

## Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances Form

This document is being sent to all Category A eligible staff to REF2021 (see '[Guidance on submissions](#)', paragraphs 117-122 and the Abertay REF 2021 Code of Practice <https://intranet.abertay.ac.uk/research/ref2021/>). As part of the university's commitment to supporting equality and diversity in REF, we have put in place safe and supportive structures for staff to declare information about any equality-related circumstances that may have affected their ability to research productively during the assessment period (1 January 2014 – 31 July 2020), and particularly their ability to produce research outputs at the same rate as staff not affected by circumstances. The purpose of collecting this information is threefold:

- To enable staff with a significant responsibility for research, who have not been able to produce a REF-eligible output during the assessment period, to be submitted to REF without the minimum requirement of one output where they have;
  - circumstances that have resulted in an overall period of 46 months or more absence from research during the assessment period, due to equality-related circumstances (see below)
  - circumstances *equivalent* to 46 months or more absence from research due to equality-related circumstances
  - two or more qualifying periods of family-related leave.
- To recognise the effect that equality-related circumstances (see below) can have on an individual's ability to research productively, and to adjust expectations in terms of expected workload / production of research outputs.
- To establish whether there are any Units of Assessment where the proportion of declared circumstances is sufficiently high to warrant a request to the higher education funding bodies for a reduced required number of outputs to be submitted.

### Applicable circumstances

If your ability to research productively during the assessment period has been constrained due to one or more of the following circumstances, you are requested to complete the attached form.

- Qualifying as an Early Career Researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016)
- Absence from work due to secondments or career breaks outside the HE sector
- Qualifying periods of family-related leave
- Circumstances with an equivalent effect to absence, including:
  - Disability (including chronic conditions)
  - Ill health, injury or mental health conditions
  - Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity or adoption that fall outside of the standard allowances for leave
  - Caring responsibilities
  - Gender reassignment
  - Other circumstances
  - COVID-19 related circumstances (REF6a only)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As well as effects due to applicable circumstances (such as ill health, caring responsibilities), this includes other personal circumstances related to COVID-19 (such as furloughed staff, health-related or clinical staff diverted to frontline services, staff resource diverted to other priority areas within the HEI in response to COVID-19); and / or external factors related to COVID-19 (for example, restricted access to research facilities).

Further information can be found in paragraph 160 of the Guidance on Submissions (REF 2019/01).

Completion and return of the form is voluntary, and individuals who do not choose to return it will not be put under any pressure to declare information if they do not wish to do so. Completion of this form and/or a declaration of information about any equality-related circumstances with your line-manager or directly to your School HR/OD Partner in confidence, are the only means by which the University will be gathering this information; we will not be using HR records, contract start dates, etc. You should therefore complete and return the form if any of the above circumstances apply and you and you are willing to provide the associated information.

### **Ensuring Confidentiality**

Completed forms should be returned to the Special Circumstances Panel ([SpecialCircumstances@abertay.ac.uk](mailto:SpecialCircumstances@abertay.ac.uk)). Completed forms will be treated in the strictest confidence. Staff circumstances will be considered in a fair and consistent way by a confidential meeting of the Special Circumstances Panel that will convene as necessary (according to demand) and who will report to the REF Steering Group. The Special Circumstances Panel will determine whether a valid case is made for a reduction in submitted output if circumstances have prevented an individual's ability to research productively and produce output throughout the REF period, according to REF 2021 Guidance (see section 4.3 of the Abertay REF 2021 Code of Practice). In all cases a note of the special circumstances considered and the finding of the Panel will be recorded and retained confidentially for audit (see REF Privacy Notice) and REF Data Collection Statement (see REF 2021 in MyAbertay). The Panel's finding will be communicated to the individual (in writing by November 2020) and to the REF Steering Group. The University will destroy submitted information about individuals' circumstances on completion of the assessment phase of the REF.

If the institution decides to apply to the funding bodies for either form of reduction of outputs (removal of 'minimum of one' requirement or unit circumstances), we will need to provide UKRI with data that you have disclosed about your individual circumstances, to show that the criteria have been met for reducing the number of outputs. Please see the ['Guidance on submissions'](#) document (paragraphs 151-201) for more detail about reductions in outputs and what information needs to be submitted.

Submitted data will be kept confidential to the UKRI REF team, the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs. All these bodies are subject to confidentiality arrangements. The REF team will destroy the submitted data about individuals' circumstances on completion of the assessment phase.

### **Changes in circumstances**

The university recognises that staff circumstances may change between completion of the declaration form and the census date (31 July 2020). If this is the case, then staff should contact the Special Circumstances Panel to provide the updated information.

To submit this form you should email the completed form to the Special Circumstances Panel ([SpecialCircumstances@abertay.ac.uk](mailto:SpecialCircumstances@abertay.ac.uk)).

**Name:** [Click here to insert text.](#)

**Department:** [Click here to insert text.](#)

Do you have a REF-eligible output published between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2020?

Yes

No

Please complete this form if you have one or more applicable equality-related circumstance (see above) which you are willing to declare. Please provide requested information in relevant box(es).

Circumstance	Time period affected
<p><b>Early Career Researcher (started career as an independent researcher on or after 1 August 2016).</b></p> <p><i>Date you became an early career researcher.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter a date.</p>
<p><b>Junior clinical academic who has not gained Certificate of completion of Training by 31 July 2020.</b></p>	<p>Tick here <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>Career break or secondment outside of the HE sector.</b></p> <p><i>Dates and durations in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter dates and durations.</p>
<p><b>Family-related leave;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maternity leave</li> <li>• adoption leave</li> <li>• Additional paternity or adoption or shared parental leave lasting for four months or more.</li> </ul> <p><i>For each period of leave, state the nature of the leave taken and the dates and durations in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter dates and durations.</p>
<p><b>Disability (including chronic conditions)</b></p> <p><i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively with details of the effect/impact of the condition on the ability to carry out independent research. Total duration in months.</i></p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>

<p><b>Mental health condition</b></p> <p><i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	Click here to enter text.
<p><b>Ill health or injury</b></p> <p><i>To include: Nature / name of condition, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	Click here to enter text.
<p><b>Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity or adoption that fall outside of standard allowance for leave</b></p> <p><i>To include: Nature of constraint(s), with details of the effect/impact of the condition on the ability to carry out independent research including any periods of absence from work beyond Family-related Leave covered above, and any periods at work when unable to research productively.</i></p>	Click here to enter text.
<p><b>Caring responsibilities</b></p> <p><i>To include: Nature of responsibility, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	Click here to enter text.
<p><b>Gender reassignment</b></p> <p><i>To include: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p>	Click here to enter text.
<p><b>COVID-19</b> (Applicable only where requests are being made for the removal of the minimum of one requirement)</p> <p><i>To include: periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.</i></p> <p><i>The overall impact of the COVID-19 effects should be considered in combination with other applicable circumstances affecting the staff member's ability to research productively throughout the period.</i></p>	Click here to enter text.

**Any other exceptional reasons e.g. bereavement.**

*To include: brief explanation of reason, periods of absence from work, and periods at work when unable to research productively. Total duration in months.*

Click here to enter text.

Please confirm, by ticking the box provided, that:

- The above information provided is a true and accurate description of my circumstances as of the date below
- I understand and accept that the above information will be used for REF purposes only and will be seen by Abertay University's Special Circumstances Panel and a note of the special circumstances considered and the decision made will be seen by the REF Steering Group.
- I understand and accept that it may be necessary to share the information with the REF team, the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, and main panel chairs.

I agree

**Name:** Print name here

**Signed:** Sign or initial here

**Date:** Insert date here

I give my permission for an People and OD Partner to contact me to discuss my circumstances, and my requirements in relation this these.

I give my permission for the details of this form to be passed on to the relevant contact within my Dean of School. (Please note, if you do not give permission your School may be unable to adjust expectations and put in place appropriate support for you).

I give my permission for the details of this form to be passed on to Abertay University's REF Appeals Panel in connection with any appeal I make.

I would like to be contacted by:

Email  Insert email address

Phone  Insert contact telephone number