

### Impact template (REF3a)

<p><b>Institution:</b> Edge Hill University</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 4 - Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience</p>
<p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>Our research capabilities are of direct relevance to a wide range of users beyond our disciplinary confines as they cross boundaries into education, medicine, neuroscience, consumer marketing and ergonomics. Despite being a relatively new department we already have developing relationships with a number of users in the public, private and voluntary sectors, and we are evolving ways to build proactively on these to enhance further the usefulness of our research to both new and existing users. Our main beneficiary groups are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Health and social care policymakers, practitioners, patient groups, service users:</b> Cognitive and social psychological work on the causes, effects and management of a range of conditions and associated behaviours has direct policy and practice implications. Examples include research on substance use and addiction, autism, and detection of cognitive decline amongst brain damaged individuals.</li> <li>• <b>Social policymakers and practitioners:</b> Work on the psychosocial origins of prejudice and resistance to its adverse psychological effects has relevance to policy and practice in employment and elsewhere. Cognitive and social psychological research on addiction and substance use (e.g. the cognitive effects of ecstasy and cannabis) has implications for drug classification policy, harm reduction and treatment policies and practices as well as substance-use educational programmes.</li> <li>• <b>The legal profession and the police:</b> Cognitive work on memory and attention has implications for legal professionals, police and others involved in the court system, including procurement, use, presentation and examination of testimony from the elderly.</li> <li>• <b>Education and training providers:</b> Cognitive work on learning (including expert-led skills acquisition) has policy, practice and professional educational implications, for example with regards to curriculum design.</li> <li>• <b>Business and consumers:</b> Our work on behaviour change in the context of sustainability has implications for governments, NGOs, multi-national businesses and individual consumers. Research on prejudice is of direct relevance to recruitment practice and talent identification, as is our research concerned with increasing the validity of interviews/assessments. Work on communication, joint decision-making and skills acquisition has implications for a wide range of organisations in the public and private domains. Our stimulus-response compatibility research is of relevance to ergonomics / interface design.</li> <li>• <b>The general public:</b> Research offering insights into cognitive and social processes, communication and the patterns of interaction underpinning everyday human behaviour.</li> </ul>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p>With close to 80% of our staff joining the department since its formation in June 2011, our approach to impact has benefitted from being in a position to build from the very beginning two research groups capable of producing theoretically driven research with implications for a wide range of potential beneficiaries. Strategic recruitment has therefore been a key tool to ensure that we are capable of producing high quality impactful research. A proven track record of engagement and impact orientated work has been a key criterion in recruitment, allowing us to prioritise research with the potential to deliver very high impact. This is reflected in the research of the Cognitive Science Research Group, for example, which aims to improve our understanding of (i) cognitive functioning associated with substance use (Murphy) or psychological conditions such as autism (Powell) or brain injury (Qureshi), (ii) numerical cognition and its implications for education (Mitchell), (iii) differences in the examination of medical images, such as cancer, as a function of expertise (Litchfield), (iv) the effects of ageing on memory in the context of eye-witness testimony with implications for the legal profession (Humphries), (v) the role of stimulus-response compatibility in interface design, including aviation display for the U.S. army (Yamaguchi). In the Health and Social Issues Research Group, our research has direct relevance to policy and practice with regards to improving the life chances of people (i) facing prejudice and discrimination, including prejudice in employment practice and in schools (Beattie, Heim), (ii) engaging in substance use to change their behaviour (Monk, Heim). It also includes research on behavioural</p>

change in consumers to promote sustainable consumption (Beattie) and factors shaping impression formation to increase the validity of assessments in interviews and other applied contexts (Wall).

We are fostering a culture in which impact considerations like those above are central and our researchers are well-networked beyond the academy, to ensure that our research findings and their implications are communicated to beneficiaries, users and audiences effectively, and that we engage with them to shape the research questions we choose to address. Our approach is underpinned by proactive dissemination activities to **engage with public debate and awareness** through close involvement with the media. This is exemplified through the work of Beattie who is a regular commentator on various national (e.g. BBC, ITV and Sky) and international (e.g. ABC, CNN, News Asia) television news channels. He also regularly contributes to radio broadcasts (e.g. Radio 4, BBC World Service). Our work has featured in international science journals targeting readers beyond our discipline. Powell's work, for example, has featured in New Scientist Magazine while Beattie has had two articles on consumer behaviour in the context of sustainability published in Nature Climate Change. Murphy's work has featured nationally in the Times Higher, the BBC and Channel 4. Additionally, our twitter feed is actively used for disseminating our work as well as psychological research more generally. This strategy is proving very effective as is evidenced by our steadily growing number of followers and retweets.

We also emphasise the importance of proactively **fostering local relations**, for example with regards to media engagement in regional outlets, including BBC Radio Merseyside (Heim) and the regional press (Murphy, Heim). In this regard our public lecture series attract members of the public and pupils from local schools. Similarly, research findings into the effectiveness of an interactive strategy for the teaching of disengaged school students which was carried out before the department was founded between 2008 and 2010 were presented at regional conferences and meetings involving education authorities and schools.

Staff also **engage collaboratively in research and dissemination with stakeholders and practitioners**. Murphy's research into using the opiate antagonist naltrexone on prisoners prior to discharge, for example, was carried out and disseminated in conjunction with regional NHS trusts. Partly as a result of this work, representatives of our department are being invited to research and development events held by local NHS trusts. By rotating attendance among our early career researchers (ECRs) we are facilitating networking opportunities. Our **collegiate approach to fostering impact** by engaging with potential research users is also evidenced by the fact that Powell is actively introducing other ECRs to the institution wide Autism Research Group which has excellent connections to parent groups and practitioners. The aim is for our researchers to generate programmes of research which integrate end-user needs from the outset.

Our **emerging engagement with industry** is also carried out in a way to encourage involvement of ECRs. We recently hosted a major ideas event for senior Unilever representatives on their global challenges in terms of both sustainable and healthy lifestyles, and this featured presentations from both senior and more junior staff. Staff who attended then fed back Unilever's challenges to both research groups to spread awareness of the kinds of psychological questions and concerns a leading multinational is trying to address to inform the evolution of our research.

We actively **encourage knowledge exchange activities**, and this has already provided opportunities for the development of research collaborations with various external organisations and practitioners. Activities have included the provision of research methodology consultancies for NHS clinical staff, and support for a charity helping the relatives of psychiatric patients in the Merseyside borough of the Wirral. In the latter the effectiveness of support for the relatives of patients was examined, as well as its consequent impact upon the wellbeing of patients and carers. Outcomes from this research were shared with the community group for families hosting this research (The Family Tree), and with practitioners in the Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

### **c. Strategy and plans**

Most broadly our approach to impact is aimed at **inculcating and equipping researchers with awareness and understanding of impact**. Our strategy draws upon and feeds into the wider research strategy outlined in REF 5b; it is founded on (i) our assessments of our current and emerging expertise, (ii) the needs of research users, (iii) the needs and ideas of our researchers established through consultation and staff appraisal, (iv) our assessment of the research funding

landscape, (v) a structured review of recent, current and emerging research within the Unit, and (vi) the development of new interdisciplinary research institutes and centres within the University.

Through our developing activities we are ensuring that genuine value is attached to impact - we emphasise and articulate impact considerations at every stage of the research planning process and our internal procedures reflect this. Internal research funding requests must include consideration of the non-academic applications, and where appropriate, set out how potential for impact will be maximised. This also aims to **ensure pump-priming supports impact activities**. Researchers are encouraged to track and monitor any emerging impact by staying active in relevant non-academic networks. Staff update academic managers on their work with user groups through the Annual Academic Review process and this will be facilitated by the roll out of recently acquired tools to identify, record and track the results of work with users.

We will continue to draw on **institutional support through the Research Capacity Building Programme** which includes sessions addressing engagement, influence and impact. ECRs are, in particular, encouraged to attend the sessions which include building network presence, use of social media, and media training. Person-centred support is available through faculty and departmental staff development resources for the development of key external audience engagement skills. ECRs are given the opportunity to engage with end-users on projects being developed by more senior staff, so that they become familiar with this core part of the research planning process as part of their own Continued Professional Development. The recent meeting with Unilever to discuss research ideas of mutual interest is an example of this.

**Strengthening our links with other departments and faculties in the university to maximise impact.** The University is investing in the development of a number of new institutes to act as hubs for interdisciplinary, collaborative and commissioned research, knowledge exchange and engagement. These provide opportunities for members of our Health and Social Issues Research Group to work with colleagues in the faculties of Education and Health & Social Care, as well their academic and non-academic collaborators beyond the university. The Postgraduate Medical Institute will provide similar opportunities, particularly in the fields of medical education, in autism spectrum disorder and substance misuse. The 'Institute for Sustainable Futures and Behaviour Change', which is currently being planned has its intellectual base in psychology and has already been identified for pump priming by the University.

**Careful mentoring of ECRs by more established staff with significant experience of making their research relevant to society as a whole.** ECRs require careful mentoring and support for them to venture beyond the safe territory of the research that characterises most PhDs and much postdoctoral work. We recognise the career importance especially for ECRs of certain key journals which often prioritise excellent theoretically driven research. The key is support and encouragement to allow them to develop a research portfolio with applied *and* theoretical strands, to establish themselves in networks with research users whilst continuing to meet key early career milestones.

#### **d. Relationship to case studies**

REF 2014 marks our first submission to a research assessment in psychology. Almost 80% of staff joined the department since its formation in June 2011, and 92% of staff returned to REF 2014 were recruited since mid-2012. Previously, a much smaller group undertook work mostly of a pedagogical character, in a multi-disciplinary department. This history, and the time lag between research and the emergence of impact, constrains our ability to identify case studies for REF 2014. We therefore present case studies based on the work of Murphy (now Head of Department) and Putwain, who is now in our Faculty of Education. Murphy's in particular exemplifies our recent approach and informs our strategy for impact, with its demonstration of the merits of building and maintaining relationships with research users and intermediaries, its formal and collaborative engagement in policy-making and dissemination to users via the national media. What should be clear, however, is that a new research culture is currently being established with a clear and well-articulated impact agenda. In addition to that the recruitment of several key members of staff with significant experience of developing and running research with major impact means that we are very well-positioned for the future. We believe that we now have the staff with the skills, knowledge base and track record to ensure that this will be a department that punches well above its weight in terms of high impact research.