

**Institution: Birmingham City Business School**

**Unit of Assessment: Business and Management Studies (19)**

**a. Overview**

The Centre for Business Innovation and Enterprise (CBIE) within Birmingham City Business School (BCBS) is one of 14 centres of excellence created by the University in 2009. Whilst all BCBS staff are allocated to one of the School's three subject area departments (namely: i) Accountancy and Finance; ii) Business and Marketing; and iii) Management and Human Resources), the research activities within CBIE oscillate around the two principal areas of Enterprise, Finance and Marketing, and Strategy, Innovation and Change. Each of these areas incorporates a range of research themes which include:

- Enterprise, Finance and Marketing (EFM) – e-entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, marketing, tourism marketing, small and medium size enterprises, Islamic tourism, e-marketing in small firms, ethnic minority business finance, and micro-finance.
- Strategy, Innovation and Change (SInC) – machinery sales, innovation, managing health and safety, machinery theft and innovative financing of infrastructure.

The four senior research staff and one early career researcher who form the 'core staff' submitted by CBIE under this UOA narrative, are at the vanguard of the Centre's research movement. The products of their combined research endeavour regularly feature within international peer reviewed journals and global conferences, and have led to the publication of several key textbooks during the inter-Ref period. However, the approach to research staff development within CBIE is inclusive by design and supports all BCBS staff, through both direct financial investment from the School and through support in kind (e.g. buying of teaching to encourage research activity).

The Centre's core staff have raised the quality of outputs, environment and impact since RAE 2008 (with concomitant international recognition), whilst simultaneously encouraging a broader complement of 'up-and-coming' research staff within the School to achieve the planned future growth within CBIE. A fundamental objective of all CBIE research activity is to align new knowledge generation with professional practice; a mutually beneficial blend of academic and industrial interests that facilitates real world impact and serves as a conduit through which the School's taught provision can yield societal advantage.

**b. Research strategy**

In harmony with the University's strategic research plan, both innovation and enterprise are inherent and cohesive themes within CBIE's EFM and SInC research areas. Not only does this strengthen the clusters of research expertise within these areas, but it also supports individuals in attaining a broader output of the highest international standards. This approach also fosters innovative and business commonality across all BCBS staff, thus encouraging competitive multi-disciplinary/ collaborative research links, peer-reviewed outputs of the highest quality and impact through products and services rendered. At an operational level, CBIE affords latitude for each research theme, which is supported by explicit University-wide strategic aims and BCBS/ central academic support, services and infrastructure.

The Centre recognises that research is a quality criterion. Income streams within CBIE have been diversified (to include a proportion of industrial funding) and there is specific focus with regard to public outputs upon both the quality of research conducted and the outlets for its publication. This 'raising of the bar' is evidenced in the current quality of public dissemination (vis-à-vis that reported in RAE-2008) via leading peer reviewed journals which include: Tourism Management, IEEE Engineering Management Transactions, Journal of Construction Engineering and Management and Journal of Operations Research Society. Several other post RAE-2008 initiatives also evidence the emphasis on quality, such as the consultancy services offered; spin-out ventures established; bespoke professional practice courses established; major professional practice and dedicated industry research events and conferences hosted; and the contemporary PhD and DBA opportunities developed with industrial partnerships that have been promoted. The latter also galvanises the collaborative links with industry – companies presently working with CBIE include

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J.C. Bamford; Greene King; Jewsons; Mitchells and Butler; Caterpillar; Mentor Training; Tarmac/Lafarge joint venture; and the United States Department for Defense [sic].

Regular monthly meetings held between research staff and the Centre Director positively impact on outputs and performance by providing a forum in which to communicate progress, advise of the latest research opportunities and inform of relevant activity in a wider context (including activities within the pan-University Centre Directors' forum, Academic Ethics Committee and Research Strategy and Policy Committee). There is also a horizontal path of communication between researchers within CBIE which facilitates reporting of progress achieved and sharing of best practice, thereby contributing to the research aspirations of all BCBS staff.

A new personal research plan scheme has been integrated into the annual staff Individual Personal Review (IPR) process. This has empowered staff to concentrate effort in key areas of academic performance (viz. quality and quantity of peer-reviewed dissemination, PhD supervision and encouragement of funding applications). The personal research plan also provides a monitoring mechanism that feeds back into BCBS research strategy; guiding and informing research support in order to target areas of maximum impact and underpin future success, growth and differentiation.

**c. People, including:****i. Staffing strategy and staff development***Recruitment, Equality and Diversity*

Momentum generated from new recent funding sources is expanding the researcher base via Three Tier Research Recruitment (3T2R). First, 3T2R progressively augments the pool of 'home grown' PhD studentships; second, from this pool, the finest talent is actively integrated into CBIE via funded fellowships and post-doctoral posts; and third, post-doctoral researchers who exhibit the aptitude to conduct both high quality research, professional practice and input into taught awards at post- and undergraduate levels, are encouraged to achieve BCBS lectureships. 3T2R also directly employs research active staff at every available opportunity to further reinforce the research culture. The progress made (most notably) over the past two years confirms this method is yielding results, through for instance, growth in staff now actively pursuing a PhD and/ or having begun to publish their research in peer-reviewed journal outlets.

Of the five core staff entered into REF-2014, two are white British males (Edwards and Holt), one is a British Pakistani male (Hussain), one is a British Egyptian male (El-Gohary) and the early career researcher is a British Indian female (Sandhu). The majority of the research team therefore derive from the ethnic minority population and this provides factual evidence to support the University's equality and diversity policy.

*Support and Training for Staff Development*

The commitment to developing the research capabilities within CBIE (and the School research movement) is demonstrated by many mechanisms and investments, which principally include: research time allowances; access to continual professional development (and other training), supplied locally, via Human Resources centrally and via external organisations; academic mentoring under the guidance of core research staff; and other initiatives such as the research society, faculty best paper award and best post-graduate student award (see later).

In addition to research time allowances, all new staff are allocated 200 hours of research development time in their first year of employment and 100 hours in their second year, with a minimum of 74 hours research allowance afforded to all staff. An 'encouragement allowance' of 160 hours is furnished to staff pursuing a PhD (fees paid by the School). Further 'seed corn' research investment is provided via University Research Development Funds (URDF) and Quality-related Research (QR) funding (replaced by School funding in 2012-2013). Overall, the School gives 0.33 FTE to all CBIE research staff for research endeavour, while Early Career Researchers (ECRs) have a limited teaching allocation in their first year of duty (to help establish their research footing).

Recent (new) streams of research income from KTPs, the Off-highway Plant and Equipment

Research Centre (OPERC), the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) and National Health Service (NHS), have meant that several ECRs have been recruited onto research projects with a direct business interface, providing them with an opportunity to refine their interpersonal, communication and research skills and complement the BCBS research movement. Core research staff contribute to the CBIE ethos of nurturing upcoming research talent; this is exhibited in the number of staff now engaged and seeking to become research active – up from 6 in 2012 to 13 in 2013. Importantly, although these staff have not been returned in REF-2014, all of them have published their research work in peer reviewed journal outlets - these staff are currently being mentored by senior academics to raise the quality of their outputs as part of the Centre's commitment to continual growth and recognition.

CBIE initiatives that particularly encourage and support research talent are as follows.

- A voluntary research society enabled by senior CBIE academics, which provides friendly and supportive guidance to post-graduate students, ECRs and mentored staff seeking greater involvement in research and scholarly activities. The society shares ideas on issues such as research ethics, writing papers and effectively dealing with peer review feedback.
- An internal research paper competition that proactively encourages and rewards high class peer reviewed dissemination. Previous winners include El-Gohary and Sandhu. The 2012-2013 winner is to be decided in December 2013 but has thus far received several ABS 3\* and 4\* rated entries.
- Periodic research away days during which 'best practice' is shared amongst all staff and key speakers present from other Universities, publishers and business. These events propagate new ideas, generate alternative perspectives, facilitate networks and engender team-working.
- Outward facing joint industry/academic events such as the annual Plant and Equipment Management Innovation Conference series (PEMIC); a conference that hosts some of the world's largest multi-national businesses and highly influential guest speakers such as Lord Digby Jones and Sir Anthony Bamford. Other annual events include the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR-2010—13) which reflects the growing national significance of the UOA's work in this area and is supported by business leaders from local, national and international practices (e.g. Gala Coral Group and KPMG). Both events provide excellent networking opportunities for research staff and provide a platform upon which to engender wider business participation in research conducted and impact arising from this.
- Other mechanisms such as the annual IPR process, the research seminar series, postgraduate training seminars, workshops and research conference events (e.g. the RESCON research conference which is held every year).

## ii. Research students

CBIE's commitment to post graduate researcher training and competence development is centred on a Post Graduate Certificate in Research Methods that all ECRs and research students must complete as part of their studies and training respectively. During March 2013, additional structured training was commenced in the form of a two year programme of CPD; while a series of internal research training and refresher lectures are presented annually to complement the IPR process. CBIE also organise annual research seminars and workshops which are provided to research staff and students within BCBS. CBIE has launched a PhD mentoring scheme whereby core staff and experienced supervisors are paired with ECRs to disseminate supervision best practice and broaden supervision experience. This will further develop our experienced supervision base and encourage PhD growth and completions over the next five years. BCBS has also introduced a third supervisor scheme to further increase the rate and quality of PhD and DBA completions as well as broaden access to expertise offered each research student. The overarching ethos of these combined initiatives is that such investment will yield invaluable return over the medium-long term.

CBIE has grown its community of PhD and DBA students to over 40, who are enrolled on full- and part-time awards. A holistic approach is taken to supporting research associates, fellows and students: from first point of contact through guidance, the structured supervision described above and mentoring from external specialists where appropriate. Additional support from mechanisms

such as the Research Society and research seminar series augment this. A current initiative is exploring the opportunity for greater exploitation of PhD research products *via* for example, publishing, new paths to intellectual property development and industry engagement using research as a commercial commodity.

#### **d. Income, infrastructure and facilities**

##### *Research income and bids generation*

CBIE experienced a downturn in income stream between 2008-10 (£36,734 in 2008; £20,591 in 2009) as earlier funded projects were successfully completed (EU Leonardo, the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and organisations such as the Institute for Social Entrepreneurs, the Academy of Executive Coaches, the Department of Work and Pensions, Local Government and the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce). A notable upturn in research funding came about in 2010 when it rose to £130,345 followed by a further increase to £194,858 in 2011 and a slight drop to £117,219 in 2012. This is attributed to increasing industry support through Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) (with grants of particular note secured from Servosteel, Essar and Warwickshire County Cricket Club and support from Accord Housing Association and Garden Skill).

Blue skies research also features in the Centre, for example, a £42,000 grant was awarded to CBIE in May 2010, followed by a further £42,000 grant in May 2011 by OPERC, to part-fund a Professorial post of Innovation in Machinery Management. Further top-up funding (£55,000) was secured in September 2010, June 2011 and Sept. 2012 to host the annual PEMIC conference series (see earlier). Much of CBIE's work in this field has been adopted by industry as best practice standards (refer to case studies) thus confirming the tangible benefits of industry partnerships. In October 2013, CBIE researchers were awarded a new grant for £45,000 from a consortium of hire companies via OPERC. These included A-Plant, GAP and Speedy, who between them represent 80 percent of the UK plant-hire market. Two research programmes are presently being discussed with potential funders and these focus on spirituality in the workplace (target ESRC); and open innovation management (target EU).

##### *Infrastructure and facilities*

Locally, several BCBS committees manage and support research and professional practice, both within CBIE and School-wide (Faculty Research Strategy and Policy Committee; Faculty External Projects Review Committee; and the Faculty Ethics Committee). These embrace all senior management (Dean, Associate Deans, Heads of Departments and Centre Directors), who subsequently communicate with their respective staff on research strategy and targets. Terms of reference for the committees are to set and maintain standards, implement policy, monitor progress and support staff to embrace the culture and ethos embedded within CBIE which complements the University-wide research strategy.

At an operational level, all research staff are provided with up-to-date information and communication technology (ICT), including iPads, computers, photocopiers, scanners, video equipment, voice recording equipment and voice to text/text to voice (via Disability Services), specialist quantitative and qualitative research software, dedicated photographic and video equipment including a conference suite (via Kenrick Library), print services, telephone, fax and wireless broadband. ICT is fully supported at central level and complemented by dedicated BCBS technicians. Research administration is executed through a tier of experienced and dedicated staff who deal with daily administration, marketing, promotion, website provision and post graduate research degree programmes.

An integral part of the school is the Open Learning Zone - providing a 'quiet zone' and accompanying ICT services (WiFi) for researchers to conduct business meetings, self-study or work as part of a group. In addition, the University's Kenrick Library offers hands-on support to Business School academics and researchers and access to a wealth of research resources, as well as standard textbooks, an ever-growing e-book library and host of electronic databases (including British Standards Institution (BSI), American Business Information (ABI) and Emerald). Kenrick also offers: the Sconul Scheme, which gives researchers access to other participating

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University libraries; the Ethos database (supplied by the British Library), which contains electronic copies of MSc and PhD dissertations; and the interlibrary loan scheme. All postgraduates are given dedicated study rooms and kitchen, ITC hardware and software facilities and stationery (including, printing, photocopying etc.)

A comprehensively revised and constantly updated CBIE website reporting on growth in facilities, services and staff was launched in April 2012. The site is a flagship for CBIE and provides a conduit through which individual and group expertise is promoted to the wider international business and academic communities. Other website data includes case studies of research, current PhD supervisions and video clips of keynote speakers, encouraging wider 'interactive' usage of this resource.

A constantly updated CBIE marketing brochure and a steady stream of display banners and marketing merchandise, viral marketing emails, inaugural lectures and special guest lectures (e.g. Lord Digby Jones, Sir Ranulph Fiennes) are continually produced and disseminated within, and external to, the Centre.

**e. Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base**

In a wider context, CBIE proactively disseminates research findings to highly ranked international peer reviewed journals (previously cited); conference proceedings (including the British Academy of Management (BAM) and Institute for Small Businesses and Entrepreneurship (ISBE); and bespoke events for public, private and third sectors. Many staff also review for a range of international academic journals; actively engage as editorial board members of several business journals; and in the case of two staff (Holt and ElGohary) are Editors in their own right. Others have won outstanding paper and reviewer acknowledgement from publishers such as Emerald. Another recent award of note was the Commander's medal from the United States Department of Defense (refer to health and safety case study).

Whilst undertaking a range of research activities, staff within CBIE have developed a strong portfolio of both national and international collaboration. For example, CBIE is internationally leading in its interdisciplinary research into plant and equipment health and safety management – which spans many business sectors including quarrying, manufacturing, retail and warehousing, construction and defence industries. The research is jointly led by Edwards and Holt and is supported by the world's largest professional body in the field, OPERC, which has for the last three years funded a CBIE professor. Edwards and Holt have worked extensively with colleagues at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Ghana producing several joint research papers from their collaborative work on innovative finance (in developing countries). Edwards currently holds a Visiting Professorship at KNUST and his research with Professor Peter Love has also earned him an Adjunct Professorship at Curtin University, Western Australia. In recognition of his research in the field of construction business management, Holt was awarded a fractional Professorship at the University of Central Lancashire in 2012.

Also from an industrial perspective, the PEMIC-2010 conference event attracted over 130 delegates, including those from some of the world's largest multinationals (including JCB (UK), Doosan (Korea), Caterpillar (USA), Komatsu (Japan) and Heller (Germany)) as well as those from other leading academic institutions (e.g. Loughborough, Reading, Oxford Brookes, Wolverhampton, Central Lancashire and Heriott Watt Universities). The PEMIC-2011 and 2012 events grew substantially with over 300 delegates in attendance; these events have in turn led to further opportunities for collaborative research projects and industrial funding. Such support extends to Sir Anthony Bamford of JCB who in a recent letter confirmed a desire to increase his company's research links with CBIE.

CBIE's entrepreneurship and finance research is widely recognised for its pioneering work into: small and medium enterprise development; black and minority ethnic graduate entrepreneur access to finance; and entrepreneurship within the ethnic minority communities. This has influenced policy in both the public and private sectors for more than 25 years. Led by Hussain and supported by Sandhu, the research has established an extensive network of academic collaboration with colleagues from a number of other UK institutions - including Professor Paul Mosley on micro

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finance; Dr. Paul Stuart, University of West of Scotland, on presence of venture capital amongst ethnic minorities and Dr. Jonathan Scott, Teesside University on entrepreneurship. Hussain is also a peer referee for a number of international journal publications. The culmination of this work has helped to shape regional, national and international finance policies.

The research theme of marketing has attracted extensive industrial and academic collaboration. El-Gohary's innovative e-marketing research places him at the forefront of this field and accordingly has attracted international collaboration with, for example, Professor Francesco Calza, Dr. Chiara Cannavale and Dr. Rosa Caiazza, Università degli Studi di Napoli Parthenope, Italy, Professor Nadir Aliane, Université De Boumerdès, Algeria, Professor John N. Hay, Surrey University; and Dr. Abd El-Shafey I. Ahmed - Zagazig University, Egypt. In 2009, El-Gohary's work was recognized by a best paper award from the American Academy of Business and Public Policy and he also won Routledge best paper on Marketing and Strategy. Underpinning the School's recognition of its research talent and desire to facilitate staff progression, El-Gohary was awarded a Readership in 2011 and has recently applied for his Professorship. His expanding research portfolio includes extensive collaborations with up-and-coming BCBS researchers – marketing research is predicted to grow and expand beyond REF-2014 to become a dominant Centre theme. As well as publishing in prestige journals such as Tourism Management, Dr El-Gohary is also Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of Online Marketing (IJOM) and an associate editor of The International Journal of Customer Relationship Marketing and Management (IJCRMM). This area is set to develop and expand with several recently appointed research staff actively engaging in the research field.

In conclusion to this narrative, BCBS encourages, through the myriad mechanisms discussed, a relatively compact but vibrant research base in the field of Business and Management Studies. This is evidenced by the generation of strong collaborative linkages with business stakeholders, influence upon government policy, publishing in leading academic journals and the production of research output that has tangible research impact.