

## Environment template (REF5)

<b>Institution: Queen Margaret University</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: UoA 4 Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience</b>
<b>a. Overview</b>

This submission marks significant changes in Psychology research at Queen Margaret University (QMU) during the period of assessment. Previously (RAE 2001; RAE 2008), Psychology researchers were included within broader returns submitted by QMU: in 2001 to UOA 11C - Social Sciences in Health, and in 2008 to UOA - 12 Allied Health Professions and Studies. This submission, the first to a Psychology unit of assessment, reflects the development and advances made in Psychology research in the period since 2008.

Early in the assessment period, in response to and reflected in changes in the research environment (see b. below) and in staffing strategy and staff development (see c. below), we refocused our research activities around two central themes. We developed these themes to build upon existing research strengths and to provide clear direction for future activities and further growth. The resulting themes of *discourse* and *cognition* have provided coherence and vitality in Psychology research. The strength and sustainability of this research is reflected at a University level in that 'Discourse and Cognition' comprises a core element of one of QMU's three 'flagships' that provide the focus for future planning.

This submission includes the work of six researchers. Of these, five (Chisholm, Darling, Goodall, Mansour, McVittie) are based in the subject area of Psychology, in the School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management (ASSaM; one of two Schools within QMU). O'May is a Research Fellow who conducts much of her work within Psychology with an interdisciplinary focus.

<b>b. Research Strategy</b>
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Significant changes to the research environment over the assessment period

Prior to 2008, Psychology research at QMU was diversified across a range of areas. Two changes that occurred early in the assessment period led to the refocusing of research activities around the current themes of *discourse* and *cognition*. The first change, at University level, involved QMU conducting a strategic review of all its activities, resulting in the restructuring of the University from four Schools into two. The new Schools, the School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management (ASSaM) and the School of Health Sciences, were designed, *inter alia*, to facilitate collaboration between researchers with common interests. The second change, arising from staff retirements and departures, involved Psychology researchers reviewing the breadth of research being conducted and identifying areas of recognised and sustainable strength that would provide optimal directions for future activity. These processes led to the development of research priorities that could most usefully be pursued within the new QMU context, reflected in the two themes described below.

*Discourse* (Chisholm, Goodall, McVittie, O'May): Research here addresses issues of discourse, communication and identity, building upon previous research into communications between practitioners and service users and the consequences for individual health and welfare and social inclusion/exclusion (Rivers; Impact Case Study REF 3b1). As regards health and welfare, research has examined the communication of health-related information to students using new media (internet) (O'May #4); perceived communication difficulties of future health professionals in delivering health interventions to service users (O'May #1); the challenges facing health professionals in communicating with particular groups, e.g. children with complex needs (O'May #2), and mothers' experiences of communications with health professionals (Goodall #1). Other research has examined aspects of mother/child communication, such as the consequences of mother/child communications and maternal communicative style for dietary adherence in young children with type 1 diabetes (Chisholm #1; #3), the relationships between maternal sensitivity and overt aggression in young children with Down syndrome (Chisholm #2), and maternal sensitivity and infant and mother adrenocortical function (Chisholm #4). Research into social inclusion/exclusion has studied how those who are socially marginalised manage their identities in discourse, for example how young people described as having learning disabilities disavow such an identity (Goodall #2). Two recent studies have examined issues of identity in groups that are commonly 'hard to reach', one showing that asylum-seekers and refugees in the UK discursively align themselves with UK society (McVittie #1) and the other showing that Hamas leaders identify the Palestinian people as similar to Western nations in attributing to the international community responsibility for resolving the Palestinian/Israeli conflict (McVittie #2). A major achievement has

## Environment template (REF5)

been a highly innovative line of research that brings together discursive psychology and neuropsychology. McVittie has shown how the capacities and impairments of neurologically or cognitively impaired patients are interactionally negotiated by patients and clinical researchers: task failures of patients with dense amnesia can be partly understood as outcomes of interactions that are designed for them to fail (McVittie #3), and patients who produce momentary confabulations do so in contexts that are especially conducive to these outcomes (McVittie #4). These two studies apply a novel collaborative approach to studying neuropsychological issues.

*Cognition (Darling, Goodall, Mansour):* This theme builds on earlier work into information-processing and decision-making. Previous work examined factors involved in farmers' decision-making (Willock; Impact Case Study REF 3b2). Recent research has extended that focus to the study of information-processing and biases, strategies involved in recall and decision-making, and the role of emotions in cognitive processing. Studies of information-processing and memory have shown that where and how information is presented has an impact not upon perception but on subsequent recall. For example, research with healthy adults has shown a recall bias for items presented on the left side of the visual field rather than the right side (Darling #2) and a lateral bias for other memory tasks (Darling #4). Other investigations of visuo-spatial working memory have shown that different sub-systems are used in memory for appearance and memory for location (Darling #1). The work of Mansour, who joined QMU Psychology in 2013, complements this research by examining memory processes in the applied setting of eyewitness identification. Her work shows that disruption of specific features of a face can be as detrimental to accuracy of recall as disruption of the entire face (Mansour #2). Also, witnesses in making identification decisions often rely on immediately-available information instead of on recall, demonstrating the fallibility of memory-based procedures (Mansour #1). Other work has looked at the role of emotions in information-processing, showing that conscious awareness and metacognition of emotional states are both associated with mindfulness (Goodall #4). A main achievement has been Darling's finding that cognitive processes for emotion recognition differ from those for identity recognition (Darling #3). This work will provide a focus for further research.

### Achievement of strategic aims and goals during assessment period

Our research strategy for the period of assessment had the following aims:

- 1) to organise Psychology research around two themes that would build on existing strengths;
- 2) to develop a vibrant research culture, reflected in an increasing volume of funding applications, high-quality publications, conference presentations, and research seminars;
- 3) to demonstrate the social and/or economic relevance of our research and to achieve impact;
- 4) to attract high-calibre research students, and
- 5) to attract increasing research income from external funding bodies.

We have largely succeeded in achieving the first aim: the two research themes give clear focus for Psychology research at QMU and provide a sound basis for further development. We have made progress towards achieving aims 2 and 3: the volume of funding applications, high-quality publications, conference presentations, and research seminars has increased over the period of assessment, and a strategy for achieving impact is embedded in future goals and plans (see REF3a). Achievements to date represent work in progress and these aims will be pursued further. Achieving aim 4 remains a challenge. Recently, however, the Unit has attracted six research students, three in 2013 alone. We expect that this marks the start of a trend towards increased recruitment. As regards aim 5, applications for external funding have increased and we expect greater success to follow.

### Future strategic aims and goals for research

For the period 2014 to 2019, we will pursue further aims 1 to 5 above. Specifically, we aim

- 1) to consolidate the themes of *discourse* and *cognition* as the primary directions for our research;
- 2) to increase the number of research-active staff from six to eight, with an attendant increase in funding applications, high-quality outputs, conference presentations, and research seminars;
- 3) to embed pathways to impact in all research produced within Psychology;
- 4) to maintain the current level of recruitment of research students;
- 5) to double the amount of external funding received (£83,576 in the current period of assessment) in the coming period.

## Environment template (REF5)

These aims will be taken forward by means of mechanisms and processes introduced in the current period of assessment to support research. These comprise the following:

*Psychology meetings:* All Psychology researchers meet monthly to review research outputs, funding applications and successes, recruitment of research students, research seminars, and conference presentations. They also consider funding calls and other opportunities from external bodies, their relevance to the two research themes, and how research activities within Psychology can be most effectively supported.

*Theme meetings:* Researchers within each theme meet monthly to discuss and conduct collaborative projects. Future discussions will include, as a priority, identification of funding possibilities to support such work. In doing so, they will consider funding calls and research priorities issued by major external funders that are relevant to the theme and will develop funding proposals in liaison with the QMU Research and Knowledge Unit (see c. I below). Theme meetings will also identify relevant topics of study for potential research students.

*Mentoring:* Junior members of staff and new members of staff appointed to Psychology receive mentoring from more senior researchers in developing their research plans and careers and ensuring best fit with Psychology research priorities.

*Performance Enhancement Review (PER):* Each member of staff plans his/her research activities for the following year as part of the QMU PER process. This process ensures that each research-active member of staff has a workload that is suitably balanced to enable him/her to pursue research. PER is conducted by the Head of Psychology and Sociology, who has responsibility for staff developmental budgets and can support researchers at a local level and facilitate research activities such as conference attendance and travel to research meetings.

*ASSaM Research Steering Group:* Research across the School of ASSaM is overseen by The ASSaM Research Steering Group convened by McVittie. This group will continue to review research across ASSaM, to identify and promote research opportunities to individual researchers, and to support further development of research within Psychology and across ASSaM.

*Institutional infrastructure and facilities:* Psychology researchers will continue to make use of and benefit from the institutional infrastructure and facilities described in d. below.

### **c. People, including:**

#### **I. Staffing strategy and staff development**

##### Staffing strategy

Development of the research themes has been accompanied by key staff changes. Research in *discourse* has been advanced by the promotion of two members of staff to senior posts, one to Professor (McVittie) and one to Senior Lecturer (Goodall). Research in *cognition* has been advanced by the appointment of two new members of staff (Darling, Mansour) during the period. McVittie has taken on the role of Director of Research for Psychology and oversees research and research development. These promotions and appointments have been central to the growth and development of Psychology's research priorities and its achievements to date. Future appointments will facilitate further research development through the appointment of researchers whose work demonstrates fit with and potential to extend the activities of one or both themes.

Psychology research is supported by other QMU staff. Members of the Research and Knowledge Unit provide support in pursuing funding opportunities, research grant applications, accepting new awards, liaising with sponsors, negotiating contracts, planning, and costing and pricing of research. The Unit also supports development of research policy and strategy. The Unit is the central contact point for the Concordat (see below) and matters relating to contract research. Members of the Marketing and Communications Unit provide assistance in disseminating research findings and identifying possibilities for achieving research impact. A research librarian supports the development and use of resources. A 0.5 FTE technician supports use of research resources and facilities.

##### Staff development

Psychology has contributed to and benefited from QMU's institutional policies and practices for the development of researchers, as follows:

*The availability of career development for all researchers at all stages:* There is a QMU Career Development Strategy for all researchers. This draws upon external initiatives such as the Vitae

**Environment template (REF5)**

initiative to realise the potential of researchers, embedded within a QMU-wide Researcher Development Framework. The QMU Researcher Development module is open to all members of staff and covers all aspects of conducting and applying research. There are also workshops throughout the year on topics such as supervising research. Any member of staff may attend any or all sessions or workshops to facilitate further development of their research skills and expertise. As well as benefiting from the QMU Career Development Strategy, Early Career Researchers participate in sector-wide initiatives for research careers (e.g. Broadening Horizons, sponsored by Vitae). QMU is an active member of the "EURAXESS - Researchers in Motion" network: a unique initiative providing access to information and support services for European and non-European researchers wishing to pursue research careers in Europe. These initiatives are complemented by mentoring, both informally and formally under the QMU Research Mentoring Scheme, allowing new and junior researchers to discuss their research careers and training and development needs. QMU Human Resources have developed role profiles to provide research roles for researchers at all stages of their careers

*Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers:* In 2010, QMU was one of the first UK HEIs to be recognised for achieving HR Excellence in Research by the European Commission, underlining its commitment to enhancing the quality and output of the research base. In 2012, QMU was one of ten universities in the UK to have their two-year reviews and future plans approved. QMU fully endorses the principles of the Concordat and engages with its vision to ensure ongoing enhancement of the professional and career development of its research staff. In endorsing the Concordat, QMU also endorses the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

*Support for Equalities and Diversity:* QMU's mission statement demonstrates a commitment to social responsibility, inclusion and participation. QMU is committed to promoting the general duties set under the Equality Act 2010 of eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations across protected characteristics. It has engaged in the Vitae "Every Researcher Counts" initiative and promotes good practice, for example through a Single Equality Scheme which embeds equality in all aspects of its research strategy. This Single Equality Scheme is supplemented by the University's policy to mainstream equality throughout its services over the next four-year planning cycle. In line with its REF Equality Code of Practice, QMU regularly impact-assesses key aspects of its policies and procedures and publishes these on its website. Research is a standing item on the agenda of QMU's institutional Equality and Diversity Committee, ensuring that equalities and diversity remains a constant focus. The University received a Bronze Athena SWAN Award in April 2013 for its commitment to assisting the recruitment and retention of women in science, engineering and technology (SET).

<b>c. II. Research students</b>
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QMU has an annual university-wide competition for funded PhD places. Successful candidates receive an annual stipend of £12500 for three years, together with an allocated budget of £2000 to spend on research activities, including conference attendance, travel, dissemination activities, or building research networks. Available topics are widely advertised internally and externally. Psychology annually advertises bursary topics falling under its research themes. In both 2012 and 2013, a Psychology candidate was successful in this competition, resulting in the recruitment of two research students, one pursuing study within *discourse* and one within *cognition*.

Training for research students is provided by a QMU-wide Research Skills Training Programme. All research students undertake this training, which was designed in response to the Joint Statement of the UK Research Councils' Training Requirements for Research Students. The training course covers the following topics: Planning & managing research; Understanding research ethics; Using E-resources for research; Working with your supervisor; Delivering effective presentations; Developing research questions; Understanding the philosophical foundations of research methodologies; Using Personal Development Planning. This Programme runs in the first semester for new research students, ensuring that they receive training in research skills at the beginning of study. There are also additional voluntary sessions on advanced SPSS/statistics, and workshops that prepare students for the viva and for future career development as researchers.

Research students in QMU are supervised by at least two research-active members of staff. Psychology research students are allocated a Director of Studies from the theme within which the research project sits and with whom the student will have had preliminary discussions. A

## Environment template (REF5)

second supervisor is appointed from among researchers in the team. Composition of supervisory teams is designed to ensure that students receive supervision from a researcher who is familiar with the topic and a supervisor who has experience of previous PhD supervision to completion and who can oversee progress of the project. Research students meet with their Director of Studies monthly and with the supervisory team at least once every four months during their period of study.

Each research student is provided with dedicated study-space: desk; shelf space; lockable storage; a 'thin client' terminal giving full access to the central University server and resources; electronic mail address; facilities for receiving paper mail; stationery supplies; access to photocopier, and access to telephone. Psychology research students are allocated desk and storage space in an area immediately adjacent to full-time members of staff, allowing ready communication between students and supervisors and serving to embed students within the Psychology research culture. There is also a QMU-wide Doctoral Students' Association to which all Psychology research students belong. Psychology research students have also been regular presenters at its annual conference, which has run since 2008.

### **d. Income, infrastructure and facilities**

*On campus* – Psychology has use of the following dedicated resources:

(i) Fully equipped laboratory with 10 PC computers (regularly updated), each with an extensive range of software (E Prime Professional, SPSS, NVIVO) for conducting experiments and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. There are also EPRIME Serial response boxes and EPRIME Custom Expansion Kit to enable full use of the programme in running experiments. Additional software includes Adobe Fireworks, MediaLab and DirectRT, Snagit and Camtasia. Hardware includes two newly-purchased laptop computers (with E Prime Professional, SPSS, NVIVO), digital camera, video camera, six digital recorders, a range of microphones, and six sets of headphones. There is seating room for ten people.

(ii) Resource room, providing computer terminals that give access to all QMU services, an audio research computer terminal using Adobe Audition, seating space for eight people.

The use of these resources is supported by a dedicated 0.5 FTE Psychology technician. As well as these resources, Psychology also has use of shared resources within QMU that include:

(iii) Motion Analysis Laboratory, Human performance laboratory, General purpose laboratory, Audio/video recording studio, 2 x sound and video edit suites (each capacity 20), Speech Science laboratories, Speech and language resource room, Audiology Resource Rooms;

(iv) Learning Resource Centre, equipped with an extensive stock of Psychology texts and journals, 415 ejournals, and access to numerous electronic Psychology and interdisciplinary databases;

(v) eResearch, the QMU electronic research depository;

(vi) All staff have access to researchresearch.com and Research Professional, providing the most comprehensive details of current funding opportunities for research in the UK and internationally.

The use of all these resources is supported by expert staff, including IT support, a Research Support Librarian, an audio-visual technician, a photographic technician, and a graphic artist.

*Off campus* - A Citrix desktop provides remote access to the QMU central desktop, all QMU research support units, and all electronic resources, providing immediate access for researchers working off-campus.

### **e. Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base**

#### Indicators of wider influence

Evidence of the influence of Psychology researchers is provided by their contributions to numerous national and international conferences, by memberships of major scientific committees and professional groups, and invitations to deliver research talks to academic and non-academic audiences.

*Memberships of major scientific committees and professional groups:*

*Darling:* Organised (since 2004) the UK national Working Memory Discussion Group held each year at various locations in the UK and in mainland Europe. The 2011 and 2013 WMDG meetings were held at QMU.

*Goodall:* BPS Scotland Committee 2010 to 2012; Scientific Committee of International Psychological Applications Conference and Trends (2012).

*Mansour:* North Western Cognitive and Applied Memory Group 2013 Annual Conference Organizing Committee.

## Environment template (REF5)

*McVittie*: Scientific Committee, International Psychological Applications Conference and Trends (since inauguration 2011); International Scientific Committee, World Conference on Psychology, Counselling and Guidance (since inauguration 2010); Executive Committee, International Society of Critical Health Psychology (2010); 2011 ISCHP Conference Programme Committee.

*Invitations to deliver research talks*:

*Darling*: University of Aberdeen; Nottingham Trent University.

*Goodall*: ISCHP Conference 2009 (Lausanne, Switzerland); Scottish Trades Union Congress.

*Mansour*: Emily Carr University; University of British Columbia Faculty of Law; Western Illinois University Department of Psychology; University of Victoria Department of Psychology.

*McVittie*: University of Aberdeen Natural Language Generation Group; Coventry University Department of Psychology, University of Edinburgh (Department of Psychology; Human Cognitive Neuroscience Group; Linguistic Circle); Glasgow Caledonian University Department of Psychology, International Society of Critical Health Psychology, ISCHP 2009 (Lausanne); Scottish Trades Union Congress; University & College Union, Religion and its constructions symposium (University of Stirling); the Scottish Arts Therapies Research Network.

### Participation in the peer-review process

Psychology researchers participate regularly in the peer-review process, acting as reviewers for grant applications and reports, manuscript reviews, and book proposals, as follows:

*Chisholm*: grant reviews for Chief Scientist Office (Department of Health, Scottish Executive), NHS Quality Improvement Scotland, Ontario Mental Health Foundation. Manuscript reviews for: Child: Care, Health and Development, Journal of Adolescence, Journal of Pediatric Nursing.

*Darling*: grant reviews for ESRC. Manuscript reviews for: Applied Cognitive Psychology, British Journal of Psychology, Developmental Science, Journal of Experimental Psychology, Learning, Memory & Cognition; Memory; Psychonomic Bulletin & Review; Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology; Visual Cognition.

*Goodall*: grant reviews for ESRC, National Institute for Health Research. Manuscript reviews for: BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth; Clinical Rehabilitation; Educational Psychology; Health Expectations; Mindfulness.

*Mansour*: Manuscript reviews for: Applied Cognitive Psychology; Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology; Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied; Law and Human Behavior; Psychology, Public Policy, and the Law.

*McVittie*: grant reviews for ESRC. Manuscript reviews for: British Journal of General Practice, British Journal of Health Psychology, British Journal of Social Psychology, British Medical Journal, Discourse & Society, Health Psychology, Human Relations, Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology, Journal of Health Psychology, Psychology and Health, Psychology Learning and Teaching, Qualitative Health Research, Sex Roles, Social and Personality Psychology Compass. Book proposal reviews for: McGraw-Hill, Pearson Education, Polity Press, Sage Publications, Wiley-Blackwell.

*O'May*: Manuscript reviews for Alcohol and Alcoholism.

### Academic collaboration

We have collaborated with a range of academic units in the following ways:

*Chisholm*: Research outputs (McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada, Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada, Plymouth University; University of Edinburgh, University of Portsmouth).

*Darling*: Externally-funded projects (University of Edinburgh); Research outputs (University of Edinburgh, University of Leeds); Research student supervision (University of Leeds).

*Goodall*: Research outputs (University of Edinburgh, University of Sydney).

*Mansour*: Research outputs (Swinburne University of Technology, Australia, Queen's University, Canada, Simon Fraser University, Canada).

*McVittie*: Externally-funded projects (University of Aberdeen, University of Edinburgh); Research outputs (University of Aberdeen, University of Abertay Dundee, University of Edinburgh, University of Queensland, University of Sydney); Research student supervision (University of Edinburgh, University of Leeds).

A main achievement has been McVittie's collaboration with researchers at The University of Edinburgh, leading to numerous outputs, the development of innovative research involving discursive psychology and neuropsychology, and joint supervision of five research students (three

## Environment template (REF5)

completions to date). This collaboration has been marked by McVittie's appointment as Honorary Professorial Fellow at The University of Edinburgh.

### Collaboration and engagement with external bodies

Public Engagement is a crucial strand of QMU's commitment to sustainability as it enhances research and promotes a positive contribution to society, resulting in greater relevance, accountability and transparency. As an Engaged University, QMU aims to:

- Develop Public Engagement strategically and with appropriate external partners.
- Support and promote dialogue with the public.
- Influence public policy and improve public services.
- Improve the quality of research and knowledge exchange by increasing impact through Public Engagement.

QMU has signed up to the [Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research](#) which was developed by the UK's research funding bodies to create a greater focus on and help embed Public Engagement with research across all disciplines in the higher education and research sectors. QMU is committed to the four principles of the Concordat:

- UK research organisations have a strategic commitment to Public Engagement.
- Researchers are recognised and valued for involvement with Public Engagement activities.
- Researchers are enabled to participate in Public Engagement activities through appropriate training, support and opportunities.
- The signatories and supporters will undertake regular reviews of their and the wider research sector's progress in fostering Public Engagement across the UK.

In pursuing its commitment to public engagement, QMU:

(i) Is a member of the Beltane Public Engagement Network (Beltane), a network supported by the four Edinburgh universities. The network follows on from, and builds on, the work of the Edinburgh Beltane Beacon for Public Engagement project which was one of six UK Beacons for Public Engagement funded by Research Councils UK, the Funding Councils and the Wellcome Trust;

(ii) Has a strategic partnership with our local national Science Centre – Dynamic Earth. We regularly engage in collaborative events, allowing our postgraduate researchers opportunities to obtain hands-on, practical experience in science communication. We work with other national initiatives to promote research to non-academic audiences including the Bright Clubs, Edinburgh International Science Festival and the Scottish Government's Science on the menu initiative;

(iii) Runs a Researcher in Residence Scheme, under which PhD students and early career researchers work with Primary schools in East Lothian and the City of Edinburgh. The scheme aims to engage young people with real-life research, to raise aspirations and inspire the next generation of researchers while strengthening QMU's visibility and profile in the local community.

Psychology researchers are fully committed to participating in and supporting these QMU-wide initiatives. Psychology researchers also engage with a range of external bodies, for example:

*Chisholm*: Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh;

*Goodall*: Anti-Bullying Network East Lothian; Brainstrust research group (a group that works collaboratively in research into neuropsychosocial care for people and carers who are living with a brain tumour diagnosis); East Lothian Council Educational Psychology Service; ELCAP; James Gillespie's Primary School, Edinburgh; NHS Lothian; Outward Bound Trust; Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives; West Lothian Council Educational Psychology Services;

*Mansour*: Association in Defense of the Wrongfully Convicted; Innocence Network UK; Scottish Institute for Policing Research;

*McVittie*: Infusion Co-operative; Hibernian Community Foundation; Outward Bound Trust; Scottish Centre for CrossReach; Healthy Working Lives; Wester Hailes Arts and Leisure;

Psychology researchers are also currently engaged in discussions with various not-for-profit sector organisations and other external bodies using the Scottish Funding Council's Interface Scheme, all intended to create opportunities for collaborative research with external bodies.