

## Code of Practice template

Institution name: Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance

Date of submission: 15<sup>th</sup> May 2026

### Part 1: Introduction

#### 1. How your CoP supports the principles of:

- **Robustness** – Explain how the policies and processes set out in the CoP ensure that contracts identified as contributing to the volume measure reliably reflect the responsibilities of staff.
- **Transparency** – Detail how the CoP is communicated to all staff, including those on leave of absence or based outside the UK. Ensure accessibility by providing information in various formats and through appropriate channels. Highlight any additional resources (FAQs, web pages) to support staff understanding. An up-to-date version of the CoP should be published and available externally.
- **Equity and inclusion** – Explain how decisions about submissions are fair and impartial supporting a diversity of people and research, where diverse contributions are valued and supported.

#### 2. Contextualisation within Institutional Policies:

- Describe how this Code of Practice relates to your institution's context on equality, diversity, and inclusion, SPRE and responsible research assessment.

#### 3. Update on Actions Since REF 2021:

- Summarise key actions taken since REF 2021 to address issues or recommendations from previous EIAs.

### Context

(1) The Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2029 is the UK-wide system for assessing the quality of research in higher education institutions (HEIs). It is a requirement of REF 2029 that each submitting HEI establishes a Code of Practice (CoP) outlining the mechanisms for: a) identifying staff with significant responsibility for research (SRR) contributing to the volume measure; b) determining research independence; c) allocating contracts to UoAs, and d) selecting research outputs. Decisions remain at the discretion of individual HEIs but must be transparent, robust, and compliant with equality legislation. Heads of HEIs are required to attest that their CoP complies with relevant equality and diversity legislation and institutional policies, for scrutiny by the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP). This CoP will be submitted by **15 May 2026**.

(2) Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance (hereafter TL) is a small specialist institution with a focused submission to Unit of Assessment (UoA) 33 (Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies). TL is committed to an environment that values and celebrates the diversity of its staff and research activity, including practice-based, interdisciplinary, and applied research. This Code of

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Practice provides the framework for all REF 2029 decision-making, ensuring that processes are transparent, consistent, accountable, and inclusive, and aligned with REF 2029 Guidance on Submissions and all relevant equality legislation.

(3) This CoP builds upon the approach TL developed for REF 2021 and has been subject to extensive internal consultation, including review by the TL Research Board, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Board, Principal's Management Group, the Board of Governors, recognised trade unions via the Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee (JNCC), Research Active staff and All Staff.

(4) The CoP is made available via the TL VLE (Moodle), institutional webpages, and in accessible formats. Hard copies are provided on request, and are available in alternative formats (such as Braille, or large print) and distributed to staff on leave or based outside the UK. An up-to-date version is published externally in line with REF requirements.

### **1. How the CoP supports the principles of:**

#### **Robustness**

(5) TL ensures that policies and processes for REF 2029 are robust, evidence-based, and consistently applied. Contracts identified as contributing to the REF volume measure are those that demonstrably include significant responsibility for research (SRR), defined through: contractual role descriptors specifying research and teaching responsibilities; workload allocation models (with a standard 20% pro-rata per FTE research allocation for research-active staff); evidence of eligible REF 2029 outputs, coupled with research expectations and activity (e.g., objectives, participation in research structures and knowledge exchange activity).

(6) For REF purposes, 'research-active' staff at TL are defined as those on contracts of >0.2 FTE including both research and teaching, which aligns with REF expectations of staff with SRR. There are currently no 'research-only' contracts at TL, reflecting the institution's integrated practice-based model.

(7) Robust decision-making is ensured through a clearly defined REF governance structure, led by the REF Advisory Panel; documented criteria and audit trails for all decisions; calibration of requirements across both music and dance disciplines within UoA 33; scrutiny by the TL Research Board of all REF-related decision making with final approval by the Principal.

(8) Output selection is undertaken through a triple peer-reviewed process involving external subject experts, internal reviewers, and moderation. Criteria are aligned with REF definitions of quality, ensuring that outputs selected are representative of the breadth of TL's research, including practice-based outputs. These processes ensure that decisions are consistent, justifiable, and defensible. These processes are underpinned by responsible research assessment principles, ensuring that robustness is achieved through expert judgement rather than metric-driven approaches.

## Transparency

(9) Transparency is central to this CoP. All policies and processes relating to: identification of staff with SRR; determination of research independence; allocation of contracts to UoAs; selection of outputs are clearly defined and aligned with REF 2029 Guidance.

(10) The CoP is communicated and made accessible to all staff through: internal email communications; the TL VLE (Moodle) and intranet; an externally accessible webpage; briefings, workshops, and recorded sessions. Materials are available in accessible formats (including screen-reader compatible documents and large print). Hard copies are provided where required, including to staff on leave or based overseas. Additional resources (FAQs, guidance documents) support staff understanding. The CoP clearly explains how decisions are made, including roles, criteria, timelines, and opportunities for engagement.

(11) Staff are informed of decisions relating to their status and outputs and have access to a formal appeals process (see Part 2). This ensures openness, accountability, and confidence in institutional processes.

## Equity and inclusion

(12) TL is committed to ensuring that REF 2029 decisions are fair, impartial, and inclusive, supporting a diversity of roles, career stages, people, and research contributions. The institution recognises the diversity of its workforce and research, including: practice-based and interdisciplinary research central to UoA 33; staff at different career stages, including early career researchers; fractional and teaching-and-research staff. All research-active staff are included in the outputs submission pool, reflecting TL's commitment to inclusivity and consistency.

(13) Equality and inclusion are embedded through: ongoing Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) at key stages of the REF timeline; monitoring by protected characteristics, contract type, and career stage; mandatory equality, diversity and unconscious bias training for decision-makers.

(14) TL recognises challenges in building an inclusive research community, including: a small staff base where roles are often hybrid; sector-specific challenges in diversifying the workforce (e.g. underrepresentation of certain ethnic groups); balancing teaching, personal professional practice, and research responsibilities. The CoP addresses these challenges through transparent criteria, equitable workload allocation, inclusive support structures, and continuous monitoring.

(15) A formal and accessible appeals process provides an additional safeguard, ensuring that staff can challenge decisions where they believe processes have not been applied fairly. These approaches contribute to TL's wider People, Culture and Environment objectives by supporting an inclusive, supportive, and sustainable research culture.

## 2. Contextualisation within Institutional Policies

(16) This CoP is aligned with TL's wider institutional framework, including:

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- TL Equality and Diversity Policy (Appendix 3:2);
- TL Strategy, People and Research Environment (SPRE) commitments;
- Responsible Research Assessment principles (DORA) (Appendix 3:3);
- TL Strategic Plan 2018-2028 (Appendix 3:4);
- TL Research Plan 2025-2030 (Appendix 3:5).

(17) TL is committed to equality of opportunity and social justice, ensuring that all staff are treated with dignity and respect regardless of protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. The institution promotes: an inclusive and supportive working environment; recognition of diverse contributions to research, including from the broad range of music and dance research, and comprising both classical and newer traditions in the disciplines; fair access to opportunities and career development.

(18) Responsible research assessment is embedded using: qualitative peer review; avoidance of inappropriate metrics; and recognition of diverse research outputs. TL is committed to the principles of responsible research assessment and aligns its REF 2029 processes with sector-recognised frameworks, including the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and associated UK sector guidance (e.g. the Leiden Manifesto and Metric Tide principles).

(19) TL implements the DORA declaration and extends it into practice-based research. TL thereby defines responsible research assessment through the following criteria: the quality of research outputs is assessed primarily through expert peer review, rather than reliance on journal-based metrics or proxy indicators; no individual output is privileged or excluded on the basis of publication venue or, by extension, performance venue, impact factor, or similar metrics; a wide range of research outputs are recognised and encouraged, including practice-based, multi-form, performative, and non-traditional outputs, which are eligible for submission to UoA 33; contributions to research culture, collaboration, and knowledge exchange are valued alongside output quality. These principles are embedded across the TL SPRE document and REF decision-making processes, including output selection, staff identification, and internal review, and are supported through training for all REF Advisory Panel members. This ensures alignment between REF processes and TL's broader commitment to an inclusive and responsible research environment.

(20) Processes are informed by sector guidance and benchmarking against comparable small and specialist institutions submitting to UoA 33 and comprising the institutions within Conservatoires UK (CUK).

(21) This Code of Practice is aligned with the TL REF 2029 SPRE framework, which emphasises the importance of inclusive research cultures, responsible research assessment, and support for the development of all researchers. The processes set out in this CoP contribute directly to TL's SPRE objectives by ensuring that staff identification, output selection, and decision-making practices are fair, transparent, and inclusive.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

(22) TL will conduct and update Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) at key stages of the REF process: a) Identification of staff with SRR; b) Determination of research independence; c) Output selection; d) Appeals process; e) Final submission.

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(23) EIAs are undertaken by the People and Organisational Development team in consultation with the Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange and reviewed by relevant committees.

(24) Initial EIA analysis, informed by REF 2021 and earlier data, identified largely neutral outcomes across protected characteristics, with previous gender imbalance now addressed through a broadly balanced research-active pool.

(25) The Code of Practice will be kept under review throughout the REF 2029 cycle to ensure continued alignment with REF guidance and institutional priorities.

### 3. Update on Actions Since REF 2021

(26) Since REF 2021, TL has maintained a consistent and inclusive approach by retaining 'research-active' status for all staff who submitted to REF 2021 subject to annual scrutiny via personal Research Activity Reports. This existing research-active pool has been expanded through periodic open calls (most recently in 2023), increasing inclusivity and access (including a balanced gender outcome in new appointments). These open-calls were followed by a rigorous peer-review procedure by the REF Advisory Panel, and EIAs were undertaken at each stage, with an identical procedure to that itemised in Part 2 for identifying staff with SRR. Research-active status continues to be defined by contracts including both teaching and research responsibilities (>0.2 FTE), ensuring clarity and alignment with REF expectations of SRR.

(27) The research environment has been strengthened through:

- A standard 20% workload allocation for research;
- Increased access to research funding (including REF 2029 seed funding);
- Participation in new research groups and the Trinity Laban Research Hub Events;
- Introduction of TL Research Mentor Scheme, training, and internal dissemination opportunities.

(28) Improvements since REF 2021 include:

- Enhanced clarity in role definitions and workload models;
- Strengthened EIA processes and data monitoring;
- Expanded EDI and unconscious bias training, including from a third-party external consultant;
- Increased recognition of practice-based, multi-form and interdisciplinary research;
- Improved communication and transparency through dedicated REF channels.

(29) TL's Strategic Plan 2018-2028 includes a commitment to increasing diversity among staff and students, addressing known sector challenges such as underrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff.

(30) These actions demonstrate measurable progress in strengthening inclusivity, transparency, and robustness, and directly inform the approach taken in this CoP.

(31) Since 2023, TL has been a member of UKRIO, which affords research staff access to bespoke online training regarding research ethics and research integrity.

## Part 2: Identifying Staff Contracts with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR)

If all your institution's 'teaching and research' (ACEMPFUN 3) contracts in the HESA staff record already comprehensively identify all staff with significant responsibility for research, simply state this here. No further elaboration is needed in this section.

### 1. Policies and Procedures:

- **Criteria for SRR:** Clearly define the criteria, based upon job role expectations, not past performance. Consider providing examples for consistent interpretation.
- **Decision-Making and Communication:** Describe the process, roles, and timelines.
- **Multiple Processes (if applicable):** If different processes are used for different UoAs, outline each and justify any differences.

### 2. Staff, Committees, and Training:

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Define roles and responsibilities of individuals and committees, distinguishing between advisory and decision-making roles.
- **Training:** Detail training provided.

### 3. Appeals:

- Clearly outline how staff can appeal decisions about SRR, with appropriate links and contact details.

### 4. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA):

- **EIA Integration:** Demonstrate how EIA informed SRR identification and policy/procedure development. Provide information on data, findings, and actions taken.

## Statement on ACEMPFUN 3 Contracts

(1) All staff employed on 'teaching and research' (ACEMPFUN 3) contracts at TL are designated as having Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR), as research activity is an explicit contractual expectation embedded within role design, workload allocation, and institutional expectations. These ACEMPFUN 3 contracts uniquely specify the staff at TL with SRR. For the purposes of this CoP the following terms should therefore also be considered equivalent: staff having SRR; 'research-active' staff; staff with REFQUALCON flag in HESA; staff with a >0.2 FTE 'research and teaching' contract with a 20% pro-rata workload allocation.

(2) This designation is derived from contract type and role definition at point of employment, rather than from past performance. TL therefore confirms that:

- No performance thresholds are applied;
- No subjective evaluation, for example by unilateral decision by senior management, of research quality determines SRR status;
- No staff are included or excluded based on research productivity or career stage.

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This approach ensures a transparent, consistent, and auditable method of SRR identification in line with REF 2029 guidance.

### 1. Policies and Procedures

#### Criteria for SRR

(3) SRR status is determined solely by holding an ACEMPFUN 3 contract. Such contracts require staff to:

- Undertake research and/or scholarly activity as a core contractual expectation, and have eligible outputs for REF 2029;
- Contribute to institutional research culture and knowledge exchange activities;
- Engage in research-informed teaching and curriculum development where appropriate;
- Complete a 3Y Personal Research Plan.

#### Decision-Making, Governance, and Communication

(4) SRR identification is a data-led process grounded by contract type, supported by formal governance oversight. The process is as follows:

- The TL People and Organisational Development department extracts staff records from the HESA staff return (ACEMPFUN 3 coding);
- All ACEMPFUN 3 staff are mapped to SRR designation;
- The REF Advisory Panel reviews all REF-related classifications for consistency and completeness;
- The TL Research Board and Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange provide oversight and endorsement;
- Final institutional approval is given by the Principal.

Staff are informed of SRR designation through formal communication, supported by REF guidance materials and institutional briefings.

#### Multiple Processes

(5) Not applicable. A single institutional process is applied across all (sub)disciplines within UoA 33.

### 2. Staff, Committees, and Training

#### Roles and Responsibilities (Committees and Personnel)

(6) This section sets out the roles and responsibilities of staff and TL committees and panels involved in the preparation and approval of TL's REF 2029 submission. The TL REF Advisory Panel is the institution's principal operational and decision-making body for all REF matters, including SRR identification,

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output selection, impact case study development, SPRE statement, and all other REF-related decisions. The TL REF Advisory Panel reports directly to the TL Research Board via the Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange.

(7) The TL REF Advisory Panel comprises (A=advisory; DM= decision-making):

- Prof Anthony Bowne (Principal, Chair, DM);
- Prof Jonathan Clark (Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange, DM);
- Prof Aleks Szram (Artistic Director; TL Executive Lead for Research, DM);
- Dr Hans Koller (Associate Director of Music, DM);
- Dr Naomi Lefebvre Sell (Associate Director of Dance, DM);
- Prof Sam Hayden (Professor of Composition, DM);
- Charles Linehan (Reader in Choreography, DM);
- Prof Dave Camlin (Professor of Music Education, DM);
- Prof Deirdre Gribbin (Professor of Composition, DM);
- External Senior Professor (Music, DM), tbc;
- External Senior Professor (Dance, DM), tbc;
- Roger Wilson (Member of TL Board of Governors; Co-Founder of Black Lives in Music, A);
- Pamela Thompson (Head of People and Organisational Development, A);
- Sara Pay (Research Administrator / UoA 33 Coordinator, A).

(8) The Panel may co-opt additional academic staff where specialist expertise is required.

(9) The REF Advisory Panel has been carefully selected according to the following criteria: blend of senior management in research with staff having SRR; experience of serving on previous REF Panels and sub-Panels; Board of Governors representation; staff with expertise in EDI training and initiatives; administrative and HR support; presence of external independent senior academics to mitigate bias. The two nominated external Senior Professors will be experienced researchers and academics with in-depth knowledge of REF processes and policies and will likely be former REF Panel or sub-Panel members.

(10) Terms of Reference. The REF Advisory Panel is responsible for all REF 2029-related decision-making and oversight, including:

- Identification of staff with significant responsibility for research (SRR);
- Determination and verification of research independence;
- Selection, review, and finalisation of research outputs;
- Development, assessment, and approval of impact case studies;
- Consideration and determination of internal appeals relating to REF decisions;
- Oversight of all REF submission components to UoA 33.

(11) In addition, the Panel is responsible for:

- Implementing the TL REF 2029 Strategy as set out in the TL Research Plan 2025-2030 and ensuring institutional communication and delivery;
- Ensuring the quality, integrity, and robustness of the full REF 2029 submission;
- Embedding the principles of transparency, consistency, accountability, and inclusivity across all REF decision-making;

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- Overseeing EDI considerations across all REF processes, including risks of bias in selection and evaluation;
- Ensuring appropriate documentation, audit trails, and governance records are kept up to date for all REF decisions.

(12) All decisions made by the REF Advisory Panel are subject to scrutiny and endorsement by the TL Research Board with final approval by the Principal. The Panel may delegate operational and administrative tasks (including data collation and coordination) to named staff; however, decision-making authority for all REF matters remains with the REF Advisory Panel.

### Training

(13) All individuals involved in REF 2029 governance and administration undertake mandatory training covering:

- REF 2029 guidance and Code of Practice requirements;
- Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), provided biannually by a third party, the Virtual College;
- Specific REF 2029 EDI training by an external consultant;
- Consistent application of contract-based SRR identification;
- Decision-making transparency and governance accountability;
- Data protection and confidentiality requirements.

Training is refreshed regularly and completion is centrally recorded by the UoA Coordinator and Head of People and Organisational Development.

### 3. Appeals

(14) An appropriate appeals procedure is a vital part of this CoP. An appeal can be made regarding any aspect of REF decision-making and will address the following issues: perceived unfair discrimination; concerns about the due process for identifying staff with SRR; the selection of REF 2029 outputs; circumstances pertaining to any new evidence that has come to light during the assessment period that was previously unavailable. The REF is essentially a process of peer review, and in common with other processes of peer review, contains qualitative judgements based on expert professional knowledge and expertise. Therefore, a disagreement with decisions on academic grounds alone is not a sufficient basis for an appeal, unless there are reasons for thinking that the judgement was exercised unfairly or in contravention of the principles of equality and inclusion.

(15) An individual who wishes to make an appeal must write to the TL Head of People and Organisational Development department in the first instance clearly stating the reasons for requesting a review. This written appeal should be submitted **within 10 working days** of being informed of the decision against which they are appealing, and the decision clearly outlined. The written appeal should contain details of the grounds for the appeal, referring to the criteria for e.g. output selection in this CoP and any supporting evidence, including evidence that may have been previously unavailable. The appeal will be considered by the TL Head of People and Organisational Development **within 15 working days** of receipt. A pro-forma for any appeals is included in the Appendix 2.

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(16) The procedure above may uphold an appeal, in which case the REF Advisory Panel will be asked to reconsider their original recommendation, or may dismiss an appeal, in which case the original recommendation will stand. The decision of the Appeals Panel will be communicated to the appellant **within 3 working days** of the panel meeting. There will be no further right of appeal under this REF Appeals Process.

#### **4. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

(17) An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) on current TL staff with SRR has been undertaken to inform this CoP to assess the potential equality implications of SRR identification and wider REF-related processes. Such an approach is relevant at this point in the REF 2029 window, as this population is anticipated to remain relatively consistent until the final TL REF 2029 submission. The EIA analysed data regarding protected characteristics in the research-active pool versus baseline data in the TL academic staff at large. EIAs regarding final identification of staff with SRR and all other aspects of the CoP will be refreshed at further dates in the REF 2029 time window. The findings of the preliminary EIA on SRR were broadly statistically neutral, with both some improvements from the situation in REF 2021, and some small anomalies that will be addressed in TL's REF 2029 SPRE statement. Results and data are given in Appendix 1.

## Part 3: Determining Research Independence

*(Required for all participating institutions)*

### 1. Policies and Procedures:

- **Criteria and Evidence:** Clearly outline criteria and evidence used to assess research independence, particularly for 'research only' (ACEMPFUN 2) contracts.
- **Decision-Making and Communication:** Describe the process, roles, and timelines.

### 2. Staff, Committees, and Training:

- *If this section is the same as Part 2, please just refer to the earlier text.*
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Define roles and responsibilities of individuals and committees, distinguishing between advisory and decision-making roles.
- **Training:** Detail training provided.

### 3. Appeals:

- Clearly outline how staff can appeal decisions about research independence, with appropriate links and contact details.

### 4. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA):

- **EIA Integration:** Demonstrate how EIA informed research independence determination and policy/procedure development. Provide information on data, findings, and actions taken.

## Statement of Applicability

(1) TL confirms that it does not employ staff on 'research-only' (ACEMPFUN 2) contracts. All staff engaged in research activity are exclusively employed on 'teaching and research' (ACEMPFUN 3) contracts. As a result, no formal institutional process is required to determine research independence for REF purposes, as the category of staff to which this assessment applies does not exist within the institution's staffing pool. The institution has nevertheless reviewed the REF requirements relating to research independence to ensure compliance and confirms that its staffing model does not involve a cohort requiring classification under this criterion.

### 1. Policies and Procedures

#### Criteria and Evidence

(2) Not applicable, as the institution does not employ staff on research-only contracts. Therefore: no determination of research independence is undertaken for REF submission purposes, and no criteria or evidential frameworks are required for this purpose.

(3) TL similarly does not recognise research assistants or research associates as independent researchers where the primary employment function is research only and they are employed to carry out

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another individual's research programme, for example in a project managed by a separate Principal Investigator. At the time of writing, there are no such employees at TL. TL additionally does not employ post-doctoral researchers or research fellow positions with research-only status.

### Decision-Making and Communication

(4) Not applicable. As there are no ACEMPFUN 2 'research-only' staff, no decision-making process, panel review, or classification exercise is undertaken in relation to research independence. The REF Advisory Panel maintains oversight of this position to ensure continued alignment with REF requirements and confirms this status as part of routine REF governance reporting.

## 2. Staff, Committees, and Training

### Roles and Responsibilities

(5) The governance structures described in **Part 2 (Staff, Committees, and Training)** apply to all REF processes generally. However, they do not undertake any activity relating to research independence classification, as this category is not used within the institution. The REF Advisory Panel however retains overall responsibility to ensure that the institution's staffing structure remains appropriately mapped to REF requirements, and that no staff are incorrectly classified under research independence criteria.

### Training

(6) Training relating to research independence classification is not required, as the institution does not operate a research-only staffing category. However, REF-related training (as described in Part 2) includes awareness of: REF definitions of research independence; understanding when research independence criteria are not applicable; ensuring the correct interpretation of all contractual research responsibilities.

## 3. Appeals

(7) Not applicable.

## 4. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

### EIA Integration

(8) An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken to confirm that the absence of research-only contracts does not disadvantage any protected group in relation to REF participation or classification. The EIA specifically considered whether: the absence of ACEMPFUN 2 contracts could create unequal access to research recognition and whether research independence criteria might indirectly apply through other mechanisms.

### Findings

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(9) The EIA concluded that: the institution's unified ACEMPFUN 3 model ensures that research responsibility is exclusively embedded in all research-active roles, no differential treatment arises from the absence of research-only contracts, and that the REF independence criterion is not triggered within the institutional staffing structure and therefore has no operational impact.

## Part 4: Allocating Contracts to UoAs

(Required for all participating institutions)

### 1. Policies and Procedures:

- **Criteria and Evidence:** Clearly outline criteria and evidence used to allocate contracts to UoAs
- **Decision-Making and Communication:** Describe the process, roles, and timelines.

### 2. Staff, Committees, and Training:

- *If this section is the same as Part 2, please just refer to the earlier text.*
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Define roles and responsibilities of individuals and committees, distinguishing between advisory and decision-making roles.
- **Training:** Detail training provided.

### 3. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA):

- **EIA Integration:** Demonstrate how EIA informed allocation of contracts to UoAs and policy/procedure development. Provide information on data, findings, and actions taken.

## 1. Policies and Procedures

### Criteria and Evidence

(1) To inform this CoP, selected members of the REF Advisory Panel undertook a scoping exercise on the outputs specified and self-nominated by TL staff with SRR as their 'best guess' for REF 2029 submission during the Spring Term of AY 25-26. In all cases, these outputs fell under the disciplinary remit of the single UoA 33, including interdisciplinary outputs.

(2) Informed by this exercise, and as befitting a small specialist institution, the TL REF Advisory Panel committed to operate a single-UoA model for REF 2029. All staff with significant responsibility for research (SRR) are therefore contractually allocated to UoA 33. Given this focus, no competitive or selective allocation between UoAs is therefore required. All eligible staff will be included in a single submission to UoA 33.

(3) TL recognises that individual outputs may be interdisciplinary or, in principle, align with more than one UoA. However, this does not affect the allocation of staff contracts, which is based on the overall research role and disciplinary alignment of the individual, not on the classification of individual outputs (see Part 5).

### Decision-Making and Communication

(4) Given this single UoA focus, the process for allocating contracts to UoA 33 is clearly transparent and consistently applied: All staff receive written confirmation of their contractual inclusion in the submission to UoA 33.

## **2. Staff, Committees, and Training**

(5) This section should be read in conjunction with Part 2; roles and structures are consistent.

## **3. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

(6) An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) informed the development and implementation of this CoP and observed no differential impact identified in UoA allocation due to the single-UoA model.

## Part 5: Selecting outputs

### 1. Policies and Procedures:

- **Identifying substantive link to outputs**
- **Selecting outputs where the substantive link is via former staff:** covering compulsory redundancy, voluntary redundancy or severance, retirement, expiration of fixed term contracts
- **Assigning outputs to UoA/s:** Considering interdisciplinary research and submitting an output to multiple UOAs.
- **Procedures for supporting diversity of outputs**
- **Procedures for ensuring submissions are representative of the research undertaken within the submitting unit during the REF period:** Outlining the processes that will be undertaken to ensure that submitted outputs are reflective of the research strategies and structures, the diversity of research outputs, and contributions, collaborations and partnerships of the submitting unit and the unit's research strategies.
- **Policies and procedures and responsible research assessment practice**

### 2. Staff, Committees, and Training:

- *If this section is the same as Part 2 or 3, please just refer to the earlier text.*
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Define roles and responsibilities of individuals and committees, distinguishing between advisory and decision-making roles.
- **Training:** Detail training provided.

### 3. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA):

- **EIA Integration:** Demonstrate how EIA informed the selection of outputs and policy/procedure development. Provide information on data, findings, and actions taken.

## 1. Policies and Procedures

### Identifying substantive link to outputs

(1) Outputs will be considered for submission where a substantive link to TL can be demonstrated. This is defined as outputs where:

- The research underpinning the output was substantially undertaken while the individual was employed by TL and evidenced by an employment contract of >0.2FTE for a minimum of twelve months;
- The output reflects institutional support, infrastructure, and research environment;
- The output aligns with the disciplinary scope of UoA 33.

Evidence used to determine a substantive link includes employment and contractual records, output metadata, and, where appropriate, contextual statements (including for practice-based research).

### **Selecting outputs where the substantive link is via former staff**

(2) TL will consider for submission: outputs of former staff first made publicly available while they were employed as research-active staff; outputs of staff whose employment ended at the conclusion of a fixed-term contract; outputs of staff who have retired from the institution. In all cases, consideration will only be given where a substantive link to TL exists, the output is consistent with the remit of UoA 33 and achieves grades 3-4\* in the output selection exercise (see below).

(3) TL will not submit outputs from staff made either compulsorily or voluntarily redundant while holding permanent contracts, or those who left part-way through a fixed-term contract.

### **Assigning outputs to UoAs**

(4) As a single-UoA submitting institution, TL submits all outputs to UoA 33. Accordingly, outputs are not distributed across multiple UoAs for submission purposes.

(5) However, TL recognises that research outputs may be interdisciplinary in nature and may, under REF guidance, potentially fall within the scope of more than one Unit of Assessment. The institution's approach is therefore as follows:

- All outputs are returned exclusively in UoA 33 as part of TL's single-UoA submission strategy. This avoids the need for complex internal mapping structures and ensures that decisions regarding eligibility, inclusion, and output selection are made within a single, clearly defined framework.
- Interdisciplinary characteristics of outputs are fully recognised and supported within internal review and selection processes.
- The presence of interdisciplinary content does not alter the UoA to which an output is submitted, but if deemed suitable by the TL REF Advisory Panel, the output may be 'cross-referred' to another UoA as per the REF 2029 Guidance.

### **Procedures for supporting diversity of outputs**

(6) TL recognises the diversity of research outputs within UoA 33, including: practice-based outputs (e.g. performance, composition, choreography); scholarly outputs (e.g. journal articles, book chapters, monographs); collaborative and interdisciplinary work.

(7) To support this diversity:

- Outputs are assessed on their intrinsic research quality, not on the location of publication or performance venue;
- Practice-based research is supported through 300-word contextual statements and appropriate review processes;
- Proxy indicators, quantitative metrics (e.g. journal rankings) or aesthetic value judgements are not used as determinative criteria;
- Multiple reviewers may be used where appropriate to ensure fair assessment.

## Procedures for ensuring submissions are representative of the unit's research during the submitting period

(8) In addition to TL's commitment to a policy of supported self-nomination for the selection of outputs, the institution also commits that each member of staff with SRR will contribute at least one output to the REF 2029 submission (see below), provided this output meets the criteria of the Output Selection Exercise. This policy decision clearly plays an important role in ensuring that the final submission is both diverse and representative of the unit's research activity.

(9) This approach: broadens representation across the unit, ensuring that the submission reflects the contributions of the full community of research-active staff rather than a narrow subset; supports the inclusion of different career stages, particularly early career researchers, whose work might otherwise be underrepresented in a purely selective model; enables recognition of the full range of research practices within UoA 33, including practice-based, multi-form, collaborative, and interdisciplinary outputs; reduces the risk that particular groups or output types are systematically excluded due to structural biases or differences in opportunity; contributes to a submission that more accurately reflects the breadth of research strategies, methodologies, and partnerships that characterise the unit.

(10) Output Selection Exercise: The TL REF Advisory Panel will conduct an exercise during the Autumn Term of 2027 to make decisions on the selection of outputs to be included in the TL REF 2029 submission.

(11) The Panel will utilise a triple peer-reviewed process (2x internal; 1x external) to minimise biases. TL recognises the difficulty in fully preserving anonymity in a small specialist institution, but all output materials will be nevertheless anonymised, and the REF Advisory Panel has been trained by an external consultant to mitigate this, and other potential biases. The reviewers of an output will be asked to: peer review research outputs against the standard REF grading system (1\*–4\*); to avoid ties, reviewers may use a graded version of this scale, e.g. 3.25, 3.5, 3.75); advise on any referrals of outputs to other UoAs; consider any grounds for appeal via the stated TL REF 2029 Appeals Procedure.

(12) The REF Advisory Panel will apply the following criteria to the selection of outputs:

1. A minimum of one output per staff member with SRR will be submitted, with a maximum of five to the final submission to REF 2029. TL will adopt a policy of supported self-nomination into an initial selection pool of outputs, whereby staff nominate their 'best' outputs, together with any reserve alternatives. This process will be mentored by individual Research Mentors and Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange in advance of review.
2. Research outputs will be pre-screened and progressed only if they meet: a) REF 2029 eligibility requirements (see Appendix 3:1); b) publication or dissemination during the REF 2029 window; c) REF 2029 Open Access requirements, or have a valid exception; d) data requirements, including, for practice research, a 300-word contextualising statement. Outputs not meeting all criteria will be deemed ineligible.
3. Outputs passing pre-screening and receiving a 3\*-4\* rating through peer review will be selected, coupled with the requirement that the total number of outputs equals 2.5 times the submitted FTE and that each member of staff with SRR will be submitted with at least one output.

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4. Where there is disagreement within the REF Advisory Panel, external reviewer guidance will take precedence. This guidance is used solely for REF purposes and will not inform internal performance or promotion processes.
5. Staff will be notified in writing by December 2027 of outputs that are provisionally selected.
6. Final decisions, including consideration of outputs produced after 2027, will be made at an Extraordinary Meeting of the TL Research Board in September 2028. Staff will then be notified in writing of confirmed selections.
7. TL will review the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) following the selection process and implement any actions identified.
8. TL recognises that research outputs may be produced in languages other than English, including minority and community languages. Such outputs are considered fully eligible for submission and are assessed on the same basis of quality, originality, significance and rigour as all other outputs. The language of publication will not be used as a proxy for quality, and no output will be disadvantaged based on language.

### **Policies and procedures and responsible research assessment practice**

(13) TL is committed to responsible research assessment, aligned with sector best practice such as San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (see Part One).

(14) Accordingly:

- Outputs are selected based on quality, originality, significance, and rigour;
- Publication or performance venue or perceived prestige is not used as a proxy for quality;
- No quantitative metrics or other indicators are used;
- Equal value is given to practice-based and non-traditional outputs;

The process is transparent, consistent, and auditable, and supports equality, diversity, and inclusion.

### **2. Staff, Committees, and Training**

(15) See Part 2 for full details; roles and structures are consistent.

### **3. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

(16) The EIA will be reviewed following the output selection procedure (Part 5 paragraph 12; 1.-8.), with actions implemented as required to ensure equitable outcomes, for example in relation to protected characteristics and output selection.

## **Part 6: Appendices**

- 1. Equality Impact Assessment**
- 2. Trinity Laban REF2029 Appeals Form Template**
- 3. Referenced material in the CoP**

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## APPENDIX 1 (Equality Impact Assessment)

### EIA on current TL staff with SRR (May 2026)

The assessment explicitly considered concerns regarding:

- Potential indirect discrimination arising from contractual allocation;
- Differential access to ACEMPFUN 3 contracts across protected groups;
- Structural inequalities affecting research participation.

The EIA considered:

- Distribution of ACEMPFUN 3 contracts across protected characteristics;
- Employment patterns (full-time/part-time; fixed-term/permanent);
- Disciplinary distribution across Music and Dance;
- Historical recruitment and promotion pathways into research-active roles.

Comparative % of Research Active Staff and Total Academic Salaried Staff based on known protected characteristics data:

	<b>% of Research Active Staff</b>	<b>% of Total Academic Salaried Staff</b>
<b>Male</b>	58%	55%
<b>Female</b>	42%	45%

<b>Age</b>	<b>% of Research Active Staff</b>	<b>% of Total Academic Salaried Staff</b>
31-35	15%	8%
36-40	3%	7%
41-45	9%	14%
46-50	24%	18%
51-55	15%	11%
56-60	21%	19%
61+	12%	23%

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>% of Research Active Staff</b>	<b>% of Total Academic Salaried Staff</b>
White - English Scottish Welsh Northern Irish or British	79%	77%
White - Irish	0%	2%
Any other White background	12%	6%
Asian - Chinese or Chinese British	6%	2%
Any other Asian background	0%	1%
Black - African or African British	0%	3%
Black - Caribbean or Caribbean British	3%	1%
Mixed ethnicity-White/White British & Black	0%	1%
Any other ethnic background	0%	1%
Ethnicity not known	0%	5%

<b>Disability</b>	<b>% of Research Active Staff</b>	<b>% of Total Academic Salaried Staff</b>
Disability	12%	5%
No known disability	88%	95%

(42) The EIA concluded that:

- The SRR model is procedurally neutral relative to the baseline of all TL academic staff;
- In particular, mapping of SRR status across protected characteristics is broadly correlated with baseline data. As an example of this, the current EIA finds that the under-representation of staff identifying as female in TL's submission to REF 2021 has corrected to near parity to baseline. 42% of staff identifying as female currently have SRR, compared to a 45% baseline of TL academic staff as a whole;
- On ethnicity, there is again a broadly statistically neutral performance relative to baseline, albeit with very low sample sizes, but with some over-representations: (100% Asian- Chinese or Chinese British representation; baseline sample of 2); (100% Black: Caribbean or Caribbean British; baseline sample of 1); (66% Any other White Background; sample size of 6);
- In line with relevant EDI findings from REF 2021, there is an under-representation of staff in one category of ethnicity. More action is needed on the (0% Black: African or African British; sample size of 3) classification and TL will address this issue directly in its REF 2029 SPRE statement. Actions already put in place by TL to address this discrepancy include targeted funding from the TL allocation of 'Enhancing Research Culture' funding from Research England. This targeting aimed to significantly increase access to postgraduate research training at TL from under-represented groups, and to researchers of colour in particular. It is anticipated that by the time of the final TL submission to REF 2029, the EIA on this classification will have improved because of this direct intervention;

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- On age, there is strong correlation to baseline, with under-representation only in the 36-45 brackets. This issue will be investigated in preparation for the next EIA;
- On disability, of staff identifying as disabled in the baseline academic staff group, 80% have been assigned SRR;
- There was a statistically neutral outcome across contract type (full-time versus part-time);
- No direct adverse impact was identified in relation to SRR designation itself.

(43) To ensure ongoing fairness and compliance:

- EIAs regarding identifying staff with SRR and all other aspects of the CoP will be refreshed at appropriate decision-making points in the REF submission window;
- Annual monitoring of ACEMPFUN 3 contract allocation by protected characteristic will be undertaken;
- Recruitment and promotion processes into research-active roles will be reviewed for equity impacts;
- Findings will be reported to the TL Research Board and REF Advisory Panel;

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## APPENDIX 2 (Appeals Process)

### Trinity Laban REF 2029 Appeals Form Template

Appeals should be submitted to [HRAdmin@trinitylaban.ac.uk](mailto:HRAdmin@trinitylaban.ac.uk), for the attention of the Head of People and Organisational Development.

#### 1. Individual details

Name:	Job Role:
Subject Area (Music/Dance):	Date:

#### 2. Grounds for appeal

In completing this form, I wish to lodge a formal appeal on one or more of the following grounds:

The criteria for the selection of a) academic staff with significant responsibility for research, and for b) the selection of outputs were not applied in accordance with TL's REF Code of Practice in respect of my eligibility for inclusion in TL's REF submission (delete as applicable).	
There was a material error in the data used by the TL REF Advisory Panel in applying the criteria to determine my eligibility for inclusion in the TL's REF submission.	

#### 3. Detail of grounds for appeal

Please provide information below to support this appeal, using a separate sheet if required to append any supporting documentation.
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## APPENDIX 3 (Referenced Material in the CoP)

1. REF 2029 Definition of Eligible Research

<https://2029.ref.ac.uk/guidance/section-4-contributions-to-knowledge-and-understanding-cku-guidance/#section-eligible-outputs>

2. TL Equality and Diversity Policy:

<https://trinity-laban-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2024/10/Equality-and-Diversity-Policy.pdf>

3. San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA):

<https://sfdora.org>

4. TL Strategic Plan 2018-2028:

[https://trinity-laban-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2026/04/Strategic\\_Plan\\_2018-28\\_March\\_26-compressed.pdf](https://trinity-laban-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2026/04/Strategic_Plan_2018-28_March_26-compressed.pdf)

5. TL Research Plan 2025-2030:

<https://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/research-and-knowledge-exchange/>