

Bangor University Code of Practice

Part 1: Introduction

All staff with a significant responsibility for research (SRR) will contribute to Bangor University's volume measure for REF 2029. As per the REF guidelines, staff must be on the payroll with a primary employment function to undertake 'Teaching and Research' or 'Research Only' for the 2025/26 and 2026/27 academic years to be classified as having significant responsibility for research. In the case of staff on Research Only contracts, staff must also meet the criteria for independent researchers (see Part 3 below).

Staff on other academic contracts, such as Teaching and Scholarship, are not eligible to contribute to the volume measure for REF 2029 since research is not a requirement of their contract.

Following initial development of the REF 2029 Code of Practice (COP) by the REF Group, the three Trade Unions, University and College Union (UCU), Unite, and Unison will be consulted, as well as the University's EDI and Well-being Committee. Following this, all academic staff were consulted about the draft in March 2026.

The principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity underpin the University's Annual Research Review exercises, which are the main means by which we prepare for REF. The REF Group's reports on these exercises are reviewed by the University's Research Committee and the University Executive Board. The process and procedures are reviewed each year, updated, and amended as required in response to feedback from staff and in response to updates on REF 2029 Guidance and Panel Criteria.

Independent researchers

The pro-forma for determining research independence status (Appendix 2) and supporting material was emailed to all academic staff on Research Only contracts and is available on the University's intranet from Autumn 2025.

Staff absent from Bangor University will be contacted by their School/Unit or Human Resources.

Staff who join Bangor University or whose circumstances alter after Autumn 2025 will be directed to the documentation on the University's REF 2029 intranet pages.

Open information sessions will be held at University/College level from Spring 2026 onwards.

1. Contextualisation within Institutional Policies

Bangor University aims to provide an environment which respects and values the positive contribution of all its members so enabling them to achieve their full potential and to gain benefit and enjoyment from their involvement in the life of the University.

To achieve this aim, the University acknowledges the following basic rights for all its members and prospective members:

- To be treated with dignity and respect
- To be treated fairly with regard to all procedures, assessments and choices
- To receive encouragement to reach their full potential.

These rights carry with them responsibilities and the University requires all its members to recognise these rights and to act in accordance with them in all their dealings with other members of the University community. To achieve this aim, staff training in the area of equality and diversity has been identified as a key objective for the University. This training, mandatory for all staff, aims to increase staff's understanding of the broader equality and diversity issues, ensures staff are familiar with equalities legislation and know their rights and responsibilities and are aware of the negative effects of discrimination. Furthermore, this training aims to increase staff's understanding of how unconscious bias can impact upon the workplace and might affect staff's ability to make objective decisions or judgements. The University is committed to and has a legal obligation to monitor and ensure that every member of staff undertakes equality and diversity training.

Bangor University's current Strategic Equality Plan (2024-28) sets out the University's objectives and priorities to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations amongst our staff, our students and the wider community. This Strategic Equality Plan outlines our role as an employer and higher education provider to support and promote equality, diversity and inclusion. Research Excellence is one of three pillars underpinning Bangor University's Strategy 2030 which commits to providing equal access, equal rights, and equal justice to all.

Progress has been made towards embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into Bangor University's policies, procedure and culture. Since REF 2021, Bangor University has achieved a Silver Athena Swan award (January 2024), and eight schools have achieved Department-level. Bangor University joined the Race Equality Charter in 2023 and was awarded Bronze Race equality Charter award in April 2025. Since 2019, Bangor University publishes its annual Gender Pay Gap analysis; since 2020 this has included the analysis of the Ethnicity pay gap, and since 2021 the Disability Pay Gap.

The University continues to be fully committed to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. The Concordat sets out principles related to environment and culture, employment, and professional and career development; Furthermore, the University became a signatory of the Technician Commitment in 2024 and is also signatory of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

The University holds an HR Excellence in Research Award, which recognises efforts towards creating supportive working conditions for researchers, enhancing researcher professional and career development, promoting inclusive research environments, and fostering open, transparent recruitment, promotion and progression processes.

Bangor University is a signatory of DORA (the Declaration on Research Assessment). DORA commits the institution to be explicit about the criteria used to evaluate researchers, focusing those on the

quality of outputs rather than proxies such as metrics or publication outlet; and to consider the value of a full range of types of research outputs.

Bangor's progress against these principles is overseen by the Researcher Development Concordat Group, which reports to the Research Committee.

Bangor University's Welsh Language Policy enables the University to achieve its strategic aim of being a bilingual organisation that contributes proactively to the development of the Welsh language and bilingual agenda in the University, the surrounding area, nationally and internationally. The policy also supports the University's implementation of the Welsh Language Standards placed on us by the Welsh Language Commissioner. Among the core principles is a commitment to ensure that our services will be of the same quality in Welsh and English by being equally visible, equally easy to use and equally effective and that we plan proactively and progressively in the interest of the Welsh language by using research expertise and applied expertise that benefits the use of the Welsh language in the university and further afield. The university supports and promotes academic work through the medium of Welsh and advocates Welsh language research in Welsh and British forums, such as the REF. Bangor University has a Pro Vice-Chancellor for Welsh Language, Culture and Region who is a leading figure in Welsh language, bilingualism and education research and leads the Welsh language and bilingual agenda within the University.

REF specific

To support the University's strategic aim of being a bilingual organisation, for REF preparations all internal REF related staff correspondence is provided bilingually; staff are able to both submit outputs for review and to review outputs and impact case studies via bilingual review forms with supporting information also provided bilingually. Staff are also able to apply for independent researcher status via a Welsh or English application process and our REF COP internal consultation process was also bilingual. Bangor has Welsh speaking staff in all REF Units of Assessment, and this supports our bilingual internal output review process. We also have Welsh speaking staff on REF related committees. Our PURE CRIS system can be operated in both Welsh and English.

Bangor University has had an institution-wide Current Research Information System (PURE) since July 2016, allowing staff to view, amend and update information on their research activity. The PURE system allows staff to nominate outputs for internal review during each annual research review and enables us to perform equality impact assessments, for example when looking at internal gradings of outputs. Bangor has a set of principles for internal grading of outputs for staff as part of REF preparation. These outline the criteria provided by REF and emphasise the University's commitment to best practice in the evaluation of research, including its commitments as a signatory of the DORA agreement.

Links to relevant policies and training:

[Equality Policy Statement](#)

[Dignity at Work and Study Policy](#)

[Welsh Language Policy](#)

Employee Support Policies

Equal Pay Audit

Gender Pay Gap reports

Equality and Diversity Training:

- Diversity in the workplace at Bangor University (mandatory)
- Unconscious bias training (mandatory)

2. Update on Actions Since REF 2021:

Following the EIA conducted at the end of REF 2021, we identified that, on average, and measuring across the entire submission, fewer outputs were "attributed" to female members of staff than to male members of staff. Working with colleagues leading on EDI, we investigated further to find that, on average, female members of staff tended to have fewer outputs in general in the full "pool" of eligible outputs captured in our PURE repository. Despite this, proportionally *more* of those outputs were eventually selected for inclusion.

As anticipated in our REF 2021 EIA, we since have worked closely with Bangor's Athena Swan leadership to conduct further qualitative and quantitative internal research about gender parity at the institution with respect to research outputs and to research activity more generally. This work in turn directly influenced the setting of key priorities in Bangor's Athena Swan Silver action plan with one of the priority areas focusing on "Creating and sustaining inclusive and supportive research practices". This includes objectives aimed at: increasing the proportion of women on T&R contracts; using a work load allocation model (WAM) to manage workloads to ensure staff have time for research and publication; ensuring that women are not disproportionately undertaking certain types of roles e.g. significant administrative roles; identifying and addressing barriers to women publishing; and supporting female academics to apply for schemes such as UKRI Future Leadership Fellowship etc. The Action plan also includes a commitment to ensuring EDI considerations are embedded in our preparations for REF 2029 –e.g. ensuring the reviewer pool used for internal evaluation of impact and outputs is as broad as possible by including a diversity of staff in terms of career stage and protected characteristics representative of the research community, and raising EDI issues relating to REF prominently in the reporting of our Annual Research Reviews to the Executive Board.

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

All Bangor staff with teaching and research contracts in the HESA staff record identify as having significant responsibility for research. The University's "ACADEMIC STATUS & CHANGE OF CONTRACT PATHWAY POLICY" provides a mechanism for staff who wish to request a move to a different academic contract type, with the support of their Head of School.

Part 3: Determining Research Independence

The REF eligibility status of all staff on research only contracts are reviewed during annual research reviews. These staff are initially identified internally as 'eligibility – pending' until independent status can be assessed in line with the final REF Guidance documentation including the [Research Fellowships list](#). From autumn 2025 onwards, all staff on research only contracts were invited to complete a short pro-forma (Appendix 2) in consultation with their School and College Deans of Research in order to establish whether they fulfil the criteria set for research independence within the REF 2029 guidelines. All completed forms are regularly reviewed by the University's REF Group and decisions communicated to staff in a timely manner via the REF Group or their School or College or directly from their Head of School, or a designated representative nominated by the Head of School. Independent status will be confirmed as part of the following annual research review. Once research independence has been confirmed staff do not need to resubmit any further evidence. We did not receive any feedback from any of our consultation routes regarding the independent research status process. This process will continue until REF submission.

Support for fixed-term and part-time staff. Annual monitoring of the number of staff (all staff) on fixed-term contracts is conducted via the Anti-Casualisation Group (a joint Human Resources and UCU group) which has an objective to reduce the proportion of fixed-term contracts by at least 5% (currently 39%) by 2028. In January 2023 Bangor launched a Bridging Support Scheme to enable the retention of experienced and skilled staff in order to sustain research teams and expertise and avoid breaks in employment and careers. The number of staff on fixed-term contracts is also monitored as part of the Annual Research Review (REF eligible). Bangor is also committed to ensure that part-time staff have the same access to development and support as full time staff. The profile of part-time staff (all staff) is reviewed annually, and the level of satisfaction with their work and support forms part of the Staff Survey (last run in 2024). Bangor also monitors the uptake of training and development opportunities by part-time staff to ensure that they have the same access to support and development opportunities as full-time staff.

As part of our Annual Research Review data analysis, we provide UoAs with basic information on the distribution of outputs amongst staff by career stage, age range, full or part-time status and gender, as well as an indication of the proportions authored by current and former staff. This information helps to give a preliminary indication of any obvious bias in the choice of outputs that would need further investigation and support the process of optimising output configuration for each UoA. For other protected characteristics, data is provided where there are sufficient numbers to avoid identification of individual staff.

1. Staff, Committees, and Training

Bangor University's REF Group is a standing committee with responsibility for REF that reports and makes recommendations about the University's REF submission to the University's Research Committee, which in turn reports to The University Executive Board. Membership and Terms of Reference are provided in Appendix 3. Approved minutes from these committees are available to Bangor staff via the staff intranet.

The REF Group also relies on other groups as part of the preparations for submission, such as writing groups for Strategy, People, and Research Environment (SPRE), working groups for specific elements such as the Code of Practice and workshops to explore topics or support particular groups such as cross-disciplinary impact case study workshops. These groups are ad hoc and have advisory roles only.

All members of the Executive Board, Research Committee, and REF Group receive equality training through Bangor's Equality E-learning and Unconscious Bias training courses. These modules are mandatory and monitored by the Human Resources department. In addition, staff with line managing responsibilities are strongly encouraged to complete the Equality for Managers training.

2. Appeals

Appeals regarding any aspect of the REF process or REF eligibility, including research independence, are considered by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) and will be evaluated for evidence of factual or process errors. Any issues that cannot be resolved via this process will be considered by the Vice-Chancellor, who will institute a rapid and independent review of each case within 28 working days. The Vice-Chancellor (or nominated representative) will convene an independent group of three senior academics, none of whom is on the REF Group. Staff are informed of the appeals process annually during each annual research review. A deadline for appeals will be set six months before the final REF 2029 submission deadline to ensure all appeals are completed prior to final submission.

3. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

The funding bodies require all HEIs to conduct an EIA on their policy and procedures for the REF to determine whether the institution's output selection policy for the REF has a differential impact on particular groups. An equality impact assessment (EIA) will be carried out on Bangor's REF Code of Practice prior to submission (Appendix 1). It will be kept under review as submissions are prepared to ensure that any necessary changes to prevent discrimination or promote equality are taken prior to the final REF submission deadline.

If any EIA identifies discrimination as a result of Bangor's policies or procedures the REF Group, in conjunction with the University's HR Department, will explore alternative procedures that could be employed to mitigate the negative effect or justify the policy or practice within the constraints of the law, and will also explore other solutions available to support the staff affected. If any policy or practice is found to advance equality, Bangor will seek to apply it to other areas of REF preparation.

Our approach to determining research independence in REF 2021 was reviewed with a light-touch EIA. No disparities in outcomes were found although it was acknowledged that the overall number of applications was small due to the small size of Bangor University's staff pool. Further monitoring of EIA considerations will take place as part of the research independence application process for REF 2029, via our Annual Research Reviews.

The COP and initial EIA will be published on our staff intranet REF pages once the COP has been approved by Medr. The COP and final EIA will be published on Bangor's main website after the REF submissions have been made. The published information will include the outcomes of any actions taken to prevent discrimination or advance equality.

Part 4: Allocating Contracts to UoAs

Bangor is a small institution therefore our approach to allocating contracts to REF UoAs aims to focus research concentration into areas in which there is a viable volume. Allocation of contracts to UoAs takes place during each annual research review and predominantly follows a School to UoA process with the exception from small units where research is reviewed in line with UoA descriptors and cross-referral is utilised if appropriate. Decisions made by the REF Group are then ratified by the Research Committee and the University's Executive. All staff are able to see which REF UoA they are assigned to via our PURE CRIS system.

1. Staff, Committees, and Training

Same as Part 2 above.

2. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

As outlined above in Part 1.2, our Bangor's Athena Swan Silver action plan includes a commitment to ensuring EDI considerations are embedded in our preparations for REF 2029 –e.g. raising EDI issues relating to REF prominently in the reporting of our Annual Research Reviews to the Executive Board, this would include reviewing the characteristics of staff contracts per UoA as part of the EDI analysis following each Annual Research Review.

Part 5: Selecting outputs

1. Policies and Procedures

This process forms part of Bangor's Annual Research Reviews. A key element of this process is that only outputs recorded in PURE will be considered. Clear communication is provided to staff on a regular basis, regarding when and how PURE should be used for recording outputs. All Bangor University members of staff associated with a given candidate output will be identified. These identified staff members will then be screened to determine whether one or more of them currently holds, or has previously held, an eligible contract. The contract period may include the date on which the output became publicly available, in which case the substantive link is confirmed. Where contract dates precede or follow the public availability dates of an output, further information may be required as determined by the relevant REF Panel Criteria.

2. **Selecting outputs where the substantive link is via former staff:** covering compulsory redundancy, voluntary redundancy or severance, retirement, expiration of fixed term contracts

Consideration of such outputs presumes that the outputs are recorded and accessible within the PURE system. The Jisc Publications Router populates PURE with publications from Bangor-affiliated staff. This enables us to identify outputs affiliated to Bangor that may be authored by former members of staff to ensure we are capturing all our research output.

Outputs that are present in PURE but have not been nominated for submission by author/s will be reviewed as follows:

- Outputs that are associated with current members of staff that haven't been nominated for review will not be considered further by this process.
- Outputs associated solely with Bangor University staff who have been made compulsorily redundant will not be considered further for review or submission.
- Outputs associated with other former staff, including due to retirement or voluntary severance, including but not limited to those who maintain Honorary or Emeritus staff, will be assessed by UoA leads or their nominees as part of the annual research review process to determine their eligibility and suitability for further internal or external review.

3. **Assigning outputs to UoA/s:** Considering interdisciplinary research and submitting an output to multiple UOAs.

Each research output must be assigned to the most appropriate Unit of Assessment (UoA), taking into account the disciplinary focus of the work, the subject affiliations of the contributing staff, and Bangor University's overarching research strategy.

Initial allocation of outputs will be based on an automated first pass that matches staff, via their home Schools, to the corresponding UoAs. Keywords, particularly those associated with journal articles, may be used to assist in determining the most relevant UoA for each output. Where an output could reasonably fall under more than one UoA, the relevant College Dean(s) of Research will lead the decision-making process. This decision will be based on which UoA best represents Bangor

University's research strengths and strategic priorities in the relevant area. Outputs that are identified as potentially interdisciplinary should be flagged during the nomination and review process for further consideration, including for submissions to multiple UoAs if appropriate. Decisions regarding the assignment of outputs, including interdisciplinary or multiple-UoA submissions, will be documented to ensure transparency and auditability.

4. Procedures for supporting diversity of outputs

Bangor University is committed to valuing the full diversity of research outputs produced by its staff. We recognise the importance of academic expertise in determining how research is best communicated in a given discipline area. All forms of eligible research output will be assessed equitably and without bias regarding format, medium, language or discipline. Authors are expressly encouraged to submit all types of research outputs, including those that take non-traditional or discipline-specific forms. For any outputs submitted for review in British Sign Language, we would initially seek internal review as for any other output and would engage external expertise for review if suitable expertise is not available within Bangor. The Executive Board has provided the REF Group with financial resources to enable us to obtain external review of REF eligible outputs where required.

Communications relating to the annual research review will include an exemplary list of the types of outputs identified in official REF guidance, to ensure staff are fully aware of the breadth of eligible research forms. Examples may include, but are not limited to, journal articles, books, chapters, performances, exhibitions, digital artefacts, software, policy reports, and creative works.

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

Research strategies and organisational structures have evolved over the REF cycle. These developments reflect both internal strategic priorities and external influences, such as changes in government policy and the funding landscape. In the early stages of the REF cycle, internal reviews have appropriately focused on the overall volume of outputs being generated and recorded. As the submission process progresses, subsequent reviews will shift in emphasis towards ensuring the representativeness of outputs. To ensure that submissions are representative of the research undertaken within each UoA, the annual research reviews will include a dedicated step in which UoA Leads, Deans of Research, and Heads of School jointly review the profile of research outputs. This review will compare the emerging submission profile with the current and historical descriptions of the unit's research strategy and activities, to identify potential gaps in representativeness.

6. Policies and procedures and responsible research assessment practice

- Bangor University is a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and is committed to ensuring that research and researchers are evaluated fairly, transparently, and in ways that support high-quality, diverse, and meaningful research. Bangor University assesses researchers based on the quality, content, and significance across their range of contributions to the university, not on journal-based or citation-based metrics, and

inclusion (or exclusion) in external rankings is not used as a primary indicator of researcher quality or value and does not form part of funding, appointment, and promotion considerations.

- Explicitly rule out or exclude evaluations of outputs based solely on Journal impact factor or other metric indicators of OUTLET quality
- Following COARA we emphasize throughout internal assessment the need to consider each output on the merits of quality in its own rights
- Academic judgment is at the core of assessment and reviewers are provided with specific Bangor guidance as well as REF guidance and criteria.

7. Staff, Committees, and Training

Same as Part 2 above.

8. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

See Part 3.3 above.

Part 6: Appendices

1. **Equality Impact Assessment**
2. **REF 2029 Research Independence status application form**
3. **Committees Terms of Reference**