

**Institution: Loughborough University**

**Unit of Assessment: D27 Area Studies**

**a. Context**

Research in Politics, History and International Relations (PHIR) has historically included a number of areas in which research and its dissemination have been designed to contribute to the broader public good, and to the enhancement of policy making, training and the quality of life. In particular, there is a long tradition of policy-relevant research in European integration, and especially in European Social Policy, which has also fostered developments in international research methods and training (see International Social Research Methods: Enhancement of Analysis, Resources and Training - **case study 1**). More recently, this has been complemented by research in international governance and in particular of the role of diplomacy, which has had significant impacts on policy analysis and the training of relevant officials (see Diplomacy and International Governance – Enhancing Practice Through Innovation in Theory and Analysis - **case study 2**). The unit has also fostered research in intelligence and security, which has led to significant links with relevant UK government departments and to developments in the consideration of policy initiatives (see Improving the performance of the UK government’s intelligence community - **case study 3**). These activities have been framed and facilitated by the establishment of research centres within the unit: initially, the European Research Centre (established in the early 1990s) and more recently, the Centre for the Study of International Governance (established 2006). The centres have provided an essential channel for the development of applications, for the establishment of relevant networks and for the delivery of significant events such as workshops and conferences, in which ‘users’ have been involved as a matter of policy.

It can be seen that thus far, impact-related research in the unit has been concentrated in a number of key policy-relevant areas, and on key research groups or individuals. One challenge for the future is to broaden the ‘impact-awareness’ of the broader PHIR community, and this has been partly addressed through the discussion of impact case studies within the unit and the increasing awareness of impact issues that has resulted. More recently, the unit has been incorporated into the School of Social, Political and Geographical Sciences (SPGS). The School encompasses departments and research centres with a substantial record in generating research with external impact, and it is expected that this will lead to further development of the impact culture and of the impact of research in PHIR (see below).

**b. Approach to impact**

Within the unit, research activities are framed by the Research Committee, chaired by the Research Coordinator. The coordinator is responsible for ensuring that research applications are reviewed, with attention to their potential for generating impact broadly defined. By their nature, projects undertaken for European institutions and for government bodies in the UK entail attention to the impact that they will generate, and these dimensions of relevant projects are fully considered within the review process. During the period 2008-2013 these structures have: **enabled staff to interact and develop relationships with key users** in EU, UK government and other government agencies (for example, the European Commission, European External Action Service, UK Cabinet Office, Economic and Social Research Council); **sustained these relationships** through the operation of networks, the provision of policy-relevant advice and the conduct of training activities (for example, through the development of international Social Science research methods and related training, the provision of diplomatic training, the conduct of briefing activities for UK government bodies); **enabled staff in appropriate contexts to**

**evaluate the impact of their research and to develop follow-on activities** both in the academic sphere and in relation to government bodies and other institutions (for example through the development of cross-national into international Social Science research methods, the progression from broad studies of diplomatic innovation to the study of innovation in EU diplomacy, the progression from general studies of intelligence planning to the development of specific innovations in Cabinet Office practice); in combination with relevant external funding and with support from university structures, **allowed staff the time to create, sustain and evaluate impact-related activities** (through facilitation of study leave, provision of seed funding for impact-related events, and provision of administrative and other support).

The unit's approach is complemented by well-focused university structures. Formal committees exist for both research and enterprise, and each of Loughborough's ten academic schools is represented respectively by Associate Deans for Research and for Enterprise on these committees. Each committee is chaired by a Pro-Vice Chancellor with senior representation from the lead managers of the research and enterprise support offices. Since 2011 these functions have been co-located in a dedicated and refurbished administrative hub to ensure that the most efficient and effective integrated strategic support can be brought to bear on research and enterprise activities. Research and enterprise teams provide support to academic teams across a wide range of activities including the identification of relevant and appropriate funding sources, the creation and costing/pricing and submission of research and enterprise applications and the post-award financial administration of successful applications.

### c. Strategy and plans

The unit's strategy for the forthcoming period is shaped by three broad forces leading to a set of key aims and actions: **First**, it will take advantage of the continuing support of the university for activities with the potential to generate impact in the wider world, as outlined above. This is delivered through the Research Office and the Enterprise Office, and is also embedded in university procedures such as Performance Development and Review and discussion of Personal Research Plans, which generate annual review processes for individual members of staff and will progressively encompass considerations of impact. The university will continue to provide where appropriate seed-corn funding for impact-related activities. **Second**, it will be framed by the development of the School of SPGS and the potential for cross-fertilisation and learning that is inherent in the School structure. As noted above, there is extensive experience within the School of policy-related research and activities with an impact on the broader quality of life and public good, and it is a key part of the School strategy to facilitate the sharing of experience and the generation of new cross-School research activities. Working with the Associate Deans for Research and Enterprise and with other School staff, the unit will pursue opportunities for impact-related research across key areas of School activities. **Third**, it will encompass the continuation and where possible the generalisation of the activities described above. A major step in this direction was taken with the appointment in 2011 of Lee Miles as Professor of International Relations, and his installation as Research Coordinator. Drawing on extensive experience both in the UK and in Sweden with impact-generating projects, Miles has responsibility for capitalising on the potential in the unit, and for working with others across the School to implement the broader strategies outlined above. In particular, PHIR has already identified via the recruitment process the potential of new staff such as those in History to contribute to its overall impact profile. The unit has also recognised the potential for greater clustering of impact-related work in the developing fields of inter-regional and cross-border relations within the EU, crisis and crisis management, and intelligence and security. As a means of pro-actively disseminating best practice and fostering more effective agenda setting, the Centre for the Study of International

## Impact template (REF3a)

Governance organised seminars in 2013 where staff involved in European crisis management work and in intelligence and security studies discussed collaboration between existing clusters of impact activity in the unit. In addition, Dr Rob Dover has taken a key role in the development of one of the university's emerging research themes, 'secure and resilient societies', and in 2013 took on the post of Associate Dean (Enterprise) at the Loughborough University campus at Olympic Park in London – a position which will allow him to contribute further to the unit's strategy for maximising research impact. Finally, the planned establishment of a second research centre in the unit, the Centre for Public Scholarship, during 2014 will enable PHIR to address the pursuit and generation of impact through interdisciplinary research, and especially through innovative work in History and Political Theory, such as that dealing with the position of women in Islamic societies and the role of sport in forming national identities.

The initial focus during the next period will thus be on three key tasks: (1) **Defining more clearly a set of 'impact goals'** for the unit and identifying the key areas in which these can be pursued both by groups and by individuals; (2) **Identifying and developing key 'impact areas'** as outlined above, with the aim of diversifying and systematising the approach to impact and to impact case studies; (3) **Refining and developing a set of 'impact mechanisms'** including the use of the School's workload model, of performance and development review and of advancement strategies to incorporate considerations of impact, the organisation of departmental and school events to provide opportunities for the exchange of experiences and examples, and the deployment of procedures for the tracking and mapping of impact. This will be focused at School level by activities including a programme of 'impact surgeries' and training and mentoring of staff in the documenting of impact claims drawing on an inventory of impact case studies. At university level, the Glendonbrook Centre for Enterprise Education, established in 2011, will provide a context for the exchange of ideas and information about impact and enterprise, and for the development of new impact cases. Through these goals, areas and mechanisms, impact considerations will become embedded into the unit's research culture, and new impact potentials will be identified as part of the unit's five-year research perspective.

**d. Relationship to case studies**

Research in cross-national and international Social Science Research Methods (**Case Study 1**) was initiated by Professor Linda Hantrais through the mechanism of the European Research Centre, supported by the university through the Research Office and further developed through the network of cross-national and international researchers generated by the initial activities. This has had key impacts upon public policy, specifically through the development and adoption of an international research training framework by the ESRC. There has also been significant impact on the approach to impact adopted within PHIR more generally, channelled at in large measure through the establishment of the Centre for the Study of International Governance as successor to the ERC. CSIG itself was a key component of work on diplomacy and the development of this work not only to encompass the developing EU system of diplomacy but also to develop research and training activities (**Case Study 2**). Throughout this process, the support of university officers and the ways in which this linked with individual staff activities were an essential part of the process. Research on intelligence and security (**Case Study 3**) has involved the development of close links with government officials in relevant areas with the aim of contributing to the enhancement of practice in policy-making and communication. This work has been facilitated by university seed-corn funding and by the provision of support from the Research Office and departmental resources, including time to conduct impact-related activities.