

University of Oxford

REF 2014: final equality impact assessment

Introduction

1. This is the University of Oxford's final Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) of the REF 2014. It has been prepared jointly by the University's Equality and Diversity Unit and the REF team in the Planning and Resource Allocation Section.
2. The University of Oxford endeavoured to take a fair, evidence-based and transparent approach to selecting staff for REF submission. All submission to REF2014 was guided by the first objective of the University's Strategic Plan for the period, to produce *internationally leading* research across the University's disciplinary spectrum. All Category A staff, and Category C staff where appropriate, were eligible from the outset for inclusion in the submission and the primary criterion for their inclusion was the quality of their research outputs.
3. For the duration of the REF, the University established two dedicated bodies, with specific responsibilities for integrating equality and diversity into all aspects of staff selection:
 - The REF Project Board, which reported to the University's Research Committee, met eleven times over the REF period and was responsible for agreeing the Code of Practice¹ and overall strategy on submission.
 - The central REF Equality Committee (REFEC) met eight times and also conducted business by email to agree the process for disclosure of complex circumstances, and to consider each individual case of complex circumstances.
4. The EIA is structured as followed:
 - a. The **Summary** identifies the key outcomes from the EIA, (page 2).
 - b. The **Background** gives an overview of the measures the University took at the outset to embed equality and diversity in staff selection, (page 3).
 - c. **Section A** is a quantitative analysis of the profile of staff submitted compared to the profile of the University's research and academic staff, by disability, ethnicity and gender, (page 4). In it, we note any differences between the final staff selection profile and those at the dry-run (2012) and interim (2013) assessments.
 - d. **Section B** gives further detail on the actions the University took to prevent discrimination or advance equality, and their outcomes, (page 15).
 - e. **Section C** offers a reflection on the lessons the University has learnt from REF 2014 and identifies areas where the University will undertake additional work, (page 18).

¹ <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/pras/research/ref/>

Summary

5. For REF 2014, the collegiate University submitted 2,497 staff members as Category A and 8 individuals as Category C. The submission included 170 college-only appointments. These are individuals employed directly by colleges and are therefore not on the University's HR system. These staff are excluded from the analysis as:
 - a. We do not know with confidence the total population of REF-eligible college staff since the colleges are independent bodies who manage their own recruitment and employment of staff separately from the University's HR system.
 - b. Demographic data are not available on these staff since each of the 44 colleges² manages their own HR records.
6. 2,851 members of University staff³ were eligible for submission on the census date and 2,334 were submitted: 82%. The proportion was highest in Maths Physical and Life Sciences (90%) and lowest in Social Sciences (79%).
7. *Gender*: Women made up 30% of the REF-eligible population. Despite considerable efforts throughout the submission period, they were less likely to be submitted than men (78% compared to 83% selected as Category A). The five percentage point gap between men and women showed no improvement on the 2013 pre-submission analysis, although there had been an earlier reduction in the gap since the 2012 dry-run analysis. Women were least likely to be submitted in the Humanities (78%F: 85% M).
8. *Age*: Earlier analyses showed that staff under 35 were less likely to have been selected as Category A, but by the time of submission, there were no statistically significant differences across the University as a whole, although some differences attained statistical significance at divisional level.
9. *Ethnicity*: Twenty-four percent of the eligible population have not disclosed their ethnicity, which makes it difficult to draw conclusions on ethnicity. With this caveat, there is no statistically significant difference in the likelihood of declared BME staff being submitted compared to 'other' staff (white and unknown), although the difference attained individual statistical significance in one division (Medical Sciences).
10. *Disability*: The numbers who have disclosed a disability are very low (66 individuals), but there were no statistically significant differences for reported disabled staff compared to the rest of the population. This is an improvement on the difference identified in the 2013 analysis, where reported disabled staff were significantly less likely to have been selected as Category A, and more likely to have been excluded.
11. Overall, we are confident that our selection process was conducted as fairly, consistently and transparently as is possible in a devolved collegial structure where decisions were being made at local level across 31 Units of Assessment in respect of staff from 123 departments and 39 colleges. However, we recognise that, despite embedding equality in all our processes, there were some differences in submission rates. We believe the underlying causes of this are complex and will undertake further qualitative work to investigate areas of difference, including an analysis of all cases of complex circumstances.

² This number includes the 6 Private Permanent Halls.

³ These include staff on joint University-college appointments.

Background

12. At the outset of preparations for REF 2014, the University took the following measures to ensure that equality and diversity would be integrated into each aspect of its preparations:
 - The University set up a robust process for managing the REF submission, which included transparent reporting lines, scrutiny by the REF Project Board, and the involvement of the University's Equality and Diversity Unit (EDU) at each stage of decision-making. The Head of the EDU sat on the REF Project Board and REFEC.
 - REF Project Board consulted widely across the University in the development of the **Code of Practice**, and the Code was approved by the UK Funding Councils on first submission.
 - The University developed a project plan to conduct three EIAs over the relevant period: during the dry run (August 2012), part-way through the selection process (July 2013), and after submission (January 2014). The aim in each case was to analyse the results for differences in submission rates against protected characteristics, where data was available, and to take remedial action as needed.
 - The findings of the dry run and interim EIAs were presented to the REF Project Board, which drew them to the attention of divisional boards and relevant UOA co-ordinators. They were asked to consider them when determining any outstanding ('Q') cases, particularly in relation to age, disability and gender, though co-ordinators were also asked to consider issues of inter-sectionality (e.g. BME women), and to consider whether any additional actions were needed.
 - Every member of staff involved in any decision-making role in the REF, received face-face guidance and training on equality and diversity in relation to the selection of staff. Fourteen sessions were held covering 101 participants, and the University secured 100% participation. All training was carried out by the REF Project Manager and Head of Equality & Diversity, using the examples developed by the Equality Challenge Unit.
 - The University's Staff Disability Adviser, who is a specialist adviser within the EDU, was given an additional fixed term part-time contract to handle the administration of all cases of individual circumstances. This ensured that all individuals disclosing individual circumstances received a knowledgeable and supportive response.
 - The University took a policy decision that all decisions on quality of individual outputs should be reviewed by at least two people, to avoid any potential for bias.
 - The Planning and Resource Allocation Section (PRAS), which administered the REF, ran regular checks on the emerging data to highlight potential issues, including:
 - doing cross checks on younger staff, who might be more likely to be early career researchers
 - frequent monitoring of disclosure of individual circumstances by UOA, with targeted reminders sent to staff in those UOAs where disclosure appeared low.
 - The Head of the EDU, a HR Policy Officer and the University's Researcher Development Officer reviewed and provided feedback on all environment statements.
 - For individuals conducting interdisciplinary research, there was regular liaison between UOA coordinators to identify the correct Unit of Assessment.

Section A: quantitative analysis of final submission

A1 Data and methods

13. For REF 2014, the collegiate University submitted 2,497 staff members as Category A (2,409.52 FTE) and 8 individuals as Category C.
14. The following quantitative analysis is based on staff data extracted from the University's HR system on the census date, 31 October 2013. The data contain multiple rows for some individuals due to multiple contracts, different functions within a contract or different department affiliations within a contract. In order to complete the EIA for individuals, a weight for counting people has been applied where an employee has two or more rows: this means that counts of staff are not always whole numbers.
15. The staff submission includes 170 college-only appointments (158.18 FTE). These have been excluded from the following analysis since the total eligible population of college-only staff is not known with confidence and because demographic data for college-only staff are not held centrally. From this point, the REF-eligible staff population refers to University staff only (including those with joint University-college appointments).

A2 Characteristics of the eligible staff population

16. 2,851 members of University staff were eligible for submission to the REF on the census date. This population included virtually all academic and research staff apart from research assistants and others classified as ineligible for 'other' reasons. Since the previous analysis undertaken in July 2013 there has been an increase of nearly 300 in the number of staff identified as REF-eligible.

Table 1 REF-eligible staff population by REF category (as at submission)

REF Category	No. Staff	% of total
Category A – included ⁴	2,334	82%
Category E – excluded	517	18%
Total	2,851	100%

17. *Age and gender:* Although women form 30% of the REF-eligible population, there are considerable variations by age group, and the percentage of eligible women declines with age (from 35% of eligible staff under the age of 45 to a quarter of those aged over 45). Staff in the age bands 35 to 54 form the largest proportion of Category A (see Table 14).

⁴ NOTE: 'Category A' is used throughout this document with the internal definition of individuals who will be returned to REF, not individuals who are *eligible* as Category A.

Table 2 Summary of REF-eligible staff population by age and gender

Age group	No. Staff	% F	% M
0-34	500	34%	66%
35-44	904	36%	64%
45-54	750	27%	73%
55-64	542	24%	76%
65-99	155	16%	84%
Total	2,851	30%	70%

18. *Ethnicity*: There is a high rate of non-disclosure of ethnicity among academic and research staff, equating to 24% of the REF-eligible population. This makes comparisons by ethnicity difficult. BME staff formed 7% of the total eligible population, or 10% of those who had disclosed their ethnic background.

Table 3 Summary of REF-eligible staff population by ethnicity

Ethnic groups	No. Staff	% of total
Asian/ British Asian	83	3%
Black/Black British	10	0%
Chinese	46	2%
Mixed	38	1%
Other ethnic group	30	1%
White	1,958	69%
Unknown	686	24%
Total	2,851	100%
BME population	207	7%

19. *Disability*: Only 2% of the REF-eligible population are recorded in the staff data as having a disability, while the situation for 23% is unknown.

Table 4 Summary of REF-eligible staff population by disability

Disabled	No. Staff	% of total
Yes	66	2%
No	2,124	75%
Unknown	661	23%
Total	2,851	100%

A3 Staff selection – by Division⁵

20. Table 5 shows the final selection outcomes for REF-eligible staff by academic division. Overall, 82% of eligible University staff were submitted, with staff in Maths Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS) most likely to be returned.

Table 5 Selection of REF-eligible staff by Division*

Division	% Cat. A	% Cat. E	Total No.
MEDICAL SCIENCES	79%	21%	699.5
MATHS, PHYSICAL & LIFE SCIENCES	90%	10%	719.5
SOCIAL SCIENCES	79%	21%	778.5
HUMANITIES	82%	18%	594.0
CONTINUING EDUCATION	60%	40%	20.0
ACADEMIC SERVICES	29%	71%	27.5
UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION AND SERVICES	75%	25%	4.0
SOCIETIES, OTHER & COMPANIES	25%	75%	8.0
Total	82%	18%	2,851

*Where division refers to division of appointment (not UOA)

A4 Staff selection – by gender

21. Despite the considerable efforts made to embed equality, a lower proportion of women than men were submitted (78% compared to 83%) and this difference is statistically significant⁶. It mirrors the findings of both previous analyses and while, at the 2013 analysis, the gender gap had reduced from a difference of nine percentage points to five, there has been no further improvement between July 2013 and submission.

Table 6 Selection of REF-eligible staff by gender

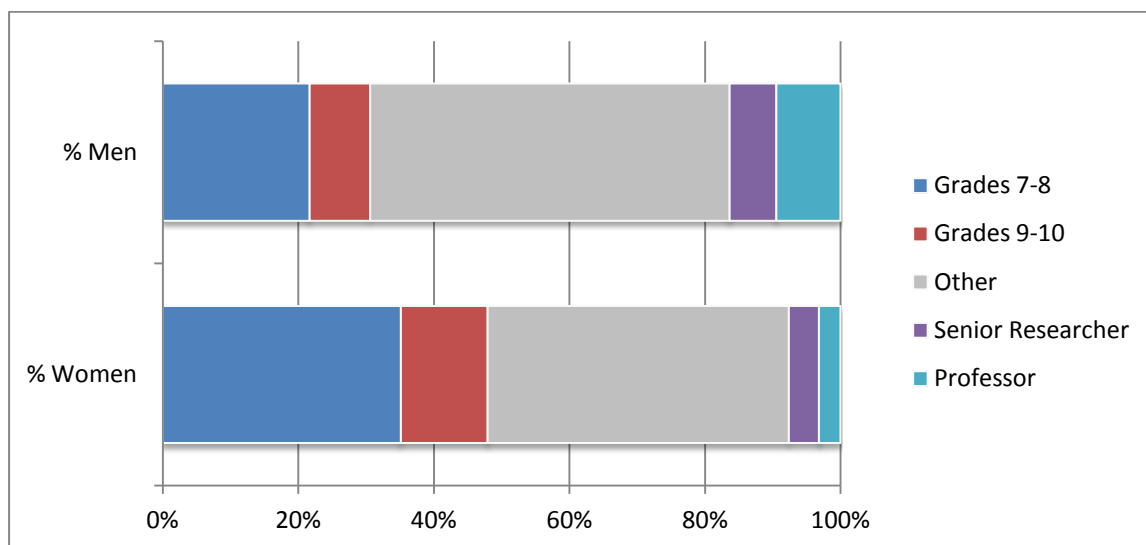
Gender		Cat. A	Cat. E	Total
F	Number	669	187	856
	%	78%	22%	
M	Number	1,665	330	1,995
	%	83%	17%	
Total		2,334	517	2,851

22. *By gender and grade:* Staff in lower grade posts were less likely to be submitted to REF: 69% of staff in Grade 7 posts compared to 90% of Senior Research staff. Within the eligible population, a higher proportion of female staff were in these lower grade posts, as shown by Chart 1. This will have affected the overall likelihood of women being returned, although it does not fully account for the gender differences. Within the majority of grade categories, men were more likely to be submitted than women: most notably for staff in Grades 8 and 9 (where each grade shows a gender difference of eight percentage points between the selection of men and women). However, none of these differences acquire statistical significance.

⁵ For details on the University's four academic divisions see: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/divisions/>

⁶ All references to statistical significance indicate that a chi square test has been performed at the standard 5% level of probability.

Chart 1 Proportion of REF-eligible population by gender and grade



23. *By gender and age:* Staff aged 35 to 64 are more likely to have been submitted than younger or older staff, and there is a steep reduction in the proportion of female staff in this group, from 36% to 24%.

Comparison of the proportions of women from each group who have been submitted shows that they are under-represented in each age group, apart from over-65s. The disparity is greatest among the under-35s.

Table 7 Proportion of female staff in each REF category by age group

Age group	Total	% Female	
		Cat. A	Cat. E
0-34	34%	31%	45%
35-44	36%	35%	44%
45-54	27%	26%	32%
55-64	24%	23%	28%
65-99	16%	16%	15%
Total	30%	29%	36%

A5 Staff selection – gender and Division

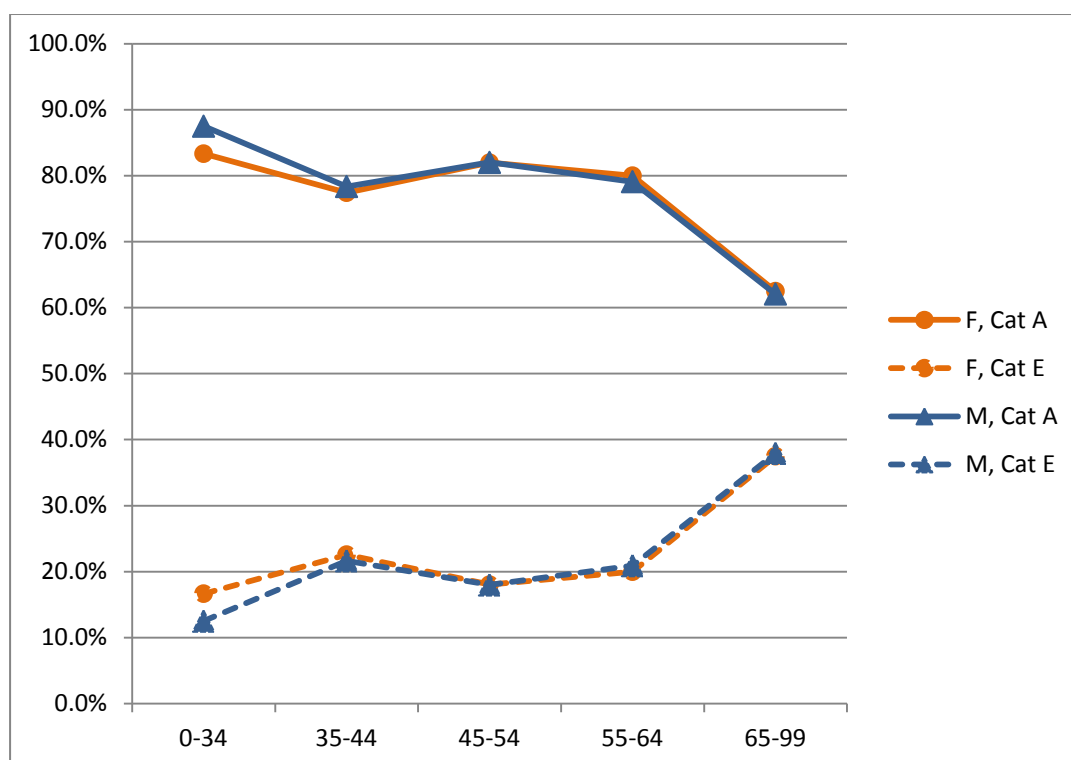
24. *MSD*: Results for staff in Medical Sciences departments indicate:

- The gender gap in staff selected as Category A that was evident in both of the previous analyses has greatly diminished and is no longer statistically significant.
- A statistically significant discrepancy in the likelihood of both men and women over the age of 65 to have been selected as Category A.

Table 8 Selection data by gender and age (MSD)

Gender / Age group	% Cat. A	% Cat. E	Total
F	79%	21%	221
0-34	83%	17%	24
35-44	77%	23%	93
45-54	82%	18%	61
55-64	80%	20%	35
65-99	63%	38%	8
M	80%	20%	478.5
0-34	88%	13%	48
35-44	78%	22%	152.5
45-54	82%	18%	139
55-64	79%	21%	110
65-99	62%	38%	29
Total	79%	21%	699.5

Chart 2 % of REF-eligible staff by REF category, age and gender (MSD)



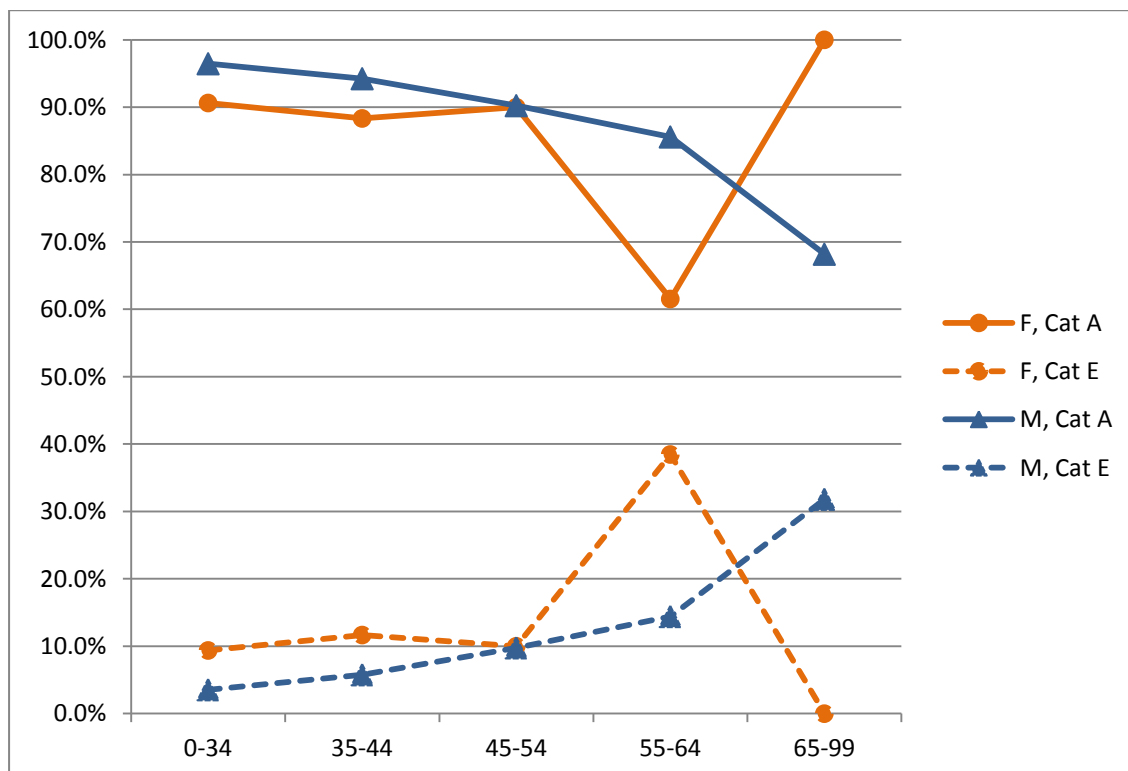
25. *MPLS*: Results for staff in Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences departments indicate:

- A sharp reduction in the number of women over the age of 45.
- While the overall gender difference in staff selected as Category A is no longer statistically significant (as was the case in July 2013), there continue to be particular gaps for women under 45 (statistically significant) and aged 55-64 (although only 13 women in this age group).

Table 9 Selection data by gender and age (MPLS)

Gender / Age group	% Cat. A	% Cat. E	Total
F	87%	13%	127
0-34	91%	9%	32
35-44	88%	12%	60
45-54	90%	10%	20
55-64	62%	38%	13
65-99	100%	0%	2
M	91%	9%	592.5
0-34	96%	4%	98.5
35-44	94%	6%	190.5
45-54	90%	10%	174
55-64	86%	14%	107.5
65-99	68%	32%	22
Total	90%	10%	719.5

Chart 3 % of REF-eligible staff by REF category, age and gender (MPLS)



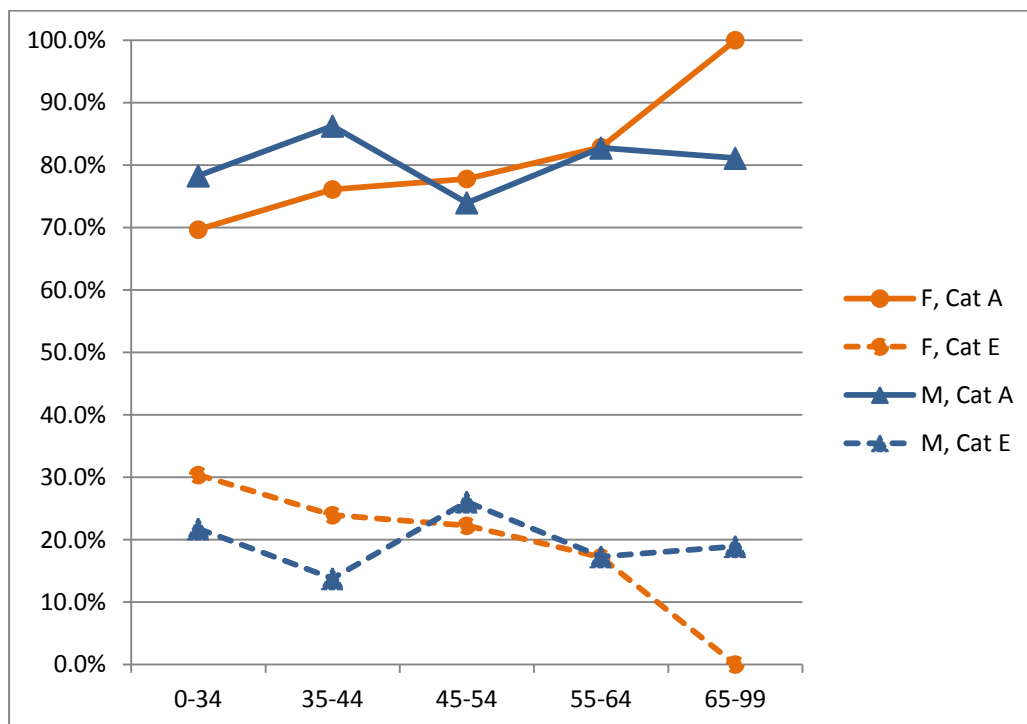
26. **SSD:** Results for staff in Social Sciences departments indicate:

- The gender gap in staff selected as Category A has widened since the 2013 analysis, which showed broadly comparably results for men and women at each stage.
- The gap in the selection of women under 45 is statistically significant.
- A higher proportion of women over 65 were selected as Category A, although only 9 women in this age group.

Table 10 Selection data by gender and age (SSD)

Gender / Age group	% Cat. A	% Cat. E	Total
F	76%	24%	262.5
0-34	70%	30%	72.5
35-44	76%	24%	92
45-54	78%	22%	54
55-64	83%	17%	35
65-99	100%	0%	9
M	80%	20%	516
0-34	78%	22%	126.5
35-44	86%	14%	138
45-54	74%	26%	119
55-64	83%	17%	95.5
65-99	81%	19%	37
Total	79%	21%	778.5

Chart 4 % of REF-eligible staff by REF category, age and gender (SSD)



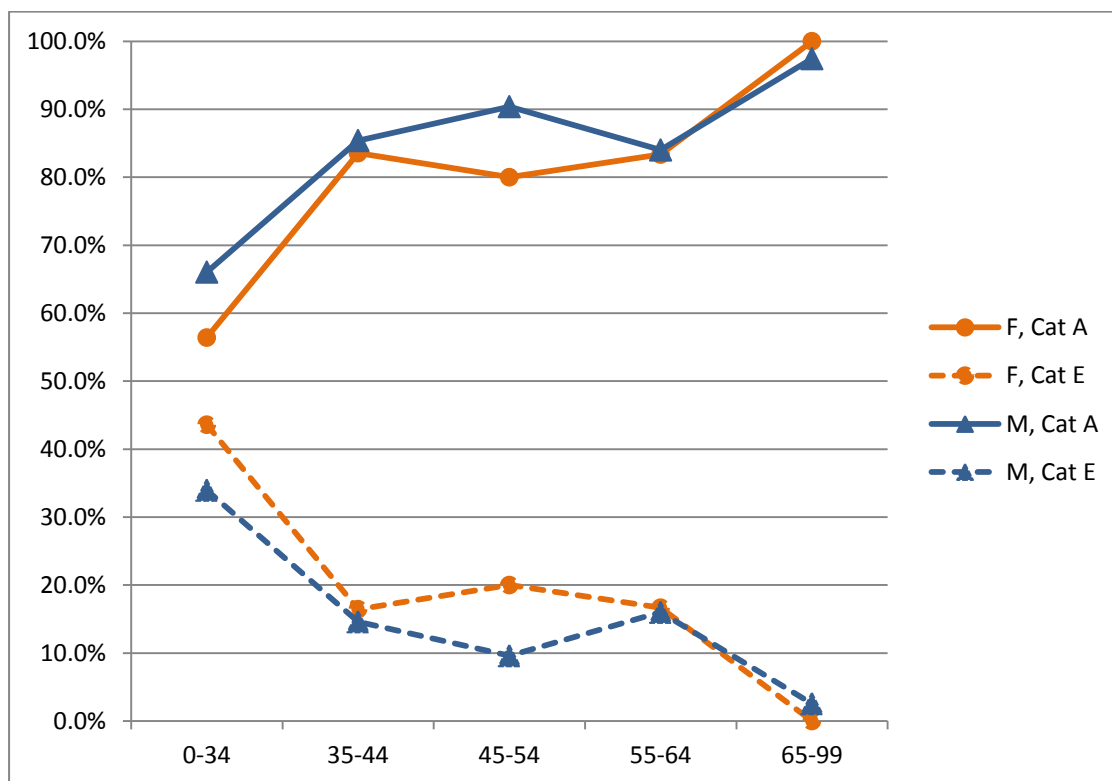
27. *HUM*: Results for staff in Humanities departments indicate:

- Overall, women are less likely to have been selected as Category A (statistically significant), although there is no statistically significant gender gap for any age group.

Table 11 Selection data by gender and age (HUM)

Gender / Age group	% Cat. A	% Cat. E	Total
F	78%	22%	221.5
0-34	56%	44%	39
35-44	84%	16%	79
45-54	80%	20%	57.5
55-64	83%	17%	42
65-99	100%	0%	4
M	85%	15%	372.5
0-34	66%	34%	53
35-44	85%	15%	89
45-54	90%	10%	104
55-64	84%	16%	87.5
65-99	97%	3%	39
Total	82%	18%	594

Chart 5 % of REF-eligible staff by REF category, age and gender (HUM)



A5 Staff selection – by ethnicity

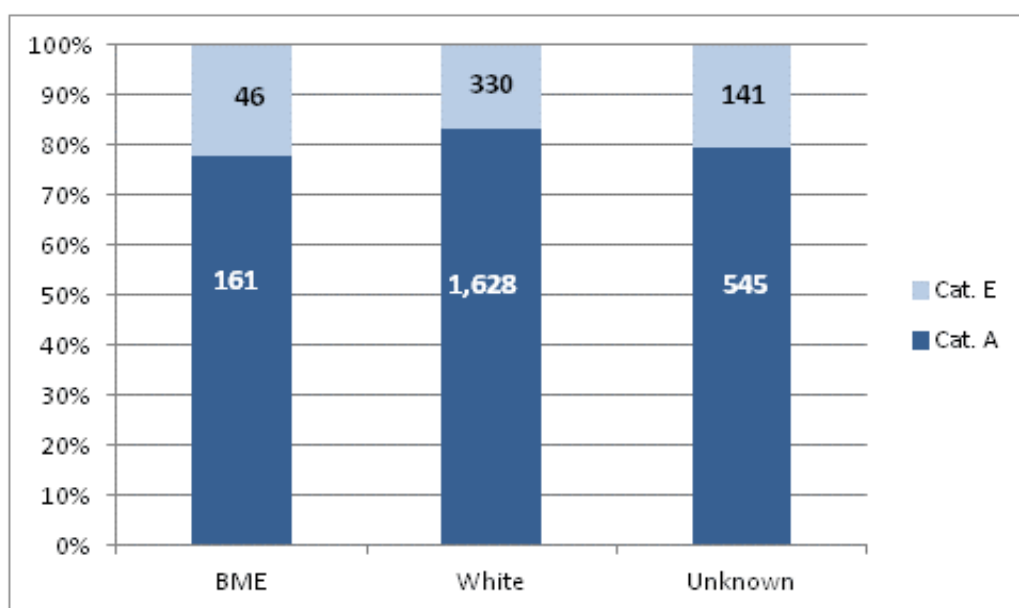
28. With the caveat that the ethnicity of almost a quarter of the eligible population remains unknown, there continues to be no statistically significant difference in the overall likelihood of BME staff being selected as Category A compared to ‘other’ staff (white and unknown).

However, declared BME staff in Medical Sciences are less likely to have been selected as Category A (statistically significant difference of 69% selected as Category A compared to 80% for rest of population).

Table 12 Selection of REF-eligible staff by ethnicity

Ethnicity	% Cat. A	% Cat. E	Total No.
BME	78%	22%	207
White	83%	17%	1,958
Unknown	79%	21%	686
Total	82%	18%	2,851

Chart 6 % and number of REF-eligible staff by REF category & ethnicity



A6 Staff selection – by disability

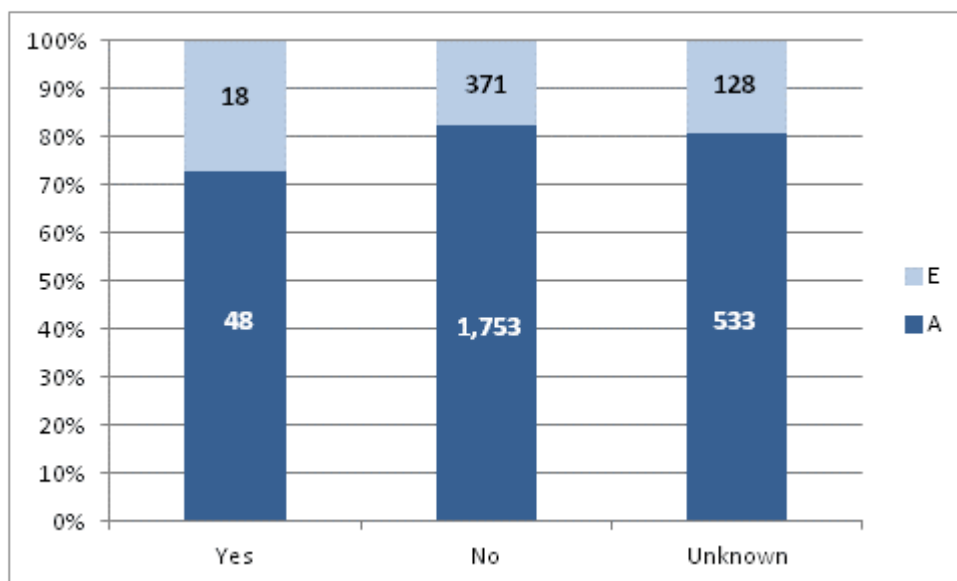
29. The disability status of as many as 23% of the eligible population is unknown and the number of reported disabled staff in the eligible population is 66, so findings should be treated with caution.

While staff with a reported disability were, in July 2013, statistically significantly less likely to have been selected as Category A than other staff, in the final submission there are no longer any statistical differences across the population as a whole.

Table 13 Selection of REF-eligible staff by disability

Disabled	% Cat. A	% Cat. E	Total No.
Yes	73%	27%	66
No	83%	17%	2,124
Unknown	81%	19%	661
Total	82%	18%	2,851

Chart 7 % and number of REF-eligible staff by REF category & disability



A7 Staff selection – by age

30. Statistical tests were performed to compare the outcomes of staff aged under 35 and over 65 with those of the rest of the eligible population as whole. While in July 2013, staff under 35 were less likely to have been included as Category A, there is no longer a statistically significant disparity for this age group, which indicates that while selection decisions for this group of staff took longer, the outcome was not significantly altered.

There continues to be no disparity for over-65s across the University as a whole.

At divisional level:

- MSD shows a statistically significant age gap for staff over 65.
- In MPLS staff over 55 are less likely to have been submitted (statistically significant). However, contrary to the July 2013 analysis, staff under 35 are more likely to have been selected as Category A.
- No statistically significant age gaps in Social Sciences.
- In Humanities, staff under 35 are less likely to have been included (statistically significant difference of 62% selection compared to 86% for staff aged 35 and over), although a higher proportion of staff over 65 have been included (98% of age group).

Table 14 Selection of REF-eligible staff by age group

Age group	Cat. A	Cat. E	Total
0-34			
Number	396	104	500
%	79%	21%	
35-44			
Number	759	145	904
%	84%	16%	
45-54			
Number	618	132	750
%	82%	18%	
55-64			
Number	439	103	542
%	81%	19%	
65-99			
Number	122	33	155
%	79%	21%	
Total	2,334	517	2,851

Section B: embedding equality and diversity in process

31. We set out below the steps the University took at each stage to prevent discrimination or advance equality, including any steps taken to address differential impact and any information about policy or practices that had a positive impact on equality.

Steps to encourage disclosure

- The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research) wrote to all staff in June 2012 inviting disclosure of individual circumstances, and staff joining the University after that date were sent a letter upon appointment.
- The pool for potentially eligible staff was widely drawn, with subsequent checks to eliminate staff ineligible due to their contract type or other verifiable factors. In view of the complexity of the collegiate University, particular care was taken in dealing with people who held college-only appointments.
- The University established a central, confidential, process for the disclosure of all individual circumstances, which ensured consistency across all UOAs. This was very important in providing reassurance to individuals: several said that their department was not aware of their circumstances, sometimes because of staff changes.
- Reminders to all staff to disclose were issued through departments.
- All staff were encouraged to contact the Equality & Diversity Unit for a confidential discussion of whether to disclose; and staff with a disability were specifically invited to contact the Staff Disability Officer.
- Many departments were proactive in contacting in advance early career researchers (ECRs) or other new recruits due to start employment in September or October 2013 and inviting them to submit forms disclosing individual circumstances.
- Information about the disclosure of individual circumstances was cascaded through colleges as well as academic departments.
- The University conducted a 'dry-run' submission, and undertook an EIA of this dry run, including a qualitative study.

Evidence of the impact of these steps

- The University submitted 704 staff with fewer than four outputs (28% of staff submitted) and handled 588 disclosures of individual circumstances via the central disclosure route, including 83 disclosures of complex circumstances, of which 37 related to a disability or long-term health condition.
- The University processed some cases of complex circumstances where people were not at the time on an eligible contract for submission, in anticipation that they would be moved to an eligible contract.
- We received disclosure forms from 51 people holding college-only appointments.
- During April and May 2012, the University undertook a qualitative survey of the way in which UOA co-ordinators were including equality considerations in their REF preparations. A series of one-to-one interviews were conducted by an external consultant who concluded that:
 - There was a good understanding of the relevance of equality in REF submissions
 - UOAs had a broadly similar approach to REF preparations in terms of organisational structure
 - There was an apparent even-handedness in the way UOAs made selections for the dry run
 - The equality training workshops helped UOAs have a deeper understanding of the equality issues and risks.
 - There was a high degree of comfort with handling clear circumstances.

- UOAs had a mixed understanding of the process for dealing with complex circumstances.
- There was some concern that people with complex individual circumstances would experience barriers in coming forward.
- The University addressed the two latter concerns by making small revisions to the draft Code of Practice to address these points. The cover letter to staff was amended to provide greater assurances on confidentiality. The University also developed detailed guidance for UOA coordinators to sit alongside the Code of Practice and to outline exactly how individual staff circumstances would be handled.

Steps taken to ensure fair consideration of complex circumstances

- The Staff Disability Adviser responded sensitively to individuals disclosing complex circumstances, provided reassurance about confidentiality and engaged in a supportive dialogue to elicit further information. She also took care to explain the way that decisions were made.
- All complex cases were considered by the University's REF Equality Committee (REFEC), which included senior academic representatives (one male and two female professors), expertise on equality (the Head of Equality & Diversity) and a senior officer from Personnel Services. The REF Project Manager and Staff Disability Adviser were officers of the committee.
- All cases were discussed by REFEC anonymously. Members of REFEC withdrew for discussions of any cases within their department.
- Appropriate evidence was discussed with the individual, who was asked for explicit permission before any approaches were made.
- The decision on eligibility for a reduction was passed to departments, without any reasons, thereby maintaining confidentiality.
- A small number of staff were made aware at a very late stage that they would not be included in the REF submission, which prompted some late disclosures of complex circumstances: these additional cases were handled in exactly the same way despite time pressures.

Evidence of the impact of these steps

- A number of unsolicited comments were received thanking those involved for the sensitive way in which the process had been handled.
- No appeals were made about process. Even when individuals were disappointed about the decision given, they commented that they understood the reasons for the outcome.
- The separation of decisions on eligibility for a reduction on the basis of complex circumstances, from decisions about quality of outputs and submission strategy, is demonstrated by:
 - submission of some individuals with four outputs who were considered eligible to be submitted with reduced outputs
 - submission of some individuals with reduced outputs who would otherwise have been excluded from the submission.
- All cases of complex circumstances were considered by REFEC, including those made after the published deadlines.
- The thresholds for reductions laid down in national REF guidance ensured consistency, but it was inevitable that some people would fall just short of a threshold. It was not within the power of the University to address this.

Gender

- The interim EIAs conducted in 2012 found that women were less likely to be identified as 'likely to be submitted' than men in one Division. The finding was explicitly raised with that division and the results of the EIA were used to remind *all*

UOAs to consider whether any implicit bias or failure to take account of individual circumstances could affect selection decisions.

- The 2013 EIA showed a reduction in the gender gap, but also that there was a still a significantly lower proportion of eligible women included as category A (69%), than the corresponding proportion of eligible men (74%). As a result, women formed a lower proportion of category A staff than would be expected in relation to their representation in the University (28% instead of 30%), though this varied by age group. However, no discrepancy was found in the proportions of men and women likely to be excluded at that stage.
- Divisions were asked to maintain the situation under review and to draw the results of the EIA to the attention of all relevant UOA co-ordinators.
- At the time REF submission decisions were being made, many STEMM⁷ departments were also engaged in making submissions for Athena SWAN accreditation and developing action plans. This ensured that gender equality maintained a high profile. Many of the Athena action plans address issues that may have contributed to differential REF submission rates, such as gendered workload allocation. The University is also considering additional measures to support women returning from maternity leave to return to successful research careers.
- We note that additional action may be needed in disciplines where there is a very uneven gender profile, such as Economics.

Ethnicity

- Twenty percent of the eligible population as of July 2013 had not disclosed their ethnicity, which makes it difficult to draw conclusions. However, all three EIAs found that there were no significant differences in the proportions of BME and 'other' (white and unknown) staff in category A, or category E.
- As a world-class research university we employ staff from around the world. We do not believe that there has been any direct discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity. However, we note that the national REF process may operate to disadvantage researchers who are carrying out applied research in developing countries, who may publish in regional journals that are not highly ranked.
- Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff are under-represented at senior levels within the University, as are women. One woman disclosing complex circumstances expressed the view that it was harder to have a successful academic career as a BME woman, but we were unable to quantify this. We are working to improve our support of BME staff through measures including the creation of a BME staff network.

Disability

- We believe that disability is currently under-reported by academic staff, so caution is needed on data in this area.
- The 2013 EIA showed that, although the number of staff who had disclosed a disability prior to the REF was very low (62 individuals), they were significantly less likely than those without a disability to have been included at this stage (61% selection for reported disabled staff compared to 73% for other staff). They were also significantly more likely to have been excluded.
- By submission, the discrepancy between staff with a reported disability and other staff had reduced to a gap of nine percentage points and was no longer statistically significant.
- We were pleased that staff ranging from early career researchers to professors felt able to disclose disabilities, including mental ill-health. In some cases, the disability was not known to the individual's department, and in some instances, the Staff Disability Adviser was able to build on this initial contact, to ensure that individuals

⁷ Science Technology Engineering Maths and Medicine

had appropriate support for the future. We noted that some individuals disclosing other other disabilities also had poor mental health.

- There was little disclosure of disability among clinical practitioners – perhaps because of the stamina needed to combine clinical practice and academic research.
- Some people were successfully combining academic careers with living with a disability, including mental ill-health.
- Some members of the university had caring responsibilities for disabled family members, which was a significant constraint on their ability to research.
- Many people did not want their disability to be known to colleagues in their department. This may indicate a culture which is not supportive of disabled people, and a need for further training and development.

Age

- The 2012 EIA showed that, in two divisions, researchers under 35 were less likely at that stage to be identified as 'likely to be submitted'. The results were drawn to the attention of UOA coordinators.
- The 2013 EIA also found a statistically significant difference in the likelihood of staff under the age of 35 being selected. While younger staff were not significantly more likely to be excluded at that stage, a high number remained in the 'not known' and 'Q categories'.
- The final EIA showed no statistically significant differences for staff under 35 compared to the rest of the population, indicating that while selection decisions for this group of staff took longer, the outcome was not significantly altered.

Section C: reflections on lessons learnt and further work

32. We are confident that our selection process was conducted as fairly, consistently and transparently as is possible in a devolved collegial structure where decisions were being made at local level across 31 Units of Assessment in respect of staff from 123 departments and 39 colleges. However, we recognise that, despite embedding equality in all our processes, there were some differences in submission rates. We believe the underlying causes of this are complex and will undertake further work to address areas of under-representation in the areas listed below.

Gender

33. The University recognises the extent of gender inequality among academic and research staff and has taken the following actions to address this since 2008.
- All 28 of our science and medical sciences departments will have applied for an Athena SWAN award by April 2014, and 20 of those departments already hold a Bronze or Silver award, the highest number in the UK.
 - The Faculty of Philosophy is participating in the pilot of the Gender Equality Charter Mark and the University is committed to extending GEM to all relevant departments at Oxford.
 - In preparation for GEM, our Social Sciences division will conduct a scoping exercise identifying the specific barriers to women in social sciences and the best practice that has been implemented nationally and internationally to address those barriers.
 - Our Medical Sciences division has undertaken a systematic review into the barriers for women in medicine and is using the results of that review to inform its work on Athena SWAN.
 - The Vice Chancellor announced in July 2013 a £1 million Diversity Fund to address the under-representation of women at Oxford.
 - The Vice Chancellor and senior team participated in a session on unconscious bias in October 2013 and briefings on unconscious bias are now being extended across the University.
 - The University has introduced a formal pause in recruitment to its most senior professorial posts where there are no female candidates on the short-list.
34. While directly comparable figures for RAE 2008 are not available, there is evidence that the overall situation has improved. In RAE 2008, the collegiate University submitted 655 women (equivalent to 28% of Category A staff). In REF 2014, this figure increased to 729, which equates to 29% of Category A staff. This represents an increase of 11% in the number of women submitted, where the overall size of the submission only grew by 7%.
35. However, the University recognises that significant barriers remain to the retention and progression of women and have made this area a priority for further action in our new Strategic Plan for the period 2013-18. In particular, the University is currently consulting on indicators and targets in support of our high level public objective to address the under-representation of women in senior posts.

Developing existing good practice in supporting researchers at key periods

36. The high number of individuals disclosing individual circumstances (28% of staff were submitted with fewer than four outputs) through a systematic process highlights the opportunity for the University to do more to support staff during critical periods. We note, for example, that many staff may need extra support establishing their career (for early career researchers), returning from breaks (for maternity or ill health), or maintaining work during periods of constraint such as caring responsibilities or ill-health.

Fair working arrangements for all

37. During its consideration of cases of complex individual circumstances, the REF Equality Committee identified a number of issues where the collegiate University could do more to support individuals. Some of these areas are already being tackled through departmental Athena SWAN action plans, including concerns about workload allocation and the balance of research, teaching and administrative duties.

Supporting staff during periods of temporary disruption to their research

38. The University will explore options for supporting staff in maintaining their research productivity during periods of constraint. These might include buying out teaching time, mentoring or keeping in touch during periods of absence.

Caution about informal arrangements

39. Further learning for the institution itself relates to the potential pitfalls of informal arrangements intended to be supportive of individuals. In retrospect, more formal arrangements, including temporary adjustments to patterns of work, might have been more helpful to both the individual and the department. Closer monitoring would also be helpful, to ensure that the arrangements had the intended outcome.

Publicising available support

40. We also wish to increase awareness by individuals and their managers of possible support that is available through the University and promote a departmental culture that recognises that people may have periods of constrained research due to individual circumstances.
41. We hope to develop increased provision for staff with caring responsibilities, since this was a significant element in a number of the complex cases, and is likely to increase.