Guidance to UCU negotiators
on code of practice on RAE submissions

1. All institutions will be asked whether they have produced a code and some may be required to submit code for verification.
2. Institutions will be asked to provide an equality profile. Where there is an imbalance between those submitted and those not then the HEI may be required to produce an explanation (impact assessment).
3. Units of assessment should be asked to produce a statement of intent i.e., information about how it will carry out its selection and submission process. Staff should be consulted.

A.
Basic Principles.

    (i)   Consistency: the practice needs to be consistent across the institution.
    (ii)   Stages: the code of practice needs to set out the principles to be applied at each stage (e.g. from HoD to senior members of faculty to research committee)
    (iii)   Responsibilities and roles: should be clearly defined and operating criteria and terms of reference for individuals, committees, advisory groups should be set out and publicised.

B
Senior Management Team
Committees
Unit of Assessment Coordinator.

    (i)   Training: all those involved in the process should be trained in equalities legislation and panel criteria.
    (ii)   Transparency: the selection of those involved in the decision–making process, the membership of committees, roles and responsibilities, and the criteria for inclusion / exclusion of individuals and their work should be open and transparent.
    (iii)   Communication: the code of practice ought to be published on the intranet and made available to all members of staff.
    (iv)   Feedback: reasons for decisions ought to be fed back to staff.

C.
Process and Procedures.

(i) Externals: procedures for appointing externals (e.g. as part of a mock RAE) need to be specified.

(ii) Appeals: an appeals process must be formalised.

(iii) Individuals: documentation must be kept for all meetings where individuals are discussed and all relevant information should be included in that discussion.

(iv) 'Mock' RAEs: might be conducted along these lines.

(v) Fixed Term/Part Time staff: a statement must be included as to how these staff are supported by the institution.

D.
Matters to Negotiate.

(i) 'No detriment': building on the Aberdeen model letter, LAs could try and negotiate an agreement where there is no career detriment following inclusion /exclusion or caused by 'star' ratings (see section 1.5 of LA7669). This might involve disaggregating RAE 'star' ratings from annual review processes, appointment procedures and promotion procedures.

(ii) Bullying and harassment: LAs could insist on a statement about bullying and harassment being included in the code of practice. If possible, this could be linked to any existing dignity at work agreements.

(iii) Academic judgment: the LA could try to convince their institution that 'equalities' applies to academic judgments as well, i.e., a tendency to dismiss certain types of work is a result of bias. This could be negotiated through appeal to an external agreed by both parties.

(iv) Appeals procedures: tend to be geared towards procedure: legislation and panel criteria. The LA should try and negotiate academic appeals. At the very least the work should be read by someone other than the person immediately involved in the decision making process.

(v) Feedback: the code specifies the role of feedback. The way this is handled will depend on the institution. Try and ensure equalities and confidentiality.

(vi) Fixed Term/ Part Time staff: at the very least resources (such as sabbaticals, conference grants etc) should be distributed fairly and transparently. The LA could develop this section.

E.
'Mock RAE'.

(i) Equalities: should be conducted along the same lines as the real RAE.

(ii) Externals: important to push for the fair and transparent appointment of externals.

(iii) Appeals: procedure needs to be established early on so that an individual can appeal 'star' rating or inclusion / exclusion.

(iv) Star ratings: should not apply to individuals. Where they are attached to pieces of work try to keep discussion of them confidential or as local as possible.