Institution: University of Westminster

Unit of Assessment: UoA3 Allied Health Professions and Studies

a. Context

Westminster's School of Life Sciences incorporates four Departments and has moved recently (August 2013) to a new Faculty structure (Science & Technology) that incorporates the Schools of Life Sciences and Electronics & Computer Science, as well as the Department of Psychology. We have had a track record of work across a broad range of disciplines, from basic biomedical research to the social sciences, and the medical humanities. Research, during the period of assessment, has been organised within and across the Departments of Molecular and Applied Biosciences, Human and Health Sciences, Biomedical Sciences and Complementary Medicine. The cross Department Research Clusters within the School that have played key roles in fostering impact are Applied Biotechnology Cluster (coordinator **Roy**); Cell Communication Cluster (including Against Breast Cancer Unit) (coordinator **Getting**); Diagnostics and Therapeutics Cluster (coordinator **Barr**); and the Perspectives in Health Cluster (including Patient Experience Research and the East Medicine Centre) (coordinators **Ridge** and **Scheid**). The ethos of the School of Life Sciences exemplifies the University of Westminster record of excellence in 'research that makes a difference' and takes advantage of the supportive institutional culture and structures that are in place. There has been an on-going active policy to generate and exploit opportunities for impact. These have focussed on a number of different forms of impact including; **public policy, services, practitioners, consumers, health and welfare, and commerce**.

The beneficiaries include policy makers, practitioners including clinicians, charities and support groups, pharmaceutical companies and patients as well as the general public.

b. Approach to impact

The approach to impact established within the School of Life Sciences takes advantage of the broad and supportive environment for such activities in the University. The current University Corporate Strategy published in 2009 explicitly embeds impact in relation to research and knowledge transfer aims: 'The University will build on its broad-based strengths in pure and practice-led research with a focus on excellence with impact – a portfolio of research that makes a difference'. Specifically one of the objectives is 'to ensure that our practice- and policy-informed research agenda is both shaped by, and the outputs disseminated to, corporate stakeholders from the private, public and not for profit sectors'.

Our approach to achieving impact in the period 2008-13 has incorporated a number of focussed strategies, including identifying and nurturing partnerships, providing support for **working with external non-academic partners**, as well as media training and PR support for enhanced dissemination. Work by **Ridge**, **Draper**, **Peters,** and **Polley** has benefitted greatly from developing associations with government, the NHS, charities, patient support groups, health professionals, as well as work with the PR agency **Broadgate Mainland** to get their messages out into the media, including establishing a monthly health blog in the **Huffington Post** by **Ridge**. This approach has been crucial to generating wider dissemination of their work beyond academia and generating impact in **public policy and services, practitioners and consumers.** Their work has also benefitted from **targeted dissemination talks to specific stakeholders** such as practitioners or user groups. Particularly gratifying has been the adoption of work by **Ridge** into NICE guidelines for clinical practice promoting recovery from depression. Other University support for influencing policy and practices in the community has resulted in significant impacts. For instance, **Draper's** research and policy advice for the UK Food Standards Agency directly influenced the Department of Health to adopt a uniform policy of consumer friendly front of pack food labelling. **Murphy's** role as an advisor to judges at UK Courts of Appeal and the Supreme Court in a landmark case concerning the patenting of a human gene for therapeutic purposes ([2011] UKSC 51) also underscores our strategy to promote work with external non-academic partners at the highest level and hence generate impact in public policy.

Associations with other academic colleagues from other units of assessment (Electronics and Computer Science) within Westminster has also been particularly encouraged and was pivotal for **Greenwell's** innovative work on developing novel user friendly computer software packages for biologists worldwide. An important feature of the Schools research environment and impact strategy has been a focus on inter- and cross-disciplinary engagement leading to impact both within and outside academia. As Professor of East Asian Medicines, **Scheid** specifically has been supported to develop a long and consistent track record of making medical humanities research

relevant to **other stakeholders** in the field of East Asian medicines including biologists, epidemiologists, clinical researchers, practitioners, and patients. **Scheid** has established the Traditional East Asian Medicines Research Network (TEAM-RN), which has organized a number of International conferences and workshops hosted by the School, leading to cooperative publications and research projects.

Another strategy has been **leveraging internal mechanisms and resources to support impact.** These mechanisms have been used to support **targeted funding applications.** A number of School initiatives have fostered industrial/commercial development of original research. This included the appointment of a School **business manager** (Professor Thierry Chaussalet) whose job remit included identifying opportunities for commercial/industrial exploitation of original research findings. **KTP** activity within the school has also been fostered and **Renshaw** received an award of £110k from the Technology Strategy Board (2009) and then 2 further direct awards to support additional salary and consumables, (£17k and £19k respectively). Specialised research facilities within the School, including a recently established Genomics Centre (**Moschos**), incorporating a state of the art deep sequencing machine, have been actively marketed for commercial purposes to outside clients and so far (2012-present) have attracted, as a start, £27K in commercial contracts (**Moschos**).

A competitive scheme exists in the School for a two year appointment as an **Enterprise Fellow**. (**Renshaw, Patel**). This scheme is supported by HEIF funding. Academics appointed to this position, receive increased salary for the duration of the appointment, and have a special role in promoting commercial/industrial opportunities within the School. Regular Enterprise Events are organised by the **Enterprise Fellow** with external speakers attending from stakeholder industries and important government bodies (e.g. Technology Strategy Board). Seed funding for commercial/industrial exploitation of research within the School is also supported by a competitive **mini-grant scheme**, which provides £2,500 seed funding to carry out basic research, to facilitate project development. Once proof of concept has been established, applicants can apply for a PARK WestFocus Knowledge Exchange grant. WestFocus is supported by HEIF and was initially established as a government-funded knowledge exchange project to develop entrepreneurial activity. A number of academics in the School have been successful in obtaining PARK WestFocus Knowledge Exchange grants (**Renshaw, Roy, Milton, Patel**) amounting to approximately £200k received by the School in 2008-2013.

c. Strategy and plans

We recognised early on the increasing competitiveness and selective context for research funding in the UK, and the need to deliver **value for money** to funders and society, by not only producing excellent research but also ensuring that our research had real **world impact.** Across the broad spectrum of research within the former School of Life Sciences, it is clear that in some research fields there are clearer routes to generating impact from original research than in others. Nonetheless, general strategies are being implemented to facilitate and maximise impact across all fields of research, from the biosciences to the social sciences. Looking ahead, we believe that the current trend, for traditional funding sources to become increasingly targeted to a limited number of UK third level institutions, will continue. Our challenge therefore is to put in place strategies that maximise our research impact by diversifying our sources of research funding and promoting links with industry, venture capitalists, charities, practitioners, the media and other user groups.

We plan to continue and build on the strategies outlined above, particularly working with **non-academic partner organisations and the media**. While much of our internal strategies in 2008-13 were directed at supporting production of excellent research, we are now assigning more resources to **incentivise and facilitate impact activities.** In 2013 the University moved to a new workload allocation model that allocates hours specifically for research and dissemination. We will **allocate time for impact generating activities** in the same way as for primary research, and request impact updates from colleagues alongside their yearly reports of research outputs. We will further **embed** impact **evaluation activities** in future applied work, to monitor our success. We will also **capitalize on our undergraduate teaching-related outreach activities**. We will continue to promote and develop strategies to facilitate commercialisation/industrial development of basic research findings. These strategies will include; 1) providing **seed funding** for community networking and commercial/industrial projects, 2) promoting and fostering **KTP** activity including applications to PARK Westfocus Knowledge exchange grants, 3) seeking commercial/industrial contracts and users for our **specialised research facilities**, 4) providing incentives for individual

academics to focus on commercial/industrial opportunities for research funding and partnerships (e.g. **Enterprise Fellows**), 5) facilitating the development of **spin-out companies**. 6) Introduce regular staff workshops to train and instruct staff in ways to develop impact. In these efforts, we believe there will be an increasingly important role for academics and business managers to work closely together and adopt a blue skies approach to identifying novel research funding streams alongside more traditional funding opportunities.

We are particularly energised by the creation of the new Faculty of Science & Technology that incorporates former Schools of Life Sciences, Electronics & Computer Science, and Psychology. This will enhance the already interdisciplinary work of staff, and provide increased opportunities by facilitating the development of novel interdisciplinary projects.

d. Relationship to case studies

While a number of impactful activities have been generated with future potential (as mentioned above), we focused on three areas with particular impact. The three submitted Case Studies are:

Ridge's (Case Study 1 - Coping and recovering from mental health problems) work on depression has been supported by the School to ensure activities that generate impact. He was given time away from teaching on appointment in 2006 to analyse and write up his work on recovery. He was funded to attend writing workshops, and had PR consultancy support to develop his blog for the **Huffington Post** and was given training in dealing with the media. As part of his workload allocation, he was allowed time out to train as a psychotherapist. Thus, Ridge now directly translates his research into working as a psychotherapist with depressed clients, working for 3 hours a week since 2010. He has also been given funds to hold public events (e.g. the Living or Just Surviving Event, October 2013) to further disseminate his recovery research (150 public attendees). Through staff development planning, he has been encouraged to work with charities directly, and has just been made a Trustee of CALM, the successful anti-suicide charity for men.

Peters (**Case Study 2 - Incorporating Complementary Therapies for musculoskeletal pain in the NHS) pioneered** the use of non-pharmaceutical interventions in mainstream healthcare for the past 20 years, particularly in incorporating osteopathy and acupuncture for musculoskeletal conditions like chronic pain to improve wellbeing. Much of his work has been developmental by engaging with **clinicians, practitioners and patients** in NHS settings and at the Marylebone Health Centre. There is now a legacy of innovative new services for musculoskeletal conditions developing in the NHS which is testament to the impact of **Peter's** work which provided an original template for non-pharmaceutical intervention. In the early 1990s the collaboration between the ground-breaking Marylebone Health Centre (NHS) and The University enabled the establishment of the Centre for Community Care and Primary Health (CCCPH). CCCPH became a Centre in the University in 1992 within which the Department of Complementary Therapy played a leading role. Peters' appointment as Senior Academic and subsequently as Professor of Integrated Healthcare facilitated a working relationship (strongly supported by the University who allocated time and an administrator) with the **Department of Health** and the **King's Fund**. A series of grants from these sources in the late 1990s allowed foundational work to be undertaken. The University allocated significant amounts of time for Peters to act as advisor to many external bodies exploring the potential of complementary therapies and for his ongoing research which from 2000 has established his reputation as a leader in integrating osteopathy and acupuncture into the NHS.

Scheid's (**Case Study 3 - Re-invigorating Chinese Medicine as a Living Tradition)** path-breaking interdisciplinary work has benefited greatly from working as a humanities-focused researcher within a life science focused School. The School has consistently supported Scheid's boundary crossing activities providing administrative and financial support for the organisation of three international conferences and workshops held at the School, as well as coaching and support in developing funding proposals. Scheid has been provided with time and travel support to foster and extend these links internationally throughout Europe, the US, and East Asia, where EAST*medicine* is now widely recognised as one of the most innovative research centres in the field. This, in turn, has played a significant role in his ability to work consistently with the Menghe current in Shanghai and Jiangsu Province in China for over a decade. In addition the School has continued to foster and develop this area of impact by appointing **Bligh,** a chemist specializing in small bioactive molecules of natural origin, at professorial level and Head of Department to further cultivate and exploit this area of impact.