

Institution: Swansea University
Unit of Assessment: 21 - Politics and International Studies
a. Context

The UoA has two research groups: Political Analysis and Governance (PAG) and International Studies, Conflict and Security (ISCAS). Researchers in both groups have had significant impacts on public policy makers, professional organisations providing educational services, and political organisations as creative influences on society. The **beneficiaries** and **types of impact** in this census period have included:

1. International policy makers. Research on Central and Eastern Europe led to **policy debate that was better informed by the research evidence** in respect of US foreign policy. This was achieved through advice to the State Department and CIA in an invited presentation in Washington in 2009 on the impact of and responses to the global financial crisis in Central and Eastern Europe. Research on global drug policy has influenced the work of NGOs and stimulated **policy debate towards consideration of changes in policy direction or a withdrawal of existing policies** at the United Nations and among states actively re-considering their drug harm policies. This resulted from a re-conceptualisation and classification of the options for drug policy reform within the framework of the UN drug control convention and their promotion among policy actors.

2. UK Government: Research on perceptions of counter-terrorism powers by different social groups led to **policy debate that was better informed by the research evidence** through the provision of a briefing to the Home Office's review of counter-terrorism powers in 2010. Other research helped to **shape policy made by government**. This included the UK Government's Global Strategic Trends Document and Defence Green Paper in 2009 through participation in Chatham House rules meetings with officials and ministers; and the Ministry of Defence Space policy through advice to a senior RAF official, located in the UoA in 2009. Research also led to **policy debate better informed by the research evidence which influenced implementation**. This resulted from evidence on Muslim-Christian co-operation and aid policy to the Parliamentary All Party Group on Overseas Development in November 2008, which furnished text for a speech given by the UK Prime Minister shortly after to the UN Inter-faith conference in New York.

3. Educational Organisations. Research in international relations and politics **influenced the planning and management of services** through researchers accepting roles as curriculum advisors to the International Baccalaureate organisation on global politics and the Aga Khan foundation on global politics and global economics. Research in international relations also **stimulated practitioner debate among stakeholders** in the publication and provision of global politics texts for children. It **provided resources to enhance professional practice and changed practice among stakeholders** towards the adoption of a review culture.

4. UK political parties and civil society organisation: Research **stimulated policy debate to influence a change in policy direction and the withdrawal of expected policy**, through advice to the 2010 Welsh Labour Party Policy commission on local government reform. This provided arguments for reforms affecting democratic participation, and on why not to go ahead with the widely expected reform of local government structure and focus instead on improving leadership and partnerships (an approach adopted both by the Commission and the subsequent Welsh Labour 2011 election manifesto). Other research **influenced a campaign for political change** in advising a working group of the Institute of Welsh Affairs in its submission of evidence in 2012 to the Silk Commission on the powers of the National Assembly to adopt similar powers to Scotland.

5. UK Parliamentarians and the general public: Research **informed political debate** on the implications of individual voter registration through evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Political and Constitutional Reform and the Electoral Reform Society in 2009. Research also **informed public debate** as a result of radio and TV broadcasts on US, European and UK politics, elections and referenda in Wales; and UK public policy debates.

b. Approach to impact

The UoA was ambitious during the census period in seeking to embed research impact into the research culture of both its research groups, by focusing on three inter-related priorities.

Impact template (REF3a)

1. The UoA provided staff with the awareness, time and resources to develop impact from their research. Awareness of what was required for research impact was raised through the appointment of a UoA impact officer and impact briefings. Research impact strategies were embedded in individual research strategies and these were regularly reviewed by the Director of Research. Furthermore, the University's award-winning *Performance Enabling Scheme* and *Career Pathways* model for staff promotion specifically supports and rewards innovation and engagement / impact activity. The UoA provided time to present talks to non-academic research users and the provision of facilities, for example, for hosting a senior RAF officer in the UOA in 2009. The UOA approach also drew on advice from the University Research Institute of Arts and Humanities (RIAH) on pathways to impact plans, knowledge transfer opportunities and how to consult research users from the outset and build impact plans in to grant applications. RIAH also provided support for impact work through sabbatical leave, as well as funding support through the inclusion of research impact as one of the purposes of the RIAH research initiative fund.

2. The UoA supported the communication of research to generate impact. This included making non-academic research users aware of research through research news briefings on the departmental website, the use of a departmental twitter feed and publication of research spin off articles in on-line publications such as Open Democracy and International Studies Today. The UoA supported the organisation of workshops with research users, for example a workshop on counter-terrorism powers in London in January 2010, attended by organisations including the Metropolitan Police Authority and the Muslim Council of Britain, to make them aware of research on counter-terrorism powers. The UoA established a standing mechanism for making research known to policy makers in Wales by establishing a RIAH sponsored National Assembly Research Briefings series, held regularly on Tuesday lunchtimes from 2010 at the National Assembly. The UoA also supported researchers in taking up official advisory positions to public bodies to enable research to have an impact. These included roles as expert advisor to the Welsh Labour Policy Commission on local government reform in 2010, membership of an Institute of Welsh Affairs working group on reform of the financial powers of the National Assembly in 2012, and the role of expert advisor to the UK All Party Parliamentary group on drug policy reform from 2011.

3. The UOA supported researchers in participating in on-going policy communities and developing partnerships with research users. This included time devoted to attendance at Chatham House policy discussions, such as those relating to the UK Government's Global Strategic Trends Document and Defence Green Paper in 2009. It also included collaboration with policy officers in the Drugs and Democracy programme of the Transnational Institute, based in Amsterdam; and annual participation in NGO delegations to the UN to consider drug policy reform. In this case the researcher was granted a term's sabbatical to work specifically on research impact and was supported in a successful grant application to create a Drugs Policy Observatory to run from 2012-2014 and facilitate long term impact sustainability in this area. Support of this kind was also exemplified by support for long-term collaboration with educational organisations and stakeholders concerned with book provision for children on global politics. The researcher was enabled to maintain a curriculum developer role with the International Baccalaureate from 2009 and to maintain standing relationships with the UK Publishers Association, the School Library Association and the Historical Association. These were initiated by a RIAH research initiative fund grant of £5k which funded a project '*From citizenship to security: military literacy and young people*' to create an archive of children's books, and to hold a workshop with relevant stakeholders.

c. Strategy and plans

The overriding objective is to enhance our global reputation for the reach and significance of our research impact through sustained engagement with a variety of political organisations and other bodies. This will be achieved by the UoA focusing on the following enhancements:

1. The UOA will enhance staff incentives and capacity to generate research impact. Staff are incentivised by the fact that research impact has become a key criterion for sabbatical leave and is treated as having equal esteem with research outputs. The UoA has developed a research impact mentoring policy based on senior researchers giving workshops on their impact experiences. Research impact is built into early career researcher probation agreements. It is also a requirement that visiting fellowships where possible will incorporate plans to extend research

Impact template (REF3a)

impact. This includes opportunities through the Texas visiting fellowships programme to enhance international research mobility. It will also be a major consideration over the next five years as the UoA enhances and extends its space and facilities in the light of the £250 million investment by the European Investment Bank, Welsh Government and other funders in developing the Swansea University estate. This will allow the provision of translational research space for researchers to develop long-term impact partnerships with non-academic research users who can be located on campus as required.

2. The UOA has consolidated support for long-term partnerships with non-academic research users. This includes the Global Drugs Policy Observatory (GDPO) which now provides a standing capability to advise governments and global policy makers on the nature of drug related problems, the potential of anti-narcotics strategies and drug policy reforms. The GDPO is externally funded by the Open Society Foundations (2012-14) and the aim will be to sustain the GDPO as a standing centre thereafter. The UOA will also generate public policy impacts in Welsh government on the basis of Swansea University's role as a tier one partner in the Public Policy Institute for Wales, funded £0.45m p.a by the Welsh Government from 2013. This will respond to policy advice requests from Welsh Government work programmes, as well as generating its own agendas of policy discussion. From now on this institute will provide a structured basis for researchers to contribute commissioned policy advice to Welsh government. Researchers also have the opportunity to apply to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales Strategic Insight Programme (SIP) for funding of innovation and engagement partnerships in which researchers receive up to £2.5k to work in non academic research user organisations to enable knowledge transfer. The UoA has developed a SIP partnership with the publishers association to enable a researcher on international relations to develop her collaboration with stakeholders to establish a code of practice for the production of global politics texts for children.

3. The UOA is now able to generate new research impacts from a heightened state of awareness of the role of impact in research strategies. Expected new research impacts include influence on EU and UK Government development of space satellite systems as critical infrastructures for both security and non-security purposes. They will also include impacts on democratic participation through relationships with digital technology companies, government bodies and media outlets in the creation and promotion of voter advice websites; and on FIFA regulation of football governance as a result of European commission funded research surveys on corruption among football referees. Finally, expected new research impacts are exemplified by influences on debates on international development policies and governance arrangements both in the UK and overseas that will arise from new collaborative research in the UOA on UN development policy after the revision of the UN New Millennium goals.

d. Relationship to case studies

The two selected case studies are (i) influencing high level policy debates on United Nations drug control policy; and (ii) influencing the International Baccalaureate global politics curriculum and educational stakeholder approaches to texts on global politics for children. These are considered to best reflect the aims of the UoA's impact approach in that they have resulted from strong embedding in individual research strategies and engagement with advice on research impact. They have utilised institutional support for impact work either through sabbatical leave or research initiative funding. They have both adopted effective communication strategies to make their research known to research users and they have both sought long-term engagement with policy communities and/or partnerships with research users. They also represent best practice as they have exemplified research impacts which have sought to maximise reach by seeking to influence multiple organisations in varied contexts, and significance, through sustained work with the non-academic research users. Both also exemplify impacts on policy and professional services that can be evidenced and which have substantial potential for long-term societal benefits i.e. reducing drug related harm and producing critically aware citizens on global politics. Accordingly, they have been models for crafting a future strategy that seeks to inspire researchers to produce impacts with national and global reach and significance and the benefits of developing long-term impact partnerships that can utilise increasing campus translational space as a basis for future development.