

REF 2021 Privacy Notice for non-Staff

The University of Worcester is the “Data Controller” of your personal data. We are committed to upholding individuals’ privacy rights and we process personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (“GDPR”). This privacy notice is to let you know how we use personal data that is submitted to the Research Excellence Framework (REF).

Why are we collecting the data?

Under the GDPR we have to have justification (“lawful basis”) for obtaining your information which in these circumstances is:

Public Task

To ensure that we can carry out our role as an educational and research establishment, meeting legal, moral and contractual obligations, as laid out in the University’s Charter.

How do we use the information you provide?

The purpose of the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF 2021) is to assess the quality of UK research and to inform the selective distribution of public funds for research by the four UK higher education funding bodies. The REF is managed by the REF team, based at Research England (RE), on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies. RE is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and under this arrangement UKRI has the role of ‘data controller’ for personal data submitted by us to the REF.

An important component of REF2021 is impact, which is assessed through case studies. Your information will be used to inform the development of these case studies and as evidence to support our claims of impact.

What sort of information do we collect?

You may have provided a letter or other testimony which provides your name, your job title, organisational affiliation and contact details.

Who do we share the information with?

Your data will be shared internally with staff who need to view it as part of their role in preparing the REF 2021 submission. This will include staff in Human Resources, the Research Office, REF UoA Coordinators and members of the REF Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Panel.

Your data will be shared externally with UKRI. UKRI may pass your data, or parts of it, to any of the following organisations that need it to inform the selective distribution of public funds for research and to carry out their statutory functions connected with funding higher education:

- Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland (DfE)
- Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)
- Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

Some of your data (Unit of Assessment, HESA staff identifier code and date of birth) will also be passed to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to enable it to verify coded data returned to it as part of our HESA staff return (see www.hesa.ac.uk). Data returned to the REF will be linked to that held on the HESA staff record to allow UKRI and the organisations listed above to conduct additional analysis into the REF and fulfil their statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 (England, Wales and Scotland) or the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Northern Ireland).

UKRI and the organisations listed above will use the information to analyse and monitor the REF 2021. This may result in information being released to other users including academic researchers or consultants (commissioned by the funding bodies), to carry out research or analysis, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679). Where information not previously published is released to third parties, this will be anonymised where practicable.

UKRI will require that anyone who has access to your data, held in UKRI's records, paper or electronic, will respect its confidentiality and will only process it in accordance with instructions issued for the purposes specified by UKRI.

Parts of your data will be passed to the REF expert panels and the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (whose members are independent of UKRI) for the purpose of conducting a systematic evaluation of submissions, in accordance with predetermined criteria and methods. Panels will make judgments about the material contained in submissions and will not form quality judgments about individuals. All panel members are bound by confidentiality arrangements.

Publishing information about your part in the submission

The results of the assessment exercise will be published by UKRI, on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies, in December 2021.

Those parts of submissions that contain factual data and textual information about research activity will also be published by UKRI, on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies, and will be made available online. Published information is likely to include textual information including impact case studies in which you may be referenced. Your name and job title may be included in this textual information. Other personal details will normally be removed.

How long do we keep your data for?

We will retain your data to support the University's REF 2021 submission and this will include any legal, accounting, or reporting requirements. Specifically, we will retain all data used in the development of the REF submission until completion of the REF audit process, and will retain a copy of the staff, outputs, impact and environment submission after submission, in order to facilitate future REF submissions.

Data is retained for as long as it is required to perform its purpose, or for as long as is required by law. At the end of that retention period, your data will either be deleted completely or anonymised, for example by aggregation with other data so that it can be used in a non-identifiable way for statistical analysis and business planning.

Accessing your personal data

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR, you have the right to request a copy of any personal information held by the University. Please visit <https://www2.worc.ac.uk/informationassurance/requests-for-personal-data.html> for further information on this.

We have appointed a Data Protection Officer, Helen Johnstone, who may be contacted by email: infoassurance@worc.ac.uk.

You also have the right to access information held by UKRI. Further information about the Act and GDPR, and guidance on making a subject access request, can be found on the RE website at <https://re.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards/foi-data-protection/>

If you have any concerns about your information being used for these purposes, please contact:

Data Protection Officer
UK Research and Innovation
Polaris House
Swindon, SN2 1FL
Email: dataprotection@ukri.org

Further guidance on your rights is available from the Information Commissioner's Office (<https://ico.org.uk/>). You have the right to complain to the UK's supervisory office for data protection, the Information Commissioner's Office at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/> if you believe that your data has been processed unlawfully.