**Key dates and facts from REF 2021 based on draft guidance on submission document released in July 2018.** Elisa Piccaro – 20/09/2018

The original document can be accessed here: <http://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/2018/draftguidanceonsubmissions201801.html>

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| **REF 2021 overall dates** |
| **Event** | **Date** |
| Staff census date | 31 July 2020 |
| Deadline for submission | 27 November 2020 |
| Results to be expected | December 2021 |
| Publication of submissions, panel overview reports and subprofiles | Spring 2022 |
| REF 2021 to inform research funding from | academic year 2022-2023 |

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| **Details about different periods considered for each element of the submission** |
| **Element of submission** | **Period type** | **Dates** |
| Research outputs | Publication period | 1 January 2014 - 31 December 2020 |
| Impact case studies | Assessment period for achieving the impact | 1 August 2013 - 31 July 2020  |
| Impact case studies | Underpinning research period | 1 January 2000 - 31 December 2020 |
| Environment data | Period for research doctoral degrees awarded and research income | 1 August 2013 - 31 July 2020 |

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| **Open Access** |
| **Date the output was accepted for publication** | **Open Access requirement** |
| 1 April 2016 - 31 March 2018 | The output must have been deposited within the open access repository as soon after the point of acceptance as possible, and no later than three months after the date of publication. |
| 1 April 2018 - 31 December 2020 | The output must have been deposited within the open access repository as soon after the point of acceptance as possible, and no later than three months after this date. |

**Total number of outputs to be returned.** The total number of outputs must equal 2.5 times the summed FTE of the unit’s submitted staff. A minimum of one output must be attributed to each staff member returned, and no more than five attributed to any staff member.

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| **Impact case studies requirement** |
| **Number of submitted staff (FTE)** | **Required number of impact case studies** |
| Up to 19.99 | 2 |
| 20 to 34.99 | 3 |
| 35 to 49.99 | 4 |
| 50 to 64.99 | 5 |
| 65 to 79.99 | 6 |
| 80 to 94.99 | 7 |
| 95 to 109.99 | 8 |
| 110 to 159.99 | 9 |
| 160 or more | 10, plus one further case study per additional 50 FTE |

**Research doctoral degrees awarded.** Each submission must include the number of research doctoral degrees awarded in each academic year (1 August to 31 July) 2013–14 to 2019–20 to students supervised within the submitted unit.

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| **Assessment criteria** |
| **Element of submission** | **% weight** | **Criteria** |
| Outputs | 60 | originality, significance, rigour |
| Impact | 25 | reach, significance |
| Environment | 15 | vitality, sustainability |

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| **Overall quality profile: Definitions of starred levels** |
| **Starred level** | **Definition** |
| Four star | Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour. |
| Three star | Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence. |
| Two star | Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour. |
| One star | Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.  |
| Unclassified | Quality that falls below the standard of nationally recognised work. Or work which does not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of this assessment. |

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| **Outputs sub-profile: Criteria and definitions of starred levels** |
| The criteria for assessing the quality of outputs are ‘originality, significance and rigour’. |
| **Starred level** | **Definition** |
| Four star | Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour. |
| Three star | Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence. |
| Two star | Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour. |
| One star | Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour. |
| Unclassified | Quality that falls below the standard of nationally recognised work. Or work which does not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of this assessment. |

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| **Impact sub-profile: Criteria and definitions of starred levels** |
| The criteria for assessing impacts are ‘reach’ and ‘significance’:* In assessing the impact described within a case study, the panel will form an overall view about its ‘reach and significance’ taken as a whole, rather than assess ‘reach and significance’ separately.
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| **Starred level** | **Definition** |
| Four star | Outstanding impacts in terms of their reach and significance. |
| Three star | Very considerable impacts in terms of their reach and significance. |
| Two star | Considerable impacts in terms of their reach and significance. |
| One star | Recognised but modest impacts in terms of their reach and significance.  |
| Unclassified | The impact is of little or no reach and significance; or the impact was not eligible; or the impact was not underpinned by excellent research produced by the submitted unit. |

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| **Environment sub-profile: Criteria and definitions of starred levels** |
| The research environment will be assessed in terms of its ‘vitality and sustainability’. Panels will consider both the ‘vitality and sustainability’ of the submitted unit, including its approach to enabling impact from its research, and its contribution to the ‘vitality and sustainability’ of the wider research base. |
| **Starred level** | **Definition** |
| Four star | An environment that is conducive to producing research of world-leading quality and enabling outstanding impact, in terms of its vitality and sustainability.  |
| Three star | An environment that is conducive to producing research of internationally excellent quality and enabling very considerable impact, in terms of its vitality and sustainability.  |
| Two star | An environment that is conducive to producing research of internationally recognised quality and enabling considerable impact, in terms of its vitality and sustainability. |
| One star | An environment that is conducive to producing research of nationally recognised quality and enabling recognised but modest impact, in terms of its vitality and sustainability.  |
| Unclassified | An environment that is not conducive to producing research of nationally recognised quality or enabling impact of reach and significance.  |

**Definitions of research for the REF**

For the purposes of the REF, research is defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared.

It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, culture, society, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction. It excludes routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes such as for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques. It also excludes the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research.

It includes research that is published, disseminated or made publicly available in the form of assessable research outputs, and confidential reports (as defined in the guidance linked above).

**Definitions of impact for the REF**

For the purposes of the REF, impact is defined as an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia.

Impact includes, but is not limited to, an effect on, change or benefit to:

* the activity, attitude, awareness, behaviour, capacity, opportunity, performance, policy, practice, process or understanding
* of an audience, beneficiary, community, constituency, organisation or individuals
* in any geographic location whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.

Impact includes the reduction or prevention of harm, risk, cost or other negative effects.

For the purposes of the impact element of the REF:

a. Impacts on research or the advancement of academic knowledge within the HE sector (whether in the UK or internationally) are excluded. (The submitted unit’s contribution to academic research and knowledge is assessed within the ‘outputs’ and ‘environment’ elements of REF.)

b. Impacts on students, teaching or other activities both within and beyond the submitting HEI are included.

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| **Units of assessment (UoA)** |
| Main Panel | UoA - number | UoA - Name |
| A | 1 | Clinical Medicine |
| 2 | Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care |
| 3 | Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy |
| 4 | Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience |
| 5 | Biological Sciences |
| 6 | Agriculture, Food and Veterinary Sciences |
| **B** | 7 | Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences |
| 8 | Chemistry |
| 9 | Physics |
| **10** | **Mathematical Sciences** |
| 11 | Computer Science and Informatics |
| 12 | Engineering |
| C | 13 | Architecture, Built Environment and Planning |
| 14 | Geography and Environmental Studies |
| 15 | Archaeology |
| 16 | Economics and Econometrics |
| 17 | Business and Management Studies |
| 18 | Law |
| 19 | Politics and International Studies |
| 20 | Social Work and Social Policy |
| 21 | Sociology |
| 22 | Anthropology and Development Studies |
| 23 | Education |
| 24 | Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism |
| D | 25 | Area Studies |
| 26 | Modern Languages and Linguistics |
| 27 | English Language and Literature |
| 28 | History |
| 29 | Classics |
| 30 | Philosophy |
| 31 | Theology and Religious Studies |
| 32 | Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory |
| 33 | Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies |
| 34 | Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management |