

Impact template (REF3a)

<p>Institution: University of Sheffield</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 19 - Business and Management Studies</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The research mission of Sheffield University Management School is to promote socially responsible work practices and have a positive impact on organisations and society throughout the world. To achieve this, our strategy is to target research users in supra-national institutions (e.g. International Labour Organisation (ILO), European Commission) as well as national and local government agencies and commercial organisations to affect changes in legislation, regulations, policy and practice.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>To achieve our mission of promoting socially responsible work practices, the School has adopted the strategy of establishing deep and significant relations with our targeted research users in supra-national institutions and national and local government agencies. This is achieved using four approaches: (i) participatory methods (action research); (ii) sharing and co-production of knowledge (research partnering and collaboration); (iii) practice-driven, client-based/led work (contract research and consultancy); and (iv) research-driven, practice-relevant work.</p> <p>1. Impact through action research</p> <p>To fully involve research users as active participants in identifying and solving problems, new participatory tools have been developed within the School. For instance, the <i>INSPIRE</i> (INnovation System for Performance Improvement and RE-organisation) participatory methodology, whose principles were developed by a member of staff and doctoral candidate in the School, has been used with over 40 organisations, including the Department for International Development, the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action, Royal Mail, and in the US and UK health sectors to generate significant process innovations and performance improvements. Similarly, the use of the <i>CLEAR IDEAS</i> participatory tool with multifarious public sector organisations has enabled substantial organisational changes to be achieved (see Case Study).</p> <p>To help our main research users promote socially responsible work practices, staff in the School have also created new regional, national and supra-national institutions to allow them to do so. This is exemplified by: our creation of an employee volunteering network (with Hull) which connects over 150 public, private and third sector organisations and has changed attitudes towards volunteering; the establishment of the UK Hidden Economy Expert Group, founded and chaired by an academic in the School, to bring central government departments together to join up strategy and operations on the hidden economy; and our design of a European platform to bring national governments together to jointly develop strategy and operations on undeclared work, which is now the subject of a legislative initiative in the European Parliament (see Case Study).</p> <p>2. Impact through research partnering and collaboration</p> <p>The sharing and co-production of knowledge through research partnering and collaboration has enabled significant impacts to be achieved. International examples include: collaborating with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to prepare the 2012 Climate Change report (WG III); partnering with the US-based Global Think Tank Institute, PwC and consulting company IOD PARC to enable the <i>INSPIRE</i> participatory methodology to be employed with a large international client base; partnering with Regioplan (a Dutch private sector consultancy) to produce an on-line ‘knowledge bank’ of ‘best practice’ policy measures for tackling undeclared work, which has had 61,449 views from national governments and others since its 2009 creation; partnering with consultancy companies in Bulgaria (Vitoshka Research) and Croatia (Institute of Public Finance), funded by a €1.25m Marie Curie Industry-Academia Partnerships and Pathways grant (2013-2017), to develop the capacities and capabilities for tackling undeclared work in Bulgaria, Croatia and FYR Macedonia; and collaborating with the International Labour Office to formulate new technical memoranda on labour administration and inspection, resulting in the improvement of labour standards in organisations across the world.</p> <p>An important and growing feature of our partnering strategy at the national level has been to facilitate secondments of academic staff to central government departments, including a 2010 secondment to the Department of Business Innovation and Skills during the Comprehensive Spending Review and a two-year NERC-funded Policy Placement Fellowship in the Environment</p>

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Agency working two days a week on flood and drought projects. Additional national-level examples of the impacts of our partnering strategy include: our partnering with local authorities to improve their procurement practices in terms of the energy supply chain under the £15m BIG Energy upgrade project, with the outcomes informing the Green Deal; using a software tool called SCEnAT to work in partnership with Rolls-Royce PLC, Sheffield Forgemasters International, Muntons PLC, Northeast Light Alloy Co and Brocklesby Ltd to analyse their supply chain environment, identify carbon hotspots and assess potential interventions (see Case Study); partnering with Capita, Co-op, Hull City Council, Irwin Mitchell and Yorkshire Bank to develop their corporate social responsibility strategies; and collaborating with Sport England and Manchester City Council to formulate their volunteering in sport strategies.

3. Maximising the impact of contract research and consultancy

Opportunities for contract research and consultancy arise as a direct corollary of the established research reputations of staff. At the international level examples include: contract research and consultancy on tackling undeclared work for Eurofound and the European Commission, leading directly to a legislative initiative in the European Parliament (see Case Study); and working for the British Embassy to produce new international partnerships in the education sector in Angola.

National-level examples include undertaking contract research and consultancy for the National Audit Office on evaluating the performance of HMRC in tackling the hidden economy which has led to significant operational and organisational improvements in how HMRC tackles the hidden economy; and for the British Psychological Society in designing a new professional practice qualification validated by the Health and Care Professions Council.

An exemplar of our local-level contract research and consultancy is our work with Sheffield First Partnership to develop the collaborative leadership capacities of the members of its executive board, which has resulted in them working through their role as a board and taking greater responsibility for the leadership of the city, resulting in them playing a more active leadership role, exemplified by their development of a Sheffield 2035 vision for the city.

4. Impacts of research-driven practice-relevant work

The impacts on practice of our basic research are exemplified by its frequent use as a principal catalyst and reference point for major alterations in policy and professional practice. International examples include: research on employment relations in South Africa, influencing the policies of the trade union federation; and research on the role of women in accountancy in Japan being adopted by the Japanese Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

National level examples include: supply chain research that highlighted the flaws of the food miles argument directly and explicitly informing the Food 2030 strategy of the UK government; research on workplace conflict and resolution informing the policy consultation and debate around the addition of 'unfair dismissal' in 2013 to the list of jurisdictions where employment judges can sit alone; research on reverse logistics leading to significant changes in practice across a wide range of organisations (see Case Study); research on staff engagement helping NHS England to start to change its approach; NHS-funded research on the quality of older patient care impacting on the NHS Confederation's briefing paper on improving dignity in care for older people; research showing that primary angioplasty for the treatment of heart attacks is feasible, cost-effective and acceptable to patients, leading to significant changes in the national guidelines for heart attack treatment and the working practices of cardiology centres; and Department of Health funded research on the marketing of alcohol significantly influencing the UK policy debate around the potential introduction of a minimum unit price for alcohol.

Mechanisms to support and facilitate impact

Our intellectual position is that impact is an inherent feature of the research process. Consequently, support for impact was not distinguished from other aspects of research pre-2008. However, in parallel with the emerging debate on impact, it has been increasingly addressed more explicitly, distinctly and formally, and has benefited from growing financial support, training and professional service support.

The University's Innovation, Impact and Knowledge Exchange (IIKE) strategy enables academic staff to undertake up to 35 days paid consultancy per annum in addition to their salary, and provides full indemnity insurance, contract negotiation and financial administration. SUMS staff completed 68 consultancy projects during the period, an exemplar being the consultancy project

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for the European Commission on joining-up policy on undeclared work which led to a European Parliament legislative initiative (see Case Study). Funding to support impact has also been provided through the University's Rapid Response KE fund (used by 6 staff in this REF period). At Faculty-level, and part of the IIFE strategy, the £1.5m HEIF-funded Research Exchange for the Social Sciences (RESS) offers practical help with accessing funding for collaborative and knowledge exchange projects and provides external organisations with access to research expertise. Vorley, a senior lecturer in SUMS is deputy director of RESS and 19 School staff have been assisted by RESS to establish stakeholder connections and pathways to impact, exemplified by RESS playing a lead role in identifying senior staff in government to represent their departments on the cross-government Hidden Economy Expert Group.

At School level, the Associate Dean (Knowledge Exchange) took on the role of Impact Champion in 2011; an Impact Manager was recruited in 2012 to support and stimulate the above examples of impact activities; a seven-strong School External Relations team works with the University's Corporate Affairs team and RESS at Faculty level to facilitate relationship-building and impact opportunities; and an Impact Mentor scheme matches academics who have succeeded in translating research into impact with less experienced researchers. Study leave can be used to pursue impacts on research users and/or secondments. Progress on achieving impact is monitored by the Research Committee which has a standing agenda item on this issue. Research centres report annually on research impact, and individual staff report on their impact on research users and development needs in their annual research review with the Dean and Associate Dean for Research, as well as under the annual staff review and development scheme. Promotion cases can now be made primarily on the strength of significant impact on research users.

c. Strategy and plans

The School's 2014-20 Impact Strategy aims to extend the reach and significance of our impact on research users across a wider range of supra-national institutions (e.g. ILO, World Bank, European Commission) and a broader array of national and local government bodies and commercial organisations across the world in order to achieve the widespread adoption of socially responsible work practices. To ensure that feasible and measurable changes in policy and behaviour are achieved by our research, our strategic objectives are to:

- Enhance staff training via an impact development training programme on good practice.
- Expand significantly our research partnering by quadrupling the number of secondments to non-academic organisations at both the international as well as national level.
- Formalise support for achieving impact by providing business development support to deliver and monitor research impact KPIs at the School level. Investment will be made in collecting documentary evidence (e.g. testimonials), developing metrics for international reach and significance, and increasing external secondment and internship opportunities for academic staff and PhD students.
- Improve the dissemination of the impacts of our research by developing an on-line 'knowledge bank' of our impacts on research users.

We will also fully synthesise research and impact activities by changing the 40% workload allocation of staff for research as well as research funds to 'research and impact' allocations, and invest in the training of not only academic staff but also dedicated professional service staff in the Research Office and Business Development Team to support the planning and delivery of research impact. Through these strategic and training developments, we will engender a culture change that raises expectations regarding the generation of impacts on research users to the same level of importance as internationally excellent outputs.

d. Relationship to case studies

Each case study illustrates how the School maximises the reach and significance of our research impact through a targeted and strategic approach focusing on research users in supra-national institutions as well as national and local government agencies, and through this, achieves widespread impacts on organisations and societies. The *Transforming Policy on Undeclared Work in Europe* case study shows how investment in impact has directly shaped policy, legislation and practice at the supra-national level, and the *CLEAR IDEAS*, *Reverse Logistics* and *Low Carbon Supply Chain* cases demonstrate how, through targeting national and local government agencies, widespread impacts on organisations have been achieved.