

**Institution: Oxford Brookes University**

**Unit of Assessment: 19 Business and Management**

**a. Context**

The UoA has a well-established record of engaging with beneficiaries and end-users outside of academia and is strongly committed to the advancement of its research impact in the public domain. This track record of engagement is evident in each of the research groupings identified in REF 5 environment template. The breadth of impact achieved by members of staff is exemplified by work such as **James'** long standing engagement with policy makers in occupational health and safety and recent input to the review of health and safety regulation set up by Chris Grayling, Minister for Employment; **Cooper's** role as Senior Special Advisor Human Resources for the UN World Tourism Organization; and **Angwin's** policy advice to the EU on mergers and acquisitions in the European food industry.

The UoA's research beneficiaries includes those operating at a local, regional, national, European and international levels and encompasses the sector-specific (e.g. Brookes, President of EuroCHRIE, the largest network of hospitality practitioners and academics for Europe, Middle East and Africa) and the professionally-specific (e.g. **Spira**, research relationships as advisor and member of the Research Advisory Board, Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales). Main user groups consist of policy and decision makers, businesses from SME's to global corporations, public sector bodies, labour organisations, individual practitioners in their professional lives, and sports decision makers and sports fans. **McDonald's** research collaboration devising a suite of models of the global economic system (The GLOBE project) has been used, for instance, by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace to evaluate the impacts of the Doha Development Agenda on India and, in conjunction with the International Labour Office, on the employment and internal labour migration implications for Brasil; it has also been used independently of the authors to examine EU trade policies. Findings from **Altinay's** research into ethnic minority entrepreneurial orientation through Turkish and Chinese small firms in the UK were adopted by the Association of Community Based Advisors to develop training programmes and support mechanisms for small ethnic minority businesses and were also taken up by the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce. **Ekinci's** work with Harding and Yorke Ltd examining the measurement of the quality of customer interactions in contact centres resulted in modifications to the company's measurement tool to produce a stronger focus on empathy. Communicated through conferences, other contact centre companies (e.g. Tele2 in Russia, Standard Bank in South Africa, First Direct UK) have implemented similar methodologies.

The case study of **Paraskevas** demonstrates the use of KTPs within research to achieve impact within an on-going relationship (InterContinental Hotels Group). The first of the two sequential KTPs ran over a two-year period to examine the re-development of IHG's Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans, and the second over a three-year period to develop an ERM methodology for the company. This and other KTP successes informed the UoA's commitment to KTPs for research impact. The other two impact case studies also emphasise the importance of continuity, building on earlier research work with both internal (**Manfredi's** cross-disciplinary work with law) and external collaborations (**Lewis'** long standing collaboration with Duckworth). This commonality between the case studies has highlighted the importance for UoA impact plans to support network development and collaborations. Taken together, the three case studies embody the different means by which our approach to impact has achieved significant results, and captures the way that we see our research having meaningful consequences for individuals, businesses, organisations and specific sectors from a local to international level.

**b. Approach to impact**

The primary approach to developing the impact of our work is to conduct research that directly relates to concerns beyond academia with the potential to make a practical and positive difference to individuals, organisations and policy arenas. Pathways to impact are supported through institutional support mechanisms, incorporation of impact into the research cycle and targeted resourcing of impact activity.

## Impact template (REF3a)

*Institutional support mechanisms*

We have targeted specific support for Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) as these provide strong opportunities for developing high-impact research. KTP support is provided at UoA level by the Faculty Research Office which matches external client needs with internal research capabilities and at University level by dedicated personnel in the RBDO nurturing potential partnerships through the application process. This dual support has resulted in a number of successful KTPs over the review period; for example, with shoe retailer Ecco, with online retailer Mankind Direct Ltd, and the most recent with Brethertons solicitors. **Paraskevas'** research with the InterContinental Hotels Group exemplifies the KTP route to impact, integrating two highly successful KTPs, both ranked as excellent, into the project design. Both the Research Manager and a part-time Research Grants Officer situated within the UoA's Research Office offer advice on user groups, network development and impact plans. The UoA's Grant Panel in reviewing external bids gives feedback on strengthening impact for users beyond academia.

*Incorporation of impact into the research cycle*

Embedded in the Personal Development Review process, staff that identified impact-related activities in their 3-year research plans are supported with allocations of research time, and increased emphasis is being given to knowledge exchange and impact in pathways to promotion to Readership and Professor. The Research Leads (RLs) for the Departments mentor staff in their development of research user connections and design of impact activities. Workshops and seminar sessions to enhance staff knowledge and skills concerning impact were hosted during the period and complemented impact-related seminars organised by the research groups. These events were led by internal UoA staff, University contributors, and by external invitees. For example, an externally-led training day (Professors Wallace and Wray, March 2012) on bid writing included a strong impact component and was followed with an internal seminar dedicated to impact planning.

*Targeted resourcing of impact activity*

Staff have been successful in winning external funding for specific impact activities; for instance, Quinton and Domingos-Canhoto were awarded £3,500 by the National Strategic Directorate of e-Social Science at Oxford University for a workshop on 'Bridging the relevancy gap between digital research in Universities and business' (March 2013) for senior industry managers and academics to share collaborative opportunities. The UoA also resourced staff attending external events on research impact. From 2010, the UoA has run an internal small grants scheme which is open to projects focusing on impact improvement for example, in 2010 **Manfredi** was awarded £4,000 to run a one day symposium on the Equality Act 2010, and in 2012 **Bowen** and **Clarke** were awarded £6,000 to build user networks in the Gower and Mawddach areas of Wales. In addition, the University Central Research Funding was used in the form of timetable relief to support the development of seven impact cases three of which were selected for inclusion in this return.

**c. Strategy and plans**

Our mission statement highlights the University's commitment to "contribute to the intellectual, social and economic development of the communities it serves through teaching, research and enterprise of the highest standards". Building on a tradition of distinction in academic, professional and social engagement to enhance our reputation as "a university which educates citizens for lives of consequence", UoA19 has a pivotal role in leading on research initiatives to deliver the Oxford Brookes' mission. This includes ambitious yet realistic goals and plans for maximising the potential for impact from current and future research, to be of consequence, and for embedding a culture which recognizes the value and importance of impact.

The Faculty's strategic 'Vision for the Future' identified cross faculty research groups which support the developing research culture of the Faculty; these are described in environment template REF5. Within our future strategy we recognise the necessity to: establish relationships with research user communities outside academia; build a portfolio of research activities that evidence reputations with such user communities; and involve users from the early stages of research through a properly considered user engagement and knowledge exchange strategy. The approach, therefore, focuses on the factors that are important for creating the opportunities for impact generation. We are committed to enhancing the impact of our research and will review our

## Impact template (REF3a)

strategy following REF 2014 as part of looking ahead to 2020. We will examine the School of Law's JISC funded pilot study 'Embedding impact analysis' to apply useful lessons for Business and Management. The toolkit developed allows staff to track impact from individual outputs and allows staff to see interconnections between various forms of dissemination and eventual impact on end users.

The workload planning model, allocates knowledge exchange as well as research time to incentivise the fostering of relationships and networks with user communities. This incentive is intended to warrant sustainability by ensuring impact for the future. A sabbatical scheme and a Visiting Academics scheme agreed during the review period both aim to facilitate co-operation or networking with collaborators outside the University and/or overseas and to 'enhance the reputation of the University's research externally' will be operational from the academic year 2013/14. Two KTPs recently awarded, one with the legal firm Brethertons LLP, which is 50% funded by the ESRC and 50% by the Technology Strategy Board, and the second with 'Media Analytics Ltd', an Oxford-based publishing and consultancy business that is a world leader in analysis of the global water industry are early evidence of success in the continuation of our KTP strategy. The latter KTP is formally based in the Faculty of Business and will be supervised jointly with the Faculty of Technology, Design and Environment.

Following our post REF review and evaluation of impact we will identify the next group of cases from existing research for targeted support to take forward for impact achievement and continue to develop our events on impact facilitation to embed impact in the UoA culture. In addition four proposals will be evaluated:

1. The establishment of a faculty Lead role for Impact
2. The creation of 'impact' scholarships for PhD and early career staff
3. Identification of research impact champions for specific types of impact, research clusters and Centres
4. A researcher in residence scheme for public engagement short sabbaticals to support staff to work with businesses, NGOs, public sector, labour organisations, policy think tanks etc.

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

In preparation for this REF return staff were invited to nominate their research for consideration as an impact case study. Seven specific projects were selected and supported for further development. The focus for these was to accumulate evidence of impact arising from relationships with organisations at local, national and international level. Following rigorous internal and external evaluation the final three impact case studies selected for submission in 3b are located in Accounting, Finance and Economics (**Lewis**), Business and Management via the Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice (**Manfredi**), and the Oxford School of Hospitality Management (**Paraskevas**).

At the global end of the business spectrum, **Paraskevas**' risk management research collaboration with the InterContinental Hotels Group of around 4,600 properties across the world developed new risk management practices and established the InterContinental Hotels Group as industry leader in the field. The Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice (**Manfredi**) has produced research that has been instrumental in developing the equality policy of HEFCE and the equality framework of the REF 2014 and has informed equality policy and practice in Higher Education establishments both in the UK and overseas. Research on age equality and retirement policies has been used in training for HE human resources managers, equality specialists and trade union representatives. The adoption of the Duckworth / **Lewis** Method Professional Edition in top level cricket across the world allows fairer match outcomes benefiting the teams, cricket fans and the games' regulatory bodies. With substantial media coverage and contributing to an individual's enjoyment of life, the Duckworth/Lewis Method arguably stands unique as business research accepted as everyday parlance. These research projects are all actively engaged in developing knowledge exchange activities, based on international research, which generate impact with non-academic users.