

Meeting of the Academic Board

2.00 pm on Wednesday, 21 February 2018
in 1B27 - Technopark, SE1 6LN

Agenda

<i>No.</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Pages</i>	<i>Presenter</i>
9.	REF 2021	155 - 160	PI

Date of next meeting

2.00 pm on Wednesday, 6 June 2018

Members: Pat Bailey (Chair), Sodiq Akinbade, Ian Alberty, Asa Hilton Barber, Craig Barker, Janet Bohrer, Patrick Callaghan, Charles Egbu, Patricia Godwin, Paul Ivey, Gurpreet Jagpal, Janet Jones, Mike Molan, Jenny Owen, Shushma Patel, Lesley Roberts, Tony Roberts, Shân Wareing and Saranne Weller

Apologies: Kirsteen Coupar and Warren Turner

In attendance: Claire Freer and Sally Skillett-Moore

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	CONFIDENTIAL
Paper title:	LSBU's Strategy for REF 2021: an overview
Date of Report	16 February 2018
Board/Committee	Academic Board of Study/Executive
Authors:	<i>The REF Strategy Group:</i> Paul Ivey (chair) Gurpreet Jagpal Karl Smith Argyrios Georgopoulos Graeme Maidment
Exec Sponsor:	Paul Ivey
Purpose:	To inform the University of the approach developed by the REF Strategy Group, in concert with other key University stakeholders, to maximise LSBU's performance in REF 2021
Recommendation:	That LSBU supports the proposed strategy and framework for delivery.

Executive Summary:

The University seeks to deliver a substantial improvement in its performance in the REF, raising its Grade Point Average (GPA, where 4.0 represents a perfect score) from the 2.52 attained in 2014 to ≥ 2.80 . Further, it seeks to increase the number of FTE submitted (from ca. 100 to ≥ 150), the number of PGR completions, the value of research income attained and the number of Units of Assessment (UoAs) (from 7 to 8), thus increasing LSBU's QR income. Further, we also want to put LSBU in the strongest position possible for subsequent REFs.

In November 2017, HEFCE published the key decisions on the implementation of REF 2021. In response to this, the REF Strategy Group has developed a framework for implementing the LSBU REF strategy, which comprises the following principal strands:-

- Establishing and consolidating the structure of the submission through the Research Centres and Groups and the Unit of Assessment (UoA) leads
- The Code of Practice Working Group (to cover staff selection)
- Data collection and compliance for REF
- Optimising of the REF 2021 UoA submissions
- External review
- Initiatives to improve our institutional submission
- Regular Reports to Executive on Progress.

This paper describes the full key decisions from HEFCE, LSBU's approach to the REF and our submission for consideration.

REF 2021 overview:

The UK government funded, Research Excellence Framework (REF) assessment takes place every 6-7 years: the next REF will be in 2021. The results of REF direct the annual distribution of over 1 billion pounds of Quality-related Research (QR) funding across the submitting Higher Education Institutes (HEIs).

In November 2017, HEFCE published the key decisions concerning the manner of implementation of REF 2021. These are summarised below:-

Impact:

- The REF's Impact element has increased in value from 20 % to 25 %, with the allocation for Research Outputs reducing from 65 % to 60 %.
- The Impact template, which comprised 20 % of REF 2014's Impact element, has been subsumed into the Environment element.
- Together, the changes summarised above mean that the value of Impact case studies has risen from 16% to 25 % - an increase of 56%.

Staff submission

- All staff with significant responsibility for research are required to be submitted.
- Contractual status will be used, in the first instance, to identify staff with significant responsibility for research, termed "Category A". Category A staff are ≥ 0.2 FTE, substantively connected to the institution, have a HESA coding of *research only* or *teaching and research*, are demonstrably independent if they have a research only contract and are on the payroll on the census date [31st July 2020].
- Where category A status does not accurately reflect significant responsibility for research, institutions can set their own criteria for identifying who has significant responsibility. The processes for identifying who has significant responsibility for research must be explicated in the institution's REF Code of Practice.

No. research outputs required for submitted FTE

- Each submitting Unit of Assessment (UoA) will need to return an average of 2.5 research outputs per 1.0 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff members submitted. Each researcher employed on the census date (31st July 2020) can submit a minimum of 1 output and a maximum of 5 outputs.
- Outputs demonstrably generated at LSBU within the census period (1st Jan. 2014 to 31st Dec. 2020) by researchers who at the time of employment at LSBU had category A status, but who are no longer employed on the employment census date (July 31st 2020), can be included within the UoA submission.

Open Access

- Journal articles and conference proceedings with an International Standard Serial Number must be made open access compliant three months after the date of acceptance from 1st April 2018 and three months after the date of publication during the first two years of the policy (1st April 2016-31st March 2018).

Units of Assessment

- There will be a single Unit of Assessment (UoA) for Engineering, with **an** option to make multiple submissions.
- Film and Screen Studies will be included in UOA 33, yielding: Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies.

The LSBU REF Strategy

Mission: The target for REF 2021 is to:-

- Submit the best possible submission for LSBU
- For each School to submit a Unit of Assessment (UoA) that is representative of their research, but with cross-school collaboration in submissions encouraged to evidence LSBU's interdisciplinarity
- Increase the number of FTE submitted (from ca. 100 to ≥ 150)
- Move LSBU to a mid-table position amongst all submitting HEIs through obtaining an overall increase in score from 2.52 to ≥ 2.70 GPA, with outputs rising from 2.49 to ≥ 2.70 GPA, impact from 2.83 to ≥ 3.10 GPA and environment from 2.23 to ≥ 2.80 GPA
- Position LSBU well for forthcoming REFs.

Our Approach:

The REF Strategy Group

Chaired by Paul Ivey, the REF Strategy Group's role is to oversee and police the University's submission to REF 2021. Meeting quarterly, it is working to ensure that the quality and scale of the REF submission is maximised, ensuring also that the REF strategy is attuned to changes to the REF2014 framework implemented by HEFCE and further, making recommendations to LSBU's Executive as required. It has oversight on all of the key elements of LSBU's REF preparations.

The REF Strategy Group's framework for implementing their REF strategy comprises the following key strands:-

- Establishing and consolidating the structure of the submission through the Research Centres and Groups and the Unit of Assessment (UoA) leads
- The Code of Practice Working Group (to cover staff selection)
- Data collection and compliance for REF
- Optimising the REF 2021 UoA submissions
- External review
- Initiatives taking place to optimise our institutional submission
- Regular Reports to Executive on Progress.

These 7 strands are described below:-

1. Establishing and consolidating the structure of the submission through the Research Centres and Groups and the Unit of Assessment (UoA) leads

The intention is to have at least one UoA representing each school and for the **Research Centres** to underpin each UoA submission. Thus, the Centres comprise the critical element of LSBU's REF strategy, collectively covering the three REF elements of Research Outputs, Impact and Environment. The Centres are therefore tasked with producing not only research outputs but also, development of staff and generation of impact case studies, research income and PGR completions.

The Research Centre framework formally came into being in Aug 2017 with the initialisation of 14 Research Centres. The Centres encompass ca. 150 researchers. A new call for Centres is being run in Feb. 2018 and a further call is proposed for 2019.

Research Groups are tasked with developing a supportive research environment for colleagues. Thus, they aid the development of staff who are new to research, with a view to developing LSBU's REF 2028 submission and they serve to foster an inclusive research culture across the University, as well as allowing emerging research themes within LSBU to develop.

Unit of Assessment leads - appointed by the Deans and Directors of Research (DoRs), with guidance from the REF Strategy Group, the UoA leads are tasked with supporting the DoRs in developing and optimising the UoA submission(s) for their parent schools.

2. *The Code of Practice Working Group*

Chaired by Prof. Shushma Patel, the Code of Practice (CoP) Working Group has been established to produce LSBU's CoP for identifying and robustly evidencing who, from LSBU's Category A pool, has Significant Responsibility for Research.

The CoP Working Group has a pivotal role to play in developing LSBU's submission. Firstly, because it will work to ensure, via the CoP, that only research-active staff members are submitted, thus reducing burden, in terms of expectations of producing research outputs, on staff who are not experienced in research and are chiefly focussed on teaching, administration and professional practice. Secondly and more critically, it will seek to establish a protocol for ensuring that, in principle, researchers who have been identified as having significant responsibility for research, are assigned a workload allocation that provides meaningful time for research. In the principle of fairness, academics with significant responsibility for research should have a workload allocation that reflects, enables and supports their contribution to the REF.

3. *Data collection and compliance for REF*

The Annual Universal Research Audit (**AURA**) is an online survey, first conducted in the autumn of 2016 and run for a second time in the autumn of 2017, which is completed by all staff across the University. It has the following critical functions for the REF:

- It collects data on researchers' publications over the past academic year and also on what they plan to publish: this data is crucial to modelling the REF submission
- Through asking researchers to use the REF criteria to self-assess their research outputs, it develops researchers' understanding of the REF review process and thus inculcates a REF oriented approach to research output development
- It collects information on researchers' collaborations and measures of esteem – this information is critical to the preparation of each UoA's Environment element.

Impact - An extensive database of LSBU's potential Impact case studies has been developed from which impact case studies will be optimised and evidenced.

Open Access - Symplectic is the system used by the University to collate and archive all of the research outputs that its researchers produce, prior to the outputs' uploading to the University open access repository (<http://researchopen.lsbu.ac.uk/>). The Library and Learning Resource (LLR) team manage the upload process to ensure that no copyright laws are contravened.

LSBU policy requires that LSBU's researchers individually register and deposit their research outputs to Symplectic within the three month compliance window. To maximise open access compliance, REI have worked with LLR to develop an Open Access comms campaign, which has included the dispatch of reminder emails, Yammer posts, presentations to schools, the circulation of promotional flyers and the placing of instructional material on the intranet. To further improve compliance, in December 2017 LLR commenced the issuing of monthly open access compliance reports to DoRs and in spring 2018, LSBU will appoint an Open Access Officer to support the work of the Repository Manager (Stephen Grace).

4. *Optimising the REF 2021 UoA submissions*

The **REF Working Group** meets bi-monthly and its role is to optimise the REF2021 submission. Thus, its work involves: 1) reviewing and advising on the data obtained to inform REF 2021 preparations; 2) exploring and consulting on proposals to enhance the University's performance in the REF; 3) reviewing work underway to ensure compliance with the REF's requirements; and 4) developing proposals and material in support of the REF submission for review and approval by the REF Strategy Group.

Using research output data collected from AURA, the external reviews, the Research Centre reviews and Symplectic, as well as SciVal, a number of different **UoA submission scenarios** will be explored for LSBU. UoA leads will work with REI to develop initial UoA mock submissions, whereby researchers are allocated to UoAs solely on the basis of their parent School. These initial projections, which will

comprise 1 page summaries of the UoA's projected Research Output, Impact and Environment submissions, will then be used to scope alternative scenarios involving not only movement of researchers across schools but also, alternative UoA selections (where it is felt that that a different UoA could yield more favourable reviews and/or funding).

5. External review

For both AURA 2016 and AURA 2017, DoRs have selected outputs for external review by academic experts. These external reviews are used to provide tailored feedback to individuals on the quality of their research and how they can improve it, as well as moderate the self-assessed scores collected from AURA and inform decisions on which of the outputs should be submitted.

6. Initiatives to improve our institutional submission

Centrally, we have developed and implemented a number of initiatives to increase capacity and capability, including the Research Sabbaticals scheme, the London Doctoral Academy, the Professoriate and the Researcher Development Framework.

At School level we aim to work with DORs and UoA leads to support local activities as informed by evidence through our annual AURA and REF analysis work.

7. Regular Reports to Executive on Progress

We aim to provide initially 6 monthly reports on progress to Executive and as we move closer to the REF submission date, we will provide more frequent status reports. Our **timeline** is as follows (please note, some dates are subject to change):-

Key Dates	HEFCE Milestones	LSBU actions
Winter 2017/18	Appointment of panels Consultation workshops on Impact	Initiate CoP Working Group Launch new Centres + Groups call Complete interim Centre reviews
Spring 2018	Panels meet to develop criteria	Preparation of mock UoA submissions Shortlisting of Impact case studies
Summer 2018	Publishing of draft guidance, including instructions on CoP	Drafting of Environment statements Develop Impact case study plans Finalise institutional Impact strategy Development of draft CoP
Autumn 2018	Consultation on panel criteria	Conduct AURA 3.0, inclusive of Centre + Group reviews Production of revised mock UoA submissions Issuing of 1 st and 2 nd CoP drafts
Winter 2018/19	Submissions + Panel Criteria guidance and Working Methods published	Complete CoP and submit to HEFCE Call for new Centres and Groups; interim Centre review Decision from Exec on UoAs to be submitted
Spring/summer 2019	N/A	Compile significant responsibility for research evidence Develop drafts of Impact case studies for external review
Autumn 2019	Opening of survey on submission intentions	Conduct AURA 4.0, inclusive of Centre + Group reviews Produce revised mock UoA submissions
Winter 2019/20	Complete preparation of submission systems Publication of approved CoPs	Launch new Centres + Groups call Complete interim Centre reviews Revise UoA Environment statements
Spring 2020	Submission phase commences	Commence compilation of research outputs in submission-ready form
Summer 2020	July 31 st : Staff census date; end of assessment period for impact and environment data.	Complete all Impact case studies, with evidence Complete assembly, by UoA, of all UoA Environment data and Environment statements Submit draft submission to Exec. for consideration
Autumn/winter 2020	Dec. 31 st : Research output closure assessment period	Final round of AURA and confirm research output selection Signoff from Exec. and submit to HEFCE.

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