

<p>Institution: University of Cumbria</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 3 Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing & Pharmacy</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>Research within the unit focuses on Allied Health Professions (specifically Occupational Therapy & diagnostic imaging) and Nursing. Whilst the University was only formed in 2007, the unit has a long track record of practice based research through its legacy institution, St Martin's College.</p> <p>The main non-academic user groups are practitioners in the professions upon which the unit's research is based. This includes both individual practitioners; organisations and services related to these professions (including the NHS, private health providers, and professional societies or networks); patients and other service users benefitted through changes to services and practice; and policy and related organisations (for example NHS policy or National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) professional guidelines).</p> <p>The main types of impact which have occurred as a result of the research are on practitioners and services, particularly in terms of influencing best practice and on practitioner support and information available through relevant professional bodies and other practitioner networks; on public policy and services, particularly in terms of stimulating debate on policy related to the delivery of services, and influencing policy and adopted guidelines on service provision and treatment; and on health and welfare, through the benefits to patients from changes in the practice of Allied Health Professionals and Nurses.</p> <p>Specifically, the research has influenced training and development for practitioners and service departments, and is shaping and defining best practice models and theories of practice. The research has demonstrated direct influence on professional body guidance, stimulated practitioner debate, and challenged traditional practice.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The practice based nature of the unit means that engagement with the non-academic beneficiaries of the research has always been an intrinsic part of the activity undertaken. The clear engagement focus of academic activity and the applied nature of the research projects, findings and the significant quantity of practitioner-orientated outputs produced create a direct route to impact for the unit's research.</p> <p>The unit has a range of important mechanisms for engagement with key research users. These include a large proportion of the research being undertaken in collaboration with individual practitioners, hospitals or NHS Trusts; engaging practitioners and trusts in action research projects; direct involvement in relevant professional bodies and societies, including leading research and special interest groups, and raising professional debates; involvement in and development of local practitioner networks and research groups; engagement with and dissemination through practitioner orientated routes, including professional body annual conferences and through publication in professional journals in addition to traditional academic publications; and engagement with public and governmental bodies such as National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and NICE, in order to bring evidence based expertise to national guidelines and practice.</p> <p>The long standing track record of the University and Faculty in stakeholder engagement has been developed into an explicit Faculty policy to highlight that all staff must consider impact when undertaking bids for external grant funding and when carrying out research, and which has been adopted by the unit. In particular, this aims to support staff to consider how generating impact from research can be supported, and how mechanisms can be built in to research projects to ensure that the impacts can be identified and measured. Support is provided by the Faculty to engage in knowledge exchange activity, including through Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) and funding to support stakeholder engagement events or for pilot research to pump-prime larger studies. The unit uses internal research funding schemes and Faculty enterprise support teams to</p>

Impact template (REF3a)

enhance engagement activity. The annual University research conference (Cumbria Research and Enterprise 20--) is also used to disseminate the research and evaluate its influence of beyond academia, as a range of external stakeholders, practitioners and service leads from health and social care are invited to attend the event.

An integral part of the unit's approach which is instrumental in achieving evaluation of the impact and influence of the research is through building and enhancing relationships with the key beneficiaries. The unit concentrates on developing strategic and synergistic partnerships with key stakeholders in order to help to shape the research agenda, including other academics, but also including practitioners and other key stakeholder organisations as outlined above. Pivotal strategic partners include professional bodies such as College of Occupational Therapists and the Society of Radiographers, charities and other voluntary sector organisations (such as Rosemere Cancer Trust) and Primary, Acute and Partnership NHS Trusts (such as Calderstones NHS Foundation Trust and East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust), developing Academic Health and Science Networks, and Britain's Energy Coast (West Coast of Cumbria).

One example of engagement with professional bodies leading to impact is through the influence of the research evidence from the PhD and post-doctoral work of a member of the unit's staff on occupational engagement in forensic settings, and staff role as a member of the consultation group in the development of the NICE accredited 2012 practice guidance "Occupational therapists' use of occupation focused practice in secure hospitals".

An example of the unit's approach to constructing engagement and impact opportunities is the position of the University as a co-founder of the Cumbria & Lancashire Allied Health Professions Research Network (AHPRN) with the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan). Formed in 2009, this provides support and development opportunities for practitioners across the region, and provides direct engagement between academia and practice. The Cumbria & Lancashire Hub runs three dissemination and capacity building workshops for academy and clinical practitioners three times per year. In addition to two individuals from the unit being network Steering Group members, many staff are active members, including a number of Early Career Researchers. The unit also undertakes collaborative research and other engagement activities with NHS Trusts, for example through a KTP to support a local Trust in becoming a Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease centre of excellence.

Due to the practice orientated nature of the unit, a considerable proportion of academic staff are professionals, and are supported by the University to develop research skills, capabilities and experience. As part of this, new researchers are integrated into stakeholder relationships and provided with engagement and impact related development opportunities as part of their post-doctoral development plans. Staff are encouraged and supported to produce outputs for a practitioner audience (including reports and executive summaries) as a doubly beneficial development technique, which both represents development towards producing academic outputs, and also fosters engagement with stakeholders, which can be developed into an on-going research relationship. Additionally, many staff have existing individual linkages with practice. This includes part time staff, a number of whom still undertake roles in practice.

In order to expand the research base and influence practice the University has appointed a number of Honorary Research Fellows and Visiting Professors and scholars from practice, which has enhanced the quality and influence of collaborative research within Allied Health Professions and nursing. These positions include the Head of Research at a Primary Care Trust, other professional individuals in AHP and nursing research and practice, and also extend the reach of the unit's research by maintaining links with international academic institutions, particularly in China and Kyrgyzstan.

c. Strategy and plans

The Faculty has established an impact policy, which has been adopted by the unit, and raises the issue of building capacity for impact in the planning and implementation of research projects.

A number of research impact hubs have been identified, and will be used as foci for impact

Impact template (REF3a)

development and measurement. The hubs are: occupational therapy, medical imaging perception, e-health & e-learning, mental health & resilience, physical activity & wellbeing, healthy ageing, and voices of people with learning disabilities. Impact will be integrated into the research strategy for each area.

A specific impact strategy will also be developed for the Cumbrian Centre for Health Technologies (CaCHeT), a new research centre within the University. Impact will be led by the Director of the Centre, appointed in 2012, and will maximise the impact from the centre's focus on technology development for improving health and wellbeing. The key beneficiaries of CaCHeT's work are likely to be dispersed and rural communities who have reduced access to traditional modes of healthcare delivery, and care providers such as the NHS who could potentially realise savings through implementation of smart technologies. CaCHeT's impact strategy will take account of the specific characteristics of the impact related to its work, and establish relevant routes to impact.

The specific unit strategic aims are to:

- Embed an explicit impact strategy for the unit, to support the policy for considering impact in research planning. This will include specific elements addressing how to enable impact from research and on how to measure and evaluate impact generated.
- To maintain and extend non-academic collaborations (such as with NHS Trusts and stakeholder organisations such as professional bodies) and practitioner focussed research programmes. This will include supporting the direct uptake of research findings and developing a shared understanding and processes to capture the impact of these collaborations.
- To increase the quantity of dissemination events and conferences which engage practitioners and other relevant stakeholders, and maintain levels of practitioner focussed publications and other outputs, in addition to academic outputs.
- To utilise the University's Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP) development processes to provide enhanced mechanisms and support to allow staff to undertake tangible engagements with stakeholder organisations, for example to join working groups or submit research evidence for professional guideline developments.
- To use University mechanisms to target support to staff for stakeholder events, practitioner training events around specific research, and evidence-based study days for practitioners.
- To put in place processes to monitor the potential impacts of research programmes and gather evidence of impact.

d. Relationship to case studies

Case Study 1: Improving understanding of medical image perception and enhancing interpretation in practice

The case study details research which assessed the processes used by practitioners in reviewing scans and images for diagnosis, which has had implications for the training and practice of radiologists and reporting radiographers. This exemplifies that the research of the unit primarily leads to impacts on the practice of allied health professionals.

Case Study 2: Improving the uptake of Occupational Therapy as an evidenced-based intervention to improve management of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome.

This case study is a clear example of research which has had an impact on practitioners and services in new clinical and lifestyle interventions, which have been trialled with long term and enduring conditions. It exemplifies two important elements of the approach to achieving impact: undertaking practitioner based research which involves direct collaboration with NHS stakeholders (through the Medical Research Council funded multi centred randomised controlled trial) and of engagement with organisations developing and endorsing guidelines for practice.