

<b>Institution:</b> University of Sheffield
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 18 Economics and Econometrics
<p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>Economics at Sheffield has a reputation for undertaking research which has significant impact. Our view is that the application of excellent research should influence policy makers, and have an impact on practitioners and stakeholders. Consequently, user engagement and impact are integral to the design and implementation of research applications and projects. Providing guidance to policy makers is embedded in the Department's mission statement, and we have engaged with charities, government departments in the UK and overseas, international agencies and the private sector during the REF period.</p>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p><i>(i) Unit's approach to impact</i></p> <p>Our goal is to undertake excellent research, often policy-related, having the potential for impact beyond academia. Our strategic approach to impact has three key elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- developing and maintaining relationships with research sponsors, external partners and stakeholders with the potential to deliver high-quality impact;</li> <li>- where appropriate, working together with external partners to produce high quality publications in peer-reviewed academic journals and/or to be used to inform stakeholders;</li> <li>- ensuring impact maximisation by internal monitoring structures (see b(iv)), and effective engagement with sponsors, partners and other potential end-users of our research.</li> </ul> <p><i>(ii) Examples of who we have worked with</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During 2011 McIntosh advised the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) on reviewing the evidence of productivity spillovers, and estimating the productivity return to the 'Train to Gain' training programme. He has also submitted evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs on apprenticeships. Collectively, this engagement has potentially influenced the expansion of the apprenticeship programme in recent years. This grew out of his expertise in the area of education and labour markets, building on relationships already developed with government, e.g. in 2009 he worked with BIS and HM Treasury to review the returns to NQF Level 2 and Level 3 vocational education and training, in particular the private and social returns to apprenticeships, and he has also advised Vince Cable and David Willetts on the wider implications of education research and policy. McIntosh's reputation in this area and established links have helped to secure funding from BIS to evaluate the Employer Ownership Pilots (EOP), see (c).</li> <li>• Dickerson and McIntosh have worked with the Low Pay Commission (LPC) on the impact of the National Minimum Wage (NMW). Their LPC funded work includes examining the labour market behaviour of 16/17 year olds, as well as more recently on the impact of the NMW on training, productivity and earnings (2011, 2012). These research reports provide the evidence base to inform the LPC in its deliberations on the annual uprating of the NMW, potentially having a national impact.</li> <li>• Roberts was involved in early work developing methods to incorporate economic analysis into National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Clinical Guidelines which were a new feature of NICE's work in the early 2000s. As a result of this experience and her continued relationship with NICE, she has recently served on two NICE Public Health Guideline Development Groups (2011-14) – 'Walking and Cycling to Work' and 'Behaviour Change', (which covers behaviours relating to smoking, alcohol, diet, physical activity and sex). The initial impact which has stemmed from this is the NICE 'Walking and Cycling Guidelines' published in November 2012 which have subsequently received wide media coverage.</li> <li>• Other examples include: Dickerson's research into Child Poverty 2020 for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) and his on-going work with Popli which received wide media attention in 2012 and was recently presented to a Government Economic Service and Child Poverty Unit seminar; Tsuchiya was a consultant to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Health and Safety Laboratory in 2008, investigating the impact of noise; Wright has investigated issues around labour mobility for the Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Directorate of the European Commission; and Gregory-Smith has reported to the HM Treasury Fair Pay Review on executive remuneration, acted as a consultant on the Kay Report, and to BIS on</li> </ul>

## Impact template (REF3a)

executive pay.

(iii) *Developing and maintaining relationships with key users*

- Over the REF period there has been continual development of staff engagement with outside users. The Department has an ongoing Framework Agreement with the DWP to help enable and also to maximise impact potential. In early 2012, colleagues met with the Deputy Director in the FE & Skills Analysis Division of BIS to discuss the changing policy landscape and priority areas of research. We subsequently intend to build on this, see (c).
- Tsuchiya is the director of the Centre for Health and Wellbeing in Public Policy and in collaboration with Sheffield City Council in 2011 coordinated an event for the Office for National Statistics on measuring national wellbeing, an area receiving increasing political attention.
- Since November 2006 the Department has coordinated the DWP-sponsored Work Pensions and Labour Economics Study Group (WPEG) which brings together a network of over 500 academics and policy makers with interests in labour markets, poverty, housing, pensions and savings. Taylor is the convenor, with Brown and Dickerson on the steering group.

(iv) *Mechanisms for achieving impact from research*

- Research strategy is overseen by the Research Committee (comprising senior and junior staff) which has responsibility for all research activity, including the PhD programme, external funding, knowledge exchange and impact, ethics and mentoring. The Department has had an explicit knowledge exchange/impact coordinator since 2005.
- All research grant applications, regardless of the proposed funding provider, have to submit an approval request form to the Department's Research Grant Coordinator before the grant proposal is signed off by the Department. One of the important elements of this process is to ensure that a clear strategy is in place to maximise the impact for non-academic beneficiaries.
- In 2012/13 the Department introduced a 'research investment fund' scheme which is a pump-priming initiative to encourage and promote large external grant applications, and to promote small groups of academics to collectively develop new research ideas, e.g. through the research clusters (see REF5). One of the criteria in assessing the proposals submitted to the scheme is that the application should explicitly incorporate a 500 word impact strategy.
- The University has five outward-looking 'gateways', aligned to the external user environment, to enable cross-department and/or cross-faculty collaborations. The gateways are networked across all departments and faculties and act as a single point of contact to identify and access expertise anywhere in the University. The Research Exchange for the Social Sciences (RESS), the social science gateway (a £1.5m Higher Education Innovation Fund initiative), assisted with Roberts' research on 'Behavioural Approaches to Student Choice' commissioned by the Higher Education Academy and National Union of Students, and resulted in a Roundtable Discussion hosted by *The Guardian* prior to its formal publication in December 2012, (see (c)).
- The University aims to stimulate innovation and maximise the impact of its ideas and knowledge on the wider world through the development of protectable Intellectual Property (IP). The Commercialisation Team, within Research and Innovation Services, promotes and supports the commercialisation of IP and has entered into a partnership with Fusion IP plc, an AIM listed company. One of our impact case studies, the Short-Form Six Dimension (SF-6D) Preference Based Health Status Utility Index, is managed commercially by Fusion IP plc.

(v) *Supporting staff to achieve impact from their research findings*

- The Department has a Workload Allocation Framework (WAF) which gives explicit credit for research funding in order to facilitate excellent research and to maximise impact potential and user engagement. We are currently reviewing how impact is further incentivised in the WAF (see (c)).
- Our one-to-one research mentoring scheme, the annual individual research plans audit, and the University-wide annual Staff Review and Development Scheme (SRDS) appraisal ensure that individuals' research plans are compatible with Department and University aims. Impact is explicitly monitored through SRDS and is considered in promotion cases.
- We hold biannual research planning meetings with all academic members of staff to review their research strategy, publications, and to identify user engagement and potential beneficiaries stemming from research. Furthermore, impact priorities have been identified and developed via our research clusters (see REF5) and also via Department away-days.

**c. Strategy and plans**

## Impact template (REF3a)

- We are currently reviewing existing, and developing new, mechanisms to explicitly enhance impact. Plans for the future include:
  - addressing and rewarding impact in future workload planning separately to other research activities, by explicitly allowing time for impact related activity in the WAF;
  - encouraging staff to undertake advisory or consultancy roles specifically to maintain and develop relationships with an impact dimension;
  - continued strategic development of applications via RESS with CFE Research (a specialist consultancy in employment and skills evaluation). A Knowledge Exchange Associate has been appointed in Autumn 2013, joint with RESS, to maintain and develop the portfolio of research and impact activities in the Department undertaken in partnership with CFE;
  - the introduction of pump-prime funding for research clusters to enable groups of individuals to be proactive in addressing impact, and developing priorities, in particular investigating the potential for research to be organised through alliances with core partners;
  - impact is an explicit part of our overall future strategy and is overseen by the Research Committee (see b(iv)). However, we view this as being potentially too inward-looking and thus aim to develop this strategically by including end-users and stakeholders to explicitly contribute to agenda setting research.
- Our long term strategy remains to achieve excellence in our research in accordance with the three stage approach indicated above, see b(i). This is part of the broader institutional ‘Innovation, Impact and Knowledge Exchange’ strategy to create and maintain deeper partnerships with external organisations. Examples include:
  - a range of projects undertaken in partnership with CFE, including: (i) evaluating ‘Behavioural Approaches to Student Choice’ which stemmed from this route (see b(iv)); (ii) Dickerson, McIntosh & Roberts who will evaluate the EOP 2012-2015 for BIS. This is a £250M scheme whereby the government funds employers to coordinate and provide training and is likely to have a significant impact on future training policy in the UK; and (iii) McIntosh and Roberts have secured £1.8M to evaluate the BIG Lottery Fund ‘Fulfilling Lives’ programme;
  - Roberts is leading a large 5 year EPSRC-funded project, ‘Reflect: Experienced utility and travel behaviour’, which uses smartphones to gather real-time data on commuting experiences. The Department for Transport is a stakeholder group. The impact is likely to influence travel behaviour and policy, potentially culminating in reducing carbon emissions;
  - a new research institute InstEAD (the Institute for Economic Analysis of Decision-Making) directed by Brown and Roberts, financed initially via the University Strategic Development Fund, was launched in 2013 and includes international researchers in areas such as behavioural economics, economic psychology, health economics and labour economics. InstEAD aims to enhance our understanding of how individuals and households respond to their changing economic, financial and personal circumstances. Relevant stakeholders, include DWP, JRF, NICE, and the Bank of England who will be involved in developing the research agenda and help to maximise impact.

### **d. Relationship to case studies**

The two case studies are a culmination of the investment in collaboration, management and planning for end-user engagement made before and during the REF period. The development of the SF-6D algorithm funded by Glaxo Wellcome grew out of an existing research relationship with the company and a number of smaller health outcome projects which the investigators had carried out for them pre 2000. It is at the core of the health valuation work carried out in the Department and stemmed directly from our strategic approach to impact, see b(i). The case study is typical of our continued research activity in this area e.g., an MRC funded project (2010-12), the ‘Preparatory study for the Re-evaluation of the EQ-5D Tariff’ (Risa Hole and Tsuchiya) followed directly from this, both modifying and extending NICE’s favoured health valuation tariff. The *alcohol* case study was an inter-departmental research undertaking with the School of Health and Related Research (SchARR). This followed the strategic approach described above and the long standing links between SchARR and the Department of Health (DoH). Employing a similar methodology, Taylor and Roberts are currently evaluating children’s choice of school meals, nutritional intake, and price.