

<p>Institution: University of Cumbria</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 19 - Business And Management Studies</p>
<p>a. Overview</p> <p>Research within the unit covers a wide range of themes at various stages of development. These include: public sector management; entrepreneurship and small firms; innovation and technology management (specifically computing innovation, e-commerce); human resources management; corporate social responsibility and international business. The Business School strategy, however, has been to develop business and management research to address issues <i>for local and regional development and Leadership & Sustainability</i>. Business is a single academic unit within the University, located at a number of campus sites, primarily at Lancaster, Carlisle and Ambleside.</p> <p>Research is led through two specialist groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Centre for Regional Economic Development (CRED), established in Carlisle in 1996 as part of the University of Northumbria. Both CRED and the Cumbria Business School were later transferred to the University of Central Lancashire, and became part of the University of Cumbria on its formation in 2007. Under its Director, Professor Frank Peck, CRED continues to conduct applied research and consultancy on regional and local development for regional and national public sector bodies. CRED also has involvement in international research projects through the European Commission Framework programmes. Specific themes include impacts of public procurement and local economic policy in the UK, and innovation and cluster strategies in European Regions. • The Institute for Leadership and Sustainability (IFLAS), based at Ambleside, leads research on these issues. Formed in 2012, IFLAS is led by founding Director, Professor Jem Bendell. Whilst newly established, it seeks to become a global hub of inquiry, teaching, and dialogue on enabling the transition to more fair and sustainable societies. The challenge of social, environmental and economic sustainability requires "sustainable leadership": ways of relating that promote change that is mutually beneficial for the person, organisation, stakeholders and world at large. The Institute has already developed postgraduate degrees and research programmes focusing in particular on alternative currencies and exchange systems.
<p>b. Research strategy</p> <p>Whilst the unit has a long track record, this REF is the first occasion on which it has been submitted for assessment within the University of Cumbria. The strategy at the beginning of the assessment period focused on the development of research activity, with an objective "to further develop our Business School staff's expertise, consultancy and research activity, particularly in reference to the needs and opportunities in our region of North Lancashire and Cumbria".</p> <p>Specific strategic objectives in 2008 included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build on existing expertise in research and consultancy in economic development and environmental sustainability in a business context. This included plans to develop research on business ethics, social enterprise, entrepreneurship and leadership. • To promote staff's consultancy and research development, including further Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP), and contribution towards achievement of Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP). • To employ our work placement focus at undergraduate level to help develop further relationships with regional businesses. • To grow or appoint additional research active staff in the business area. <p>The unit has successfully increased staff capacity with a number of new staff appointments (further details in section c).</p> <p>Within the assessment period, the research development strategy has evolved to specifically support the established theme of local and regional development, and to strengthen existing expertise in leadership and sustainability through new appointments and the creation of IFLAS. Developments within the University have enabled an increasingly strong and coherent structure, with the two research centres brought together strategically with the Cumbria Business School.</p>

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Specifically, the focus of the evolving research strategy has been on the following three objectives:

- To continue to conduct policy-relevant academic research through CRED, building on its reputation for publication on the regional impacts of public procurement, local economic policy and regional innovation systems.
- To expand research on sustainability and leadership as an integral part of the strategy of IFLAS, encompassing the process of sustainable leadership, corporate social responsibility, social enterprise and responsible investment.
- To broaden the base of research in the Cumbria Business School by increasing the number of research active staff and expanding postgraduate research provision, with particular emphasis on sustainability, leadership and regional development. This is leading to the development of new research themes to take forward into the next assessment period, as outlined at the end of this section.

CRED strategy

Since its formation in 1996, the mission of CRED has been to conduct academic research alongside a commitment to provide client-based applied research on behalf of practitioners and policymakers involved in local and regional development. Evolving from an initial period of sponsorship provided by local authorities and development agencies in Cumbria, the Centre has broadened its client base and operates through contract research conducted for local authorities, local partnerships, regional development agencies, government departments and the European Commission. The approach of CRED to academic outputs has been, where feasible and with the agreement of clients, to use these research contracts as a basis for academic publication.

The CRED strategy has been successful within the assessment period by extending existing and establishing new funder and partner links. Examples of research undertaken include a range of commissioned sector reviews of Cumbria and the North West Region local economies, such as analyses and reports for Cumbria Vision, Carlisle Partnership (2008) and more recently, Cumbria Local Enterprise partnership (2010). The most recent work on sector reviews for Cumbria LEP focused in particular on analysing national strategies for Cumbria key sectors and identifying ways in which these strategies might be applied in the County. CRED were also funded to carry out specific research on the contact centre industry by Call North West, a workforce development project funded through the North West Development Agency (NWD). Looking at the potential for contact centres to create quality employment in the region, our research focused on seeking to understand the scale and nature of the threat induced by “offshoring” such functions to other countries, and the locational disadvantages that might induce relocation due to the negative effects of high levels of labour turnover. Our research indicated that the sector was growing fast enough to accommodate both domestic and overseas expansion of employment and that employers utilise strategies to cope with high labour turnover as a trade off against high labour availability.

This connection with local economic strategy and sector needs has informed our research on issues surrounding spatial agglomeration and the analysis of cluster strategies that have been prevalent in this policy field in the past decade. Academic publications based on contract research work can be found in publications in a range of journals, including *Regional Studies* and the *Service Industries Journal*. The most recent work in this area has arisen from the involvement of Professor Peck in a European Commission Expert Group on Clusters and Smart Specialisation, resulting in a report for DG Research & Innovation. Future plans for research in this field focus on understanding knowledge networks and regional innovation.

Publications on the impacts of public procurement on local and regional economies and the dynamics of regional supply chains have also been completed through client commissions. These include empirical studies for the Cumbria Procurement Initiative, West Cumbria Development Agency and the NWD within the period. These projects have led to examination of the effects of public procurement on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in local economies, and on local supply chains in the nuclear industry in Cumbria, and led to academic publications in *Public Policy and Administration* and *European Planning Studies*. Another significant piece of work has been research into the effects of the Small Business Relief Rates Scheme for the Welsh Assembly Government, which contributed to the extension of the scheme. There is a related publication arising from the work forthcoming in *Environment and Planning C*.

Other themes in local and regional development include research on business needs, particularly those of small and microbusiness. Studies of this type have been conducted in Cumbria focusing on the development of “producers of local products”. In a series of studies, attempts were made to evaluate the barriers to growth experienced by such businesses, including technical (such as corporate demands for traceability, safe packaging, bar coding etc.), and social and cultural barriers (e.g. that owners might prefer to remain small for lifestyle reasons). These studies were funded by NWDA through the *Distinctly Cumbrian* programme. Business needs have been studied in a very different context in a study of West Newcastle, funded through Centre West (New Deal for Communities Partnership). In this context, business needs were analysed in relation to skills, access to markets, premises and local business support. Compliance with business regulation can generate cost and become a barrier to growth for small business. Research on this theme has been completed for the Local Better Regulation Office, involving examination of case studies in different regions of England to illustrate the benefits derived from a pilot scheme (Retail Enforcement Pilot) designed to lighten the impact of regulatory visits on compliant businesses.

Future plans for CRED include completion of research on the analyses of regional innovation systems and strategies, and local knowledge networks. This work will build on recent studies of supply chains in the nuclear industry and a conference paper jointly authored by Frank Peck, Gail Mulvey and Keith Jackson on '*Knowledge dynamics and competitive strategies in the nuclear industry supply chain in West Cumbria, northwest England*', presented to the Regional Studies Association (RSA) International Conference on “Sustaining Regional Futures”, Beijing, China, 24-27 June 2012. A parallel area of research focuses on regional entrepreneurship involving collaboration with Dr Jan Zouhar from the University of Economics, Prague, and will build on Dr Zouhar’s visit to CRED as a Research Fellow in September 2013.

IFLAS strategy

The recently established Institute for Leadership and Sustainability (IFLAS) explicitly aims to influence behaviours, economic models and public policy to enable the transition to more fair and sustainable societies. IFLAS approaches the challenge of social, environmental and economic sustainability through innovative and emerging approaches and interdisciplinary research focusing on the concept of “sustainable leadership”. The scale of the sustainability challenge means it is best characterised as “transition” from unsustainable ways of living and working, requiring research and innovation to address these challenges. The research programmes and post-graduate degrees being developed by IFLAS focus on knowledge for systemic changes, and to place IFLAS as an emerging Centre of excellence on alternative currencies and exchange systems.

IFLAS has identified three core research strands within its mission:

- **Leading Transition**, focusing on how professionals can better lead their organisations, sectors or communities towards sustainability and social justice, and how such leadership can be enabled. Research includes the attributes and competencies that enable someone to participate in social transformation, how organisational and societal transformations occur, and how to encourage personal transformations and wellbeing through learning experiences.
- **Resourcing Transition**, focusing on research into alternative currencies and exchange systems. This acknowledges that some communities, small businesses and non-governmental organisations experience a scarcity of credit and money. Increasingly, alternative methods of sharing, giving, swapping, exchanging and financing are emerging, as shown in increased use of the terms “sharing economy”, “collaborative consumption” and “complementary currency” emerging, and supported by enhancements in mobile and internet technologies. It includes research on how practitioners (such as entrepreneurs and community leaders) can employ novel ways to resource their activities to enable change, and the implications for governments, foundations and other stakeholders. Professor Bendell has a reputation as an international speaker on these issues, delivering keynotes and other lectures at Rebuild21, Copenhagen; TEDx in Rome and on Al Jazeera English, in addition to publications on the subject.
- **Scaling Transition**, involving research on how professionals develop, deploy or assess strategies for transforming difficult public problems. This includes scaling up social innovations,

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the use of transformative cross-sectoral alliances, transformative philanthropy, innovations in public policies, and business innovations that are disruptive to existing markets and industries.

The current focus of the research is principally on resourcing transition, through work on sustainable exchange. Professor Bendell is the Head of Research for the Sustainable Money Working Group, which involves the British Chamber of Commerce, Cooperatives UK and other stakeholders. IFLAS is also engaged with the World Economic Forum's task force of Young Global Leaders on the Sharing Economy and is developing applied research on this topic with partners across Europe, including the Community Forge; Transition City Lancaster; Lancaster Ethical Small Traders Association; New Economics Foundation; United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UNNGLS); Escuela Superior de Administración y Dirección de Empresas, Barcelona, Spain (ESADE); Nyenrode Business University, Holland; the Academy of Business and Society (EABIS) (collaboration between private businesses and INSEAD, the international graduate business school and supported by the EC); and the European Sustainability Academy.

IFLAS also engages with academics from across the range of disciplines within the University, in order to bring a wide range of perspectives to the difficult interdisciplinary challenges on which the centre focuses. In particular, these bring in expertise on sustainability in a range of different contexts, including outdoor education, experiential learning and reflective practice in sustainability, sustainable tourism and small to medium businesses and sustainable engineering. IFLAS has also hosted a number of one day workshops with speakers from partners (including the United Nations and New Economics Foundation) and open lectures from leading experts held at the Ambleside campus, including on 'community exchange systems and local currencies' and on 'local currencies and community financing'.

IFLAS strategy is centered on the establishment of specific programmes based on its identified core research themes, particularly capitalising on the community financing work which is already being established. This approach will include identifying suitable funding, further integration with the research activities of the rest of unit and increasing the number of PhDs hosted by the Institute. Work towards these goals is already underway, including with the enrollment of two IFLAS PhD students, due to start in January 2014. As a new Research Centre for the University, IFLAS is still in the phase of development and establishing its strategy and direction. Despite its recent establishment in 2012, it already has some visible outcomes within this assessment submission, however, it is expected that the activity of IFLAS will be much more demonstrable towards the end of the next assessment period.

Other strategic aims of the unit as a whole include capitalising on new facilities to support research activity, primarily through the redevelopment of the University's Ambleside Campus and the new Business Interaction Centre in Carlisle (see section d for further details). These also include the development of additional research themes, based on the work of new appointees and relating to international business, sustainable tourism and entrepreneurship. Additionally, the unit will strategically target collaboration with colleagues in other disciplines, specifically within the environmental sciences to drive an interdisciplinary and value-added approach to sustainability research.

c. People**(i) Research Strategy and Staff Development**

Within the period, the strategy of the unit has been affected by the evolution of research and practice into the new University context, following the formation of the University in August 2007. Various phases of restructuring within the University and the Business School specifically have led to staff changes. Capacity building and research development have been important factors within these changes, and have underpinned and driven the research strategy. Whilst CRED has been maintained as a core research element of the unit, other changes have been made, which have involved a number of new appointments, including Professor Jem Bendell to lead the development of IFLAS and this new strategically important area of research. The changes in staffing and structure reflect changes in research priorities, and mean that some of the on-going research is not yet producing visible outcomes.

The staffing strategy is largely determined centrally by Human Resources, but is also driven by the unit's own research and operational strategies. The unit is unusual within the University, in that it has a number of dedicated research staff within CRED, including the Director, a Research

Fellow and a Research Assistant. These individuals take the lead in submitting bids for research and consultancy and make use of wider expertise in the Business School and beyond to secure research contracts. External partners are also engaged as partners in research where appropriate. Examples of such projects include research for the Welsh Assembly on rates relief schemes in Wales, which benefited from additional staff expertise in economics and accounting.

The University is committed to supporting the research development of its entire staff and fully endorses the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. Whilst the University does not currently have a large number of dedicated research staff (i.e. research only posts), it is committed to providing development and training opportunities to strengthen research capabilities. This can be evidenced by the treatment of researchers in CRED as full time members of staff (i.e. not fixed term linked to specific funding streams): the unit does not employ any individuals on fixed term contracts. The University has evolved from a Higher Education teaching context, which means that a proportion of our staff have greater experience in teaching than in research; therefore providing opportunities for staff to gain skills in research is fundamental to maintaining and developing our research capabilities, capacities and culture. We are currently undertaking a benchmarking exercise against the principles of the Concordat, and are planning to submit an application for the HR Excellence in Research award in 2014.

The University commitment to researcher development is fixed in the goal to achieve Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP), as stated in the strategic aims on the creation of the University. It is reflected in our engagement with the pilot for the Researcher Development Framework (RDF), which is scheduled for roll-out to all academic staff. This will be an additional element to help tailor our support mechanisms to the needs of individuals. It will be integrated into the research and scholarly planning, which takes place as part of the annual review process. Staff also benefit from a fixed annual allocation of 25 days Scholarly and Research Activity (SARA) time and access to the Epigeum research skills package, sabbatical leave and Research and Scholarly Development Fund (RSDF). As part of our commitment to developing Early Career Researchers, we also provide fee waivers and additional support mechanisms for staff members developing their research capabilities to undertake PhD.

As noted in section a, the Business School has made new recent appointments to strengthen its research and teaching capability. These appointments include Jem Bendell as Professor of Leadership and Sustainability and Director of IFLAS. Other appointments include Dr Raye Ng as Head of International and Collaborative Partnerships within the Business School. Dr Ng's research interests include international business, Chinese economy and society and corporate cultures and cross-culture management. Also, Caroline Wiscombe was appointed as Head of the Business School. Wiscombe's research interests focus on leadership and change management, as well as sustainable tourism and entrepreneurship. These are research themes that are of growing significance for the Business School.

The University has a comprehensive Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy and a set of related policies and procedures that help to ensure equity of opportunity for all students and staff. This includes positive engagement with stakeholder groups external to the University, particularly with creating access for local community and under-represented groups. Specifically in relation to research activity, the procedures include monitoring of equality, diversity and inclusion across research student recruitment, progression and completion. The policy is also applied to research staff appointment, promotion and support and, where appropriate, equality impact assessments are completed to evaluate the potential impact of new policies or procedures. The quality of research is maintained on a day to day basis by a Faculty Research Coordinator, who supports bidding and quality across the unit. Research quality and integrity are of fundamental importance to the unit, especially the position of research ethics given the social sciences basis and applied nature of the work.

(ii) Research students

The University of Cumbria is currently working towards acquiring Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP) and there are strategies and policies in place to achieve this, coordinated by a cross-institutional RDAP Steering Group. Research degrees are currently validated by Lancaster

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University, however, the management, administration and delivery of the postgraduate research programme is entirely managed by Cumbria. The University registers post graduate research students, provides supervision and research training, and manages quality and progression through the Cumbria Research Office and Graduate School.

Increasing the number of research students is a key strategic goal for the unit. There are currently five (part-time) post graduate research students registered within the unit, involving research in marketing, consumer behaviour, retail supply chains, the UK automobile industry as well as strategic leadership. The objective is to expand this number, particularly in line with the key research centre themes (and, as noted in section b, two IFLAS students are scheduled to start in January 2014). PhD students are supported institutionally by the Graduate School, which provides research training events and an annual intensive Summer School. Alongside this, PhD students are encouraged to engage with activities in the Business School including attendance at regular seminars within CRED and IFLAS.

Staff registration for PhDs

Since 2008, two staff members have completed PhDs, and a further three staff are registered. As all staff, those undertaking PhD have access to University provision for professional development, including support for attendance at conferences, and are also invited to present ongoing research work through the University’s annual doctoral colloquium and research and enterprise conference.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Income

CRED research is primarily resourced through contract and commissioned research and consultancy. Whilst the majority of the work undertaken is client-focused, where possible these projects are used as a basis for academic publication, such as theory-building works on public procurement and policy analysis. Research has been funded by the Cumbria Procurement Initiative; NWDA; the Energy Opportunities Supply Chain Project for the West Cumbria Development Agency; the Welsh Assembly Government; and the UK Government Department for Business Innovation and Skills. The level of research income is not accurately reflected in REF4b, due to a historic process error in categorising certain forms of research income (such as contract research) as enterprise, rather than as research income. This has now been corrected, but incorrectly skews the income figures. Approximate income figures by source (excluding those reported in REF4b) from across the assessment period are as follows:

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
UK-based charities (other)		£36,000		
UK central government bodies, local authorities, health and hospital authorities	£75,000	£23,000	£47,000	£60,000
UK industry, commerce and public corporations	£8,000	£21,000		£8,000

Dissemination work in particular is typically supported by internal funding mechanisms (such as the University Research and Scholarship Development Fund) to support attendance at conferences and seminars leading to publication in international refereed journals. Recent examples of this include attendance at conferences in Beijing (RSA Global Conference 2013) and Tampere, Finland (RSA European Conference 2013).

Infrastructure and facilities

As identified in section a, the unit is distributed across a number of key sites. Recent key investments include the formation of a Business Interaction Centre (BIC) at the Paternoster Row site in Carlisle, which will strengthen engagement with local business. This involves close partnership between the Business School, Carlisle City Council and Cumbria Chamber of Commerce, and is supported through the European Regional Development Fund. The BIC is intended as an interface between researchers, academics, students, established businesses, start-ups and business support services. Amongst other objectives, the BIC is will provide a platform for applied research and consultancy in business and management and regional economics. This approach will be further supported by the development of a Rural Growth Hub at the Ambleside campus as part of the Local Economic Partnership’s Rural Growth Network pilot to engage and

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support rural small businesses in Cumbria.

As well as strong engagement between CRED, IFLAS and the wider Cumbria Business School with Faculty administrative and finance support for research and enterprise, IFLAS also have a number of dedicated support staff, who help to drive forward activity and support delivery of the strategic aims of the centre, including its research objectives. These include a Deputy Director, Manager and administrative support specifically for the institute.

e. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base

The Centre for Regional Economic Development (CRED) has strong links with the international academic community through active involvement in the Regional Studies Association (RSA). The RSA is an international learned society that publishes the journal *Regional Studies* and supports interdisciplinary research involving economics, human geography and planning. Professor Peck is a longstanding RSA member and Board member since 2008. Two CRED staff are Editors of *Regions*, the RSA members' publication that contains short articles authored by RSA fellows and members worldwide and, more generally, CRED contribute through RSA international conferences, presenting the early findings from research. Through this activity, CRED researchers are engaged in, and inform, debates in regional studies at international level.

CRED also engage with the wider discipline through presentation of research findings at a wide range of academic conferences, including those organised by the Institute for Small Business and Enterprise (ISBE) and British Association of Management (BAM). Additionally, CRED collaborates in research with practitioners and private research organisations. While much of this research is conducted for clients, often such collaboration does lead to academic publication, the most recent example of which involves joint work with Dr Stephen Connolly and Jon Durnin from DC Research, an economics, culture and regeneration research and consultancy company operating across the UK, which is owned and managed by two former CRED researchers. Research is currently being developed in collaboration with Aston Business School on rural-urban differences in entrepreneurship using data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM). CRED also regularly hosts visiting scholars from universities across Europe, for example, a visiting fellowship in 2012 by Dr Borut Roncevic from the School of Advanced Social Studies, Novo Gorica, Slovenia, working on research related to the economic impacts of casinos on local economies.

CRED has hosted a Research Seminar Series since its inception in 1997. Seminars involve a mix of academic and policy speakers and attendance is open to academics as well as external partners and practitioners. The purpose of these events is to bridge the divide between academia and policymaking and to generate debate concerning the practical value of new ideas in local and regional development. The 2012-13 seminar series involved speakers from many UK universities (Coventry, York, Northumbria, Edinburgh Heriott-Watt) on themes such as the role of local enterprise partnerships (LEPs), renewable energy, digital-divide and ageing, income inequality, rural enterprise and the role of arts and culture in local economies. Seminar topics are intended to reflect interests of local policymakers, but also the on-going research interests within the Centre. The seminar on LEPs, for instance, was of direct relevance to recent publication (*Local Economy*, 2013) and future research intentions related to the implications of greater Scottish autonomy for local economic development in the North of England, related to contribution to an Economic and Social Research Council funded seminar series led by Northumbria University.

Further evidence of contribution to academic disciplines is provided by staff appointment to positions of responsibility externally. Professor Peck is an experienced referee for academic journals including *Regional Studies*, *Public Policy and Administration*, *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development* and the *International Journal for Public Sector Management*. In 2009, Professor Peck was nominated by the Regional Studies Association as Academician of the Academy of Social Sciences for contribution to research and public policy in regional economic development. Professor Bendell is on the editorial board for the *Journal of Corporate Citizenship* and Regional Editor of the *Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal*. IFLAS contribute to the research base internationally through engagement and research with academics (such as Professor of Economics at the Catholic University Louvain, Belgium) and with key stakeholders, such as the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.