Peer Review Process for Practice-based Research Outputs
School of Arts and Media – University of Salford

Purpose of Peer Review
The School advocates peer review in both a formal and informal sense in order to help staff develop and refine their research outputs and also as part of an audit to ascertain how the school is progressing in its production of outputs for REF 2021/22.

Output criteria for REF submissions
4* Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour
3* Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour
2* Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour
1* Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour

Originality:	**Significance:**	**Rigour:**
A creative/intellectual advance that makes an important and innovative contribution to understanding and knowledge. This may include substantive empirical findings, new arguments, interpretations or insights, imaginative scope, assembling of information in an innovative way, development of new theoretical frameworks and conceptual models, innovative methodologies and/or new forms of expression	The enhancement or deserved enhancement of knowledge, thinking understanding and/or practice	Intellectual coherence, methodological precision and analytical power; accuracy and depth of scholarship; awareness of and appropriate engagement with other relevant work

Please see 'Operationalising REF criteria for practice based submissions' document for further guidance on the criteria above.

Questions and considerations for practice based materials
Does your 300 word statement:
- Outline the research aims/imperatives/questions which led the inquiry?
- Indicate the 'lineage' of your research (other practice/research in this area) and its contribution to knowledge?
- Indicate a rigorous process (methods) through which this inquiry was pursued?
- State where the output or outputs were published, performed, shown or distributed? (part of a claim to significance)?
- Indicate the research significance of the output in relation to the field identified?

N.B. Any parts of the above can and should be expanded, evidenced and articulated further within the accompanying portfolio (see below for portfolio guidance)

Process of peer review
In order to have your practice based research formally peer reviewed as a REF-able output, **please submit a portfolio to Figshare including a document that is clearly labelled as your 300-word REF output statement**. The USIR team will then extract your 300-word statement to create a USIR deposit on your behalf.

If you would like to engage in some informal peer review of PaR submissions, please contact Jo or Ali at the

PaR Centre of Excellence to discuss swapping outputs with another practitioner-researcher.

Advice on 300 words (questions for reviewers – taken from Robin Nelson's workshop)
➢ Does the statement introduce itself as a research summary or an artist's statement?
➢ Does the statement indicate the lineage of the submission, pointing up its contribution to knowledge ('Originality')?
➢ Does the statement indicate a rigour of process?
➢ Does the statement briefly state where the PaR was distributed (part of a claim to Significance)?
➢ Does the statement confuse artistic significance with research significance?

Other questions to help guide submissions and review (from Journal of Artistic Research 2014)
● Does the submission contain a description of the question, issue or problem that is explored?
● Does the submission show evidence of innovation in content, form or technique in relation to a form of practice?
● Is the submission contextualized? This may include social, artistic and/or theoretical issues
● Does the submission provide new kinds of knowledge, interpretation, insights or experiences?
● Is the submission's methodology adequate and thorough?

Feedback on practice based submissions from the last REF (UOA 35)
➢ Rigorous PaR work across UOA 35 explicitly articulated a research imperative, methods by which it was explored, and how these related to previous work on this topic by others'
➢ 'the 300 word statements too often displayed a misunderstanding of what was being asked for and provided evidence of impact from the research, or a descriptive account akin to a programme note, **rather than making the case for practice as research**'
➢ 'in relation to some PaR, inadequate documentation of the research imperatives, process or outcomes was provided'
➢ 'As in 2008 the best outputs in PaR were distinguished by clearly articulated research objectives. In a number of instances, the presentation of practice needed no more than a well- turned 300 word statement to point up the research inquiry and its findings'
➢ 'The most successful portfolios helped the assessors by providing a pathway through the material submitted so it was clear what the research contribution was and why specific pieces of evidence were provided'
➢ 'Concision and selectivity in the presentation of portfolio materials was often key to the clarity of a project's research imperatives'

General Advice
➢ Think about how the portfolio operates alongside the 300 word statement to 'reveal the research dimensions' of the practice. This means editing and selecting only relevant materials to include in the portfolio
➢ Document the process of research as well as its outcome, reflecting on choices made and methods chosen - the timeline might help with this
➢ Offer the assessor a clear route through the materials submitted through an opening statement, research timeline or contents document, indicating a 'pathway' through those materials
➢ Go to the REF website and look at a few 300 word statements for practice based submissions in your area from successful institutions
➢ Think about double weighting for practice based research projects including a range of outputs over a significant amount of time. The REF definition of a double weighted output in 2014 was one which was 'contingent upon the completion of a particularly complex and extensive period of workshop/studio practice'
➢ Engage in informal peer review to get feedback on your own work and also to see how others are

formulating their practice based submissions