

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Department	Research Office
Policy	Call for recognition and support of research

Description

The call represents the opportunity for the Academy to recognise staff on teaching-only contracts who are already undertaking significant research, via movement onto teaching-and-research contracts. The call is open to teaching-only staff doing research according to the definition detailed in the Academy's Research Strategy and Research Excellence Framework 2021.

The application process is aimed at those with an active research profile who would like this to be acknowledged within their Academy role and job description, so that they can be institutionally supported as researchers. The benefits of having Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) recognised in job descriptions lie in career advancement, mentoring, publication opportunities, and financial support to bring research projects to fruition.

This Equality Impact Assessment considers the call for recognition and support of research in respect of its inclusiveness, fairness, and compliance with the Equality Act 2010. It looks to ensure that the application process does not disadvantage any protected groups, to identify and mitigate potential barriers to participation and to promote equality of opportunity for all applicants.

Full guidance and application form is available to staff via SharePoint.

Could the policy have an adverse impact on equality in relation to the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010?

- Age
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Marriage or civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

No, not directly. However, the following recommendations should be considered to ensure that there is no adverse impact:

- Disability: ensure the digital accessibility of the application form and offer this in alternative formats, where necessary, to support applicants with disabilities.
- Age: be sensitive to the issue of early-career versus senior researchers, when evaluating applications and making awards.
- Pregnancy and maternity: consider the specific needs of applicants with caring responsibilities in both award and level of research responsibility required.
- Ensure panel members have undertaken unconscious bias training.
- Make reference in the call to the Academy's Recruitment and Selection Policy, with particular regard to equal opportunities and the provision of reasonable adjustments.
- The call currently states that in support of an appeal against a panel decision 'applicants must show that the decision was wrong, for example, because of a serious mistake or procedural irregularity, or that the outcome was unfair for a particular reason.' This is a little vague and a revision of the wording should be considered making it clear that appeals can be made where there is clear evidence of procedural irregularities, including evidence of discrimination in relation to protected characteristics.

In support of the above the application form could usefully include an Equity and Accessibility section; such as that below:

We aim to support all applicants equitably. Please complete the following to help us understand any adjustments or support you may need.

- *Do you require any reasonable adjustments to participate fully in this process?*
- *Are there any caring responsibilities or personal circumstances you would like us to consider when reviewing your application (e.g. parental leave, part-time work status, health-related needs)?*
- *Would you prefer to discuss any of the above confidentially with a member of the Research Office team?*

It was also noted that the call for support is not open to professional services staff and PhD students, who are supported through other routes and initiatives. It would be useful to signpost professional services staff to these routes and initiatives, to ensure that they do not feel disadvantaged by not being able to submit an application for SRR.

Does this policy provide opportunities to make a positive impact on equality?

Yes, the call is transparent with regard to the application process, award and support that staff may receive: The call advises that:

- Applications are considered by an evaluation panel on a case-by-case basis, to consist of: 1 member of the Research Office; The Research Management Team; An appointed internal peer reviewer with complementary research specialisms; An appropriate member of HR.
- The REF 2021 grading system will be used as part of the assessment process and that sample work will need to be judged as 2* quality or above in order for SRR to be recognised.
- An appeal process in place, where applicants must show that the decision was wrong, for example, because of a serious mistake or procedural irregularity, or that the outcome was unfair.
- Teaching-only staff who may wish to apply for SRR should provide evidence of a body of work that has been produced in the absence of any prior research allocation and funding. This could include submission of examples of their best work, which may still be in progress. The evaluation panel will be cognisant of the challenges faced by teaching-only staff in bringing research projects to fruition as finalised outputs. In this way the application and award process could also be seen to be supportive of early-career researchers.
- Research objectives and support for teaching staff with SRR are discussed in an annual research planning meeting with research managers. Also, for career advancement, undertaking research that is institutionally recognised may feed into pay reviews and, in the longer term, applications for professorship or associate professorship. The process allows for self-management and effective communication with line managers to balance research alongside teaching, administration and other responsibilities. This may include participation in conferences and research dissemination or impact activities, submission of funding applications and the preparation of research outputs for the Research Excellence Framework (REF).
- The Academy promotes self-management of research time, with support through line managers where needed to balance this alongside the responsibilities of an individual's substantive role. It can be expected that this would include discussion on any reasonable adjustments required in relation to the protected characteristics, and/or in relation to change in personal circumstances which may impact on research activities.
- As part of its institutional oversight for research, SRR status will normally be reviewed and monitored as part of the annual continuous feedback cycle, rather than it being a permanent award.

What evidence has been considered? What consultation has been undertaken?

In September 2022, following the outcomes of REF 2021, a gap analysis was undertaken by a working group of the Research Committee. This identified the strategic priority to “develop a distinct ‘teaching and research’ contract for researchers and a ‘teaching and practice’ contract for those whose professional practise is of value to the Academy but does not currently meet the REF definition of research. This fed into the design of the Research Strategy 2023 deliverables, which includes: “Explore the viability of a formal mechanism for transferal between ‘teaching only’ and ‘teaching and research’ contracts, providing training, peer mentoring, and opportunities to pursue research degrees where relevant.”

In early 2025 a review of job descriptions for all staff who took part in REF 2021 was undertaken to analyse the Academy’s research volume measure. This was consultative, involving the Research Office, Research Management Team and HR, to provide a benchmark for identifying the current body of researchers who understand that an expectation of their job role is to undertake self-directed, independent research activity. For all staff, who took part in REF 2021, an updated ‘Research Activity’ clause identifying SRR was shared, with the indication that any updated wording would be included in individual job descriptions going forwards for contractual clarity. This review process allowed for staff input and reflection via line managers prior to any revision to individual job descriptions.

The Academy also recognises that in addition to its body of staff appointed to SRR roles, there are some teaching-only staff who undertake research but for whom SRR is not contractually de facto. To enable teaching-only staff whose substantive roles do not feature SRR to develop their scholarly careers, the Research Office developed a transferal mechanism for movement from teaching-only ‘teaching only’ to teaching and research contracts with SRR. The Research Committee directed the formation of a Code of Practice (CoP) Working Group to consult on the transferal mechanism for recognising SRR and to consider REF 2029 eligibility criteria.

The CoP Working Group consisted of: 2 staff members from the Research Office, 1 staff member from HR, 1 staff member from Academic Studies, 1 research-active person who was not included in REF 2021 and 1 composer and/or early career researcher. The working group met in July 2025 to discuss how to design the SRR transferal mechanism and, feedback from that session was incorporated into this call for recognition and support of research. The Research Management Team was then consulted on the design, and their feedback incorporated into the draft process.

Actions agreed as a result of this EIA

Action	Timescale	Progress
Ensure accessibility of all materials including the application form	Sept 2025	Completed
Consider an Equity and Accessibility section within the application form	Sept 2025	Completed
Collect anonymised demographic data at application and award stages	2025/26 academic year	Ongoing
Monitor and report annually on outcomes.	2025/26 academic year	Ongoing
Incorporate feedback into continuous improvement of the process	September 2026	Ongoing

EIA approved by Belonging Committee: 4/11/25

Actions updated: 5/2/26