

Annex B: Sub-panel chairs – further particulars for applicants

Research Excellence Framework 2021

This annex sets out the further particulars for applicants for the role of sub-panel chair. It includes information on panel roles, the terms of appointment, the person specification, the application procedure, who can apply, and the deadline for applications.

Background

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the system for assessing research in UK higher education institutions. The REF is undertaken by the four UK higher education funding bodies. It was first conducted in 2014, and replaced the previous Research Assessment Exercise (RAE).

An independent review of the REF was undertaken in 2016, led by Lord Nicholas Stern. Following this, and informed by our evaluation of REF 2014, the funding bodies consulted with the sector on the recommendations of this review. We have now published our initial decisions on many aspects of the framework, as set out in the main document (REF2017/01). We will announce initial decisions on the remaining aspects in autumn 2017, following further consultation on key issues.

The REF is a process of expert review, and will include the assessment of research outputs, impact and environment. Institutions will make submissions in units of assessment (UOAs), to be assessed by 34 sub-panels. The sub-panels will work under the guidance of four main panels.

For main panel and sub-panel configuration, please see REF2017/01, Annex A. Further background information on the changes to the structure from REF 2014 is set out in the main document at paragraphs 37-40.

Appointment of Sub-panel chairs

The funding bodies now wish to appoint a sub-panel chair for each of the 34 REF sub-panels listed in Annex A.

The funding bodies have appointed main panel chairs. Further information about these appointments is available at www.hefce.ac.uk/rsrch/ref2021/. We will start the nominations process to establish the wider main and sub-panel membership this autumn. Sub-panel chairs will be appointed through an open, written applications process, and assessed against criteria set out in the person specification (below). The appointments will be made by the chief executives (or equivalent) of the four UK HE funding bodies, after taking advice from the main panel chairs.

The chief executives (or equivalent) of the four UK HE funding bodies retain responsibility for appointing all panel chairs and members, and reserve the right to amend the membership of REF panels to ensure the effective conduct of the exercise.

All sub-panel chairs will also become members of the appropriate main panel.

Role of a main panel

Each main panel will provide leadership and guidance to a group of sub-panels. In particular, the role of a main panel is:

- To produce a document setting out the criteria and working methods for the group of sub-panels under its remit. In doing so, the main panel will ensure that:
 - The criteria and working methods adhere to the overall assessment framework.
 - The criteria and working methods are as consistent as possible across the sub-panels within each main panel's remit, and vary between the sub-panels only where justified to the REF Steering Group.
 - The academic community has been consulted effectively when developing the criteria and working methods.
 - Other appropriate stakeholders have been consulted, particularly when developing the criteria for assessing impact. This includes stakeholders from the private, public and third sectors who are informed by, make use of, or benefit from academic research in the disciplines covered by the panel.
- To work with the sub-panels during the assessment period to ensure adherence to the criteria, working methods and equality and diversity guidance.
- To work with the sub-panels during the assessment period to calibrate the assessment standards between sub-panels and ensure the consistent application across the framework of the overall assessment standards.
- To sign off the assessment outcomes for all submissions made to the sub-panels, based on the work and advice of the sub-panels.
- To work with the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel and the Interdisciplinary Research Advisory Panel as required on the criteria and assessment process.
- To give advice as requested by the REF team and funding bodies on aspects of the assessment process.
- To produce a final report on the state of research in the disciplines covered by the sub-panels, and its wider benefits.

In signing off the assessment outcomes, the main panel will confirm that it has worked with the relevant sub-panels to ensure the adoption of a reasonable and consistent approach to the assessment of all forms of research, including basic, applied, practice-based and interdisciplinary research; and that each sub-panel has applied the quality thresholds for the exercise to a consistent standard.

Final responsibility for the effective conduct of the assessment process for the REF lies with the funding bodies' chief executives (or equivalent). Decisions about academic

judgements in the assessment will remain the responsibility of the panels. The main panels will report their progress in reaching assessment outcomes to the four UK higher education funding bodies and will report the final outcomes to the funding bodies at the conclusion of their assessment. In the event of any dispute about the assessment process that cannot be resolved within the main panel, the decision of the UK funding bodies will be final.

Role of a sub-panel

The role of a sub-panel is:

- a. To consult on and contribute to the criteria and working methods of the group of sub-panels within a main panel, and develop any necessary criteria and working methods specific to the individual sub-panel, for approval by the main panel.
- b. To work within the agreed criteria and methods, and under the guidance of the main panel, to assess submissions.
- c. To advise the main panel and REF team on cross-referrals of submitted material to other sub-panels and any need for additional expertise required to assess submissions.
- d. To produce draft assessment outcomes for each submission to be recommended for sign-off by the main panel, and associated concise feedback for submissions.

Equality and diversity

The UK funding bodies are committed to supporting and promoting equality and diversity in research careers, and will put in place a number of measures to support equality and diversity in REF 2021.

The measures we will implement to improve the representativeness of the expert panels are set out in the main document at paragraph 44. With respect to the appointment of the sub-panel chairs, they includes the following:

- There will be mandatory, bespoke equality and diversity briefings and mandatory unconscious bias training provided for panellists involved in selection decisions (the main and sub-panel chairs).
- Equality and diversity monitoring data will be collected for all applicants and nominees for panel membership through an online form. This will be collected anonymously and used to compare the representativeness of the pool of applicants and nominees with the appointed panels.
- The main and sub-panel chairs will be provided with data on the current representation of protected groups among UK academic research staff, as well as anonymous data on the representation of these groups among nominees to the panel. This data, along with data on the representation of protected groups on the appointed panels, will be published at main panel level.

We have set out further measures aimed at improving the representativeness of the expert panels through the nominations process. In recognition of the wider equality

challenges in the sector, the sub-panel chairs will be expected to contribute to these measures to improve the representation on the panels of those from diverse backgrounds.

Terms of appointment

Main and sub-panels will meet as follows:

- a. During 2018 (the criteria setting phase) each main and sub-panel will meet approximately three or four times to develop and finalise the criteria and working methods. Panellists will also be involved in consulting stakeholders about these through their routine contacts and attending meetings of subject associations and other stakeholder groups, ensuring appropriate input from research users, beneficiaries and diverse audiences.
- b. During 2020 we anticipate each main and sub-panel will meet approximately two or three times to consider institutions' submission intentions and the need for additional members and assessors, to prepare for the assessment, and to undertake initial calibration exercises.
- c. During 2021 (the assessment phase) we anticipate that each main and sub-panel will meet approximately six or seven times to assess submissions. Some of the sub-panel meetings during this phase may be held over several days each, and may involve staying away. In preparation for meetings during this phase, sub-panel members will be expected to review a range of submitted material. This will involve a substantial workload for individual members, especially in reviewing outputs.

Sub-panel chairs will be expected to attend meetings of both the sub- and main panel, and to take part in some other meetings as representatives of their sub-panel. In total we anticipate sub-panel chairs to be involved in approximately 30 to 40 days of meetings throughout the exercise.

Sub-panel chairs will receive fees covering the criteria-setting and assessment phases to be paid at regular intervals. The fees for the criteria-setting stage have been set at £5,000. Sub-panel chairs will be provided with a full schedule of fee payments on appointment. Travelling and subsistence expenses will be reimbursed according to an agreed scheme.

Application procedure

To be considered for appointment, please complete an application statement of no more than three sides of A4 (excluding statements of endorsement), addressing **each criterion** in the attached person specification, and indicating the sub-panel to which appointment is sought.

In addition to the application statements, applicants are asked to include letters of endorsement from subject associations or other organisations that demonstrate the individual's standing in the community. Ideally these should indicate support from across the full breadth of disciplines covered by the UOA. These letters should form part of the application, and should not be sent directly from endorsing bodies to the REF team. Subject associations and other organisations may endorse more than one candidate.

HEFCE is conducting this recruitment on behalf of the UK funding bodies, and is working towards equal opportunities in employment. If you have any particular requirements in relation to the selection process, please let us know immediately so we can discuss any reasonable adjustments with you. We are requesting this information to make the process as equitable as possible for each candidate.

Applicants will be asked to fill in an equal opportunities monitoring form after submitting their application. This data will be used to monitor representation on REF panels, compared with the pool of candidates, according to key protected characteristics. Data collected through this form will not be used in the selection process.

Applications should be emailed to admin@ref.ac.uk **by 12 noon on Wednesday 11 October 2017.**

Queries can be addressed to Gina Reid, email admin@ref.ac.uk.

Successful candidates will be informed by early December 2017.

Who can apply?

Applications are open to all individuals who meet the criteria set out in the person specification below, from within and outside the higher education sector, including those who have previously served on REF or RAE panels. Heads of UK higher education institutions may not apply.

The funding bodies recognise that diversity of thought and experience contributes fundamental insight and value to the work of the REF panels, and that this insight and value comes not only from academic achievement but also from other aspects of panel members' lives. We would therefore like to encourage applications from diverse candidates, in particular from women, individuals from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, and people with disabilities, as well as international applicants.

Job Description

Responsibilities

Sub-panel chairs will be responsible for:

- Advising the funding bodies on the sub-panel's membership to ensure that it has sufficient breadth of expertise and commands the respect of the community.
- Contributing to the implementation of equality and diversity measures to increase the representativeness of the expert panels.
- Leading and chairing meetings of a sub-panel and steering members to a consensus.
- Ensuring that the sub-panel contributes to the criteria and working methods document produced by the main panel, including consulting with the community and external stakeholders.
- Leading the sub-panel in assessing submissions to the UOA, ensuring adherence to the agreed criteria, working methods and equalities guidance, and consistent application of standards.
- Working jointly with the sub-panel members appointed with a specific role to oversee and participate in the assessment of interdisciplinary research, to ensure its equitable assessment.
- Recommending the draft assessment outcomes for each submission to the appropriate main panel based on the work of the sub-panel.
- Overseeing the planning of the sub-panel's work and ensuring the timely delivery of results and feedback to the main panel on completion of the assessment.
- Reporting the sub-panel's progress to the main panel, and seeking and providing advice from and to the main panel chair and REF team as required.
- Serving as a member of the appropriate main panel, assisting with governance of the assessment process at main panel level, and liaising as required with the chairs of other sub-panels.
- Representing the sub-panel externally as required.

Key tasks

- Reviewing nominations for sub-panel membership and making recommendations about this to the funding bodies.
- Consulting stakeholders in providing advice on the development of the REF.
- Chairing meetings of the sub-panel.
- Planning, preparing for, and following up meetings as necessary, working with the panel secretariat.

- Mediating discussions between sub-panel members with a view to ensuring the consistent application of standards and procedures.
- Participating in meetings of the main panel.
- Reviewing submitted material to contribute to the sub-panel's assessments.

Person specification

Please address each of the criteria below in your application.

Criteria (essential)	Examples of evidence which may be provided
Experience	
Successful senior-level experience of conducting or leading research in higher education (or leading the commissioning and application of research in industry or another sector) in fields relevant to the sub-panel applied for.	Key academic appointments and achievements; major grants or awards; key research outputs.
Experience and understanding of peer review and research quality standards.	Involvement in RAE, REF, Research Council or other peer review exercises (including any relevant international experience).
Experience of chairing and ability to lead groups to consensus.	Evidence of chairing committees, panels or groups. Specific examples of bringing diverse groups to a consensus would be helpful.
Abilities	
Appropriate standing in the community and ability to carry the confidence of key stakeholders.	Fellowships, prizes or awards provided in recognition of your contribution to the discipline. Endorsements must be included from academic or other relevant associations, representing as far as possible the full breadth of the sub-panel's remit.
Ability to contribute to wider main panel discussions beyond your research area or discipline.	Peer review or other activities outside own discipline; involvement in overarching associations; chairing at a senior level; interdisciplinary activities.
Knowledge and understanding	
Relevant knowledge, experience or ability to contribute to impact criteria and involve research users effectively in the assessment.	Details of any relevant experience or expertise which can be brought to this area. Endorsements may be included from non-academic organisations to support this.
A commitment to supporting or advancing equalities and diversity in research careers, and an understanding of the equality and diversity issues relevant to your research area, and the implications of this in the REF.	Participation in, or leadership of, institutional or sector-based equalities training, programmes or activities.
Knowledge or understanding of, or experience	Details of any relevant experience or

in, the conduct or management of interdisciplinary research.	expertise which can be brought to this area.
Availability	
Ability to attend and participate in sub-panel, main panel and other meetings as indicated in the further particulars; sometimes work outside of office hours and stay away overnight; and engage in preparatory and follow up work as required.	Statement confirming that employer is supportive of time commitments the role will require and that you are personally willing to take this on.