

REF Equality Impact Assessment

1. What is the activity for which an equality impact assessment is being carried out?

This equality impact assessment considers the process of selecting eligible Category A staff for inclusion in the College's REF2014 submission.

2. What process was undertaken to identify potential issues at the start of the REF process?

While the Code of Practice was being developed, an extensive consultation process was undertaken between February and March 2012 with the aim of being as inclusive as possible. Meetings were held with, and feedback received from, a wide range of representatives, including:

- The University and College Union (UCU)
- The College's Equality and Diversity Committee
- The College's Equality Advisory Groups
- The College's Academic Opportunities Committee (in autumn 2013, this became the Academic Gender Strategy Committee and the Athena Committee)
- Human Resources
- The College's REF Steering Group
- Faculty Deans and Faculty REF Leads

In addition to the consultation process, an in-depth assessment of how the College's 2008 RAE Code of Practice had worked was undertaken, which was considered alongside the contemporaneous in-depth analysis of the comparison between the RAE2008 profiles of the staff being submitted and the profiles of all eligible staff. Whilst no specific issues or concerns were raised by these forums, the College was determined to ensure that the forthcoming REF2014 selection process would be managed with no potential for discrimination or adverse impact.

It should be noted that the purpose of the Code of Practice was to ensure that staff, and those making decisions about who to submit to REF2014, were aware of the context in which REF2014 decisions were to be made. The Code was thus an extension of the College's normal approach to equality and diversity designed specifically for the purposes of REF2014.

3. What was done to prevent discrimination and advance equality throughout the REF selection process?

REF Equality Committee

- a. The College's REF Equality Committee was a significant component of the College's approach to ensuring that decisions were informed by equalities legislation and good management practice. It met nine times between September 2012 and December 2013. Its membership included the Deans of each Faculty, who were charged with a specific remit to monitor and promote equality, together with the Associate Provost (Institutional Affairs), the Deputy Director of HR, and members of the College's Academic Opportunities Committee and the College's Equality and Diversity Committee. An important part of the Committee's role was to ensure that the College's REF Code of Practice was adhered to and that actions and decisions made, either locally or centrally, were: transparent; systematic and based on reliable and consistent quantitative and qualitative data; consultative; and with due regard to equality matters and protected characteristics.

- b. In order to ensure good practice and monitor the selection process in terms of potential positive or adverse impact on specific equality groups, the following questions were identified for consideration by the College's REF Equality Committee at regular intervals throughout the selection process.
 - i. Was the selection process disadvantaging staff with particular protected characteristics (those for which data was available included age, disability, ethnicity, and gender)?
 - ii. Was the selection process disadvantaging staff with other characteristics (those for which data was available included seniority/grade, fixed-term vs. open-ended contract, and full-time vs. part-time)?
 - iii. Were staff fully aware of the procedures surrounding clearly defined and complex circumstances?
- c. The College's REF Equality Committee reviewed the equality profiles of all REF-eligible staff regularly and extensively, looking at the profile of staff being submitted compared to the profile of all eligible staff and drilling down into the data in detail to examine multiple factors. This analysis was also made available 'live' via a secure online dashboard report on the College's management information system to Faculty Deans and REF Leads. They considered the data regularly as their submissions were being compiled, liaising with their local decision-makers to ensure that individuals were being communicated with about their submission status and were not being disadvantaged by the selection process being undertaken.
- d. In addition to this, after analysis of the data by the REF Equality Committee, the Associate Provost (Institutional Affairs) discussed specific data with the Faculty Deans as required to better understand the factors leading to any differences in the profiles, thus ensuring that the selection process was not disadvantaging any particular group of staff. This was particularly in relation to the representation of female academic and research staff. At various points during the process there had been a marginally lower proportion of female staff with "submit" status compared to the pool of all eligible staff. The Chair of the REF Equality Committee also took the results of the detailed gender split analysis to the Academic Gender Strategy Committee because of this committee's overarching remit to advance gender equality generally.
- e. In making decisions on complex circumstances cases, REF Equality Committee members were concerned solely with the complex circumstances experienced by the (anonymous) individuals and ensuring that each case was considered thoroughly, consistently, and with a high regard to equality matters. The range of complex circumstances which were declared by College staff and considered by the REF Equality Committee was disability, ill health or injury, caring responsibilities, and bereavement.
- f. The Committee recommended reductions of one or more outputs for all submitted complex circumstances cases, with due regard to giving more favourable treatment as allowed by the REF2014 criteria and the Equality Act 2010. No cases that were brought before the Committee for a decision were rejected. Some applicants asked for their cases to be considered but withdrew their application subsequently as their REF status became known. The recommended reduction in outputs only was communicated to the individual and decision-maker(s) concerned and was used as a factor in the selection process.
- g. All other information pertinent to associating the individual with the submitted complex circumstances case was kept entirely confidential. Anonymity was ensured; unless individuals chose to inform others, the only person involved in direct discussions about an individual's complex circumstance(s) was the Deputy Director of HR.
- h. The Deputy Director of HR met with, and advised, individual staff over the period. Discussions largely covered: guidance about the difference between clearly defined and complex circumstances; whether particular circumstances were complex; and

advice on the information required by the REF Equality Committee to consider the case. During these meetings issues relating to protected characteristics, in addition to those indicated by the individual, were discussed where relevant and appropriate to ensure that equality was to the fore.

Support

- i. Support networks available to staff requiring advice on REF2014 included: HR staff; specialist equality staff, including one dedicated to supporting disabled staff; Faculty REF Co-ordinators; Occupational Health; UCU; employee assistance / counselling services; harassment support contacts; and the College's equality advisory networks, which are particularly active in relation to disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation. The College is also a Stonewall Diversity Champion.
- j. As part of normal College processes, there is significant College-wide activity supporting women's academic careers in STEMM as part of Athena SWAN. The College has been recognised as a leading institution for supporting women in academia, being only the third institution to be awarded a Silver Athena SWAN institutional award. In particular, the Department of Chemistry was only the fourth academic department in the country to achieve a Gold Athena SWAN award. The Department of Physics holds Institute of Physics Juno Champion status. The College has also awarded 68 Elsie Widdowson Fellowship Awards, which enable female academics to concentrate fully on their research work on returning from maternity or adoption leave. The Julia Higgins Medal and Awards are awarded annually to recognise individuals who, and departments which, have made a significant contribution to the support of academic women at the College. The College's Academic Gender Strategy Committee, chaired by the Provost, champions and oversees the advancement of gender equality at institutional level. Faculty and departmental gender equality committees report regularly on activity and progress to the College-level Athena SWAN committee, which was established in autumn 2013 and reports in to the Academic Gender Strategy Committee. Faculty Ambassadors for Women, in place since 2007, are high-profile role models who support fellow female academics and researchers in their professional development and help to organise events and activities for women in their Faculties.
- k. There are significant resources dedicated to support prospective and new parents. The College runs a Childcare Support Scheme, where a monthly allowance to support childcare costs is made available to each staff member with a child under 5 years old, as well as providing childcare vouchers as part of a salary sacrifice scheme. The College's Early Years Education Centre provides childcare for the children of College staff and students. The College also delivers workshops to support prospective and new parents, and promotes and supports extensive informal and social networking.
- l. An Academic Diversity Task Force was convened in October 2012 with the aim of recommending actions to improve the diversity of academic staff, particularly at junior and middle levels. In May 2013 the Task Force reported back identifying ten recommendations for actions in recruitment and selection procedures which are currently being taken forward.
- m. Imperial Expectations, a set of seven statements articulating how the College expects its leaders, managers and supervisors to behave, are fully integrated into the College's processes and management development provision. One of the seven Imperial Expectations is to "encourage inclusive participation and eliminate discrimination".
- n. The College has implemented fully the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and has achieved an HR Excellence in Research Badge from the European Commission.

Equality and diversity training

- a. Compulsory equality training specific to REF2014, including reference to the RAE2008 equality profiles, was delivered to decision-makers. The content of these training sessions was made available online so that individual staff could refer to it and so that it could continue to be a useful tool.
- b. As part of normal College processes, the College delivers an extensive programme of equality and diversity training available to all staff. “Unconscious bias” training is provided, both in specific sessions and incorporated into relevant development activities. Training is also provided on preventing harassment and bullying. In addition to this, the College delivers positive action development programmes such as the Female Academics’ Development Centre, the Springboard Women’s Development Programme, Calibre (a leadership development programme for disabled staff), and iLead (a leadership development programme for black and minority ethnic staff).

Communication

- c. The REF Code of Practice and specific information on the procedures for disclosing individual staff circumstances were publicised widely, including through the College’s dedicated REF2014 website and regular briefing email to all staff.
- d. In addition to ongoing communication, written confirmation of submission status was sent out at regular intervals as set out in the College’s Code of Practice, in accordance with the principles of equality and fairness.
- e. Full details of the complaints and appeals process were included in the College’s Code of Practice, which was publicised widely as referenced above.
- f. At a local level, Faculty REF Co-ordinators and decision-makers worked to ensure the dissemination of relevant information to all academic staff, to answer any queries raised, and in general to support staff throughout the REF selection process.

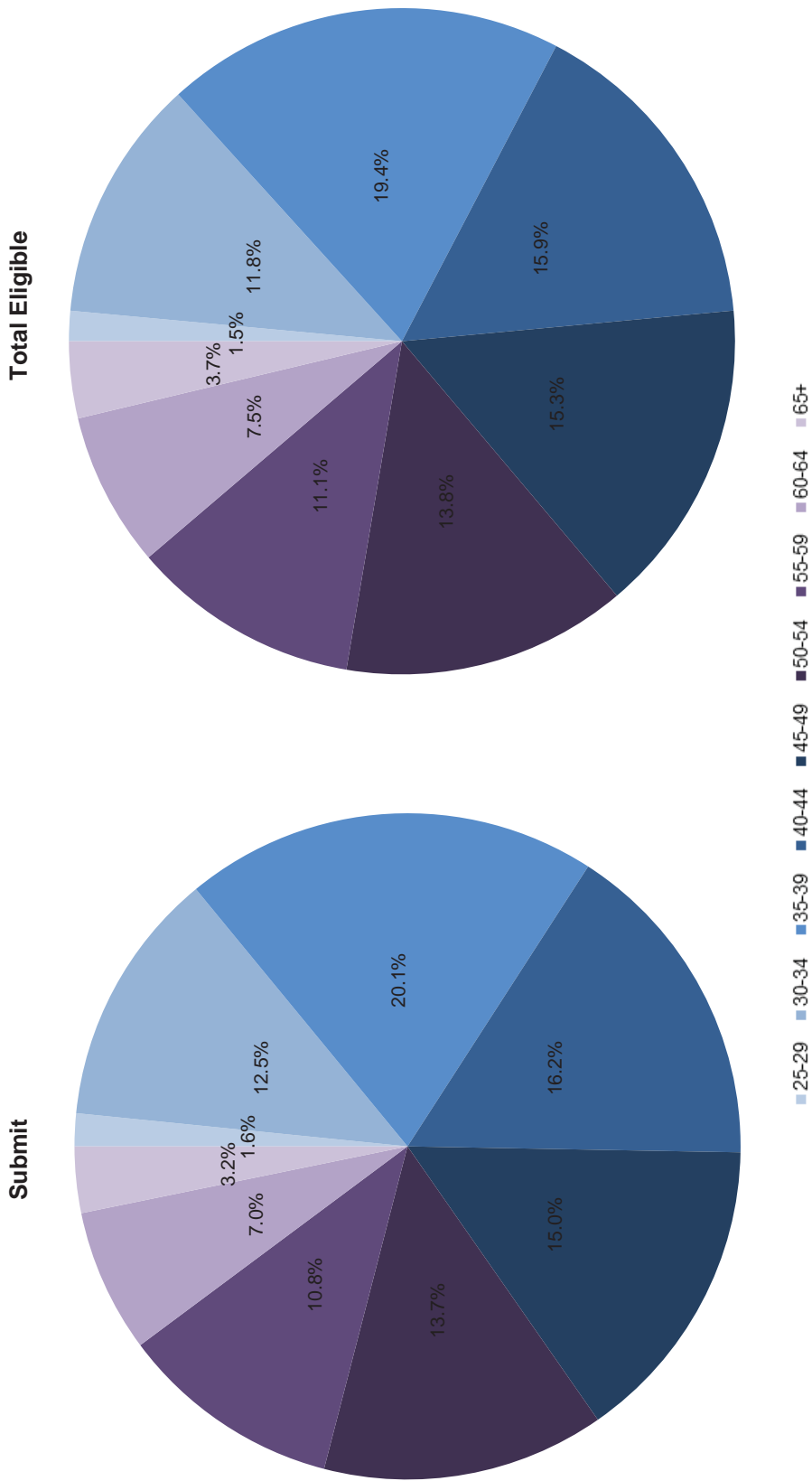
4. What were the outcomes?

In its qualitative and quantitative analysis, the College’s REF Equality Committee did not find any evidence of discrimination against particular equality groups in the REF2014 selection process. As referenced under 3d above, there had been a marginally lower proportion of female staff with “submit” status at various points during the process. In order to ensure that it was not the REF decision-making process that had led to the observed difference, the Faculty Deans, in line with their equality remit, discussed the data in detail with local decision-makers. At the final submission date a small difference was observed in the proportion of female staff in the pool of all eligible staff compared to the pool of staff being submitted, but the difference was found not to be statistically significant. The College’s Equality and Diversity Committee, Academic Gender Strategy Committee, Athena Committee and Academic Diversity Task Force continue to address gender equality more generally, in addition to the extensive support for women in academia continuing to be provided by the College.

Significant efforts were made to communicate well, widely and fairly, and to treat all individuals with respect. The College’s aim was to make the selection process as positive as possible for all concerned. There were no appeals raised from staff and so the appeals process was not used, suggesting that there had been clear communication with academic staff and that the way in which the selection process worked had been transparent.

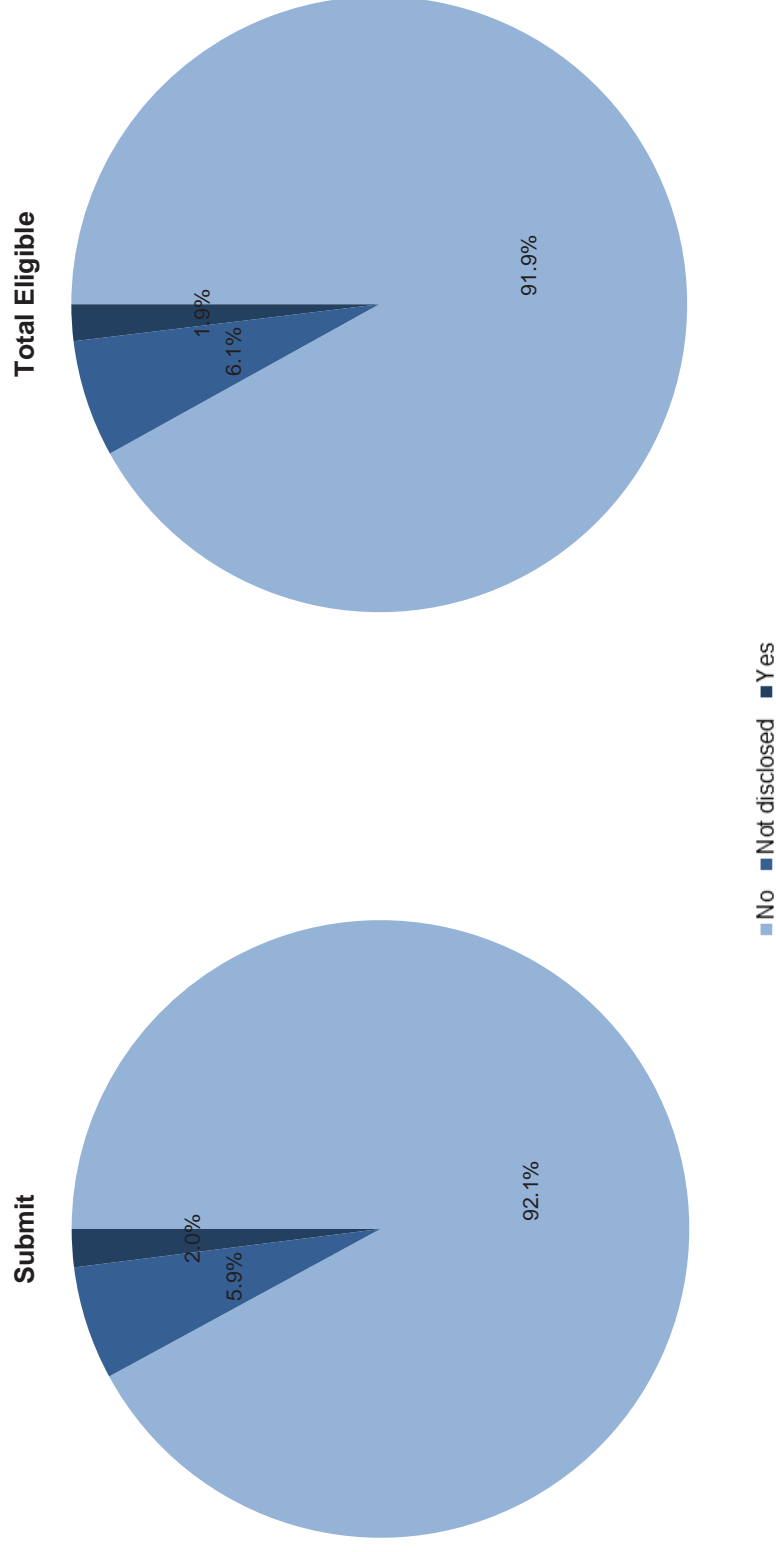
The final analysis of the data can be found at Annex 1. These data have been approved for publication by the College’s Provost’s Board.

Age Profile



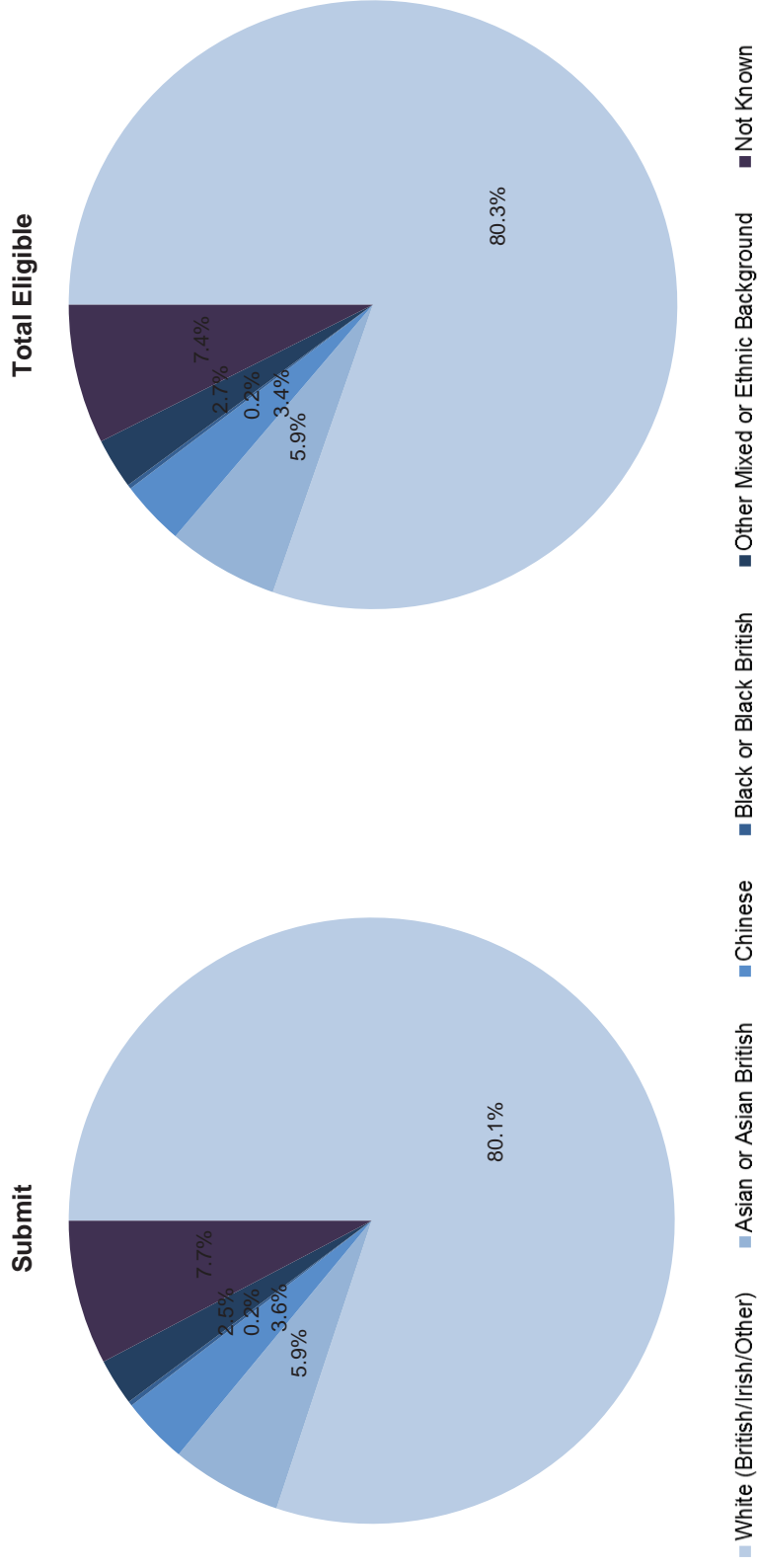
Charts show the FTE of Category A staff eligible to be submitted to REF2014, as at the REF census date (31 October 2013). "Submit" shows the breakdown of staff submitted to REF2014, and "Total Eligible" shows the breakdown of all staff eligible for REF2014, by age group.

Disability Profile



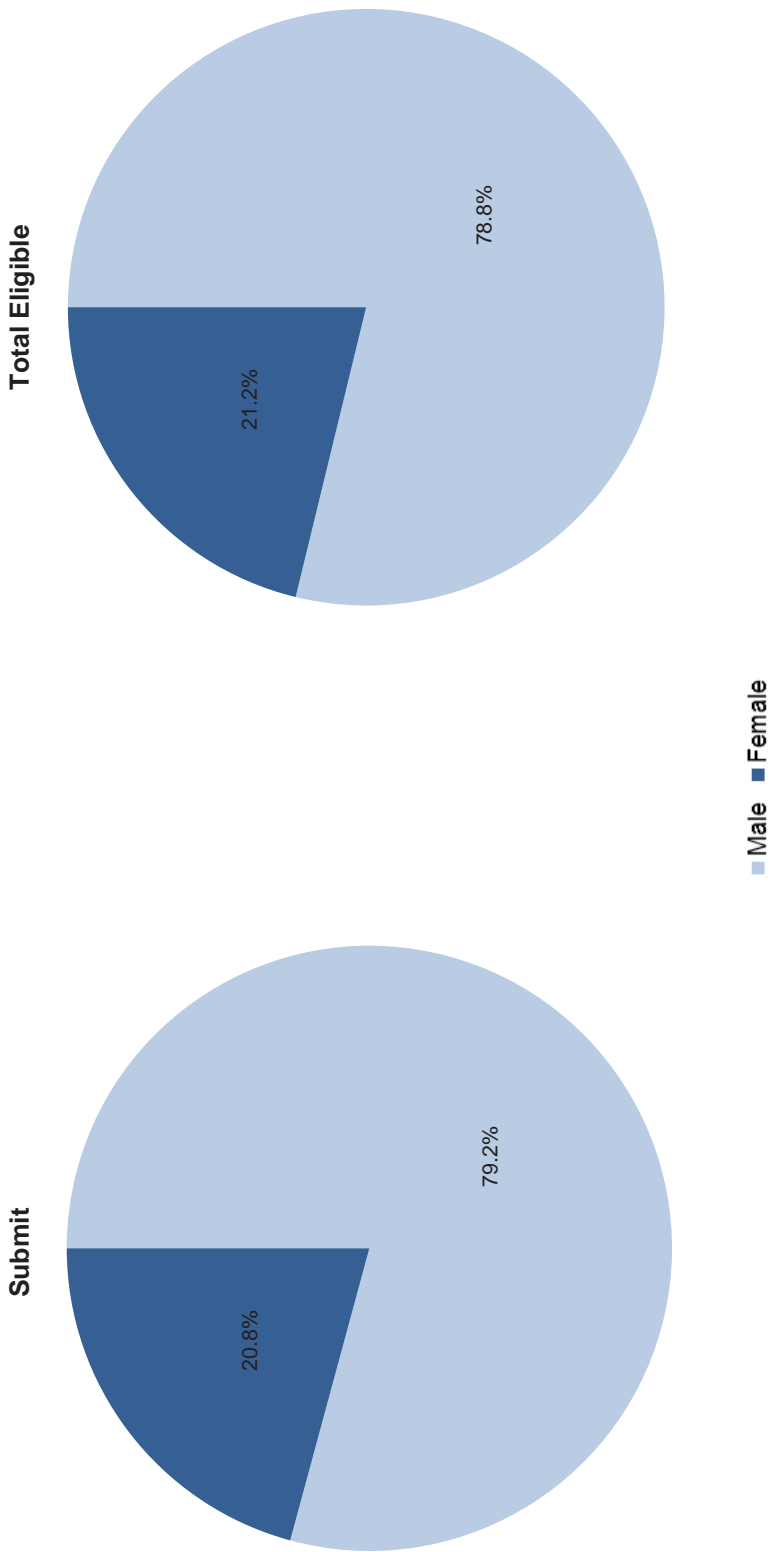
Charts show the FTE of Category A staff eligible to be submitted to REF2014, as at the REF census date (31 October 2013). "Submit" shows the breakdown of staff submitted to REF2014, and "Total Eligible" shows the breakdown of all staff eligible for REF2014, by disability.

Ethnicity Profile



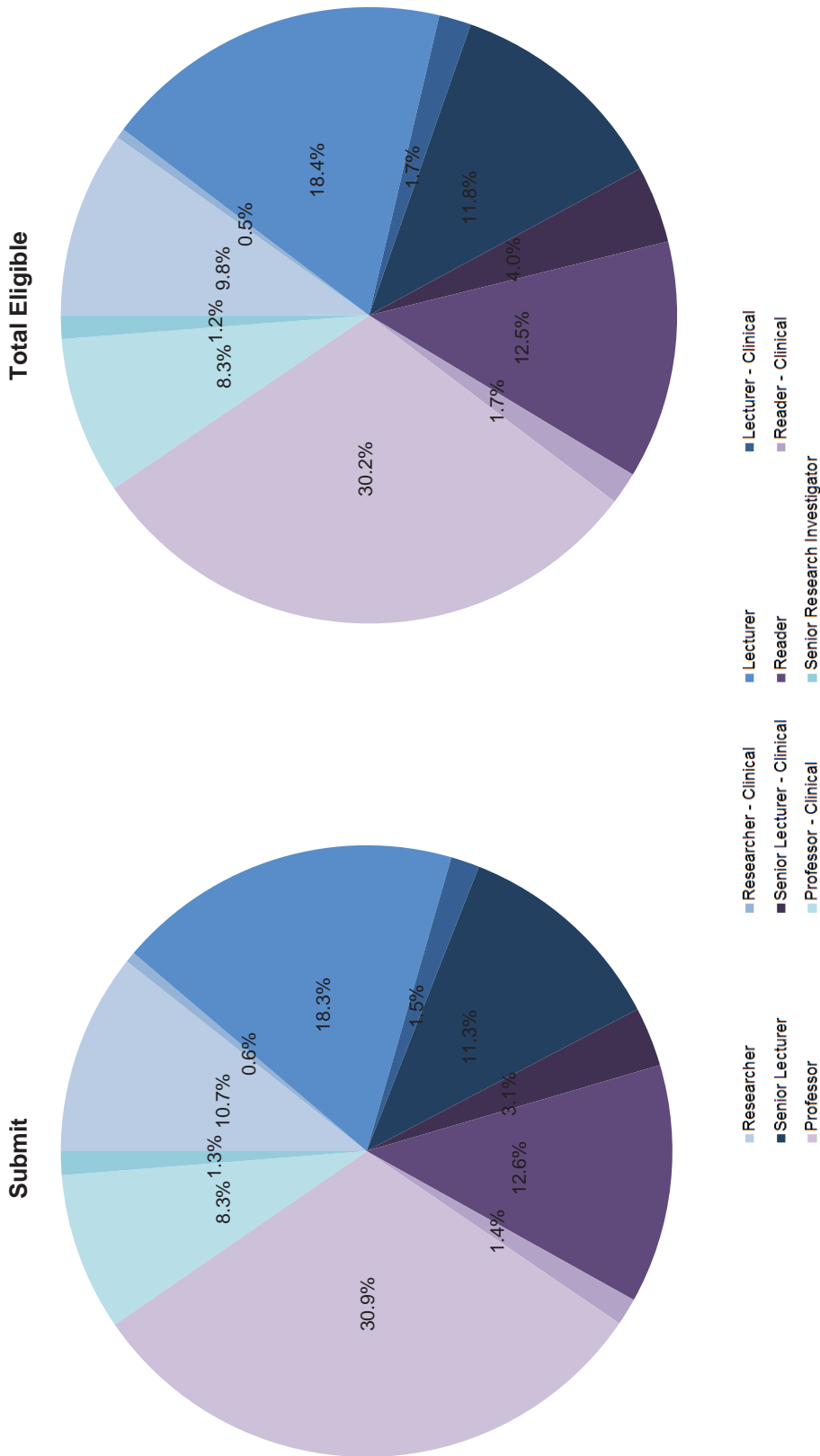
Charts show the FTE of Category A staff eligible to be submitted to REF2014, as at the REF census date (31 October 2013). "Submit" shows the breakdown of staff submitted to REF2014, and "Total Eligible" shows the breakdown of all staff eligible for REF2014, by ethnicity.

Gender Profile



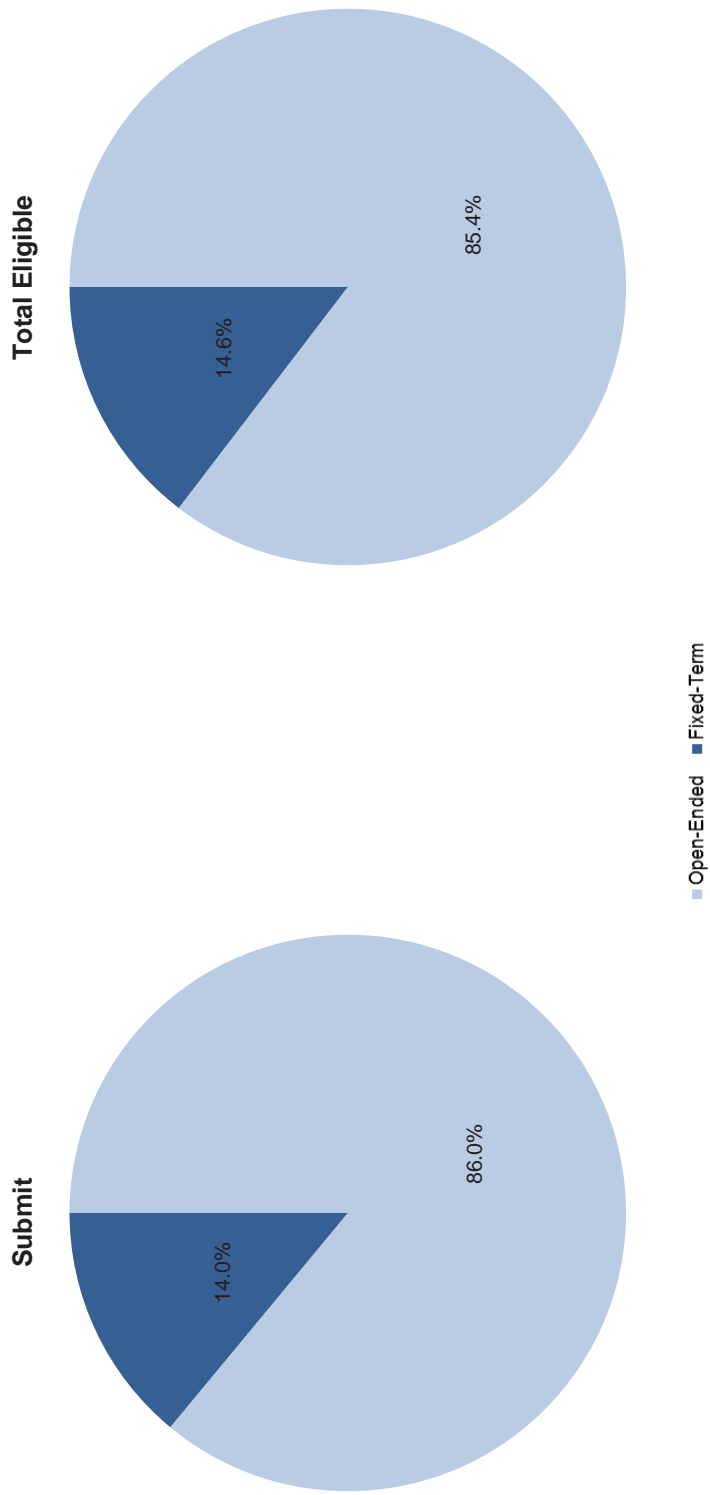
Charts show the FTE of Category A staff eligible to be submitted to REF2014, as at the REF census date (31 October 2013). "Submit" shows the breakdown of staff submitted to REF2014, and "Total Eligible" shows the breakdown of all staff eligible for REF2014, by gender.

Grade Profile



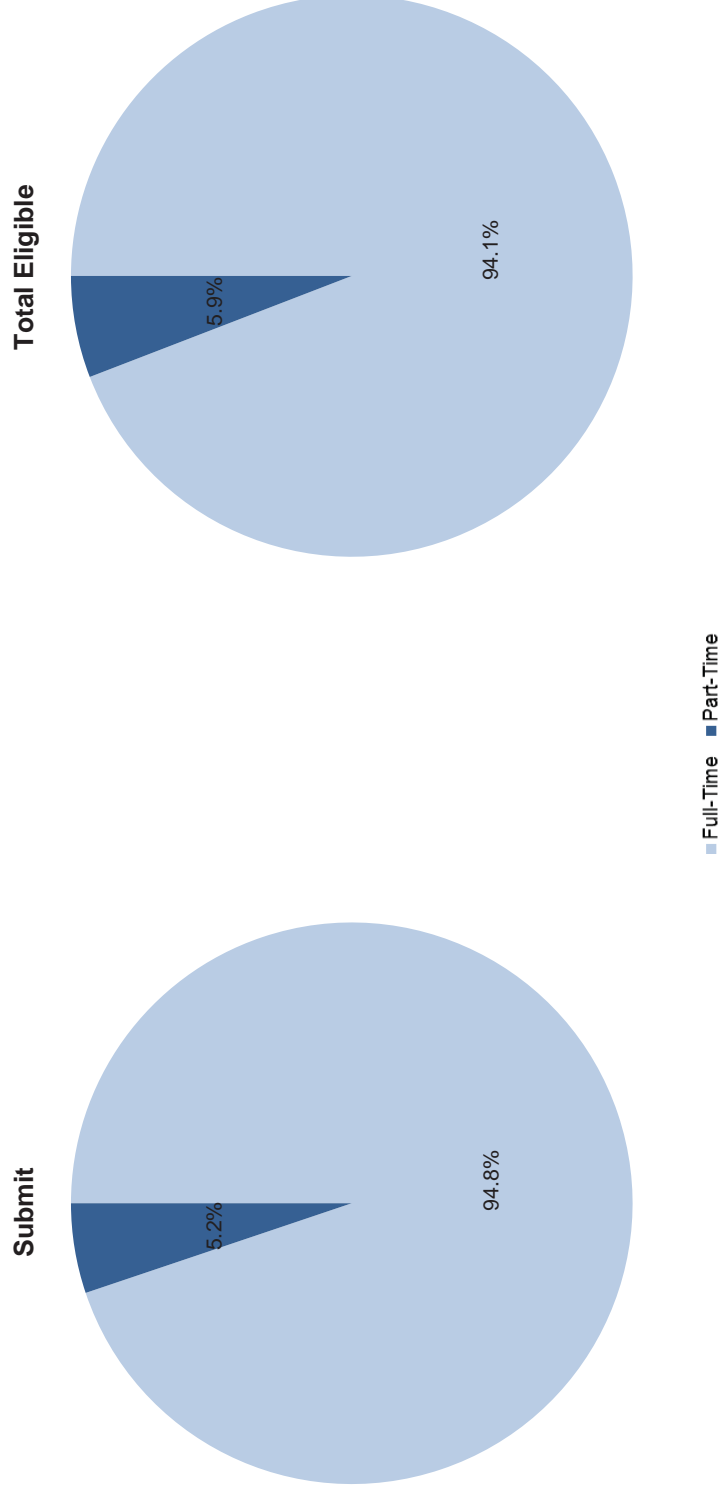
Charts show the FTE of Category A staff eligible to be submitted to REF2014, as at the REF census date (31 October 2013). “Submit” shows the breakdown of staff submitted to REF2014, and “Total Eligible” shows the breakdown of all staff eligible for REF2014, by grade.

Contract Type (Open-Ended / Fixed-Term)



Charts show the FTE of Category A staff eligible to be submitted to REF2014, as at the REF census date (31 October 2013). "Submit" shows the breakdown of staff submitted to REF2014, and "Total Eligible" shows the breakdown of all staff eligible for REF2014, by contract type (open-ended/fixed-term).

Contract Type (Full-Time / Part-Time)



Charts show the FTE of Category A staff eligible to be submitted to REF2014, as at the REF census date (31 October 2013). "Submit" shows the breakdown of staff submitted to REF2014, and "Total Eligible" shows the breakdown of all staff eligible for REF2014, by contract type (full-time / part-time).