Institution: University of St Andrews

Unit of Assessment: International Relations

a. Context

The main non-academic user groups, beneficiaries or audiences for the School's research include government agencies, policymakers, NGOs and other groups within civil societies, both secular and religious, spanning the domestic context of Scotland and the United Kingdom, to regional contexts from Europe, the Middle East to the Caucuses, and internationally at the level of the United Nations and World Trade Organization, among others. As an interdisciplinary School engaged with a subject matter that is international and global, looking outward from the perspective of foreign policy and domestic politics to the workings of the international system in a context of globalization, the potential forms of impact are wide-reaching.

The *main types of impact* specific to the School's research are social and policy-related. Forms of impact range from influence on the very categories by which particular international problems—such as human security and security ethics—are defined and discussed, to shaping the parameters of debate either at the level of policy or public attitudes, to formulating appropriate responses to particular cases or to the overall strategic direction of policies—such as UK defence policy and nuclear arms control, as well as state reform and conflict resolution in the Middle East and Central Asia. These forms of impact flow directly from the range of research themes that have been defined by the School, including conflict, peace and security; the evolving character of global and supra-national institutions; the interpenetration of civil societies and international relations; and area studies. The themes relate to research undertaken within the School's different centres, as well as to many projects that cut across these boundaries, as discussed in the Research Environment statement. In this respect, the research culture of the School, and its potential for impact, reflect a global environment that involves a range of actors which transcend and intersect with the boundaries of nation-states.

b. Approach to impact

The School's approach is to *influence policy and practice within and across states through diverse and innovative modes of engagement*. The School views impact as a critical component of high quality, ambitious and innovative research. Staff *interaction and engagement with key users, beneficiaries and audiences* has taken a variety of forms and, for the most part, pre-dates current discussions of impact. The Handa Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence (CSTPV) and the Institute of Middle East, Central Asia and the Caucasus Studies (MECACS) in particular, have a long history of engagement with key users, such as the Home Office in the former case, and policymakers in the Middle East and Caucuses in the latter. These links have grown out of research specific activities as well as requests from both government and citizen bodies for advice. Similarly, the other selected case studies submitted in REF 3b also have emerged from relationships initially developed over the past decade or so.

At the same time, however, staff continue to nurture new engagements out of existing relationships. This demonstrates the School's *agile approach to taking advantage of new opportunities*: The Scottish constitutional debate, for example, has led to on-going discussion of possible future engagements at the level of the Scottish government, for instance regarding matters relating to human rights standards in an independent Scotland. As a result, leading Scottish politicians have been invited to speak at the University and School staff have been encouraged to set up workshops with MSPs, civil servants and advisors. Members of the School collaborated extensively with government and third sector users of research during the REF period, such as:

- English acquired approximately £940k from the Home Office to cover Research Fellowships and Research Workshops in 2012-14 for CSTPV, which greatly enhance the

ability of the Centre to attract researchers and to facilitate knowledge exchange regarding terrorism/counter-terrorism policy.

- Brett has been an advisor to the Peace, Reconciliation and Development Programme of the United Nations Programme for Development in Bogota, Colombia, an international consultant for the Latin America and Caribbean Programme of the International Crisis Group, a member of the Council of Notables of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), a member of the Network of Experts on Latin America and the Caribbean for the United Nations Development Programme, and an advisor to Guatemalan NGOS in the context of the trial against former members of the country's military high command for genocide and crimes against humanity.

- I. Taylor has been engaged in a variety of consultations relating in particular to Chinese involvement in Africa, including the US Council on Foreign Relations, the United Nations Development Programme, the Norwegian Refugee Council and the House of Lords EU Committee Inquiry into conflict prevention in Sudan.

- Cummings has involved members of the Scottish Parliament, Scottish NGOs and Scottish enterprises in meetings with key international speakers on security and political change in the Middle East and Central Asia, and was invited as one of five Westerners to brief Myanmar universities on introducing nation-wide social science methodologies as the county begins to liberalize.

With regard to *supporting and enabling staff to achieve impact*, the School *made use of institutional facilities, expertise and resources* in undertaking these activities by encouraging staff to engage with University-led discussions on impact and the sharing of information, especially with those units which were involved in pilot schemes. The School's centres have also played an important role in facilitating impact, both in strengthening the possibilities for research for its individual members and encouraging outreach to user groups. MECACS, for instance, has encouraged inter-regional and cross-disciplinary collaborative work by its members, channelling and thereby accelerating the impact of its research on regional peace and reform initiatives (concerning Syria and the Kyrgyz Republic, for example) and acting as a critical intervening variable both as an institution and as a collection of individuals. It has enabled grants to be housed, speakers to be invited and comparative and interdisciplinary research to be undertaken. The combined effect of these initiatives has been sustained influence and benefits for diverse end-users. MECACS has influenced policy makers and benefitted broader society though direct participation in Western policy making, involvement in inter-group peacebuilding and advice on and participation in state and capacity building. The CSTPV is engaged in similar activities related to terrorism and political violence. It has wide-reaching connections to the policy world in the UK, and not least the Home Office, and it has encouraged the research of many people within the School, beyond those directly connected to the Centre.

c. Strategy and plans

The School's impact strategy is to build partnerships that both deliver knowledge and understanding of international politics and enhance the effectiveness of UK, regional and global policy and organizations. The School's strategic planning to maximise potential impact has three goals.

The first strategic goal is *to develop an evolving understanding of the meaning of impact that guides our development of research and external engagement.* This first goal in other words is one of *conceptualization.* Continuous reflective discussion about the relationship between emergent modes of impact and both current research expertise in the School underpins the development of an understanding of impact specific to the field of international relations and specific aspects (and challenges) of measurement, such as, for instance, identifying links between policy advice and policy or between training or educational efforts and changes to the parameters of debate on particular issues, either at the level of policy or public opinion. Such discussion and conceptualization are key mechanisms used *to support and enable impact.*

The second strategic goal is *to put the resulting understanding of impact into practice in*

encouraging future impact. As noted in section A, staff in the School are frequently called upon by key users and audiences because of their broad expertise in relation to a subject area, such as terrorism, or a national or regional specialization, such as Syria or the Caucuses, and have had significant engagement with user groups of various kinds. Yet harnessing this experience for future application requires formalizing and integrating the School's understanding of impact into work in progress. One of our plans to implement this goal is for all staff to submit at least one proposal for research funding each year. Given most funding proposals now require a discussion of potential impact, this element of the strategy supports a broader engagement of staff in these issues. The goal is both to encourage staff to think about impact as it relates to their future research plans, as well as to identify the impact of prior and existing research.

The third strategic goal is *to identify ways to improve access, utilization and engagement with both existing and new users, beneficiaries and audiences* that would be representative of the diverse streams of research conducted within the School. Staff increasingly are asked to address prospects for enhancing social participation and capturing opportunities for linking their research to political, economic, technological and institutional change, events, and policies. The School's plan for achieving this goal includes employing the Research Committee as an advisory panel about building external linkages during regular staff research interviews, and sponsoring staff-wide discussions about how the School's research knowledge may be translated specifically into national, regional and international contexts. These initiatives have helped spur a 'cultural' change about valuing quality, research-based impact.

In sum, the School's strategic planning regarding *enabling future linkages between research and impact* builds upon the goals identified above and aims to:
- enhance our ability to disseminate targeted research to pertinent sectors (governmental and non-governmental);
- identify opportunities to exercise effective social influence (e.g. with opinion leaders, mass media);
- develop further collaborations with practitioners and policy makers in areas in which we are uniquely placed to exert impact (in line with core areas of the School's expertise).

d. Relationship to case studies

The selection of impact case studies flows from the larger research environment and is a reflection of the range of potential impacts from a School whose subject matter intersects with many levels of global society. More specifically, the selection of case studies reflects the School's approach *aimed at influencing policy and practice within and across states through diverse and innovative modes of engagement*. Given the breadth of expertise in the School the impact of its research activities is by no means limited to a single issue, sector or country, and the selected case studies provide a focused cross-section of research reach and significance. Given these considerations, two centre cases, focusing on the CSTPV and MECACS, were chosen, as were two cases relating to the work of individuals within the School. From this selection, one case focuses on policy at the intersection of the international and regional levels, one on broad regional policy, one on UK policy and one on Scotland specifically.

Taking these factors into account the case from McMullin, for example, highlights impact on what is arguably the most significant international organization (UN) and its post-conflict engagements within Africa. The MECACS impact case is also regional but focused on the Middle East and Caucuses and highlights multiple dimensions of impact ranging from state policy-making to civil society. The CSTPV case study is more subject specific relating to terrorism and political violence, but with specific impact on the UK, while the case study from Walker is located in the Scottish context against the background of potential independence, while engaging with an issue of global consequence, i.e. the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The impact cases thus reflect many different levels of impact in a School that grapples with a range of problems and contexts in a globalizing world.