

Circular letter

REF 2021 Codes of practice complaints and investigations process

To	Heads of English higher education providers
Reference	RE-CL-2021-06
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Enquiries to	General queries to researchpolicy@re.ukri.org

Dear Vice-Chancellor or Principal

REF 2021 Codes of practice complaints and investigations process

1. I am writing to inform you that the REF 2021 Codes of practice (COP) complaints and investigations (C&I) process will open on 1 April 2021. As you will be aware, the purpose of the C&I process is to provide assurance to the UK funding bodies that COPs are being applied as set out by institutions participating in REF 2021 and provide assurance to the UK funding bodies of the accuracy of submissions to REF 2021. This assurance also helps the UK funding bodies to meet their obligations concerning equality, diversity and inclusion. All four UK Funding Bodies are informing institutions within their respective nations of this process in a similar manner.
2. The C&I process will sit alongside the REF 2021 audit process. Audit will concern the accuracy of submitted REF 2021 data and data adjustments will be made where data cannot be verified; the C&I process will be limited to investigating alleged breaches of the processes set out in an institution's COP. While there are differences between the functions of REF Audit and the C&I process, there are also areas of overlap – REF Audit and the C&I process will correct inaccuracies in submitted data. These functions will be used together judiciously to assure the accuracy of REF 2021 submissions. Further details of the process are available on the REF website (<https://www.ref.ac.uk/about/ref-2021-codes-of-practice-complaints-and-investigations-process/>).



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3. Institutions are requested to make their staff aware of the C&I process ahead of its opening.
4. Any questions about this letter should be addressed to researchpolicy@re.ukri.org

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Sweeney', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David Sweeney
Executive Chair