



Northumbria University's city campus in Newcastle

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Seven Northumbria researchers appointed to official REF panels

Seven leading researchers from Northumbria University have been selected to support the official panels for the [2029 Research Excellence Framework \(REF\)](#), confirming the University's reputation for excellence in research.

The four UK higher education funding bodies [have announced the appointment](#) of panels for the criteria-setting phase of REF 2029.

REF is a major national exercise for assessing the quality of research in UK

higher education institutions. Having taken place in 2014 and 2021, the next exercise is planned for 2029.

Each panel member will play a key role in shaping the forthcoming REF by providing expert guidance to ensure a rigorous and trusted assessment of research quality across the UK.

[Professor Glyn Howatson](#) was recently announced as the [sub-panel deputy chair](#) for Unit of Assessment 24 (Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism).

Northumbria's Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange, [Professor Louise Bracken](#), has been confirmed as a sub-panel member for Unit of Assessment 14 (Geography and Environmental Studies).

A number of colleagues have also been named as sub-panel members for the assessment phase.

[Professor Chris Ashford](#), [Professor Denise Martin](#) and [Professor Simon Winlow](#) will join Main Panel C sub-panels for their respective Units of Assessment (UoA 18 – Law; UoA 20 – Social Work and Social Policy; and UoA 21 - Sociology).

[Professor Krishna Busawon](#) has been selected to be a sub-panel member for UoA 12 (Engineering) and [Professor Katherine Baxter](#) will join the UoA 27 (English Language and Literature) sub-panel.

Professor Louise Bracken said: "The announcement from the higher education funding bodies underlines the quality of research that we undertake here at Northumbria.

"REF is hugely important, not only for the sector, but also for everyone here at Northumbria to evidence our growth in quality research, and I'm really pleased to see that we have our highest ever number of colleagues involved in REF panels, contributing to this major national exercise."

For the first time, panel members were appointed through an open application process, rather than by nomination, designed to reduce barriers and attract a broader, more inclusive pool of candidates. This approach was

shaped through collaboration with sector bodies and the REF 2029 People and Diversity Advisory Panel (PDAP), helping to ensure that panels command the trust and confidence of their research communities.

REF Director Rebecca Fairbairn said: “It’s been a privilege to work with the sector bodies and panel chairs on this new, open recruitment approach. I’m grateful for their insight and leadership throughout the process. It’s been inspiring to see the depth, strength, and commitment of the UK’s research community, and I’m very much looking forward to welcoming the new panel members to the team.”

UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally.

Two thirds of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from the North East region and go into employment in the region when they graduate, demonstrating Northumbria's significant contribution to social mobility and levelling up in the North East of England.

Find out more about us at www.northumbria.ac.uk

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