

Impact template (REF3a)

Institution: London Metropolitan University

Unit of assessment: UoA21 (Politics and International Studies)

a. Context

This impact template refers primarily to the work of Politics and International Studies (PIS) research active staff during the time that this research subject area was located within the Faculty of Law, Governance and International Relations (FLGIR). On 1 August 2013, PIS academic staff entered the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (FSSH), the focus of the university's research activities, with all six of LMU's research institutes and the university's central research and postgraduate office. The move into FSSH was highly likely to strengthen and develop the research focus and output of the PIS research-active staff.

Research at LMU in PIS focuses on five main subject areas: (1) Religion and politics/international relations; (2) Celebrity politics; (3) Teaching Politics in higher education (HE); (4) Regional government in the UK, and (5) Contemporary Aristotelian studies in ethics and politics. The move of PIS into FSSH involved relocation of its four research centres: (1) The Centre for Comparative European Survey Data (CCESD; created 1995); (2) The Global Policy Institute (GPI; created 2006); (3) The Centre for the Study of Religion, Conflict and Cooperation (CSRCC; created 2008); and The Centre for Contemporary Aristotelian Studies in Ethics and Politics (CASEP; created 2009). In addition, FLGIR also hosted London Metropolitan University's Faith and Citizenship Programme and the London Universities Consortium for the study of Religion, Politics and Society (LU) CORPS, founded in 2008.

In relation to PIS at LMU, the main types of impact in relation to (1) (2) (3) (4) and (5) are: (a) Enhanced cultural understanding of issues and phenomena; and shaping or informing public attitudes and values, (b) Shaping or informing of public or political debate, which may include activity that has challenged established norms, modes of thought or practices, (c) Shaping or influencing government policy and/or that by quasi-government bodies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private organisations and/or commercial organisations, and (d) Policy debate stimulated or informed by research evidence, which may have led to confirmation of policy, change in policy direction, implementation or withdrawal of policy.

Instrumental figures in producing PIS research include: (1) **Professor Jeffrey Haynes**, via the research centre he directs, **The Centre for the Study of Religion, Conflict and Cooperation (CSRCC)**. Established in February 2008, the Centre is at the forefront of research into religion's relationship with politics, both domestically and internationally. Professor Haynes developed and disseminated the concept of 'religious soft power' to provide an analytical and theoretical approach to explaining recent religious involvement in politics. The concept of 'religious soft power' which builds on Joseph Nye's well-known 'soft power' concept, examines use of religious ideas, norms and values to spread and embed religio-political understandings of the world. Religious soft power is an important influence on crucial areas of domestic and international politics, including: international development, democratisation/democracy and conflict/conflict resolution. Professor Haynes publicises related research outputs via regular keynote speeches at national and international conferences, media interviews, blogs, YouTube films, and podcasts.

CSRCC organises an international conference each year and also holds research seminars and workshops open both to academics and non-academics from various NGOs including the Dialogue Society, St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, Central Synagogue, London, the Catholic-Muslim Forum, and the Tony Blair Faith Foundation.

Professor Mark Wheeler disseminates his research on 'celebrity politics' via various public events, including, for example: The Celebrity Managers Forum (a networking group for those

whose role is to manage relationships with high profile supporters of UK charities) at Sparks Charity in November 2012, and his central involvement in a high-profile magazine article: 'Should celebrities promote charities?' *New Internationalist*, September 2012, pp.30-32.

Associate Professor Steven Curtis researches Teaching Politics in Higher Education in the UK and internationally. National [Discipline Lead for Politics at the HEA](#), Curtis works on a half-time secondment from LMU. This builds on Curtis's previous work as Discipline Associate for Politics and International Relations at C-SAP, the HEA's former Subject Network for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics. Curtis serves on the Executive Committee of the British International Studies Association (BISA) and chairs BISA's Learning and Teaching Committee. He is co-convenor of the [BISA Learning and Teaching Working Group](#). He is interested in innovations in learning and teaching of Politics and International Relations. He was a team member of two major 3-year government-funded research projects: between 2009 and 2012 he was LMU lead on a £200,000 HEA-funded project ([It's Good To Talk: Feedback, Dialogue and Learning](#)), which explored how best to give constructive feedback to students of IR, Politics and History in their assessed work. Between 2005 and 2008 he worked on [The Scholarship of Engagement for Politics](#), a £275,000 project funded by HEFCE via its Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning, which developed new models of placement learning for Politics and International Relations. Curtis appears talking about merits of research-based politics placements in a short film [Innovations in the Teaching and Learning of Politics](#), which premiered at the Palace of Westminster in November 2008.

Dr Diana Stirbu researches into regional government in the UK, specialising in Welsh and Scottish devolution and territorial politics. She regularly provides expert advice on constitutional and legislative matters and submits written evidence to National Assembly committees. She also advises public bodies, including the Welsh Football Trust and the UK Sports Board. Her interest in public engagement and participation in parliamentary organisations is manifested through membership to the SPG's Public Engagement specialist group. She is also interested in around gender representation in politics and, in May 2012, presented her research to the Women in Democracy cross party group event at the National Assembly for Wales. A member of the Institute of Welsh Affairs Women (IWAW), she presented her research to the IWAW Board meeting in July 2011.

Dr Kelvin Knight leads on contemporary Aristotelian studies in ethics and politics at LMU, primarily via his directorship of a research centre: The Centre for Contemporary Aristotelian Studies in Ethics and Politics (CASEP). The Centre's website - <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/depts/lgir/research-centres/casep/> - hosts CASEP's regular newsletters, as well as news of recent and forthcoming publications, as well as conferences and study groups, which are open to members of the public.

b. Approach to impact

In 2008, FLGIR's Associate Dean for Research, Professor Jeffrey Haynes, decided to focus the faculty's relevant financial and human resources in five research areas (religion and politics/international relations; celebrity politics; teaching Politics in higher education; regional government in the UK, and contemporary Aristotelian studies in ethics and politics). The decision was also made to seek to demonstrate research impact via both academic and non-academic conduits. In addition to the usual academic conduits - such as, publications, conference keynotes and paper presentations - non-academic forms of impact were also considered to be very important and were targeted as part of the faculty's research strategy.

c. Strategy and plans

FLGIR's research impact policy was guided by LMU's Strategic Plan (2010-2013), which, *inter alia*, sought to **transform lives through education and research of quality, meet society's needs through our socially responsible agenda**, and build rewarding careers for our students, staff and partners (emphases added; LMU's Strategic Plan, 2010-2103; <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/media/london-metropolitan-university/london-met->

[documents/professional-service-departments/marketing-admissions-and-uk-recruitment/marketing/London-Met-Strategic-Plan.pdf](#)). Research impact was guided by and geared towards education and research of quality and a socially responsible agenda

PIS research policy was based on the understanding that research impact should have as wide as possible dissemination both to academic and non-academic users. During 2008-2013, this strategy developed via: national and international conferences open to the public; involvement in public debates; efforts to influence government policy; and blogs, media interviews and television and radio appearances. FLGIR strongly supported PIS research-active staff involvement in these activities. This included, for example, a reduction in professors and readers' teaching load from 16 to 8 hours of teaching a week, specifically to develop and complete REF-able research outputs, as well as to provide appropriate opportunities to engage in dissemination of research outputs via public engagements.

From 1 August 2013, the erstwhile Governance and International Relations section of FLGIR, responsible for both research and impact in relation to PIS, became part of FSSH. This offered PIS research-active staff opportunities to develop research activities within a new research context. FSSH houses all six of the university's research institutes.

d. **Relationship to case studies**

The aim of each case study in relation to research impact beyond academia was to demonstrate the synergy of cutting-edge research undertaken in the PIS subject area with core university and faculty concerns with social justice.

First, the purpose was to highlight research strengths of key members of staff. Second, the concern was to demonstrate the coming together of research goals linking both academic and non-academic audiences. This focused on two impact case studies: religious soft power in politics and international relations (Professor Jeffrey Haynes and Dr Tamsin Bradley) and teaching of Politics in Higher Education Institutions, especially but not exclusively in the United Kingdom (Associate Professor Steven Curtis). The impact case studies sought to demonstrate these overlapping concerns in the following ways.

The work of Haynes and Bradley, who left LMU in September 2011, aims both to highlight and explain the political and social impact of religious soft power both in the UK and overseas. They demonstrated that the impact was not only of academic salience in seeking to explain what occurs when religion and politics interact but also of major public concern and importance. This was particularly the case in relation to major public issues such as the egregious attack on the USA by al-Qaeda terrorists on 11 September 2001 (9/11) and the separate but related bus and tube attacks a few years later in London on 7 July 2005 (7/7).

Curtis' work on teaching Politics in Higher Education seeks both to engage with academic issues of pedagogy, as well as examine the issue of placement learning in a range of universities and how this affects the academic fortunes and life-chances of students undertaking the placement. This approach accords with the following dimension of impact in REF 2014: impacts within the higher education sector, including on teaching or students, are **included** where they extend significantly beyond the submitting HEI (emphasis in the original). As noted in the impact case study, Curtis' work is highly influential in relation to numerous HEIs, especially in the UK, which teach Politics and International Relations at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.