Leeds Trinity we support research active staff to engage with a wide range of output forms. We acknowledge that many forms of output are valuable, including, but not limited to, high quality film, photography, and creative writing, or the creation of research informed artefacts and products such as open code, computer software, databases and

applications. We support the publication of null results, use of pre-prints and the responsible adoption of pre-registration, as well as peer-reviewed publications such as journal articles, chapters in edited collections or monographs.

For REF, this is addressed via the University's Research management System (PURE):

- Outputs are returned to the PURE, managed by Information Services, where they are verified. Verification through the PURE supports deposition in the University's OA Repository (which includes capacity for data deposit) and supports the recognition of a wide form of outputs.
 - UoA Leads are provided with reports from the PURE, with eligible outputs identified for quality assessment by external REF assessors in mini/'mock' REF exercises.
 - Output eligibility will depend on adherence to REF29 open access requirements.
- Outputs in other UK languages, e.g. Welsh, or British Sign Language, will be supported either through translation prior to internal or external assessment by Unit, or by commissioned assessment by a Welsh/BSL- etc user who is an associated subject panel expert, depending on need and agreement by the researcher who has produced the output.
- The processes underpinning all outputs must conform to the accepted standards of research integrity, must be rigorous and must meet disciplinary standards for responsible research in relation to both the 'process of investigation' and sharing of its 'new insights'. These are set out in the Leeds Trinity Code of Good Practice for Research.

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

- To ensure the representativeness of the work selected for final submission in each UoA, as conducted during the period of the full REF cycle, final output selection will be considered against each UoAs' research enabling strategies by the REF Group, who are decision-makers in this instance. It is recognised that there may have been changes in these strategies, reflecting organisational change during the period, or simply change over time, and disciplinary, UoA Leads are expected to provide guidance to REF Group on this matter.
- Selected outputs must be compliant with REF requirements, including Open Access (OA), and all outputs are therefore assessed for OA compliance as evidenced by the university's Research Management System (PURE), and reported (anonymously, and in aggregate by UoA) to the REF Group and RKEC.
- The Group will have due regard for the potential impact of its deliberations, and of any decisions made, on the University's compliance with its free speech duties and its commitment to the principle, promotion, and protection of freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law.

2. Policies and procedures and responsible research assessment practice

- Leeds Trinity will undertake a series of mini/'mock' research assessment exercises, framed by the REF29 Guidance issued by the Panels, within UoAs. This will draw on internal and external peer expertise, focus on the assessed quality of outputs in accordance with the principles of responsible research assessment, and map potential outputs to submit for each UoA during this REF cycle in line with its volume measure.
- These exercises will be conducted by UoAs, using central research office RKEO support, who will then advise the REF Group of quality outcomes.
- External assessors will be selected centrally, and in accordance with the University's processes for selection and recruitment, including EDI and receive EDI onboarding training. Outcomes will be reported to the REF Group for consideration and decision based on the principles of responsible research assessment; when reported to the senior research committee they will be anonymised and aggregated by UoA.

3. Staff, Committees, and Training:

- Please refer to the earlier outline of roles and responsibilities of individuals and committees, re advisory and decision-making roles. Training will take place for these, as previously outlined, and include onboarding EDI training for external research assessors.

4. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA):

- **EIA Integration:** EIA: in the conclusion of the REF21 EIA 'a standardised approach to the selection of staff outputs, to provide greater structure and clarity for UoAs' was identified as needed for the next REF exercise; this has been applied.
- Recognising that these processes are new to REF29, which also brings data limitations, EIA review included reflection on contextual, sector-wide data and reporting.

Part 6: Appendices

1. **Equality Impact Assessment**

Equality Impact Assessment has been live, throughout the Code of Practice's development. Firstly, the CoP has taken into consideration the results of the REF2021 Equality Impact Assessment at Leeds Trinity, an EDI report delivered at RKEC AY24/25, and contextual, qualitative sector-wide data.

These sources flagged the following foci: Early Career Researchers (ECRs), career mobility, and improved processes to address representation of older staff and of women with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) and during output submission. The processes linked to SRR have changed significantly since REF21 considering new Guidance for REF29 (Volume Measure, and eligibility to submit), and via the processes established in the CoP the University is implementing a standardised approach to the selection of staff outputs, as outlined as a recommendation in REF21 EIA.

Following initial staff-wide consultation on the first draft Code of Practice Spring-Summer 2025, which additionally went specifically to staff equity groups and JCC (Unions Joint Consultative Committee) for consultation, an existing Annual Research Action Planning process developed 22/23 and used also in 23/24 as an evidence base of time allocated, and therefore of SRR standing across the academic Departments, was also revised. It is now intended to offer this as an optional component that can be used with Line Managers to capture research activity for staff in Professional Services, technicians and research-enabling staff seeking research time/support to plan research-activity resources and time, as these, including research-active professional services staff, operate outside the workload allocation model but have research in JDs and research objectives in their PADs. This tool may also support Early-Stage Researchers (who do not have RI) and ECRs who have brought senior-level experience through established careers in professional practice, but who are transitioning to HE teaching & research careers and may include staff moving from Teaching only to T&R contracts longer term.

Following external training delivered to all decision-makers on both EDI (Protected Characteristics) and EIA writing, individual EIAs were completed for the key Policy and Processes outlined in the revised draft CoP that went for in principle approval during REF29 'pause' in the Autumn-Winter of 2025, to RKEC, Academic Board and Board of Governors. These EIAs have informed further revisions and production of the final REF29 CoP, prior to submission May 2026, and are included in the Appendices.

Actions taken in response to the EIA REF21, and data:

- Since the EIA REF21, action has been taken and EDI monitored in the research committees during this REF cycle. Training, mentoring and committee representation, and initiatives in career progression (when financially sustainable) have sought to address staff researcher career development for staff moving from Early-Stage Researcher (ESR) to ECR, through to mid- and senior- researcher, and have supported a healthy and sustainable research culture. The FTE of staff with SRR who will contribute to the Volume Measure had grown from 43.6 in REF21 to 78 FTE in 24/25, increasing further to 90 FTE Volume Contributing SRR in 25/26: an indication of our more inclusive and representative research environment.
- For research-active staff, there has been a planned increase to the number of UoAs with the inclusion of Computer Science, and Informatics, Business and Management (both of which

received small unit exemptions in 2021, as new fields of endeavour at LTU), and the addition of Social Work and Social Policy. Strengthening the vitality and sustainability of research in Theology and Religious Studies, to support the research-active staff in this area and thereby continue to reflect the research undertaken in it which is part of the foundation of our university, has been key following REF21. They therefore now work closely with staff previously returned to Communication, Culture and Media Studies, Library and Information Management/ Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies. Integration of the two has brought greater sustainability to both areas and underpinned a new approach to engagement and impact. The overall number of UoAs has risen from 6 to 8 and offers a more inclusive route to submission.

- Opportunity to advance the diversity of the PGR as well as the research-active staff population has been an additional focus re diversity and inclusivity of the research pipeline, which has been identified as a sector-wide problem. Integrated with the university's APP and REC action planning, led by the Office for Institutional Equity (a new Directorate in the University in REF21), EDI work has also included enhanced support for and review of earlier stages of career development for undergraduate and taught postgraduates, to enhance research careers guidance (a collaboration between RKEO, Centre for Excellence in Learning & Teaching, and the Careers teams). The University introduced EDI-ringfenced PhD stipends in 21/22 for UK-domiciled BAME entrants (1 in 4 university-funded stipends, in years when competitive stipends are offered); and enhanced career development opportunities for PGRs, e.g. linked to opportunities to represent PGRs on deliberative research committees, 'citizenship hours' for stipendiary PhDs. Since REF21, the number of PGR live enrolments has grown by almost 50% in line with the PGR Strategy, and MbR and PhD completions have increased threefold from 30 to 95 to date. Resulting from EDI work, the gender balance of enrolled PGRs is even, and, proportionately, twice as many PGRs return to BAME classifications compared to past registrations.

2. **Referenced material in the CoP**

See Overleaf.

Appendices 'A' through to 'E':

Appendix A EIA for IR and SRR:

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Name of Policy / Procedure / Process / Strategy	Policy and Processes for the Identification of Staff with Independent Researcher standing, and/or Significant Responsibility for Research, Code of Practice REF29
EIA completed by	University Research Culture Lead
Department Owner of the Policy / Procedure / Process / Strategy	Research & Knowledge Exchange Office
Date of Assessment	26 th March 2026
Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the Policy / Procedure / Process / Strategy	The policy and processes, as outlined in the CoP for REF29, aim to enable rigorous, transparent, equitable and inclusive decision making on the identification of eligible staff as having Independent Researcher (IR) standing, and/or Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR).
What outcomes do you want to achieve?	A policy and process that maintains a robust and fair assessment of research-active staff as having IR and/or SRR standing, and therefore, regarding SRR, an equitable, inclusive the Volume Measure that ensures that the research submitted to REF29 is representative of the work undertaken at Leeds Trinity University since REF21.
1. What is the actual / likely impact on people e.g., Who benefits? Who doesn't benefit and why not? Who should be expected to benefit and why don't they?	
Colleagues	Though REF29 is "decoupling", through the HESA return & Volume Measure, to improve fair assessment and inclusion, it is recognised that cultural norms in the sector will mean being able to say you are one of the "volume contributing staff" in REF29 will still be likely to mean an individual will represent their research activity as having greater credibility than someone who is not. (NB REF29 expects individuals with SRR to be told this). There is a longstanding culture in the sector that sees "SRR" standing as equating with status. Not being awarded SRR might therefore be received by individuals with protected characteristics as compounding the effects of societal boundaries and discrimination outside the REF, despite REF29 guidance. This is despite submissions from staff with a "substantive link" (not SRR).
Students	By REF29 mandate, PGRs will not have IR/SRR. They may continue however to adhere to an expectation that Supervisors have SRR/are 'volume contributing'. This may also be true of taught students interested in researcher careers. This is a wider issue within the sector that will need to be addressed via long-term and REF29-specific Supervisor and PGR training accessed through Leeds Trinity. But is also important that students can see a fair, transparent and equitable process at work.
Community	External equality assessment of the issues linked to IR/SRR standing in national research assessment exercises demonstrates that these have historically become divisive categories, hence changed REF29 guidance. Adjusting culturally to the new REF29 processes mandated by REF29, i.e. "decoupling" and use of the volume measure, will take time to bed down even with training.

2. Analysis of impact

The fundamental question which all EIA's must attempt to answer is: **Does the proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices have a disproportionate impact on people with a protected characteristic, whilst giving consideration to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to have due regard to**

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

	Are there any likely disproportionate impacts on any of the groups below? Please describe, including stating that you have no data.	Are these negative, neutral or positive. (N, Neu or P)	What action will be taken to address any negative impacts or enhance positive ones?
Race	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26). Disproportionate impacts might be possible for global majority colleagues due to (a) impacts from the failures of the researcher 'pipeline' across the sector, prior to REF29, (b) impacts of local policy/process by decision-makers. Actions taken for REF29 nationally have reduced likelihood of disproportionate impacts.	Neu	(a) This has been considered at Leeds Trinity in the REC Bronze Award and actions, and via REC Silver work pre- and post- award. Actions have included: a. clarity of definition and recognition of Early Stage as well as Early Career Researchers, and opportunities for ESR/ECR staff to career stage on research committees to support career development of researchers (and likelihood of reaching IR/SRR standing long term). b. Diversification of the researcher pipeline has been supported at LTU via BAME PhD studentship for UK-domiciled students (competitive recruitment to 1 BME ringfenced studentship, of 4 stipends at any one time, on any topic, since 2021; max 9 stipends 'live' in any single year funded via QR). Completion within REF cycle has potential to facilitate IR/SRR standing by REF29, after completion. UoA Leads have participated in mandatory EDI and EIA training re protected characteristics.
Age	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award	Neu	N/A

REF 2029

Research Excellence Framework

	and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26). Actions taken for REF29 nationally have reduced likelihood of disproportionate impacts.		
Neurodivergence	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26). Actions taken for REF29 nationally have reduced likelihood of disproportionate impacts.	Neu	N/A
Disability	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26). In the last EIA21, it was observed: • 'The University needs to decrease the numbers of staff for whom we do not hold diversity data, for REF and other purposes. This action forms part of the University's Race Equality Action Plan, so it should be possible to undertake more accurate data analysis for future submissions.' Completion and award of REC Silver have underpinned this, including submission of the first EDI report to RKEC. There is also a reduced disproportionate impact due to the reduction to '0' of	Neu	N/A

	minimum outputs for eligible staff (no longer determined by SRR), and therefore removal of requests for personal circumstances consideration, which targeted periods of leave and potentially disability.		
Sex	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26). In EIA21 it was stated, based on sex data: 'Depending on the requirements of the next REF exercise, the University will consider implementing a standardised approach to the selection of staff outputs, to provide greater structure and clarity for UoAs' Actions taken for REF29 nationally and the current standardisation in the current COP have reduced likelihood of disproportionate impacts.	Neu	N/A
Religion or belief	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26). Data in EIA for REF21 were very small, leading to risk of identification of individuals, therefore it was difficult to interpret. However, no disproportionate impacts in this category are anticipated.	Neu	N/A
Sexual Orientation	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26).	Neu	N/A

	Actions taken for REF29 nationally have reduced likelihood of disproportionate impacts.		
Gender re-assignment	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26). Actions taken for REF29 nationally have reduced likelihood of disproportionate impacts.	Neu	N/A
Pregnancy & Maternity	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26). Actions taken for REF29 nationally and the current standardisation in the current COP have reduced likelihood of disproportionate impacts, especially reduction to '0' of minimum outputs for eligible staff, and therefore removal of requests for personal circumstances consideration, which targeted maternity.	Neu	N/A
Marriage & Civil Partnership	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26). Data in EIA21 were very small/staff did not declare, therefore it was difficult to interpret. Few disproportionate impacts in this category are anticipated.	Neu	N/A
Other relevant groups	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue was unavailable re IR/SRR from REF21 EIA.	Neu	N/A

3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy or function? What are the results?				
The draft CoP drew on information broadly from the EIAs for REF21. The draft CoP was circulated for comment to all staff during development and to the staff equity groups and unions. Iterative 'live' feedback via comments on the draft and track changes were used to amend the document during development. This enhanced discussions of drafts shared to deliberative committees. Results of these discussions have included removal of 'legacy' materials from COP used in REF21 which are particularly pertinent to SRR given "decoupling", limited "portability", new ability to submit outputs via "substantive link", min/max submissions, and flexibility to assign outputs to UoAs separate to staff contract. OIE requested improved formatting for legibility/use of screen readers, which is being implemented via final review.				
4. Address the impact: Summarise whether the proposed policy, procedure, process, or strategy will have a disproportionate impact on any of the protected groups above? If so, this must be brought to the decision maker's attention, and you should fill out the action plan (see below)				
No disproportionate impact is anticipated, positive or negative, for any of the protected groups above.				
5. Action Plan				
	Activity	Who	When	Deliverables / Outcomes
	Mandatory REF29 training re EDI and EIAs on protected characteristics.	UoA Leads, who are decision-makers via REF Group.	Spring 2026	Completed
	EDI reporting to RKEC	Dean of Research	Spring 2026	2nd EDI report due to REKC
6. Monitoring, Review and Publication.				
How will you review the impact and effectiveness of your actions?				
IR/SRR will continue to be monitored through annual EDI reporting to the Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee.				
Lead / Author:	University Research Culture Lead	Review Date:	October 2026	
7. Office for Institutional Equity Assurance				
Has this EIA been forwarded to the OIE for feedback and assurance?			Yes/No	
Has feedback been reflected within the report?			Yes / No	
8. Sign Off				
Office for Institutional Equity (OIE)	Director of People and Development/Vice Chancellor	Date Approved:	13/4/26	

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Name of Policy / Procedure / Process / Strategy	Appeals & Review Processes for determining SRR/RI in CoP, REF2029
EIA completed by	University Research Culture Lead
Department Owner of the Policy / Procedure / Process / Strategy	Research & Knowledge Exchange
Date of Assessment	30 th March 2026
Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the Policy / Procedure / Process / Strategy	To enable research-active staff to Appeal, if they have eligible grounds, re Research Independence, or Significant Responsibility for Research standing, resulting in their contract not contributing to the Volume Measure.
What outcomes do you want to achieve?	- Clear information on the process and grounds, that underpin equity and inclusion for RI/SRR, including: membership of the Appeals Panel, eligible grounds for submitting an Appeal, stages of consideration, and timing of outcomes of the stages. - Staff satisfaction with the process to determine eligibility, which includes timely resolution of such appeals as are submitted, resulting in confidence in the fairness of the process across groups.
1. What is the actual / likely impact on people e.g., Who benefits? Who doesn't benefit and why not? Who should be expected to benefit and why don't they?	
Colleagues	Though REF29 is “decoupling”, through the Volume Measure, to improve fair assessment and inclusion, cultural norms in the sector will mean being able to say you are one of the “volume contributing staff”/being determined to have SRR in REF29 will still be likely to mean an individual will represent their research activity as having greater credibility than someone who is not. (NB REF29 expects individuals with SRR to be told this). Not being awarded SRR might therefore be received by individuals with protected characteristics as compounding the effects of societal boundaries and discrimination outside the REF, despite national REF29 guidance to include submissions from a diverse range of eligible staff with a “substantive link” (<u>not</u> SRR). It is important for transparency that staff have opportunity to Appeal the SRR/RI result, so that they can question/throw light on UoA-level decision-making. Fair scrutiny is necessary for confidence that research from people with protected characteristics is represented.
Students	By REF29 mandate, PGRs will not have RI/SRR. They may however adhere to an expectation that Supervisors have SRR/are “volume contributing” staff. This may also be true of taught students interested in researcher careers. This is a wider issue within the sector that will need to be addressed via long-term and REF29-specific Supervisor and PGR training accessed through Leeds Trinity. It is important that students across all groups can see a fair, transparent and equitable process at work to build confidence.
Community	External equality assessment of the issues linked to RI/SRR standing in national research assessment exercises demonstrates that these have historically become divisive categories in the sector, hence new national REF29 guidance: it is accepted that this must also have been true at this HEI, and that this could cause legacy practices and default assumptions that disadvantage individuals as a result. There is also varied practice in different Units, at discipline level. Adjusting to the new REF29 processes mandated by REF29 among discipline-level research leaders will therefore need additional training following publication of Panel guidance. The Appeals Process ought to ensure transparency and build confidence at University and at Unit-level that the whole of the university's work is represented across the REF period.

2. Analysis of impact The fundamental question which all EIA's must attempt to answer is: Does the proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices have a disproportionate impact on people with a protected characteristic, whilst giving consideration to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to have due regard to • Eliminate unlawful discrimination • Advance equality of opportunity • Foster good relations			
	Are there any likely disproportionate impacts on any of the groups below? Please describe, including stating that you have no data.	Are these negative, neutral or positive. (N, Neu or P)	What action will be taken to address any negative impacts or enhance positive ones?
Race	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26). Disproportionate impacts might be possible for global majority colleagues due to impacts of local policy/process by decision-makers. Process has been altered significantly since that set out in CoP for REF21 to mitigate these risks.	N	New Appeals process, separating REF Group membership (as decision-makers) from the process, and using evidence-based approach to support rigour. Potential effects of this will be monitored through annual EDI reports to RKEC.
Age	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26). Disproportionate impacts might be possible for younger researchers wanting to seek RI for the first time, due to impacts of local policy/process by decision-makers. Process has been altered significantly since that set out in CoP for REF21 to mitigate these risks.	N	New Appeals process, separating REF Group membership (as decision-makers) from the process, and using evidence-based approach to support rigour. Potential effects of this will be monitored through annual EDI reports to RKEC.
Neurodivergence	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from	Neu	N/A

	REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26). No disproportionate effects anticipated.		
Disability	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26). EIA in 2021 noted low disability disclosure rates (a common issue in the sector), which makes it difficult to determine impacts. Disproportionate impacts might be possible for disabled researchers, due to impacts of local policy/process by decision-makers. Process has been altered significantly since that set out in CoP for REF21 to mitigate these risks.	N	New Appeals process, separating REF Group membership (as decision-makers) from the process, and using evidence-based approach to support rigour. Potential effects of this will be monitored through annual EDI reports to RKEC.
Sex	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26). Disproportionate impacts might be possible by sex, due to impacts of local policy/process by decision-makers. Process has been altered significantly since that set out in CoP for REF21 to mitigate these risks.	N	New Appeals process, separating REF Group membership (as decision-makers) from the process, and using evidence-based approach to support rigour. Potential effects of this will be monitored through annual EDI reports to RKEC.
Religion or belief	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report,	Neu	N/A

	submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26). Data in EIA for REF21 were very small resulting in risk of identification of individuals, therefore it was difficult to interpret. However, no disproportionate impacts in this category are anticipated.		
Sexual Orientation	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26). Disproportionate impacts might be possible due to impacts of local policy/process by decision-makers. Process has been altered significantly since that set out in CoP for REF21 to mitigate these risks.	N	New Appeals process, separating REF Group membership (as decision-makers) from the process, and using evidence-based approach to support rigour. Potential effects of this will be monitored through annual EDI reports to RKEC.
Gender re-assignment	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26). Disproportionate impacts might be possible, due to impacts of local policy/process by decision-makers. Process has been altered significantly since that set out in CoP for REF21 to mitigate these risks.	N	New Appeals process, separating REF Group membership (as decision-makers) from the process, and using evidence-based approach to support rigour. Potential effects of this will be monitored through annual EDI reports to RKEC.
Pregnancy & Maternity	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26).	N	New Appeals process, separating REF Group membership (as decision-makers) from the process, and using evidence-based approach to support rigour. Potential effects of this will be monitored through annual EDI reports to RKEC.

	Disproportionate impacts might be possible, e.g. linked to maternity leave-linked career 'gaps' being perceived problematic, due to impacts of local policy/process by decision-makers. Process has been altered significantly since that set out in CoP for REF21 to mitigate these risks.		
Marriage & Civil Partnership	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26). No disproportionate effects anticipated.	Neu	N/A
Other relevant groups	Qualitative, contextual evidence and quantitative data on this issue was unavailable re IR/SRR Appeals from REF21 EIA, but no disproportionate effects anticipated.	Neu	N/A
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy or function? What are the results?			
As well as drawing on information from the EIAs for REF21, qualitative material from the REC Bronze and REC Silver application processes e.g. EDI report to RKEC 2025, and qualitative sector-wide material, the draft CoP was circulated for comment to all staff during development and to the staff equity groups and unions. Iterative 'live' feedback via comments on the draft and track changes were used to amend the document during development. This enhanced discussions of drafts shared to deliberative committees. Results in particular included removal of 'legacy' materials from COP in REF21. OIE requested improved formatting for legibility/use of screen readers, which is being implemented via final review.			
4. Address the impact: Summarise whether the proposed policy, procedure, process, or strategy will have a disproportionate impact on any of the protected groups above? If so, this must be brought to the decision maker's attention, and you should fill out the action plan (see below)			
In the EIA21 the following was observed: 'The Appeal process, as outlined in the CoP, consisted of two stages: ○ An informal process whereby staff were encouraged to speak to a member of the REF Group and if dissatisfied; ○ An appeal to a panel made up of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) the HR Director (HRD) and a Head of School (HoS) not otherwise involved in any aspect of the REF2021 process. 'The University received no appeals, either informally or formally from staff who believed they met the criteria.			

'This is taken as an indication that staff felt that the application of the criteria for determining if they had IR/SRR was fair and equitable. ... 'Conclusion: There were no appeals submitted by staff who believed they should have been included, indicating a level of satisfaction with the process to determine eligibility; However, at its first stage, the 2021 COP Appeal process was not evidence-based and included one or more members of the REF decision-making Group. Staff with one or more protected characteristics could feel uncomfortable approaching someone involved in the original REF-decision-making processes informally, and the first stage lacked sufficient independence. Not receiving any appeals is therefore not truly indicative of satisfaction with the process to determine eligibility. The proposed process in REF29 was altered to ensure a more rigorous approach compared to REF21. Initial IR/SRR decision-making (during autumn 2025 HESA return), did result in some Stage 1 Appeals, i.e. for formal consideration based on evidence submitted, which suggests a more effective system is now in place. However, that process, developed for the <u>draft</u> CoP for 2029 still involves members of the REF Group who are decision-makers, and must therefore be revised to remove decision-making membership.				
5. Action Plan				
	Activity	Who	When	Deliverables / Outcomes
	Revision of Appeals process	Dean of Research	Spring 2026	Removal of decision-makers from Appeals process before submission of CoP to RE, May '26
6. Monitoring, Review and Publication.				
How will you review the impact and effectiveness of your actions? Through annual reviews in EDI report to RKEC. NB small numbers of staff involved preclude UoA-level analysis, which would risk individual identification. Analysis of appeals data must therefore remain at university-level.				
Lead / Author:		University Research Culture Lead	Review Date:	Spring-summer 2026
7. Office for Institutional Equity Assurance				
Has this EIA been forwarded to the OIE for feedback and assurance?			Yes/ No	
Has feedback been reflected within the report?			Yes / No	
8. Sign Off				
Office for Institutional Equity (OIE)		Director of People and Development/Vice Chancellor	Date Approved:	13/4/26

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Name of Policy / Procedure / Process / Strategy	Policy & Process for the Selection of Outputs, including of outputs in other UK Languages, in the Code of Practice REF29
EIA completed by	University Research Culture Lead
Department Owner of the Policy / Procedure / Process / Strategy	Research & Knowledge Exchange Office
Date of Assessment	25 th March 2026
Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the Policy / Procedure / Process / Strategy	This policy and process aim to enable rigorous, transparent, equitable and inclusive decision making on the selection of outputs for submission to the Contributions to Knowledge and Understanding (CKU) submissions of each Unit, including outputs in other UK languages (inc. BSL, Welsh), as outlined in the CoP for REF29, to support submission of the highest-quality research that represents Leeds Trinity University's research activity across the REF period.
What outcomes do you want to achieve?	A policy and process that maintains a robust and fair assessment of research quality internally and permits submission of eligible high-quality outputs that are representative of the research in each Unit that has been undertaken at Leeds Trinity University since REF21.
1. What is the actual / likely impact on people e.g., Who benefits? Who doesn't benefit and why not? Who should be expected to benefit and why don't they?	
Colleagues	Though REF29 focuses on evaluating the quality of outputs at a disciplinary level, it is recognised that individuals who have their work selected and submitted to REF29 will be able to represent their research as having credibility within the University, while those who do not have their work submitted, given sector norms, will be less able to say this. There is a longstanding culture in the sector that sees the former as more authoritative and having higher-status than the latter. Not 'being submitted', i.e. not submitting any outputs for research assessment in the REF could therefore compound the effects of societal boundaries and discrimination.
Students	Submission of the highest-quality research gives credibility to Leeds Trinity University and supports OfS Conditions. It is particularly impactful on PGRs' post-doctoral careers (B3 metrics). Assessment of the institution's research quality also affects the QR income LTU will receive over the following eight years. Currently QR is used to fund PhD Stipends; stipendiary PGRs are based in the Schools, and able to support taught students and delivery through 'citizenship hours', and therefore contribute to the taught student experience more broadly.
Community	REF assessment is part of the underpinning credibility of the institution. Submission of the highest-quality research will result in the highest assessment; assessment results affect the QR income LTU will receive over eight years, which will impact staff directly, but is also important for the University's value proposition in the sector and therefore to future student recruitment.
2. Analysis of impact The fundamental question which all EIA's must attempt to answer is: Does the proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices have a disproportionate impact on people with a protected characteristic, whilst giving consideration to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to have due regard to Eliminate unlawful discrimination	

• Advance equality of opportunity • Foster good relations			
	Are there any likely disproportionate impacts on any of the groups below? Please describe, including stating that you have no data.	Are these negative, neutral or positive. (N, Neu or P)	What action will be taken to address any negative impacts or enhance positive ones?
Race	Qualitative, contextual evidence on this issue comes from REF21 EIA, sector-wide reporting, REC Bronze Award and Actions (AY2020/21), and first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025 as part of REC Silver application (awarded, AY25/26). Disproportionate impacts might be possible for global majority colleagues due to (a) impacts from the failures of the researcher 'pipeline' across the sector, prior to REF29, (b) impacts of local policy/process by decision-makers and/or quality assessors connected to LTU. Actions taken for REF29 have reduced likelihood, but his will need review in 'live' EIAs.	N	(b) This has been considered at Leeds Trinity in the REC Bronze Award and actions, and via REC Silver work pre- and post- award. Actions have included: a. clarity of definition and recognition of Early Stage as well as Early Career Researchers, and opportunities for ESR/ECR staff to career stage on research committees. b. Diversification of the researcher pipeline has been supported at LTU via BAME PhD studentship for UK-domiciled students (competitive recruitment to 1 BME ringfenced studentship, of 4 stipends at any one time, on any topic, since 2021; max 9 stipends 'live' in any single year funded via QR). Completion within REF cycle has potential to facilitate submission to REF29, for outputs made public after completion. (c) UoA Leads have participated in mandatory EDI and EIA training re protected characteristics; external quality assessors who will inform decision-making on outputs trained on EDI via LTU on-boarding.
Age	Assessment is based on REF21 EIA, & first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025. Disproportionate impacts are unlikely as submission is linked to REF29 eligibility	Neu	Leeds Trinity University became a signatory to DORA at start of REF cycle, and CoARA AY25/26 to support quality research assessment (where simple metrics can reinforce age-biases).

	definitions and employment at LTU in the REF cycle, plus 'decoupling' re SRR. Policy & process do not select by career stage.		UoA Leads have participated in mandatory EDI and EIA training re protected characteristics; external quality assessors who will inform decision-making on outputs trained on EDI via LTU on-boarding.
Neurodivergence	Assessment is based on REF21 EIA, & first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025. Unlikely impact	Neu	UoA Leads have participated in mandatory EDI and EIA training re protected characteristics; external quality assessors who will inform decision-making on outputs trained on EDI via LTU on-boarding.
Disability	Assessment is based on REF21 EIA, & first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025, and qualitative evidence from sector intelligence. Unlikely impact.	Neu	Focused support depends on increasing disability disclosure, which is a sector-wide problem. Availability of additional internal research support funding to enhance conferences/seed corn funding, based on self-identification, on return to work is designed to help those who are returning after long periods of absence due to sickness/disability. Policy supports potential selection for submission of outputs that use BSL. Leeds Trinity University became a signatory to DORA at start of REF cycle, and CoARA AY25/26 to support quality research assessment (where simple metrics can reinforce career-gap biases including due to sick-leave). UoA Leads have participated in mandatory EDI and EIA training re protected characteristics; external quality assessors who will inform decision-making on outputs trained on EDI via LTU on-boarding.
Sex	Assessment is based on REF21 EIA, & first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025. Low staffing numbers made the impacts by sex difficult to determine in REF 21, with a lower outcome of submission between the two EIAs in REF21 due to redundancy processes and compliance with COP for REF21. In REF29 CoP, all staff outputs, including those from staff who have left (except the compulsorily redundant) that are otherwise eligible for submission will be considered.	N	The policy & process supports the submission of outputs by eligible staff. Leeds Trinity University became a signatory to DORA at start of REF cycle, and CoARA AY25/26 to support quality research assessment (where simple metrics can reinforce sex-biases). UoA Leads have participated in mandatory EDI and EIA training re protected characteristics; external quality assessors who will inform decision-making on outputs trained on EDI via LTU on-boarding.
Religion or belief	Assessment is based on REF21 EIA, & first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025. No risk likely	Neu	A Catholic University, Leeds Trinity supports those of all faiths and none. UoA Leads have participated in mandatory EDI and EIA training re protected characteristics; external quality assessors who will inform decision-making on outputs trained on EDI via LTU on-boarding.
Sexual Orientation	Assessment is based on REF21 EIA, & first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025.	Neu	UoA Leads have participated in mandatory EDI and EIA training re protected characteristics; external quality assessors who

	No risk likely		will inform decision-making on outputs trained on EDI via LTU on-boarding.
Gender re-assignment	Assessment is based on REF21 EIA, & first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025. No risk likely	Neu	UoA Leads have participated in mandatory EDI and EIA training re protected characteristics; external quality assessors who will inform decision-making on outputs trained on EDI via LTU on-boarding.
Pregnancy & Maternity	Assessment is based on REF21 EIA, & first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025. There is a risk of disproportionate, based on the impacts of a career break and return to research activity, it is intended that this will be mitigated via dedicated funding offered since AY25/26.	N	Provision of additional 'return to work' research support funding, at each internal research support and conferences call, based on self-identification including maternity-/paternity-/adoption-leave. Leeds Trinity University became a signatory to DORA at start of REF cycle, and CoARA AY25/26 to support quality research assessment (where simple metrics can reinforce parental leave-biases). UoA Leads have participated in mandatory EDI and EIA training re protected characteristics; external quality assessors who will inform decision-making on outputs trained on EDI via LTU on-boarding.
Marriage & Civil Partnership	Assessment is based on REF21 EIA, & first RKEC EDI report, submitted Spring 2025. No risk likely	Neu	UoA Leads have participated in mandatory EDI and EIA training re protected characteristics; external quality assessors who will inform decision-making on outputs trained on EDI via LTU on-boarding.
Other relevant groups	Outputs in Welsh, BSL & other minority UK languages Unlikely impact (0 staff cohort)	Neu	Welsh and BSL outputs/minority languages selection is included in policy & process.

3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy or function? What are the results?

As well as drawing on information from the EIAs from REF21, qualitative material from the REC Bronze and REC Silver application processes e.g. EDI report to RKEC 2025, and qualitative sector-wide material, the draft CoP was circulated for comment to all staff during development and to the staff equity groups and unions. Iterative 'live' feedback via comments on the draft and track changes were used to amend the document during development. This enhanced discussions of drafts shared to deliberative committees. Results in particular included removal of 'legacy' materials from COP in REF21. OIE requested improved formatting for legibility/use of screen readers, which is being implemented via final review.

4. Address the impact: Summarise whether the proposed policy, procedure, process, or strategy will have a disproportionate impact on any of the protected groups above? If so, this must be brought to the decision maker's attention, and you should fill out the action plan (see below)

There is a risk that a policy about output selection might have disproportionate negative impacts on research-active staff with single/intersectional protected characteristics if the mitigations put in place, as described, do not work/are not applied. Once implemented, the potential effects of the policy and process will therefore be assessed in annual EDI reports to RKEC (Spring). If adjustments are/better implementation is deemed necessary to maintain rigorous selection of high-quality outputs from eligible research active staff who have singular/intersectional protected characteristics, changes will be undertaken in CoP via the 'live' EIA process; this process will normally be iterative with EDI reporting to RKEC annually. Results however can only be fully determined by data captured at the point of final submission in REF29, by Dec 2028, and review.

5. Action Plan

Activity	Who	When	Deliverables / Outcomes
----------	-----	------	-------------------------

REF 2029

Research Excellence Framework

Review impact of policy & process across protected characteristics.	Dean of Research/Research Manager	Spring 2026 through to final EIA	Improved output submission levels for research-active staff with singular/intersectional characteristics to REF29 observed in EDI reporting
6. Monitoring, Review and Publication.			
How will you review the impact and effectiveness of your actions? Through annual EDI reporting to RKEC (established Spring 2025), and 'live' CoP EIA process, through to final review of submissions delivered to RE Dec 2028.			
Lead / Author:	University Research Culture Lead	Review Date:	May 2027
7. Office for Institutional Equity Assurance			
Has this EIA been forwarded to the OIE for feedback and assurance?		Yes/No	
Has feedback been reflected within the report?		Yes / No	
8. Sign Off			
Office for Institutional Equity (OIE)	Director of People and Development/ Vice Chancellor	Date Approved:	13/4/26

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Name of Policy / Procedure / Process / Strategy	Allocation of eligible outputs to UoA
EIA completed by	University Research Culture Lead
Department Owner of the Policy / Procedure / Process / Strategy	Research & Knowledge Exchange Office
Date of Assessment	30 th March 2026
Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the Policy / Procedure / Process / Strategy	This section of the Leeds Trinity University Code of Practice underpins the institution's approach to and rationale for the selection and distribution of outputs for assessment through: - A rigorous and transparent policy and process that enables the allocation of eligible outputs to Units of Assessment, such that each UoA can produce a clear and accurate "Strategy of Representation" to underpin its Contribution, Knowledge & Understanding submission. - Submission of the broad range of research, across diverse roles, that represents the breadth of research activity of Leeds Trinity University during the assessment period.
What outcomes do you want to achieve?	A transparent process for allocating outputs to UoAs, that enables equality and inclusion, while selecting for submission of the highest-quality work, such that the policy & process enables: - Allocation of eligible research-active staff members' outputs to the most relevant Unit of Assessment. - Ensuring the "decoupling" of outputs from members of individual staff members, from a broad range of roles. - Leeds Trinity submits research from the range of its research activity during the assessment period. - Demonstrable "substantive link" for each output, capturing the mandated eligible employment relationship with Leeds Trinity University. - Ensuring the ability of the University to apply the "volume measure" calculated using the specified period of HESA data. - Adherence to the minimum and maximum limits (0-5) - Flexibility, so that outputs are assigned to any UoA that they fit, regardless of an eligible individual's HESA-cost code/specific employment unit. - Recognition of multiple submissions, for one output to multiple UoAs where appropriate.
1. What is the actual / likely impact on people e.g., Who benefits? Who doesn't benefit and why not? Who should be expected to benefit and why don't they?	
Colleagues	REF29 focuses on evaluating the quality of outputs at a disciplinary level, decoupled from individuals. But it is recognised that those who are eligible and then have their work selected and submitted will still be able to represent their research as having credibility within the University and the sector, while those who do not have their work submitted will be less able to do so. There is a longstanding culture in the sector that sees the former as more authoritative and of higher status than the latter. If the CoP fails in its duties of equality and inclusion, causing individuals who have protected characteristics not to have their work submitted, this could therefore compound the effects of societal boundaries and discrimination.

Students	Submission of the highest-quality research gives credibility to Leeds Trinity University and supports OfS Conditions. PGRs are not permitted to submit sole-authored outputs, but the research environment, including active participation of supervision teams who for example have work submitted for assessment, is impactful on completing PGRs' post-doctoral careers (B3 metrics). Assessment of the institution's research quality also affects the QR income LTU will receive over the following eight years. Currently QR is used to fund PhD Stipends; stipendiary PGRs are based in the Schools, and able to support taught students and delivery through 'citizenship hours', and therefore contribute to the taught student experience more broadly.		
Community	REF assessment is part of the underpinning credibility of the institution, and results are used in many Leagues Tables. Submission of the highest-quality research will result in the highest assessment; assessment results affect the QR income LTU will receive over eight years, which will impact staff directly, but is it also important for the University's value proposition in the sector and therefore to future student recruitment.		
2. Analysis of impact The fundamental question which all EIA's must attempt to answer is: Does the proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices have a disproportionate impact on people with a protected characteristic, whilst giving consideration to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to have due regard to • Eliminate unlawful discrimination • Advance equality of opportunity • Foster good relations			
	Are there any likely disproportionate impacts on any of the groups below? Please describe, including stating that you have no data.	Are these negative, neutral or positive. (N, Neu or P)	What action will be taken to address any negative impacts or enhance positive ones?
Race	Selection of outputs separate to SRR has not been employed by REF previously and there is not an equivalent process in the UK's research ecosystem, therefore there is no data. Flexibility to submit to a UoA separate to the staff contract, and inclusion of outputs from eligible staff decoupled from SRR, should ensure a fairer representation of research activity.	Neu	N/A
Age	Selection of outputs separate to SRR has not been employed by REF previously and there is not an equivalent process in the UK's research ecosystem, therefore there is no data. Flexibility to submit to a UoA separate to the staff contract, and inclusion of outputs from eligible staff decoupled from	Neu	N/A

REF 2029

Research Excellence Framework

	SRR, with a minimum contribution of 0 and a max of 5 per substantive link, should ensure a fairer representation of research activity across age groups, and take account of career breaks. This ought to support younger and older staff members most likely to experience negative effects by age profile.		
Neurodivergence	Selection of outputs separate to SRR has not been employed by REF previously and there is not an equivalent process in the UK's research ecosystem, therefore there is no data. Flexibility to submit to a UoA separate to the staff contract, and inclusion of outputs from eligible staff decoupled from SRR, with a minimum contribution of 0 and a max of 5 per substantive link, should ensure a fairer representation of research activity across age groups, and take account of career breaks.	Neu	N/A
Disability	Selection of outputs separate to SRR has not been employed by REF previously and there is not an equivalent process in the UK's research ecosystem, therefore there is no data. Flexibility to submit to a UoA separate to the staff contract, and inclusion of outputs from eligible staff decoupled from SRR, with a minimum contribution of 0 and a max of 5 per substantive link, should ensure a fairer representation of research activity across age groups, and take account of career breaks. This ought to support staff who have needed to take a career break, including breaks linked to disability.	Neu	N/A
Sex	Selection of outputs separate to SRR has not been employed by REF previously and there is not an equivalent process in the UK's research	Neu	N/A

	ecosystem, therefore there is no data. Flexibility to submit to a UoA separate to the staff contract, and inclusion of outputs from eligible staff decoupled from SRR, with a minimum contribution of 0 and a max of 5 per substantive link, should ensure a fairer representation of research activity across age groups, and take account of career breaks. This ought to support staff who have needed to take a career break, including due to maternity or caring which can disproportionately affect women.		
Religion or belief	Selection of outputs separate to SRR has not been employed by REF previously and there is not an equivalent process in the UK's research ecosystem, therefore there is no data. Flexibility to submit to a UoA separate to the staff contract, and inclusion of outputs from eligible staff decoupled from SRR, with a minimum contribution of 0 and a max of 5 per substantive link, should ensure a fairer representation of research activity.	Neu	N/A
Sexual Orientation	Selection of outputs separate to SRR has not been employed by REF previously and there is not an equivalent process in the UK's research ecosystem, therefore there is no data. Flexibility to submit to a UoA separate to the staff contract, and inclusion of outputs from eligible staff decoupled from SRR, with a minimum contribution of 0 and a max of 5 per substantive link, should ensure a fairer representation of research activity.	Neu	N/A
Gender re-assignment	Selection of outputs separate to SRR has not been employed by REF previously and there is not an equivalent process in the UK's research	Neu	N/A

	ecosystem, therefore there is no data. Flexibility to submit to a UoA separate to the staff contract, and inclusion of outputs from eligible staff decoupled from SRR, with a minimum contribution of 0 and a max of 5 per substantive link, should ensure a fairer representation of research activity.		
Pregnancy & Maternity	Selection of outputs separate to SRR has not been employed by REF previously and there is not an equivalent process in the UK's research ecosystem, therefore there is no data. Flexibility to submit to a UoA separate to the staff contract, and inclusion of outputs from eligible staff decoupled from SRR, with a minimum contribution of 0 and a max of 5 per substantive link, should ensure a fairer representation of research activity across age groups, and take account of career breaks. This ought to support staff who have needed to take a career break, including due to pregnancy or maternity.		
Marriage & Civil Partnership	Selection of outputs separate to SRR has not been employed by REF previously and there is not an equivalent process in the UK's research ecosystem, therefore there is no data. Flexibility to submit to a UoA separate to the staff contract, and inclusion of outputs from eligible staff decoupled from SRR, with a minimum contribution of 0 and a max of 5 per substantive link, should ensure a fairer representation of research activity.	Neu	N/A
Other relevant groups	Selection of outputs separate to SRR has not been employed by REF previously and there is not an equivalent process in the UK's research ecosystem, therefore there is no data. Flexibility to submit to a UoA separate to the staff contract,	Neu	N/A

	and inclusion of outputs from eligible staff decoupled from SRR, with a minimum contribution of 0 and a max of 5 per substantive link, should ensure a fairer representation of research activity across groups, and take account of career breaks/career mobility.		
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy or function? What are the results?			
Selection of outputs separate to SRR has not been employed by REF previously and there is not an equivalent process in the UK's research ecosystem, therefore there is no data. But the draft CoP drew on information broadly from the EIAs from REF21. The draft CoP was circulated for comment to all staff during development and to the staff equity groups and unions. Iterative 'live' feedback via comments on the draft and track changes were used to amend the document during development. This enhanced discussions of drafts shared to deliberative committees. Results in particular included removal of 'legacy' materials from COP in REF21 which are particularly pertinent here given new so-called "decoupling" and "substantive link" requirements, min/max submissions, and flexibility to assign outputs to UoAs separate to staff contract. OIE requested improved formatting for legibility/use of screen readers, which is being implemented via final review.			
4. Address the impact: Summarise whether the proposed policy, procedure, process, or strategy will have a disproportionate impact on any of the protected groups above? If so, this must be brought to the decision maker's attention, and you should fill out the action plan (see below)			
No disproportionate impact is anticipated, positive or negative, for any of the protected groups above.			
5. Action Plan			
	Activity	Who	When
	N/A		•
6. Monitoring, Review and Publication.			
How will you review the impact and effectiveness of your actions?			
"Decoupling" rules and 0 output minimum for those with a "substantive link" preclude detailed EDI data collection and therefore analysis due to separation of individual from output.			
Lead / Author:	University Research Culture Lead	Review Date:	2029
7. Office for Institutional Equity Assurance			
Has this EIA been forwarded to the OIE for feedback and assurance?		Yes/No	
Has feedback been reflected within the report?		Yes / No	
8. Sign Off			
Office for Institutional Equity (OIE)	Director of People and Development/ Vice Chancellor	Date Approved:	13/4/26

Appendix E Leeds Trinity University Deliberative Committee Structure and Decision-making Routes for REF 2029

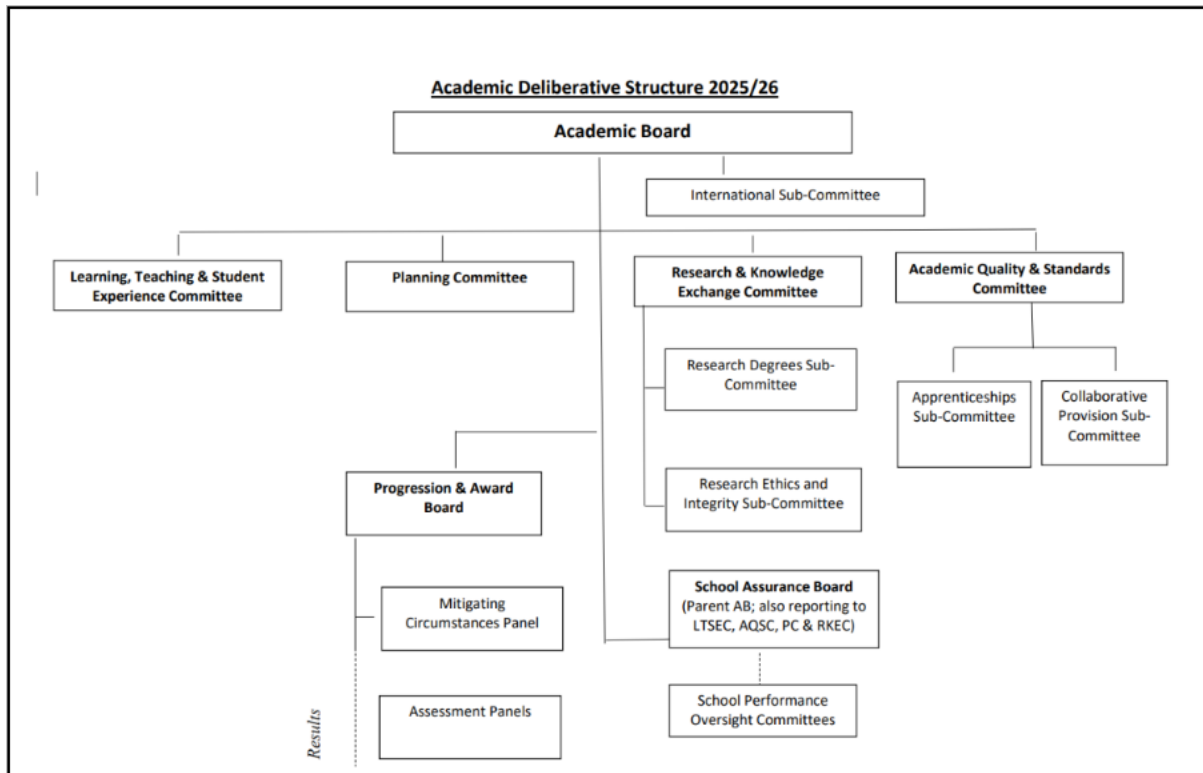


Figure 1 LTU Deliberative Committees

REF 2029

Research Excellence Framework

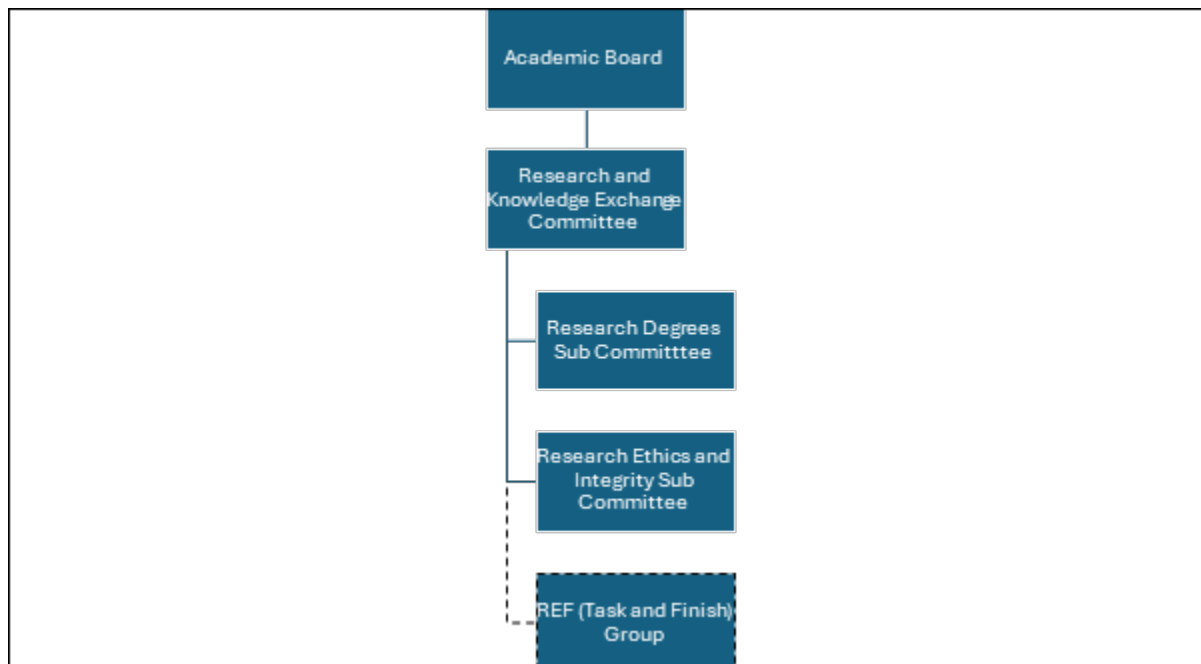


Figure 2 Research Deliberative Committee