

**Institution: Newman University**

**Unit of Assessment: 4 – Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience**

**a. Overview**

Newman University College became Newman University in 2013. As when it was a University College, the research mission of the University is to continue to broaden the base of research active staff across all areas of academic activity, to support staff research and scholarly activities through the development of an inclusive culture and supportive environment. The benefits of the University's policies of supporting research remain evident, with financial support for members of staff in Units of Assessment, with scholarships for postgraduate research students, and protected staff time for research and scholarship. We can point to substantial improvements in the quality and quantity of our research publications and a rising research profile, which will see more Units of Assessment returned in the Research Excellence Framework than in previous Research Assessment Exercises.

The University's Research Committee promotes research development and monitors its progress. This includes overseeing the supervision arrangements for postgraduate students and developing a research strategy for academic staff. The budgetary system of the University gives financial responsibility to the Research Committee. A number of measures have been taken by the University to bring about a significant change in the profile of research in order to situate it as an integral feature of activity. These measures culminated in the appointment of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Scholarship in 2013 to take a leading role in promoting research across the institution for the future, following a substantial increase in the resources available to support staff scholarly activities, the development of a new institutional research strategy to encourage and facilitate research, and a programme of training and staff development to support and refine research practices. As previously, funding towards the cost of further academic study is offered through an annual bidding process managed by the Research Committee, and monies secured in the last Research Assessment Exercise have been used to expand the University's areas of research excellence recognized in 2008.

The Psychology Unit of Assessment for REF 2014 comprises three full-time members of staff. The unit consists of two Principal Lecturers and one Early Career researcher. All three work within the Department of Psychology and Counselling, which consists of 17 lecturers. The unit has strong foundations in Applied Psychology, specifically in the areas of health and wellbeing, applied social psychology, clinical and counselling psychology. Most research within the unit and within the wider Department fits within the theme of wellbeing. This includes the research in Applied Psychology (such as research on risky health-related behaviours, addictions, domestic violence and employability), and research in counselling and psychotherapy (including research on the views and experiences of same-sex couples in counselling, and on trainee counsellor's perceptions of learning an integrative model of counselling).

This is the first submission to the REF by this Unit of Assessment. In addition to the three members of the unit, there are five members of staff within the department who are currently engaged in doctoral level study, three of whom are in their final year. A further three staff members write for publication regularly, and all staff within the department are research active with most regularly presenting at conferences.

Several members of staff hold research-related roles. This includes Mary Glover who is a member of the South Birmingham NHS Research Ethics Committee, Lorna Dodd, who is on the editorial board of the Newman University journal, 'Critical Commentary', and Alison Rolfe who has acted as External Examiner for two PhDs and two doctorates in Clinical Psychology (ClinPsyD) within the last two years.

The department is currently developing a research strategy, with a view to increasing research capacity and promoting research excellence, and increasing the number of staff submitted from

this Unit of Assessment for REF 2020. This strategy includes support for Early Career Researchers, research seminar series, and working towards successful bids for external research funding. It also includes building research partnerships with other institutions, using existing partnerships (with, for example, the Universities of Birmingham and Staffordshire) as a foundation.

#### **b. Research strategy**

As set out in its Research Strategy for 2012-2015, Newman University aspires to be recognised regionally, nationally and internationally for the quality of its research and scholarship. Our vision for research is underpinned by the University's core values as outlined in its Strategic Plan and its mission to make a positive difference to individuals and communities through the contribution of its staff, students and graduates. Building upon the positive outcome of the RAE in 2008, the Research Strategy has particularly focused investment funds on units submitting to the Research Excellence Framework, whilst enabling early-career researchers to develop their capacity. Against a background of tighter fiscal constraints we are also making links with other aspects of third stream activity. Knowledge transfer, consultancy and related forms of employer engagement are creating opportunities and funding for research and income generation, as well as broadening the student experience and providing staff development.

The University's Research Committee takes as its remit a strategic role in all aspects of developing and sustaining a successful research culture and research performance. The Committee's major function is to ensure that the University's areas of research strength and comparative advantage are protected and enhanced, that research potential is recognised and nurtured and that resources are strategically targeted to build an externally-recognised research presence. A detailed action plan for the implementation of these objectives is provided and reviewed annually. Since the last RAE, we have strengthened our academic leadership through the internal promotion of four further staff to the position of Reader and through the external appointment of several new professors, who have extensive successful PhD supervision experience; two new professors have been appointed as Deans of School and other professors have been appointed as senior academic leads, such that the University now has a Professoriate which meets periodically throughout the academic year to advise the Vice-Chancellor on matters of research.

This will be the first submission of the Newman University Psychology Unit of Assessment. Over the past decade, the Psychology & Counselling Department has grown considerably, from a very small, teaching-focussed department to one where research activity is considered to be a very important aspect of academic activity. A number of recent appointments have reflected this, including the appointment of a Head of Department with international standing in the field of gender and addictions, and appointments at lecturer level which have recruited a number of recent PhD completers with considerable potential as Early Career Researchers.

Integral to the unit's research strategy has been a more systematic approach to staff development opportunities and events to support early career researchers, including departmental research seminars as a forum for enhancing the frequency and depth of staff exposure to research. Staff development activities are aligned with the University's Graduate School programme, and have encompassed, *inter alia*: workshops on approaches to writing research, getting research published, understanding peer review, the work of the editorial board, identifying funding opportunities and approaches to successful bidding for external funds.

Over the next five years, the Unit of Assessment will strive to in further develop its research culture and activity. Research on specific research topics will be prioritised, namely: health and wellbeing; psychosocial needs of marginalised social groups; counselling and psychotherapy outcomes; and counselling and psychotherapy training. As a first stage, a seminar series open to staff and students is planned for the coming academic year. Further aims include developing staff expertise and experience in PhD supervision, and improving the structure and culture for PhD studentship within the Unit of Assessment. Another area for development is concerned with improving and extending staff expertise in bidding for research funding, with the aim of securing external research funding and having at least one Research Fellow post within the department. To achieve this,

further training will be sought for staff in order to gain expertise in bidding for funding, and seed corn funding will also be sought from within Newman University to support such work. A new Work Allocation Model at Newman University, due to be introduced in September 2014, also ensures that time for research activity (publications and funded research) is structured into staff workloads.

**c. People, including:**

**i. Staffing strategy and staff development**

There is a range of sources of funding and support within the institution that are available to members of this Unit of Assessment. The University's Research Committee operates a Small Grants scheme. Sums of up to a maximum of £600 are made available to subject areas, research groups or individuals. A significant number of awards are allocated every year to encourage members of staff to pursue small-scale research projects individually or as a group. This allocation is based on a highly competitive bidding process. In addition, the Research Committee invites research groups to bid for a maximum of £3,000 as a contribution towards more substantial research projects. The University has also operated when possible a scheme of negotiated sabbatical support for staff, who must identify clear and measurable targets to be achieved at the end of the sabbatical period. Financial support up to £2,000 is provided for staging conferences at the University and funding is also given for conference presentation to a maximum of £400 per conference; support may be given to multiple presentations in any one year.

More general support covers both advice to the research community and information to the Research Committee and is provided by the Research Office Administrator as part of the range of support offered by the Graduate School. This involves organising regular research seminars, research training workshops and inaugural-professorial lectures, as well as enabling suitably qualified academic staff to engage in postgraduate research supervision.

Staff development on research related issues is organised by the Head of the Academic Practice Unit, while all matters of staff and student research ethics are overseen by the Research Ethics Committee, which scrutinizes several hundred research proposals each year. Regular staff research seminars are held throughout the year, some organized centrally and some within the School of Human Sciences. Contributors to these seminars are University staff, research students and invited speakers from other institutions. The University has long maintained a Visiting Professor scheme for distinguished scholars. As well as delivering research seminars and workshops, the Visiting Professors play a pivotal role in developing the research and scholarship potential of staff through appropriate forms of advice, training and support.

The Department of Psychology & Counselling, within which this Unit of Assessment is located, has grown considerably over the past five years. There have been a number of staff departures, but overall there has been a considerable expansion. Significant departures include the previous Head of Department. This departure was significant not only due to the loss of a research active staff member, but because this was followed by a three-year period of acting headship, from 2009 to 2012, with the consequence that long-term strategic planning around research was more difficult during this period.

There has, however, been a net increase in research activity, with the recruitment of several research active new appointees, including two of the three staff (Rolfe and Bourne) whose outputs are submitted for this REF exercise. Dr Rolfe has brought a record of publication in qualitative research in psychology. She also has expertise in the field of addictions, having worked for six years previously on a Department of Health funded longitudinal study of untreated heavy drinking. These research interests have complimented the existing focus of the department on applied areas of psychology, whilst strengthening expertise in qualitative approaches. Since her appointment in September 2012, the development of research within the Unit of Assessment has become a priority. All new appointees in psychology have been required to have a PhD or to be very near completion, and to have clear evidence of potential for inclusion in REF 2020. She has also instigated departmental research seminar series, and begun to develop a departmental research strategy, in addition to leading on the REF 2014 Unit of Assessment. Dr Bourne has brought a

record of experience in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Oxford. His research continues to focus on the interface between cognitive and clinical psychology and he has brought to Newman University considerable experience in working on major funded research projects.

Staff recruited to the Department are required to be engaged in research and scholarly activity as essential selection criteria. In recent years, the appointment of research active staff has been made a significant priority with lecturer level appointments requiring doctoral qualification (or very near completion) and evidence of research potential. Appointment at Senior Lecturer level similarly requires doctoral qualification (other than in exceptional circumstances for practitioner-focused programmes) and evidence of research potential in the form of regular research publication. At the present time, all but one staff member within the Psychology & Counselling Department either has, or is near completion of a doctorate.

All staff in the department are currently on permanent contracts, with the single exception of one member of staff who is employed as maternity leave cover. The demographic profile of the Department within which this Unit of Assessment is situated shows that, of the Category A staff, there is a balance of genders with eight male and nine female members of staff. In terms of grade, there is one Principal Lecturer, nine Senior Lecturers and seven Lecturers. At the present time, all staff are White British or White European. Two members of staff work on a part-time basis.

There are currently no research fellowships within the Unit of Assessment but this is considered an important area for development, as we develop our research capacities and structures, both as a Unit of Assessment and an institution, and it is our intention, within the next five years, to appoint at least one Research Fellow.

Several members of the Unit of Assessment have a clinical role in addition to academic work, including three part-time staff members, all of whom carry out clinically relevant research.

## **ii. Research students**

There are currently three PhD students who are supervised by members of the Unit of Assessment: Stella Williams, Jina Tanton, and Anwar Abdulaziz Muhammad Al Nuaim.

In 2013 Thomas Michael, a postgraduate student in the Department of Psychology & Counselling was awarded an MPhil.

All PGR students are expected to have completed recent and relevant research degree training at Master's level (provided by the in-house Master of Research programme if not already achieved) before embarking on PhD research. PhD students are able to access a broad range of academic and vocational training, some designed specifically for PGR students, and all of the professional development activities provided for academic staff. PGR students complete an annual Training Needs Analysis Form and Joint Annual Progress Report. Their research project must be formally approved by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee and the University Research Degrees Committee before the final thesis may be submitted for examination.

The University's research culture is being enhanced by the on-going development of the Graduate School which has the primary responsibility for postgraduate research student training and social and intellectual integration while playing a key role alongside Schools, Subject Areas, and Programmes in developing career pathways for successful research students.

Development and support for research students is thus provided by the Graduate School, while pastoral support and mentoring is provided by the Postgraduate Research Co-ordinator. While attracting self-funding students, the University has operated an intermittent policy of offering research studentships through a competitive bidding process. The University offers training to PGR students preparing for a career in teaching in Higher Education and opportunity is sometimes available for students to gain in-class teaching experience.

**Environment template (REF5)**

Undergraduate and postgraduate students within the department are encouraged to submit to Newman's journal, 'Critical Commentary'. Students on the MSc in Clinical Applications of Psychology also conduct research around clinical psychology, health and wellbeing, and psychological therapies. These students are explicitly encouraged to consider publication of their dissertations through the structure of the dissertation task, in which they write their dissertation according to the author guidelines of a specific journal. Students are also encouraged to become involved in research projects being run by members of staff.

**d. Income, infrastructure and facilities**

As outlined above, staff are able to apply for internal funds to support their research activities to the Research Committee. One of our key aims for the next five years is to develop our research income through successful internal and external bids for research funding. These are currently been explored through several routes, including potential research partnerships with Murray Hall Community Trust, Dudley (potential external research bid), and with New Life Counselling, Northern Ireland (potential internal research funding bid).

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

The Psychology unit is actively involved in range of research collaboration that extend across all areas of its research interests. Members of the Unit of Assessment have worked in close collaboration with other researchers locally and nationally.

Dr Corin Bourne is an Early Career Researcher having been employed as a Post-doctoral Researcher at the Department of Psychiatry, University of Oxford in 2010 following completion of his DPhil. Corin Bourne remains an Honorary Researcher at the Department of Psychiatry reflecting his on-going research collaborations with the University of Oxford and is also a member of the European Network of Bipolar Research Expert Centres (ENBREC). Corin Bourne's research is in the area of cognitive processes especially their role in the causation, maintenance and treatment of psychological disorders. In addition to his own published articles, he has presented papers at several international conferences (including, 9th International Conference on Bipolar Disorder, Pittsburgh, USA and 8th Biennial Meeting of the Society for Applied Research in Memory and Cognition [SARMAC], Kyoto, Japan) and peer-reviewed articles for a number of journals including: *Psychological Medicine*, *Human Brain Mapping*, *Memory*, *Journal of Behaviour Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, *Depression and Anxiety*, *Cognitive Neuropsychiatry*, *BMC Psychiatry*, *Journal of Traumatic Stress*.

Dr Lorna Dodd is a Chartered Psychologist. Her area of research focuses on health behaviours of young adults. Her recent research collaborations have been with Prof Allan Nevill at the University of Wolverhampton and Dr Mark Forshaw previously at Staffordshire University. She is a member of the British Psychological Society (BPS), and the BPS Division of Health Psychology. She has undertaken peer review recently for *Annals of Behavioural Medicine* and *Medicina Sportiva Journals*. She has reviewed for BUPA Foundation (funding applications), and has provided reviews for both Wiley-Blackwell and Sage Publications.

Dr Alison Rolfe has collaborative links with the University of Birmingham, where she continues to work closely with Professors Jim Orford and Alex Copello in the Alcohol, Drugs, Gambling and Addictions Research Unit. As part of this, she is collaborating in further analysis of longitudinal data from the Birmingham Untreated Heavy Drinkers Research project. She has also acted as Joint Supervisor of a ClinPsyD research student at the University of Birmingham, working with Professor Alex Copello. Two publications have recently been submitted based on this work. Alison is also currently acting as second supervisor for a University of Birmingham PhD student, with Dr Michael Larkin, within the Clinical Psychology Group. She has been a peer reviewer for a number of journals, most notably as a regular reviewer for *Psychology & Health*, and the *Journal of Health Psychology*, but also for *Appetite*, *British Journal of Social Policy*, *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research* and *Critical Discourse Studies*. She has also acted as external examiner for two international PhD candidates and one national ClinPsyD candidate.