

Institution: University of Sheffield
Unit of Assessment: C21 Politics and International Studies
<p>a. Context</p> <p>We have a long-standing tradition of research excellence and high-level engagement that delivers significant impact. In particular, our research impact has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulated and informed policy debate leading to policy change; • Shaped and influenced processes of government reform; • Impacted on democratic participation through the promotion of citizens' engagement with democratic politics; • Informed and shaped public and political debate through the promotion of enhanced public conception and understanding of key political, social and economic issues. <p>Our research excellence has therefore led to impact on a wide range of beneficiaries both nationally and internationally, including the Houses of Parliament, the Cabinet Office, the Government Office for Science, the Home Office, the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, the Hansard Society, an extensive range of Parliamentary committees, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the US Department of Labor, the European Commission, the Swedish National Institute of Public Health and the Government of Thailand. Collective public goods have informed political debate and political change through a wide range of media organisations including the BBC and leading newspapers and increasingly direct influence through effective use of social media. The success of our impact strategy is evidenced by the award to Flinders in 2013 of an ESRC prize in the category 'Impact Champion of the Year'.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>Our strategy identifies and targets opportunities based on the nature of the research and potential users leading to continual and evolving collaborations with a wide range of beneficiaries. The Department of Politics' Research Committee has responsibility and oversight for all aspects of our research strategy including impact and therefore plays a key role in monitoring progress and continued development of impact objectives. Delivery of the strategy is overseen by an Impact Champion (currently Flinders) who works closely with colleagues to identify new impact opportunities, tying these into existing research agendas, cultivating an awareness of the potential for impact into all aspects of our research environment and reporting back to Research Committee.</p> <p>Our Politics-led research centres are integral to the attainment of our impact objectives by: actively connecting with wider intellectual and policy agendas; promoting engagement with an extensive range of users and audiences; and providing scope for direct interaction with beneficiaries. There are currently four such research centres; two of which are Politics-led but university-wide and were launched during the assessment period. The first of these, the Sheffield Political Economy Research Institute (SPERI) was created in 2011 with support of £725k from the Vice Chancellor's Strategic Development Fund (SDF) to build on the achievements of the Political Economy Research Centre (PERC) established in 1994. The second is the Sir Bernard Crick Centre for the Public Understanding of Politics that was established in 2013 and is also supported by the SDF. The Crick Centre is the first research centre of its type explicitly designed to promote wider public engagement with politics. In addition, two departmental research centres provide further support for high-level engagement and impact. The Centre for International Policy Research (CiPOL) is a forum for policy-relevant work analysing the adaptive capacities of governance systems. The Centre for Political Theory and Global Justice (CPTGJ) secures wider impact for research on the contested boundaries of domestic and international politics, including health, environmental sustainability, bioethics and animal rights.</p> <p>Opportunities for impact are embedded from the outset within new projects and funding applications. All research grant applications complete an approval process and are considered by the departmental Director of Research. One aspect of this process is to ensure that a clear strategy is in place to maximise the impact for appropriate non-academic beneficiaries. Early user engagement is encouraged and supported. For example, Stevenson's successful ESRC Future Research Leaders project on Innovations in International Environmental Policy was designed on the basis of previous engagement with international institutions such as the World Bank, multilateral development banks, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Jonathan Freedland from <i>The Guardian</i> newspaper and Barney Jones from the BBC</p>

have agreed to work with Stevenson to identify and implement strategies for maximising public and policy engagement. When developing his successful ERC Advanced Investigator grant application, Geddes worked with Will Somerville from the Migration Policy Institute think tank in Washington DC. In addition, and related to his work for the Government Office for Science, Geddes collaborated with Somerville on migration and climate change which then led to a publication in a leading refereed journal and a policy brief for the Migration Policy Institute.

There is extensive **evidence of the effectiveness of this strategy** in delivering impact. For example, Hay's ESRC-funded collaboration with the Hansard Society explored citizens' engagement with democratic politics, including the impact of tabloid newspapers on their readers' attitudes to politics. Flinders used ESRC funding to develop a distinct approach to the promotion of wider public engagement that has led to specific proposals for change targeted at key beneficiaries, such as the Cabinet Office and the House of Commons' Public Administration Committee. Tailored research within the framework of CiPOL into key regulatory issues included an evaluation by Geddes of the Gangmasters' Licensing Authority (GLA) with an employers' survey to assess the effectiveness of the regulatory regime governing temporary labour providers. On the basis of this work, the Home Office's Migration Advisory Committee commissioned analysis of migrant workers in the UK food sector to inform policy-making.

We also **shape and influence debate through extensive media engagement**. Extensive public engagement via the media includes contributions to leading newspapers, including the *New Statesman*, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, the *Yorkshire Post*, *Times Higher Education* and *Parliamentary Brief*. McMillan has been a consultant psephologist for the BBC on parliamentary, local, European and mayoral elections since 2008. Staff have also been interviewed on various BBC outlets (*News 24*, *World News*, *BBC4*, *Parliament Channel*, *Breakfast TV*, *Radio 4*, *Radio 5Live*), as well as *ABC Radio* (Australia) *RTE Radio 1* (Ireland) *Channel 7* (Australia) and *Star TV* (India). A highlight in 2012 was Flinders' 3-part BBC Radio 4 series 'In Defence of Politics' that attracted in excess of 1.7 million listeners and was a contributory factor in the award of his **2012 Political Studies Association's prize for Communicator of the Year**. Effective use is now being made of social media particularly through the research centres. For example, SPERI has been instrumental in establishing a successful Twitter feed (with more than 1230 followers in October 2013) and links to SPERI blog entries have led to wider impact. A SPERI blog was re-tweeted by New Zealand's former Prime Minister, Helen Clark, who suggested the blog as the inaugural item on the UN Development Programme blog. Similarly, SPERI Directors authored 5 blog items under the title of 'the great uncertainty' which were then picked up by the *New Statesman* magazine blog.

Funding for impact activities includes pump-priming, academic mentoring and administrative support for achieving impact. In the last five years, members of staff have secured £27k from the Higher Education Innovation Fund to support knowledge exchange and impact on various projects, including gender and tourist development and participation in service delivery in local government. The Department benefits from the substantial investment in the Interdisciplinary Centre of the Social Sciences (ICOSS). ICOSS houses state-of-the-art IT infrastructure, meeting rooms, exhibition space and specialised support for the impact of social science research. SPERI is housed within ICOSS. A select committee facility within ICOSS was used to host the McKay Commission on 'The Consequences of Devolution for the House of Commons' to which Bulmer gave evidence. ICOSS is also the base for the University's Research Exchange for the Social Sciences (the Faculty's knowledge-exchange hub, of which Geddes served as founding Director).

Impact training for PhD students is embedded in the work of the ESRC White Rose Doctoral Training Centre (established in collaboration with the universities of Leeds and York), with specific modules offered on 'Impact & KE', 'Thinking Critically About Evidencing Impact', 'Dissemination' and 'Impact Through Digital And Social Media Technologies'. We have expanded both the number and scope of PhD internships (including at the House of Commons, CBI, Social Enterprise Coalition, IPPR, the Cabinet Office and the British Library) and collaborations with non-academic users of the unit's research (including ESRC-CASE or other joint arrangements including with the Centre for Animals and Social Justice, Harewelle International and South Yorkshire Police).

The Department works closely with **impact support provided by the University's Research and Innovation Services** with staff aligned with the Faculty of Social Sciences, including a Faculty Research Strategy Manager, Faculty Research Development Officer and an Impact Consultant.

Funding is available for pilot research, the creation of networks with non-academic beneficiaries, the development of research proposals and the pursuit of major research and impact initiatives.

c. Strategy and plans

1. **Targeted funding to support capacity building and to ensure the mainstreaming of impact in new project development and all major research grant applications.** This has been enhanced in summer 2013 by the appointment of Visiting Professors to a Departmental Advisory Board connecting established areas of research excellence with high-level users and beneficiaries. The first appointees are: Rt Hon David Blunkett MP working with the Crick Centre; the financial commentator and analyst David Marsh working on European economic and financial governance with SPERI; Anne Posthuma from the International Labour Organization, Brasilia working on global value/commodity chains and related labour standards with SPERI; and Will Somerville from the Migration Policy Institute in Washington DC to collaborate on global migration and align more broadly with CiPOL's work.
2. **Impact will be further embedded within our appointments strategy in order to ensure its sustainability, with experience of impact transmitted from senior to junior staff.** For example, at senior level, Phillips has an outstanding track record of high-level engagement, including work with the Home Office and Joseph Rowntree Foundation. She will now work closely with LeBaron who has been appointed to a 3-year Vice Chancellor's Fellowship (with transition to a lectureship) to develop pathways to impact for their work on unfree labour. Hay played a key role in the Hansard Society Audit of Political Engagement with the Department's commitment sustained through Grasso's appointment to the Audit's Advisory Board in 2013.
3. **We will reinforce our commitment to politics-led research centres as drivers for impact.**
 - **SPERI** will further enhance its capacity to play a leading role in debates on the British growth crisis, the architecture of the Eurozone, the rise of the BRICs, the G20's leadership of the global political economy, and the impact of the environmental crisis on the growth agenda in general. Through proven mechanisms that have already delivered high-level impact, SPERI will engage both with opinion formers and the wider public to lead debate on political, social and economic futures and sustainable development.
 - **The Sir Bernard Crick Centre for the Public Understanding of Politics** will reach out beyond academe to stimulate wider public debate and encourage citizenship around the world through a systematic programme of engagement and training.
 - **CiPOL** will further develop tailored pathways to impact targeted at key beneficiaries, including the impact deriving from Geddes' ERC Advanced Investigator project on global migration governance and from ESRC-funded work by Flinders on public bodies in an age of austerity.
 - **CPTGJ** will provide a base for impact deriving from Stevenson's ESRC Future Research Leaders Award and for Brown's engagement with the Canadian International Development Research Centre linked to health diplomacy-strengthening within the East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC) where Brown has acted as a consultant for the health ministries of 12 African countries.

d. Relationship to case studies

Our approach to impact coupled with our reputation for research excellence has allowed us to target the most appropriate beneficiaries of our work while developing new relationships by responding to opportunities as they have arisen. All three case studies demonstrate the relationship between excellent research and outstanding impact that is at the heart of our approach. All three also demonstrate the genuine nature of the collaboration based on long-term work with key users and beneficiaries including the **Houses of Parliament, Hansard Society, an extensive range of parliamentary committees, the Cabinet Office, the Government Office for Science, the European Commission and the United Nations.** Our commitment to broader engagement to wider audiences is made evident by the innovations that have been led from Sheffield in parliamentary outreach that have now been adopted across the UK and in other countries. The relationships developed by the three case studies have all now fed back into the Department and shaped the development of its future strategy in the form, for example, of the creation of an Advisory Board, the launch of the Crick Centre and the success of SPERI.