

Institution: Liverpool Hope University

Unit of Assessment: Politics and International Studies (UoA 21)

a. Context

Engaging with the non-academic community has always been integral to Liverpool Hope's mission and Politics and International Studies research is integral to this aspect of the University's strategic plan.

At the university and Faculty level, Liverpool Hope University has always emphasised the importance of public community and governmental engagement which have been a regular part of the university's and Faculty of Arts and Humanities (headed by Rees) strategy and activity since the last RAE.

In terms of the departmental setting, politics and international studies are quite new subjects in Liverpool Hope, located within the Department of History and Politics as of 1 October 2013. The Politics programme was launched in 2005, while International Relations began in 2009.

The third contextual setting is the use of research centres and other research network links. These have been the main avenue for pursuing research-based impact at Hope. The Centre for War & Peace Studies, the Centre for Applied Research in Security Innovation (CASI) and the Irish Studies Research Group all have an aim of tying research activity to programmes of wider outreach and public engagement. Key activities undertaken have included the following:

- The Centre for War & Peace Studies has engaged with community groups and policy-makers at local, national and international level through a programme of open workshops, roundtables and lectures.
- CASI has engaged with security leaders in the Irish Navy, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Mulqueen ran a symposium, 'The Maritime Economy and Governance: Innovation, Energy, Security and Growth', Liverpool (July 2012), including participants from Manchester Fire and Rescue Service; Sureté Globale, Trend Macro, US Coastguard, Swedish Defence Agency, Royal Navy and other key user groups
- The department has supported and participated in the Model UN General Assembly, held at Liverpool Town Hall, an activity that regularly involves up to 150 students drawn from about 10-12 schools from the Merseyside area. They spend the day debating and negotiating international issues and drafting 'resolutions' on a range of topics.
- Kappler and Rees have contributed to the annual 'School for Changemakers' held in Liverpool Hope, which brings in young community leaders to engage in a series of skills development classes.
- For six months in 2012, Holmes participated in a monthly politics phone-in on BBC Radio Merseyside. The regular format involved discussion of one local, one national and one international topic.
- In addition, some staff members have featured on an occasional basis on a number of radio and television shows discussing political events. These have included BBC Radio Merseyside, Radio City and RTÉ (the Irish national broadcaster) (Holmes and Mulqueen).

Staff included in this submission range from established academics through to early career researchers. Since the RAE 2008, Politics and IS at Hope has undergone changes in staffing which has in turn influenced the direction of our impact strategy. After a process of change management at the university in 2010, Politics and IS were aligned more closely with Media, Communication and History, in a department run by Mulqueen, 2010-13. In the lead up to 2020, and in order to maximise current strengths and future research directions, a department review in 2013 led to Politics becoming part of the new department of History and Politics from 1 October 2013.

Our Politics and IS research group has successfully engaged with three non-academic user groups. These are: policy and decision-makers, the public and media and those working in the police, defence and security fields. The Politics and IS unit at Hope centres around two research clusters. The first of these concentrates on the impact of Europeanisation on the Republic of Ireland and its relationship to EU (Rees and Holmes); the second, based in CASI, focuses upon

Irish national security especially naval and airforce policy and strategy (Mulqueen).

Research across these two areas seeks to impact several non-academic user groups. In the case of Rees and Holmes, the goal has been to assess the impact of Europeanisation on the governance of Irish institutions and public policy processes and the level of impact on public understanding, political institutions and socialisation agents (parties and interest groups).; whereas with regards to Mulqueen the target groups have been the Irish Government and Opposition, Irish Defence Forces (Irish Navy, Army and Air Corps), Garda Síochána (Ireland’s policing and national security agency, and non-governmental organisations including leading media outlets.

b. Approach to impact

Between 2010-13 under Mulqueen’s direction, our earlier impact approaches have evolved into impact strategy. The university’s Director of Research, Atulya Nagar, UoA coordinator (Holmes), the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities (Rees) and Politics and IS staff have held several meetings in order to turn approaches into strategy (detailed below). These meetings have functioned as ‘think tanks’ to identify and support impact criteria. These ‘think tanks’ have met on a quarterly basis, allowing discussion on impact strategy and locating areas in which impact could be maximised.

The main research focus of the Politics and International Relations team at Hope is on political institutions, so therefore core focus of our research work has been on engagement with relevant political institutions. In particular, these have included:

- Government departments in the Republic of Ireland
- Directorates-General of the European Commission
- Social democratic political parties
- The Party of European Socialists

The research strategy on impact at Hope centred upon three elements;

a) Supporting the enhancement of existing public and governmental engagement.

Several staff members had already established links with government departments and non-governmental agencies on the basis of their research. There was a policy of supporting further involvement through these channels, with Rees and Holmes receiving internal and external grants to attend government events in Ireland and European Commission events and briefings in Brussels during this period in order to maintain links with public agencies there. This forms the basis for one of the impact case studies being submitted.

b) Recruitment of new members of staff with particular reference to Impact

Two new members of staff were recruited during the period under review, and this has contributed to a strengthening of research impact. One of the impact cases being submitted is provided by one of the new members of staff recruited during the period, Mulqueen, who has received Hope research support and HEIF funding to attend research events to ensure maintenance of links with Irish defence agencies and to develop linkages with other governments. In addition, the second new appointment, Kappler, has been appointed director of the Centre for War & Peace Studies and has been funded for networking visits to Switzerland and South Africa in order to develop a new range of ties and contacts.

c) Nurturing new linkages to develop additional strands.

Most prominently, the university took the decision to establish a new research centre, the Centre for Applied Research in Security Innovation, and this forms the basis of one of the impact case studies. In addition, Hope Politics and IS staff have been facilitated to attend events organised by partner networks where these include a significant public engagement dimension. For example, Holmes’s work with two policy networks advising social democratic parties has been supported in terms of time allocation and in terms of travel support from the Research funding Committee (allowing attendance at events in London, Vienna, Brussels and Berlin).

c. Strategy and plans

Impact template (REF3a)

The future strategy for impact will retain its two-pronged approach, combining both research-based impact and broader outreach and engagement activities. In terms of research-based impact, a Politics & International Studies research strategy for the period 2013-2019 commenced in September 2013. This envisages the following priorities.

First of all, in line with the broader university and departmental research strategy, there will be an emphasis on using the research centres associated with Politics and International Studies to enhance our research impact. The centres draw together a number of different aspects of research:

- They provide a coordinated focus for staff research
- They are the university's preferred framework for postgraduate research
- They maintain networks of partner organisations in both academic and practitioner fields
- They form the basis of bids for research grants and awards

In terms of promoting impact, the main area will be on creating links with practitioner bodies, and it is an objective for both research centres to actively develop such links.

Secondly, we will continue to encourage staff to develop and maintain links with public bodies through research networks that are not associated with the research centres. This offers multiple benefits. It encourages inclusion of members of staff whose research interests do not fit neatly inside the existing centres, it allows more flexible exploration of possible new research avenues, and if successful, it could lead to the establishment of further research centres in due course.

Our overall objectives will be to maintain existing linkages in fields where we remain research active, while also seeking to nurture new linkages as research interests evolve and develop.

The unit's strategy and plans for the future feed into and sit within a developing institutional strategy which will embed impact within academic life and culture. In terms of the unit's research environment:

1. Impact will form a part of annual performance review. This will include target-setting and identification of any staff development needs.
2. Impact achievement and potential will be one of the criteria to be considered in recruitment and promotion processes.
3. A portion of research funds, at unit level and institutionally, will be earmarked to support impact-related activity.
4. Regular review mechanisms for on-going projects will be established, to measure progress and effectiveness and assist with forward planning.
5. Staff development in impact for the unit will continue, to optimise the effectiveness of impact-related activity and support individuals/groups at all stages of the impact life-cycle.

d. Relationship to case studies

The first case study relates to security policy innovation and development. This was fostered in Liverpool Hope through the appointment of Prof Mulqueen in 2010 and the decision to establish a new research centre in 2010, the Centre for Applied Research in Security Innovation. This created an institutional context for formalising the existing ad hoc links with the Irish Defence Forces, and also to begin to expand the research impact beyond its initial Irish context to a wider setting.

The second case study relates to political adaptation to European Union membership in the Republic of Ireland, with particular reference to the Irish referendums on the Treaty of Lisbon. This is an example of research that has been developed through the independent research networks of staff members, Rees and Holmes, rather than through the university's research centres, in this case research emanates from the Irish Studies research group, located within the Department of History and Politics. These links were supported by the university through providing assistance to allow participation in events in Dublin and Brussels, thereby contributing to the maintenance of contacts with public officials in Ireland and in the European Union.