

Impact template (REF3a)

<p>Institution: University of Stirling</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: C19 Business and Management</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The Stirling Management School brings together four key divisions: Economics, Accounting and Finance, Retail and Marketing, and Management, Work and Organisation. As well as these core divisions, a set of key research centres provide scope for detailed development of research strengths across the School. The School consistently seeks to develop research of high impact on policy and practice, and teaching programmes driven by research active staff; providing access to cutting edge-research for students. The School is explicitly oriented in its core definition to be an applied management school providing a distinctive approach to peer-reviewed interdisciplinary policy and practice relevant research. The development of peer-reviewed research published in leading journals is supported across all aspects of School hiring, administrative task allocation, promotion and resource allocation. Our core strengths are emphatically in areas of high policy/practice relevance. We continue successfully to develop the link between publishing in respected peer-reviewed journals and making an impact on policies and practices with significant societal relevance. . Our four divisions engage a wide range of users including: in Economics through engagement with the Scottish Government Economists Group and Office of the Chief Economic Adviser (OCEA) on a range of projects; in Accounting and Finance we directly engage professional bodies through our work on auditing standards; in Marketing and Retail we have had substantial influence on policy through our work on sustainability of town centres and control of tobacco, food and alcohol marketing, and in Management, Work and Organisation we work with Health and Education Authorities and the Equality Unit to contribute, for example, to new policies on skill-mix and training for education and health workers, and the maximising of employment participation for women. We also work extensively with local SMEs; and are actively engaged in enhancing the strategic direction of a range of organisations (including the Church of Scotland and Prorail).</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>Arising from our reflections on post RAE2008 strategy we ascertained that policy-relevance is a key strength of our School and have sought to cultivate this across our four divisions. Throughout the period, we have sought to build on existing strengths in Social Marketing, Retail, Public Economics and Accounting and Finance and lay the foundation for future impact in areas such as Behavioural Science and Aging Research. Impact in our School is engendered through the development of large-scale areas of research with experienced Professors driving long-run policy-engaged areas of thematic impact. Peer-reviewed output is explicitly aimed at contributing to major policy dilemmas and School research leaders pursue sustained policy activity to ensure their research is taken into account when policy is being formed. We are major contributors to national and international debates in areas including alcohol policy, unemployment, equality of employment, long-term care, retail and high street development, food retailing, and auditing standards. In addition we engage with a range of practitioners in the development of leadership, strategy and foresight skills across public, private and voluntary organisations, including very large public sector service organisations to very small local start-up companies.</p> <p>A number of structures in the School are enabling us to develop the impact of our work. We have hired a dedicated School publicity officer who interacts with all staff to ensure academic output is appropriately disseminated, including through the University website and press releases for relevant media outlets. The development of the Management School brought together several senior academics that had been highly successful in engaging in the cycle of knowledge exchange, attracting external funding to support new and innovative lines of research and disseminating this research to a range of stakeholders. Added to this, several recent appointments add to this group and are helping to build a culture within the School where knowledge exchange and impact are built into everything we do. Hence, we strongly encourage all staff to engage with the impact agenda and to keep track of non-academic impacts of their work. Through our university research</p>

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structures and our School research committee, we keep divisional research co-ordinators up-to-date on developments in research council and other funders' thinking on impact. Impact is also a key theme in research meetings at divisional and School level.

Our research centres are particularly focused on the delivery of policy impact. The Centre for Tobacco Control Research and Institute for Retail Studies have long-established records in policy impact and engagement and developing the scope of these centres is pivotal to our strategy. The development of our new centres in behavioural science and ageing are also very much aimed at creating impact in areas of applied strength. A planned centre for sustainable practice will bring together academic research from across the School and focus on cross-disciplinary approaches to reflective practice with a heavy emphasis on corporate social responsibility with a view to involving a range of organisations and supporting them to achieve their ambitions to be responsible corporate citizens.

A substantial number of School research projects have been developed to address major policy questions directly; often in collaboration with large-scale policy institutions. Two current examples include our ESRC-funded project on the Constitutional future of Scotland after the independence referendum and the development of a Scottish National aging study, both led by Bell in collaboration with other colleagues in the University. Aging and constitutional change are two of the major policy issues in the UK at present and the development of these projects shows specifically how we are engaging at the heart of policy debates.

School research leaders are predominately involved directly in national and international policy debate. Research leaders in the School also regularly contribute to policy through committee membership, national media interventions and contributions to parliament. We have actively shaped the unemployment debate through constant activity by **Bell** and **Blanchflower** in disseminating their research findings and advising governments on the findings. The outcomes of Social Marketing research on plain packaging was directly used in developing tobacco policy following a substantial effort disseminating research findings to policy makers. And our expertise in retailing and the food industry continually feeds into contemporary debate. McQuaid has directly informed new policies to increase the opportunities for women with young children to participate more fully in employment.

More generally, impact is supported for all research staff and students through university investment including in the provision of collaborative PhD studentships allowing external agencies to co-fund PhD studentships in applied areas. Our dedicated School Research Development Manager supports staff in the development of pathways-to-impact models for research-council funding applications and the success of these models is bolstered through administrative and related support in developing external user workshops and other activity. The University has also directly invested in the creation of impact through an Impact Fellowship Programme designed to support outstanding early career researchers in high impact areas embark upon their independent research careers. Through this highly competitive programme we have already attracted **Boyce**, who is pursuing an active policy-relevant research agenda in the area of well-being. Impact fellows are particularly encouraged to develop the policy relevance of their research through targeted training, dissemination and networking events.

The reach and significance of our work was reflected in the recent announcement of the award of the 2013 Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education for "*research into the impact of product marketing on children's health which has widely influenced international policies*". This prize represents the culmination of a long period of engagement with policy by **Hastings** and others and exemplifies the central relevance and influence on research in the School.

c. Strategy and plans

We have explicitly begun to develop our school research strategy to emphasise our distinctiveness as a School that is very much engaged in policy and practice relevant research as our core organising principle. This influences how we attract staff, the importance we place on impact in promotion and retention and the range of funding initiatives we target. The development of a School identity across our four major divisions that explicitly orients toward our policy-relevance along with a growing focus on managerial practice is a key part of our strategy to develop impact. School staff members are strongly encouraged to demonstrate that policy impacts come from high-quality research and direct engagement with a range of stakeholders is treated as a separate category of engagement with regard to promotion and hiring decisions.

In terms of continuing to develop, one key pathway to impact has been through emphasising our strengths in key areas of public policy and strategically hiring in these areas. Several of our senior appointments in the REF period have been in areas with direct policy and practice relevance. We have developed our major strength in understanding policy and practice issues around work, (un)employment, gender and related issues through the appointment of **Bolton** and **McQuaid**. Engagement with industry and a focus on sustainable strategy as practice and change management is fostered by **Burt** and **Burnes**. The appointment of **Delaney** and **Wood** and the development of a Behavioural Science Centre contribute to filling a major gap in an area of policy of particular relevance to the UK environment and this group is directly engaging with policy-makers across a range of areas. We have also hired talented early career fellows in areas directly involved in policy, including behavioural science, regional development and SMEs, workplace well-being, leadership and non-governmental organisations, retail, social marketing and constitutional change. We aim to continue this trend.

An increase in the number of research awards developed in collaboration with policy and industry is another key element in the development of our School's research impact. We have actively engaged in university initiatives to build impact and have recently co-funded studies with a range of external institutions including joint-funded PhDs with the Scottish Government economic service and a range of other policy agencies. Through the next few years we will build on recent successes in policy-relevant research in areas such as behavioural science, aging, social marketing and constitutional change, along with the new centre for Sustainable practice, to further develop our relevance to key policy and practice questions.

We are actively cultivating our web and social media presence with many research leaders now actively engaged in development of popular blogs (**Delaney** on Economics/Psychology; **Blanchflower** over 20,000 twitter followers; **Bell** blog/website on Scottish Constitution; **Sparks** blog on Retailing). This has increasingly become an explicit part of our strategy for raising the profile of our research through public engagement. With this in mind, these blogs and twitter-feeds are now a central part of our website and aggregated onto one site to provide direct and accessible communications to a wide audience of people who are affected by our research. We track view-counts on all our blogs and websites and also liaise with the university to review reports of our media impact across divisions and centres in the School.

d. Relationship to case studies

Our approach to impact can be seen clearly in our five case studies. Across our four divisions, research is geared toward large societal policy and practice questions, reflecting both a long history of being involved in this type of work and a continued commitment to policy impact reflected in ongoing hiring and structural changes in the School. Case study 1 addresses the importance of reforming accountancy and auditing standards. Case Study 2 shows how School research was directly utilised in changing policies relating to display of cigarettes potentially saving countless lives. Case study 3 outlines the impact of our work on shaping public and political debate and policy development and practice on the planning requirements for retail developments, retail regeneration and town centre futures. Case Study 4 outlines the work of **Bell** and **Blanchflower**

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which has a wide-spread international impact in ensuring governments begin to tackle the substantial societal issues surrounding youth unemployment. Case study 5 outlines our work in collaboration with colleagues in Applied Social Science to address issues on sustainability of long-term care funding arrangements.

All these case-studies involve long-run streams of research among experienced School Professors directly engaged in policy while publishing in high-quality peer-reviewed journal outputs. Impact is engendered through building explicit policy objectives into programmatic areas of research funded by a range of sources and often directly including policy-makers. Staff are supported through explicit recognition of focused research and impact activity by the School's workload model, support with publicity and collegial support in terms of awareness of the importance of policy impact. Among our senior staff, impact is not seen as secondary to publication success but rather as a logical continuation of the type of research being conducted. Through an environment where policy impact is given full respect and encouraged, we are developing these impacts further. Another key feature of our approach to impact that is clear from the five case studies is the importance of research that spans disciplines for public policy. In particular, the work of **Hastings** and colleagues brings together insights from public health and marketing in way that provides directly relevant insights for public policy. Similarly, the work of **Bell** on long-term care combines insights from Economics with core insights from applied social science, allowing an understanding of these vital policy issues that would not be possible to provide within a single discipline.