

**Institution: University of Bath**

**Unit of Assessment: 19: Business and Management Studies**

**a. Context**

Bath School of Management seeks the continuous development of an active research culture that addresses the challenges of both rigour and relevance. Relevance is demonstrated in the impact our research has had on companies, public sector organizations, industry associations, professional bodies and government, as well as the everyday lives of individuals. Our research has created impact through: challenges to conventional wisdom, improvements in workplace practices, changes in approaches to management and the delivery of services, new products and processes, enhancements of professional and corporate practice, changes in policy, improved profitability and savings in public funds.

The long-term commitment of the School to rigour with relevance is reflected in impacts that align with the processes identified above. We can demonstrate economic, commercial and organizational impacts that originate in research, from the mid 1990s to the present. For example, (1) Research within the *Lean and Agile Research Group* (established, 1996) has been focused on the design, manufacture and management of processes and systems for lean production. The LARG research on 'built-to-order cars' has helped to transform how car production is understood and implemented. The research can be linked to over twenty company sponsors, including BMW, DaimlerChrysler, Siemens and Lear Automotive. (2) The *Centre for Research in Strategic Purchasing and Supply* (CRiSPS: Research Centre 1994 – 2011, Research Group 2011 – 2013, Research Centre 2013 - date) has applied academic rigour to issues of purchasing and supply in order to influence policy. Research in CRiSPS has affected public procurement at a policy level and provided a lead role in developing the understanding and capacity of businesses to apply best practice on sustainable public procurement from successful businesses. (3) The *Work and Employment Research Centre* (established, 1997) has conducted applied research of significant benefit to HR practice. In particular, WERC research has contributed to companies understanding of employee commitment and employee engagement, making a difference to underlying ways of thinking about effective ways to manage and to lead. (4) Research within the *CIMA Centre for Excellence* (2005 – 2013) has informed important design changes to professional qualifications for management accountants across the globe, leading to significant enhancements in professional knowledge and practice.

Research in the School has created benefits: for the users of central and local government because it has informed changes of approach and policy; for practitioners through the direct support of their learning and consequent changes in their everyday knowledge and practice; for company performance resulting from the generation of new frameworks and tools for increased business efficiency and effectiveness; and for organizational members arising from the strategic implementation of change for improved performance.

We can provide evidence that our research contributes to changes in attitudes, awareness and behaviour; that it supports increased capabilities and opportunities, improved performance, policy developments, and processes of innovation and understanding. Our research mobilises critiques of existing behaviour and practice, as well as informing new ideas; engaging directly with companies in order to drive innovation; and developing new tools, models and frameworks to influence and change ways in which people think and work.

**b. Approach to impact**

In RAE 2008 the School presented an established strategy of "proven scholarly quality while achieving an impact on policy and practice". The period 2008-13 has seen increased effort to understand how research can generate economic and social benefits, and to articulate potential benefits at the beginning of research. The format of REF 2014, the requirement to outline 'pathways to impact' in grant applications, and the emphasis on the relevance of business and

## Impact template (REF3a)

management research has underpinned a sharper focus on impact during this period.

*Approach and infrastructure mechanisms.* (1) The School has appointed an Impact and Information Officer (an administrative post, since 2011), who develops and records impact activities, provides advice and support to academic staff, analyses impact data, organizes impact training events, and co-ordinates and stores evidence of impact. This role also supports learning mechanisms to ensure that there is increased awareness of and action on impact within the School. (2) The School has established an Impact Advisory Board (IAB), a sub group of the School Advisory Board. The IAB evaluates and highlights the potential for impact and supports and encourages the delivery of impact. The group, which meets bi-annually (in line with our bi-annual update of new research outputs), is tasked with considering research in progress and helping to identify its potential relevance and the various ways in which this relevance can be further explored and exploited. (3) The School provides training on impact. We run internal workshops on the development of 'pathways to impact' and approaches to dissemination. These are available to all staff and are compulsory for our early career researchers (ECRs). Academics can attend inter-Faculty workshops on impact, facilitated by University staff. 39 of the individuals submitted in this Unit of Assessment have attended the University's impact training. (4) We develop our PhD students' comprehension of research impact within their formal methodological training. In addition, an annual prize for 'the best doctoral research' sponsored by Bath alumnus Neil Palfreeman (an ex CEO) has rigour and relevance as its main criteria. Doctoral research of high relevance to companies is supported through jointly funded Knowledge Exchange partnerships.

*Institutional support and infrastructure:* Knowledge Exchange funding supports specific projects with end users and the development of new relationships. The University's Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) is used to support collaborative research projects stimulated by businesses. The School has undertaken university funded Knowledge Exchange activities designed to engage businesses in proof of concept and collaborative research projects; to support projects with end users; and to promote the development of new relationships with businesses and organizations. For example, (1) Research funded through the 'KT Box' initiative (Squire), developed a tool that helps industry identify, assess and track risk in their supply chains. Unlike existing tools, this software combines a network picture of risk with automated web scraping to provide users with immediate alerts to potential disruptions. The tool is currently used through the BAE Systems submarine supply chain. (2) The 'lowcarbonworks' project (Reason) studied the human dimensions of low carbon technology, applying insights from research to explain what it is that encourages and inhibits the adoption of low carbon technologies by businesses and local authorities. Companies such as Ginsters Ltd., and organizations including Bath and North East Somerset Council (BANES), and the Business Resource Efficiency Network have all benefited from this research. (3) a knowledge exchange and networking event for professional service organizations (Kinnie), which generated direct research collaborations with CERN and Hyland Consulting. (4) An initiative on corporate social responsibility and employee volunteering in SMEs (Caulfield), in association with BANES, local companies and local charities. The work led to BANES investing £100,000 in Bath Volunteer Centre. (5) An initiative on private and public sustainable supply chain management (Hoejmoose) in collaboration with MapleCroft, the Ethical Trading Initiative, and the Supplier Ethical Data Exchange.

*How staff have engaged with and developed relationships:* The School's contact with the users and potential beneficiaries of research is well developed. Traditionally, this involves three types of contact. (1) Practitioner Forums, for example, the Change Management Forum (see below), the Bath HR Directors Alumni Group, and the MBA Alumni Network Forum. Forums engage users in a dialogue on the potential benefits of existing and recent research. (2) Dissemination Workshops that bring research participants together to receive the results of research and to consider the implications and potential for impact. They are designed to disseminate best practice, often to firms that have taken part in research. For example, 200 UK based firms collaborated in the School's 'socially responsible supply chain' project. All these firms were provided with a report to outline practical implications for supply chain management. 30 of these firms took part in an applied impact workshop funded through the University's KTA. (3) Research Consortia of Organizations, with a focus on the co-production of research. Academics and practitioners participate in, review

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and implement the findings from research over an extended period of time, within a closed network of member organizations. This design ensures that the research has impact both within and between organizations. For example, the Change Management Research Consortium (see REF 3b). In addition, our Research Centres all have individual advisors, collaborators and visiting faculty with extensive industry experience; and we have a long-standing reputation for action research interventions directly within organizations.

*An extended example of how we engage and develop relationships for impact:* The Change Management Forum (CMF) has been running quarterly, evening events since 2003. The purpose of the CMF is to provide a venue where ‘thinking practitioners’ and ‘applied academics’ can come together to exchange ideas and knowledge. The aim of the CMF is pragmatic – to promote more effective change and leadership at work through dialogue and discussion. Presentations to the CMF can involve an academic reporting research, a practitioner relaying experiences of managing and leading change, or a combination of a practitioner and academic presenting on a key issue or theme. Around 30 different organizations, private and public, are usually represented at any one meeting. Corporate members include: Sainsbury's, HBOS plc, Lloyds TSB, Axa Sunlife, GKN, Price Waterhouse Coopers, GE Healthcare. Since January 2008, speakers have included: Professor Rob Goffee (London Business School); Charlie Mayfield (Chairman, John Lewis Partnership); Neil Holloway (VP Business Strategy, Microsoft); Richard Lambert (Director General of the CBI); Ann Abraham (Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman); Professor Jean Bartunek (Boston College); Don Foster (MP for Bath); Dr. Mike Lynch (CEO, Autonomy); Justin King (CEO, J. Sainsbury plc); Sir Peter Hendy (Commissioner of Transport for London); and Deborah Rowland (People Director, BBC Worldwide).

**c. Strategy and plans**

*The School's broad strategy on impact:* Our overall goal is the production of research outputs and outcomes with rigour and relevance. We believe that it is important to consider the potential of our research to inspire identifiable benefits and changes; and we see impact as an increasingly important and integral aspect of the careers of business and management academics. We do not believe that impact can arise from all our research, because some of the key knowledge innovations and contributions we make will remain theoretical. We are supporting themes in our current research in order to produce significant and far-reaching benefits. These include, for example, research on: strategic risk, relating to insurance (Adams) and to supply chain disruptions (Squire); personal pensions and annuity markets (Tonks); approaches and processes of innovation in companies (Salter); and sustainable business and consumption (Arnould).

*We plan to support the achievement and development of impact* (1) through the on-going implementation of our recruitment, retention and promotion strategy. We consider the potential for impact as an important criterion in the recruitment of new staff. Since 2011, we have integrated planning for and monitoring of impact into the annual staff development and performance review (SDPR) to connect ‘pathways to impact’ with output planning. The ability to demonstrate impact is one of the University's criteria for promotion. (2) Through a dedicated stream of funding for impact. We have increased the funding available for impact activities in support of dissemination and to expand the reach of research. (3) Through careful checking of impact as it progresses. We will ensure that the impact outcomes of all funded research are identified, recorded and monitored. (4) The School Impact and Information Officer will co-ordinate and facilitate academic staff members' understanding of impact, helping academics to learn how to monitor, record, develop and sustain it as a part of our research. This will include training in the School each semester both for grant applications and on the engagement of users of research (5) Our Impact Advisory Board (since 2013) will meet every six months to encourage staff to recognise what is of potential benefit to practitioners in their new research. (6) The School will increase its seed funding of impact in order to identify and resource good ideas that seem likely to lead to future impact. All of these approaches and their associated measures support the areas where significant benefits and changes are likely to be realised for future REFs. For example, our research with the Bank of England on pensions policy (Tonks: ‘Personal Pensions and Annuity Markets’) and research into supply chain disruptions (Squire: ‘Designing and Managing Resilient Supply Chains’).

*We maximise the potential for impact through executive development and management education:*

(1) The *Management Research into Action* (MaRiA) group has a role to develop links between research and its application through executive development and in-company engagement. For example, the School's 'Managing Talent for Competitive Advantage' programme, led by Visiting Professor Ron Collard (former Partner, PwC Singapore) in collaboration with Professor Swart (Director of WERC) and Paul Newton-Syms (former Global HR Director of Roche), applies research expertise in knowledge management and retention to the enhancement of corporate practice. (2) We create impact within organizations by training practitioners as researchers. Our research-based courses for scholarly practitioners support research that is applied directly into senior management roles and to solve business and organizational problems. The Doctor of Business Administration in Higher Education Management (DBA-HEM) provides an opportunity for research by senior managers in Higher Education, from universities across the globe. The Engineering Doctorate (Eng.D.) provides a vocationally oriented Doctorate in engineering that combines academic research in an industrial context with taught modules to create industry leading 'Research Engineers'.

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

The School has a tradition of scholarly quality and impact that can be seen in the influence of established research centres and in the determined application and development of individuals' contributions to knowledge. We are submitting impact case studies that represent long-term work within research centres, which have produced economic, organizational and policy benefits. For example, research in CRISPS has influenced significant changes in NHS procurement policy to deliver better value-for-money decisions and improve quality of life for patients. This research has shaped the Department of Health's Commercial Strategy encouraging a more strategic use of network resources to deliver both taxpayer and patient benefits (REF 3b: 'A Strategic Approach to Public Procurement'). We are also able to show the value of individual researchers' dedication over time to a specific research theme, and how this has led to significant changes in ways of thinking and working, as well as to new tools for practitioners. (For example, REF 3b: 'Measuring the Power of Emotion in Advertising' and REF 3b: 'A System for Improvement in Demand Forecasting').

The School's established mechanisms for generating impact (researcher/ practitioner forums, workshops for research participants, research consortia) mean that we have been able to maintain long-term relationships with corporations, the public sector and individual users that inspire, deliver and sustain impact. For example, The HR Directors' Alumni Group's dissemination of research results has provided the impetus for collaborations with organizations (REF 3b: 'Managing employee Commitment Across Organizational Boundaries'). Research recommendations on poor performance of service delivery that were initially presented at a dissemination workshop have led to a set of pragmatic operating principles for all Welsh Government interventions (REF 3b: 'Designing Effective Service Recovery Interventions'). Benefits of research for Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) arose both from the data collection and analysis completed within this organization and from their involvement in a research consortium where sensitive and confidential data could be discussed within a group of organizations that faced similar challenges (REF 3b: 'Redesigning strategic change to enhance employee engagement during intense organisational transformation').

Some of the impact case studies we have presented represent the established work of research centres where the economic and social impact of the research is mature. Others represent individuals' on-going work, where leading-edge ideas, practices, tools and frameworks in (e.g.) employee engagement, demand forecasting and advertising practice have continuing impetus. The School's impact case studies show both the economic and social importance of applied research in business and management; and the value of supporting impact as an embedded issue of key strategic importance in sustaining our dual focus on rigour and relevance.