

Institution: University of Sussex

Unit of Assessment: UoA 27 Area Studies

1. Context

The geographical and substantive focus of Sussex's Area Studies submission is Europe, and the institutional nexus for structuring and delivering much of this work is the Sussex European Institute (SEI). The SEI has long operated a strategy of producing ambitious scholarship that pushes forward the conceptual and theoretical boundaries of knowledge, while making its research policy-relevant and accessible to a wide range of non-academic audiences, including policy-makers in national parliaments, government departments and the EU, think-tanks, NGOs, the media and the business community. All our research clusters engage with, and produce research that is relevant to, non-academic audiences as a core element of the Institute's rationale and ethos. This also underpins our development of a network of associated 'Practitioner Fellows' from European governments, international organisations, the media, NGOs and business. This strategy of policy-relevant research has also consciously shaped the new Sussex Centre for the Study of Corruption (which also conducts work relevant to Europe), with strong links already being forged with think-tanks, NGOs and the legal profession. The result of such linkages has been research expertise and consultancy that has fed directly into the policy development of these beneficiaries.

2. Approach to impact

There are various ways in which the SEI has actively sought to facilitate impact. First, it has sought to attract a special category of visitor to Sussex, the Practitioner Fellows, who come from the world of policy-making both to enhance the understanding of our academics and to learn from them. This tradition goes back to the foundation of the SEI in 1992, and has been personified by its directors over the years: Dame Helen Wallace and Professor Jim Rollo OBE were both civil servants before they were academics, while Professor Aleks Szczerbiak was previously a political consultant.

Second, most of the SEI's major conferences and workshops actively involve practitioners. This is well illustrated by the major conference held in celebration of the SEI's twentieth anniversary in September 2012. Based on the theme 'The Future of Europe: Progress and Decline', this included keynote contributions from Lord Brittan, former UK government minister and EU Commissioner; Professor Alasdair Smith, former Vice-Chancellor of the University and now Deputy Chair of the UK Competition Commission; and Professor Antonio Missiroli, Director of the European Institute for Security Studies.

This policy-relevant approach of the SEI is emulated by the new Sussex Centre for the Study of Corruption (SCSC), launched in 2011. In September 2012, some 250 people attended the SCSC's launch conference, a major event that was held in conjunction with Transparency International UK and was sponsored by the law firm Clifford Chance. It took place at Clifford Chance's headquarters in Canary Wharf. Some 29 speakers contributed, many of them policy-makers and NGO members. Sir Christopher Kelly gave the keynote speech. This is now set to become an annual event, with the second such conference held at the same venue in September 2013 on the theme of anti-corruption practices. The SCSC has also hosted its first Visiting Fellows, including Professor Benjamin-Immanuel Hoff, a former State Secretary for Health in the Berlin *Land* government.

Third, the relevant research centres at Sussex also disseminate and transfer research findings into practice through Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training for practitioners. Thus, 2013 saw the first SCSC/Transparency International Summer Workshop in Corruption Analysis. This two-week residential course introduced practitioners to the analysis of corruption and anti-corruption activity. Our research also underpinned the Chevening Fellows programme that the SEI ran in conjunction with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from 2006 to 2010. This was a short (12-week) course on European Political Economy delivered to civil servants from new EU member-states and 'neighbourhood' countries; it was designed to deal with key aspects of European economic and institutional integration in a way that emphasised the empirical and practical policy implications of integration while situating the analysis firmly in theoretical contexts. It involved a

Impact template (REF3a)

mixture of classroom teaching, study visits to government offices in London, Brussels and Edinburgh, and work placements in Whitehall.

SEI researchers contribute to impact on policy through consultancy projects. There are various examples of this, notably:

- An SEI team, led by Francis McGowan, Jim Rollo and Adrian Treacher, wrote a commissioned report for the EU on enlargement in 2008;
- Alan Mayhew has undertaken extensive work as advisor to the governments of Croatia, Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine, his work being recognised through the award of national honours by these countries (as well as an OBE from the UK government); he is also currently a Special Adviser to the European Commission;
- Professor Shamit Saggarr's substantial research for the Home Office's Migration Advisory Committee on the integration and cohesion impacts of migration in 2010/11 (see impact case study), his current 12-month ESRC Knowledge Exchange Fellowship at Government Equalities Office in 2013, and his secondment to the position of Chair of the Law Society's Legal Complaints Board (2006–10);
- Dr Sue Collard was commissioned to contribute to the UK *Annual Report* to the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency in 2011 (see <http://fra.europa.eu/en/video/2012/fra-annual-report-2011>);
- Jim Rollo has been a consultant to the World Bank, the EU Commission, UNCTAD, the government of Poland, the Department of Business, DFID, the House of Lords and the Foreign Office, and (along with Peter Holmes, Michael Gasiorek and Alasdair Smith) is a key partner in InterAnalysis, a spin-out company supported by the University's Enterprise Development Fund and based at the University's Innovation Centre (see impact case study); and
- Dr James Hampshire has worked as Specialist Adviser to the House of Lords EU Select Committee (Sub-Committee F) inquiry into the EU's Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM). As Specialist Adviser, Dr Hampshire provided briefing notes and presentations, and drafted several chapters of the Select Committee's final report.

In addition, the unit provides *pro bono* expert advice to non-academic users. These include:

- McGowan's energy-policy research on the highly contentious issue of shale- gas development has led to presentations on risk-regulation approaches in the US and Europe to policy-makers, NGOs and industrial interests as part of the UACES Arena programme;
- Monar's advice to a wide array of policy-makers in the field of Justice and Home Affairs (including the German Interior Ministry, the European Affairs Committee of the German Bundestag, the EU's Interparliamentary Committee, the EP's Special Committee on Organised Crime (CRIME), the European Commission's Directorate General on Research, The Swedish Prime Minister's Office, and the British House of Lords);
- Webb's written and oral evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Political and Constitutional Reform's inquiry into prime ministerial power 2011, and to the Hayden Phillips review of party funding 2008;
- Hough's evidence to the Rosa Luxembourg Foundation's review of the German party system; and
- Szczerbiak's presentation on Poland and the EU to Polish Embassy staff in London, 2011.
- SCSC Director Hough also led (jointly with the Head of Law, Politics and Sociology at Sussex, Professor Stephen Shute), a policy seminar with HMI Prisons' Directorate on the challenges of dealing with corruption within prisons in London in October 2012.

Finally, Area Studies faculty at Sussex have been heavily involved in various forms of community engagement and media work. The Sussex Salon Series was launched in 2010 and is designed to engage the public with current affairs, in the light of Sussex research. In conjunction with Brighton Dome and the Brighton Festival offices, the School of Law, Politics and Sociology has organised a series of sell-out public debates, involving expert opinion as well as feedback and questions from the audience. Themes have included the future of Europe, the crisis of politics, the relationship between the media and politics, and climate change and public policy, and speakers from the Area Studies faculty have included Bale, Webb, Monar, Szczerbiak and Rollo. These Salon events regularly sell out to public audiences, and are recorded and broadcast by Radio Free Brighton.

Impact template (REF3a)

The Area Studies group also aims to influence public debate through the media. Engagement includes regular contributions to national, local and overseas outlets, and takes in radio, television and the press. Some of the highlights include:

- Hough's articles for *The New Statesman* and *The Guardian* (http://www.newstatesman.com/writers/dan_hough);
- of the many media columns and articles that Bale wrote before his departure, there were several for *The Guardian* (most of which drew directly on the research he conducted at Sussex);
- McGowan's contributions to the respected trade journal *Energy Economist* between 2010 and 2012; and
- Webb's appearances on BBC 1's *Politics Show* (2009 and 2012), the Parliament Channel's *Record Review* (2008), and US Public Radio (Chicago and Wisconsin 2010), and commentaries for *The Observer* and *The Daily Telegraph* (2013).

3. Strategy and plans

Our broad strategic goal is for each of our three clusters (see REF5) to be involved in research that will have discernible impact. The activities set out in the previous section are central to the realisation of this longstanding objective and we will continue to develop these areas to enhance the impact of our research, in particular through the Practitioner Fellowships, Continuing Professional Development training, consultancy and *pro bono* work.

Going forward, our plans are to build on our current practices to enhance impact through three key approaches:

Sharing good practice between research centres

The SEI and SCSC are closely linked through co-location in the same School and overlap of personnel, so are well placed to learn from each other's best practices. Our aim is to use SEI expertise to support SCSC as it develops.

Improving researchers' impact skills

We are increasingly concerned to develop the 'impact-awareness' of researchers through management of the research process. Our plans for this involve mechanisms including the assessment of impact plans of all new research-funding proposals as part of the internal peer-review process; making an impact discussion part of the annual meeting between the School's Research Director and each individual faculty member; and using Personal Research Plans (which roll forward over a five-year planning horizon) to take explicit account of how research may target particular users or communities and the types of impact strategy that might best promote engagement with them.

Better use of research communications

This will include developing impact strategies appropriate to each project and using communications tools, including sending summary versions of new publications to professional and public agencies, engagement with blogs and newsletters/social networks, and media training through the University's own public-relations division.

4. Relationship to case studies

The case studies both exemplify the centrality of our engagement with the world of policy practice, as described in Section 2. In particular, both case studies fit into the category of commissioned research consultancy – that which Saggat led was on behalf of the Home Office's Migration Advisory Committee, while the work of the InterAnalysis company team (whose primary product is TradeSift) was on behalf of the EU, the UK government and various overseas governments and international agencies.