

London School of Economics and Political Science

REF 2014: Equality Impact Assessment

1. Executive summary

The School's REF Strategy Committee was committed to helping the School prepare for REF2014 in a robust, fair and transparent way (see sections 2 and 3 below). It conducted itself in accordance with all published guidance provided by the REF Team on behalf of the Funding Councils, the Equality Challenge Unit and the School's own REF Code of Practice. Equality impact assessments were carried out by REFSC at key intervals, in accordance with the Funding Councils' requirements (see Section 4). While no negative impact or discrimination was found in the School's REF submission, the School will nevertheless put in place plans to ensure the continued progress of equality and diversity throughout the School (see section 5).

2. Background

LSE's REF2014 submission was prepared in accordance with all the requirements and guidelines issued by the Funding Councils (including the Equality and Diversity Panel set up by the Funding Councils specifically in relation to the REF) and the Equality Challenge Unit. In particular, the Funding Councils require LSE to confirm that it adopted and documented an appropriate internal code of practice which attends to all relevant equalities legislation in force on the submission date. The School's REF Code of Practice complies with the requirements as set out in the REF2014 Guidance on Submissions and was accepted by the REF Team on behalf of the Funding Councils in July 2012.

3. LSE's REF processes

The School's processes with regard to its REF preparations are set out in its REF Code of Practice. As stated in the Code of Practice, the School aims to create conditions whereby all staff are treated solely on the basis of merit, abilities and potential, irrespective of background or any irrelevant distinction. This applies equally to the processes of selecting staff for submission to REF2014. The Code of Practice sets out in particular how LSE ensured that it met its legislative obligations by operating fair and transparent processes. It should be read in conjunction with the School's equality and diversity policies¹ and understood within this wider framework for equality. It was a fundamental aspect of these processes that no single person made decisions about the selection of individuals for submission.

The School's REF Code of Practice can be found at:

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/researchAndDevelopment/researchExcellenceFramework2014/home.aspx>

Hard copies were distributed to all Heads of Department and Research Centre Directors for information. Heads of Department were asked to arrange the dissemination of the Code to all eligible staff in their Department/Institute and related Research Centres/programmes, including to staff absent from the School at the time. The School also held information sessions to assist the dissemination of this Code and explain the processes related to selection of staff for

¹ LSE Equality & Diversity website at

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/intranet/staff/equalityAndDiversity/home.aspx>

submission. In addition, all codes of practice will be published by the Funding Councils as part of institutions' submissions, after the conclusion of the REF.

The School's REF 2014 preparations were overseen by the REF Strategy Committee (REFSC). For each Unit of Assessment (UOA), the development of the School's final submission was determined by the REFSC based in part upon advice and information provided by the appropriate Departmental Research Committee(s) or other nominated Departmental body tasked with managing the Department's REF planning.

Departmental Research Committees identified and reviewed the research outputs of all eligible staff within their specific disciplines and used the relevant REF panel-specific criteria² to direct and guide their discussions. Guidance was also sought from independent external assessors as appropriate.

Departmental Research Committees provided advice to REFSC on all eligible members of staff, based on the outcomes of these review processes, to enable the REFSC to make informed decisions, ensure consistency of approach, and conduct appropriate impact monitoring as set out below.

REFSC considered recommendations from Departmental Research Committees in relation to all eligible staff (whether they were recommended for submission or not), and also monitored all recommendations put forward by Departmental Research Committees for consistency of approach. The overall responsibility for decisions about selection rested with REFSC.

3.1 Selection process for individuals with reduced outputs on equality grounds

Where the number of outputs has been affected by an individual's circumstances, REFSC determined the minimum number of outputs required, based on information provided by individuals and in accordance with the equality statement in paragraphs 63 – 91 of the REF Panel Criteria and Working Methods. This sets out how panels will deal with staff who submit fewer than four publications on grounds which are covered by equalities legislation.

The REF Panel Criteria and Working Methods distinguishes between 'clearly defined circumstances' and 'complex circumstances'. In both cases, submitting institutions were required to determine the number of outputs which may be reduced without penalty, according to two tables as follows:

Table 1: Early career researchers: permitted reduction in outputs

Date at which the individual met the REF definition of an early career researcher (see paragraphs 85 – 86 of the Assessment framework and guidance on submissions for definition)	Number of outputs may be reduced by up to:
On or before 31 July 2009	0
Between 1 August 2009 and 31 July 2010 inclusive	1
Between 1 August 2010 and 31 July 2011 inclusive	2
On or after 1 August 2011	3

² REF2014 Panel Criteria and Working Methods comprising generic, Main Panel and Sub-Panel statements at <http://www.REF.ac.uk/pubs/2006/01>

Table 2: Part-time working, secondments or career breaks: permitted reduction in outputs

Total months absent between 1 January 2008 and 31 October 2013 due to working part-time, secondment or career break:	Number of outputs may be reduced by up to:
0 - 11.99	0
12 - 27.99	1
28 - 45.99	2
46 or more	3

REF data collection exercises undertaken in preparation for the submission provided an opportunity for staff to discuss matters which may have placed them at a disadvantage in producing research for the REF. Individual staff were encouraged to highlight such matters to the Research Division. To ensure that all eligible staff are given the opportunity to do this, a questionnaire was sent to all eligible staff asking them to identify any relevant circumstances. The Research Policy Manager, Assistant Research Policy Manager, the Department's HR partner or the Equality and Diversity Adviser were able to provide guidance on completing the form.

The Research Division corroborated individual staff circumstances with the School's Human Resources records where these exist. All information related to equality was treated in confidence and will not be used for any other purposes. Information describing the circumstances of individuals whose outputs have been limited (as per the guidelines of individual panels) were entered within the confidential domains of the REF submission (REF1b – Individual Staff Circumstances). In completing REF1b, only sufficient detail to enable REF Panels and Sub-Panels and/or the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel to assess the impact of the circumstances on the person's research capability was provided. No details were given on matters such as medical diagnosis or the prognosis of a long-term illness. Involvement in the completion of this section was restricted to as few people as possible within the School, and all information was handled sensitively and in line with confidentiality guidelines. To protect individuals' confidentiality and privacy, those details of individual staff circumstances which were recorded on the REF software were held on a separate database which does not immediately identify the individual. Individuals who were not involved in the initial assessment of staff circumstances did not have access to the full details of individual staff circumstances. Completed questionnaires were only seen by those responsible for making the initial assessment of the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs required (see paragraph immediately below). Before making the initial assessment, individuals' names, Departments and units of assessment were removed from the completed questionnaires to ensure confidentiality.

The initial assessment of the appropriate reduction in the number of outputs required was made by the Research Policy Manager, Assistant Research Policy Manager, Equality and Diversity Adviser, the HR Manager, Policy and Employment Relations and one member of REFSC. For some complex circumstances, it was necessary to consult with the Chair of REFSC, or one other member of REFSC if there is a conflict of interest. All members of this group undertook equality and diversity training plus training specific to the REF based on case studies.

The final decision on submission was made by the REFSC. Members of REFSC only had access to sufficient information to enable them to determine the minimum number of outputs required. In the event of an initial appeal by an individual, the contents of the individual's questionnaire were made available to the full REFSC membership. A total of three initial appeals were considered by REFSC. There were no final appeals to the independent Appeals Panel. Full details of the appeals process and training can be found in the School's REF Code of Practice.

4. Equality impact assessment

REFSC undertook an equality impact assessment four times, at key stages of the REF process, and sought advice from the School's Equality and Diversity Adviser when undertaking these:

January 2013 – before any selection of staff to be submitted had taken place, to provide base data. EIA data were provided at School-wide and unit of assessment level. At this point it was agreed that data at the UOA level were too small to be meaningful and could theoretically identify individual members of staff in some categories and/ or units of assessment. It was agreed that the School should only publish its EIA data at School level, in accordance with the Funding Councils' requirements.

June 2013 – immediately after the initial selection of staff to be submitted had taken place, to check for any bias. EIA data were provided at School-wide and unit of assessment level, for completeness.

September 2013 – before the final REF submission was made, to check for any bias. EIA data were provided at School-wide level only, as agreed at the January meeting.

January 2014 – after the final submission had been made, to ensure that data were robust and to finalise the presentation of the data for publication. EIA data were provided at School-wide level only.

REFSC's analysis of the equality impact assessments undertaken prior to the REF submission, in January, June and September 2013, concluded that there were no significant biases in the data reported and were satisfied that the processes in place had produced a credible submission which attended to the School's legal obligations with regard to equalities requirements.

In summary:

Ethnic origin (see Table 1 and Charts 1 and 2). Individual BME groups represent a small minority of the total eligible population. Consequently, it would be difficult to identify any bias.

Gender (see Table 2 and Chart 3). While an initial EIA revealed a potential bias towards submitting more men than women, the final EIA revealed that 4.8% fewer eligible women than men were submitted. While this is below HEFCE's 5% level of statistical significance, REFSC recognises that gender equality has not yet been achieved. The School places a high priority on improving its performance in this area: see Section 5 for details of the School's equality and diversity action plan for further details.

Disability (see Table 3). Declared disabled staff represent an extremely small minority of the total eligible population. No negative bias was identified: 100% of declared disabled staff were submitted.

Early career researchers (see Table 4 and Chart 4). No negative bias was identified. The total percentage of ECRs submitted exceeded the overall submission rate for the School as a whole. This reflects the School's commitment to supporting its junior staff.

Age (see Table 5 and Charts 5 and 6). Revealed some variations in submission rates across the different age ranges which reflected the levels of productivity during academics' careers. The analysis revealed that staff in the younger age groups were more likely to be submitted to the REF than their older peers, again a reflection of the School's support for young and junior staff.

5. Equality and Diversity Action Plan (2014- 2017)

Equality and Diversity Action Plan (2014-17) builds on the achievements of the School's first Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan (2010-2014). The new three-year plan identifies actions needed to ensure the continued progress of equality and diversity throughout the School.

The School's Strategic Plan (2011-16) contains a clear commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity for all staff and students. The revised action plan reflects this commitment and sets out ambitious objectives to facilitate a culture that embeds the principles of equality and diversity in all aspects of the School's activities.

Council, as the governing body of the School, holds strategic ownership and accountability for the School's equality and diversity agenda and, therefore, for the action plan. It is supported in the implementation of the action plan by the Equality and Diversity Executive Group.

Comprising senior executive management, the Executive Group is responsible for setting strategic direction governing all aspects of the action plan, including monitoring progress and identifying risks. The Equality and Diversity Forum will support the Executive Group in steering the implementation of the action plan. A Council group on equality and diversity also provides non-executive guidance.

The action plan, as a working document, will be regularly revised to take into account any emerging evidence and issues.

Progress and challenges

As we set out to address the challenges and issues we face for the future, it is important to note and celebrate key progress in achieving the objectives set out in the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan (2010-14):

- The Academic Registrar's Division has examined the difference in student population profile between undergraduate and postgraduate levels according to ethnicity and confirmed that the proportion of UK Other, Asian and Chinese students is lower at postgraduate level than at undergraduate level. Further work to substantiate and address findings is underway.
- The Academic Registrar's Division has carried out work in collaboration with the Disability and Wellbeing Service to ensure that disabled students are aware of the routes for disclosing disability and are not deterred from doing so. Further, the Student Services Centre has rewritten rules on 'mitigating circumstances' for disabled students to make them clearer, and has determined that the adjustments the School makes for students are broadly comparable to peer universities.
- The Equal Pay Review has been completed and specific areas have been identified for further rigorous statistical analysis.
- A pilot Action Learning Set for senior women (academic and support staff) was launched. Following the subsequent launch of the LSE Leadership Development Programme (LDP), most attendees transferred onto the LDP. Other tailored training programmes are also being offered to women and ethnic minority staff.
- Equality analysis of the academic promotions machinery fed into the development of the new academic career structure (NAC). NAC has now been launched and a post-implementation equality analysis will be carried out.
- The School has been, for the third year running, listed in the Top 30 Employers for Working Families and also won the Best for Fathers award. The School has also received accreditation for the Disability Two Ticks scheme.
- Estates have carried out work to consult with disabled people routinely through regular meetings of Network of Disabled Staff and Students (NODSS) and the national register

of access consultants when necessary prior to the start of all estates projects for the purpose of impact assessment.

- The Equality and Diversity at LSE blog was launched and has developed into a platform for raising awareness of and promoting dialogue about equality and diversity. Other means of communication include, such as a termly flyer of events and a film produced by the Disability and Wellbeing Service.
- The proportion of ethnic minority members of Court of Governors has increased.

Besides progress in achieving the objectives set out in the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan, a significant development has been the creation of the Equality and Diversity Executive Group, chaired by me as School Secretary. All members of the group are designated equality and diversity ambassadors, with a remit to promote awareness of and engagement with equality and diversity issues.

However, several challenges remain. In producing this revised action plan, issues have been identified on the basis of best available evidence from the staff survey results and annual equality monitoring exercise. These are outlined below:

- Women and ethnic minorities continue to be underrepresented in the School in governance and senior posts.
- While the School has been collecting information on age, disability, gender and race for a number of years and has sufficient information to take action, in other areas (such as gender reassignment, religion and belief and sexual orientation) there is a need to collect more robust data as well as gather qualitative evidence through collaboration with these groups to inform future objectives.
- Consideration for equality and diversity needs to be mainstreamed and further integrated into key School functions, such as pay, recruitment and selection, training and strategic planning.
- Further work is required to fill information gaps in order to assess equality- and diversity-related issues fully in student recruitment, attainment, progression and teaching and learning experience.
- The School has a low disability disclosure rate for staff.

Future objectives and implementation

To address these challenges, the following overarching objectives have been set out in the Equality and Diversity Action Plan (2014-17):

- LSE aims to improve diversity across the organisation and within its governance structure. In particular, it will seek to address the under-representation of women and BME staff in senior academic and support roles, with an emphasis on training, recruitment, coaching and mentoring along with progression.
- LSE will implement its single equality scheme by developing and promoting exemplar activities across all relevant functions and areas of the School for all protected groups under the Equality Act 2010, aligned with national and sector-based standards.
- LSE seeks to admit candidates with the merit, potential and motivation to benefit from, contribute to and succeed in the LSE community, regardless of age, disability, race, nationality, gender, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status or other personal circumstances.
- LSE will ensure all the students it admits have equal opportunity for high attainment and will promote an inclusive teaching and learning environment. [Subject to input from the Academic Registrar and the Director of Academic Services]
- LSE will strongly encourage disability disclosure by promoting a culture of positive awareness and understanding of disability-related matters and strengthening the support provision for disabled staff and students.

Council, supported by senior management, holds overall responsibility for the implementation of the action plan. Local equality and diversity action plans will be developed for each department and division based on locally identified priorities to support the senior management's operational responsibility to embed equality and diversity in their areas.

Annex 1: Tables

<u>Table 1: Ethnic Origin</u>						
Ethnic Origin	Total Staff	% of total	Submitted	% of origin	Not submitted	% of origin
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	1	0.14	1	100.00	0	0.00
Asian or Asian British - Indian	21	3.03	15	71.43	6	28.57
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	2	0.29	1	50.00	1	0.00
Black or Black British - African	1	0.14	0	0.00	1	100.00
Black or Black British - Caribbean	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Chinese	17	2.45	11	64.71	6	35.29
Information Refused	32	4.61	26	81.25	6	18.75
Mixed White and Asian	6	0.86	5	83.33	1	16.67
Mixed White and Black African	1	0.14	0	0.00	0	0.00
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Not Known	36	5.19	32	88.89	4	11.11
Other Asian Background	11	1.59	9	81.82	2	18.18
Other Black Background	1	0.14	1	100.00	1	100.00
Other Ethnic Background	10	1.44	8	80.00	2	20.00
Other Mixed Background	12	1.73	10	83.33	2	16.67
Other White Background	322	46.40	267	82.92	55	17.08
White British	197	28.39	159	80.71	38	19.29
White Irish	24	3.46	20	83.33	4	16.67
Total Staff	694	100.00	565	N/A	129	N/A

Table 2: Gender

Gender	Total	% of total	Submitted	% of gender	Not submitted	% of gender
Female	234	33.72	183	78.21	51	21.79
Male	460	66.28	382	83.04	78	16.96
Total Staff	694	100.00	565	N/A	129	N/A

Table 3: Declared Disability

Declared Disabled	Total	%	Submitted	%	Submitted	%
No	689	99.28	560	81.28	129	18.72
Yes	5	0.72	5	100.00	0	0.00
Total Staff	694	100.00	565	N/A	129	N/A

Table 4: Early Career Researchers

Early Career	Total ECRs	% of total staff	Submitted	% of ERCs	Not Submitted	% of ECRs
Early career researchers Yes	116	17	104	89.66	12	10.34
Early Career researchers No	578	83.29				
Total Staff	694	100.00				

Table 5: Age

Age	Total	% of total staff	Submitted	% of age range	Not submitted	% of age range
16 - 24	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
25 - 34	87	12.54	82	94.25	5	5.75
35 - 44	238	34.29	197	82.77	41	17.23
45 - 54	201	28.96	156	77.61	45	22.39
55 - 64	111	15.99	86	77.48	25	22.52
65+	57	8.21	44	77.19	13	22.81
Total Staff	694	100.00	565		129	

Annex 2: Charts

Chart 1: Total eligible population by ethnic origin

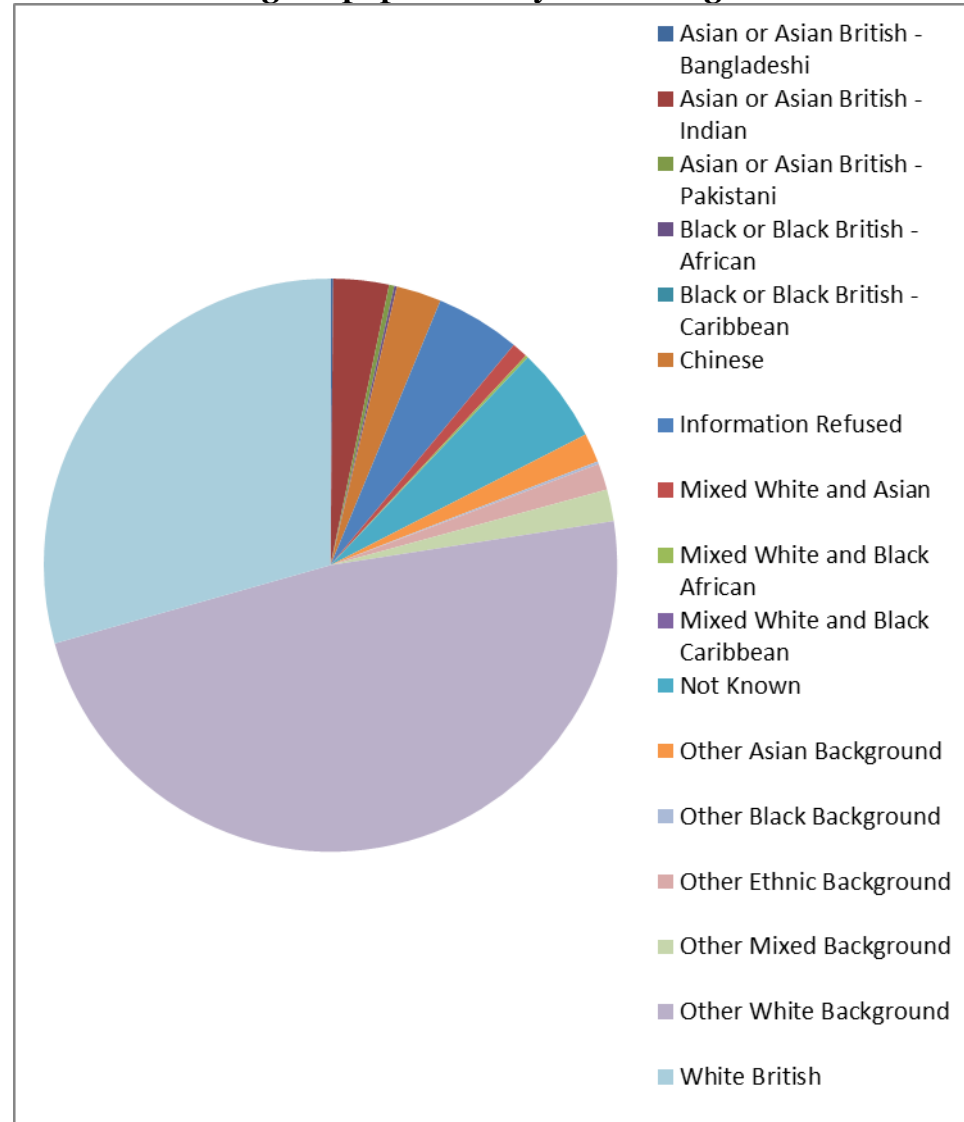


Chart 2: Submitted/not submitted by ethnic origin

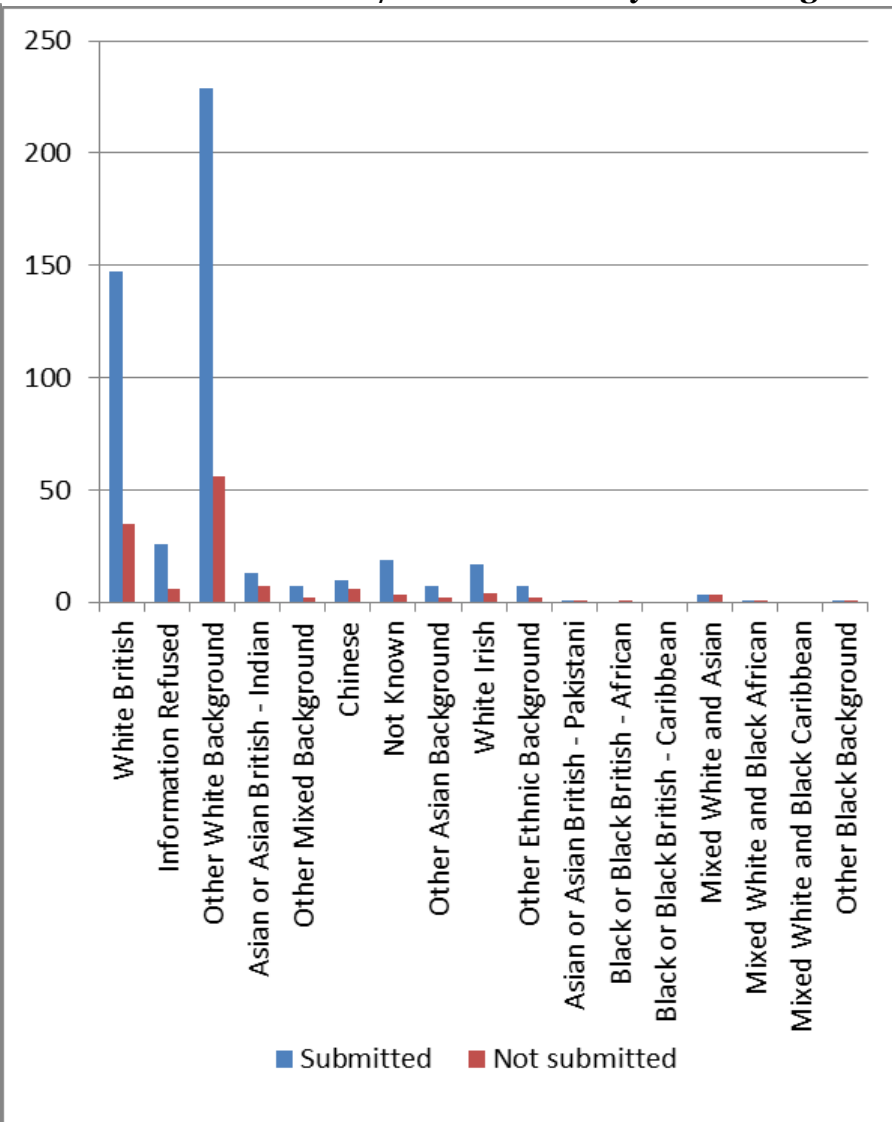


Chart 3: Submitted/not submitted by gender

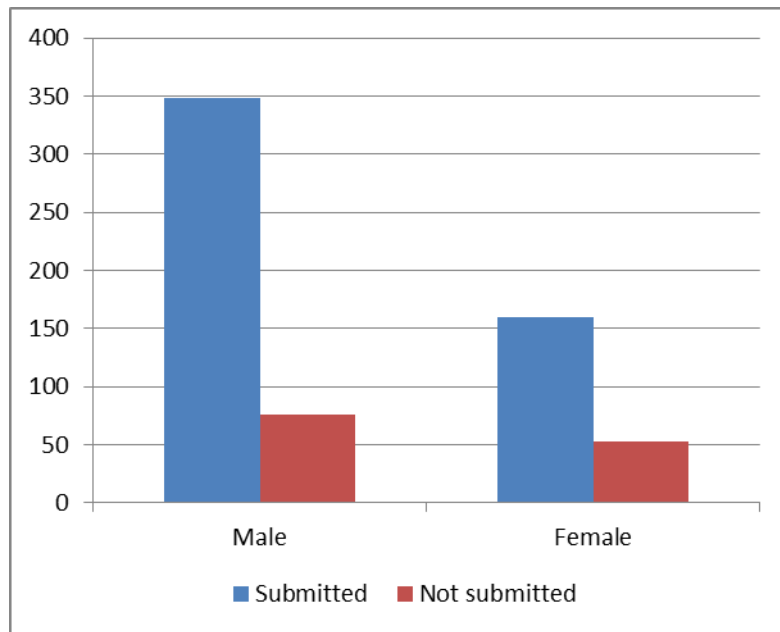


Chart 4: Early career researchers submitted/not submitted

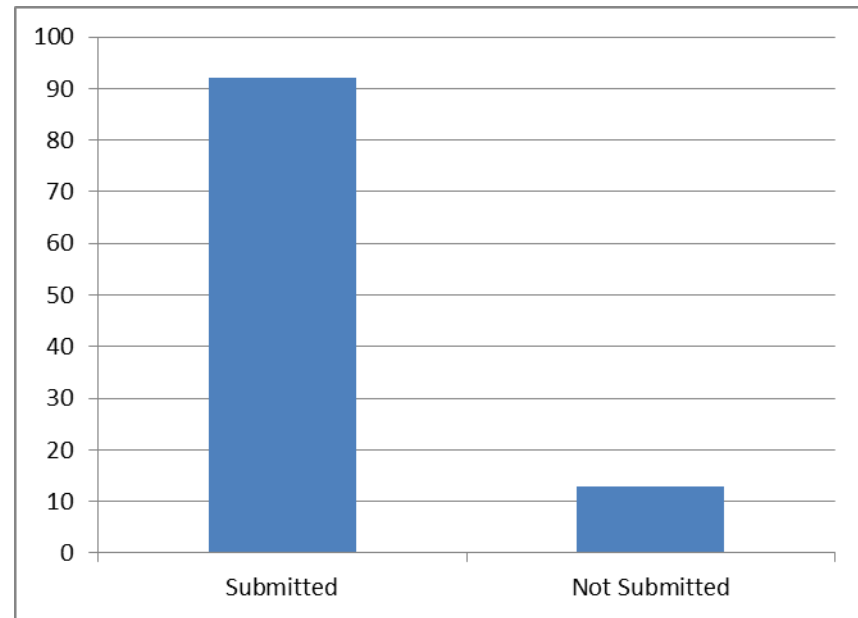


Chart 5: Total eligible population by age

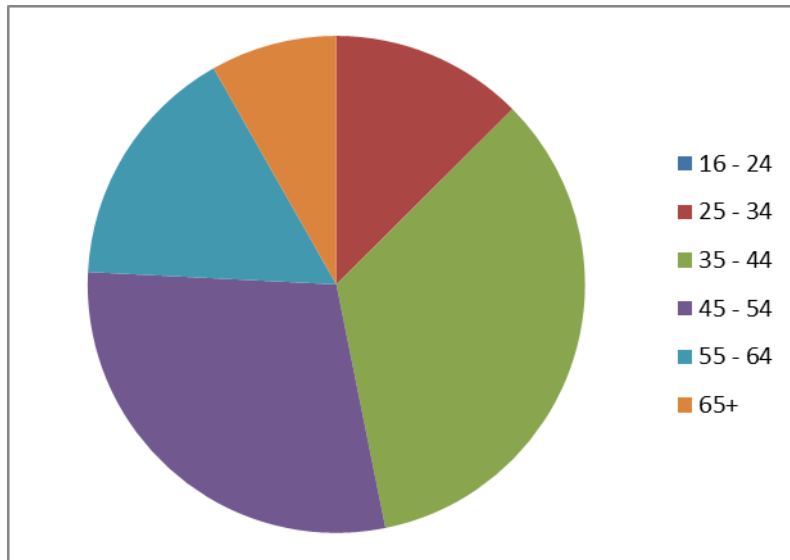


Chart 6: Submitted/non submitted by age

