**REF OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

**Notes and Actions from the Meeting Held on 18 January 2021**

**PRESENT:** Prof Andrew Ball (AB), Prof Alistair Sambell, Tracy Turner (TT), Kirsty Taylor (KT), Deborah Wills (notes)

**APOLOGIES:** Siobhan Moss

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|  |  | **ACTIONS** |
| **1.**  1.1  1.2 | **Minutes of meeting held 17 December 2020**  The minutes were approved as a correct record.  All actions had been completed. AB requested access to the box account containing the Environment Statements. | **KT** |
| **2.**  2.1 | **Institution Environment Statement**  TT confirmed that following meetings with Marketing, a new up to date Athena Swann page should be available imminently. Once available externally, the relevant links can be included in the institution environment statement. |  |
| **3.**  3.1  3.2 | **UoA Environment Statement**  TT confirmed that all except for one UoA have sent copies of their UoA Environment statements. The latest REF guidance and templates specify that they must be produced in accessibility style, so there is additional work to do over and above the content to ensure each one is compliant. LTA has volunteered assistance and TT is liaising with her to establish how much time she can give.  Some UoAs have submitted statements which are too long and not really in a final version state at present. |  |
| **4.**  4.1  4.2 | **Impact case studies**  Some UoAs are working closely with R&E, with the aim of being ready at the end of January. The ICSs do not have to be accessible in the same way as environment statements, because Research England will be putting them into their own database which will make them accessible. TT/ES are continuing to meet UoAs and review case studies.  UoAs are at different stages of completion and assessment of evidence which needs to be embedded in the narrative to make good case studies. TT advised we will be in a better position at the end of January to advise on the final submissions, but AB asked if REFOC could be kept informed of any major concerns before the next meeting by email as needed. |  |
| **5.**  5.1  5.2  5.3 | **UoA Output Pools**  KT has completed an update on all UOAs and is finalising outputs. One UoA are still to confirm their final output pool. Some UoAs have multi-component submissions so KT is liaising with other universities to see how they handle these type of submissions and get best practice recommendations, as the REF submission system is not set up to make multi-component submissions.  KT advised that items of actual evidence, including books, CDs etc., that are unavailable electronically, will be collated at her home for direct transportation to Research England.  TT advised there may something that could be received from Research England in their update due this week around any flexibility of dates and activities. |  |
| **6.**  6.1 | **REF Submission System**  KT has tested the system and it works. Only staff and output details will be automatically transferred, the remaining data and information will be uploaded separately. AB will be added as an additional submitter. |  |
| **7.**  7.1  7.2  7.3  7.4 | **Any Other Business**  **ECRs** **and Individual Circumstances** – One School have requested an extra individual circumstances (IC) round. There has been less engagement with the IC process than we would like and we know there are more ECRs than formally identified as such. If we did agree to another round so that the School could award more ECRs, there would be no ultimate benefit, as the unit reductions deadline has passed.  TT reported that REF were advised ECR identification could be a problem using the process they required, but they went ahead and relied on voluntary declarations that universities were instructed to put in place rather than enabling the universities to drive this forward and make final decisions.  ICs have been discussed regularly at URC/G but because of the process we were required by REF to implement, centrally, we are unaware whether there are specific staff that wanted to be identified but haven’t been given the opportunity.  REFOC agreed therefore that at this late stage, it would not be appropriate or add any value to run another round of IC. |  |
| **8.**  8.1 | **Date of next meeting**  The next meeting is scheduled for 22 February. It was agreed an additional meeting be arranged for 5-6 February. |  |