

Institution: University of Manchester

Unit of Assessment: 20 (Law)

a. Context

Law at Manchester is one of the largest and longest-established centres for legal and socio-legal scholarship in the UK with approximately 70 academic and research staff. We have a strong tradition and long track record of engaging with non-academic audiences for our research. Extending our influence beyond the academy – locally, nationally and internationally – is a key goal of our research, supported by the wider commitment of the University of Manchester to impact and social responsibility.

Core beneficiaries of our work have been legal professionals, policy-makers and legislators, and these groups remain key users of our research. Our strong links with NGOs, campaigning groups and professional bodies in different fields are increasingly important to the achievement of impact. Specific beneficiaries relate to our principal areas of research activity. The Criminology and Criminal Justice group (CCCJ) has strong links with the Home Office and Ministry of Justice, with criminal justice practitioners and with a range of specialist NGOs. The bioethics and medical law group (CSEP) interacts with a large number of health care and research regulators and policy-making bodies, as well as with practitioner communities in relation to medical litigation and mental health law. The regulation group (ManReg) has a more diverse set of beneficiaries, reflecting its cross-sectoral activities, with examples including policy makers and regulators in the financial, legal, health, environment, consumer, media and security fields. Other users of our research relate to particular areas of expertise: for example, the Department for Education for **Harris's** work on dispute resolution and Special Educational Needs and the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills for **Howells'** work on consumer contract law.

The main types of impact achieved by our research include:

- *Impact on public policy, law and services* – (e.g. shaping legislative and policy change).
- *Impact on practitioners and professional services* – (e.g. informing development of professional standards, guidelines and training).
- *Impact on health and welfare* – (e.g. shaping development of policy and practice in relation to medical ethics and the regulation of medical practice).
- *Impact on the environment* – (e.g. contributing to improved design of environmental policy/regulation).

b. Approach to impact

The foundation for generating significant impact is original and high-quality research. Our vibrant research environment (detailed in REF5), which aims to nurture research excellence, is the essential bedrock to our approach to impact.

We utilise a range of mechanisms to engage with users of our research. We particularly focus on building long-term relationships with key users/beneficiaries, in order to maximise the sustainability of these engagements, primarily in the three ways described below. We actively use the strong institutional support for the promotion of impact (described below) in order to enable and facilitate relationship-building and other impact work (e.g. funding attendance at relevant meetings and events, explicit recognition of impact activities in our academic workload model).

1. Relationship-building

i) Research commissioned and funded by users/beneficiaries

Conducting research directly commissioned by research users helps strong relationships to be built. Commissioned work tends to be very closely aligned with users' needs and findings can have

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direct influence. Examples here include **Stephen's** series of studies on the regulation of legal services provision funded by the Faculty of Advocates, the Scottish Government Health Directorates and the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission, all of which were commissioned in order to inform policy development. Similarly, Spencer's research on barriers to the employment of problem drug users, funded by the UK Drug Policy Commission (UKDPC), was commissioned to feed into a programme of policy and campaigning work by the UKDPC in that area. The research team participated in a number of events organised by the UKDPC, involving senior policy-makers up to ministerial level. Most recently, on the initiative of academics in CCCJ, a PhD studentship focusing on understanding the 2011 riots has been co-funded by Manchester City Council for the period 2012-15, as the Council seeks to build evidence-based local strategies for preventing future public disorder of that kind.

ii) Invitations to advise or contribute

Invitations from research users often arise based on the recognised research expertise of our academics. Our research centres play a key role in making our expertise widely known by raising the profile of our research beyond the institution. Again, these types of relationship allow for direct influence and impact that is closely aligned with users' agendas and needs. Examples include **Brazier's** invitation to advise the Human Tissue Authority, **Howells'** advising of the European Parliament on consumer rights, **Stephen's** appointment as Special Adviser to the Justice Committee of the Scottish Parliament on the Legal Services (Scotland) Bill in 2010 and **Seddon's** participation in 2009 in an External Advisory Group for the National Audit Office's work on 'Tackling Problem Drug Use'.

iii) Participation in networks, organisations and committees

As with ii), these invitations also typically result from the acknowledged expertise and reputation of individual researchers. The types of relationships that develop are different, tending to involve less direct but more wide-ranging influence and impact. Examples include **Holm's** membership of the UK Stem Cell Bank Steering Committee, **Maogoto's** membership of the Advisory Council for the Global Institute for the Prevention of Aggression and **Howells'** participation in the Consumer Justice Enforcement Forum (CoJEF) funded by the European Commission.

2. Engagement and communication

In addition to relationship-building, we also encourage and support a range of engagement and communication activities. We seek to contribute to public debate on legal and socio-legal issues in a number of ways. For example, a public lecture series was initiated in 2010, with three lectures taking place each year, delivered by academics on their current research and publicised extensively outside the University to attract a diverse audience. Academic staff are also involved in significant amounts of media work, internationally, nationally and locally, and including TV, radio and print media. For example, Aldridge et al's ESRC-funded research on youth gangs led to over 20 media interviews, including the front page of *The Guardian* and a live interview on the BBC Six O'Clock News. A growing number of academics and research groupings in Law are using new social media, running and contributing to blogs (e.g. **Brassington**, **Seddon**) and using Twitter (e.g. **Seddon**, CCCJ, ManReg), to communicate with research users in more accessible forms and to take part in public debate.

3. Support and resources

Increasingly, support for impact activities is built into applications for research funding. For example, **Gadd's** ESRC-funded project on domestic abuse included provision for a range of impact work. **Brazier** obtained AHRC follow-on funding to support the dissemination and implementation of findings from her project on 'The impact of the criminal process on health care ethics and practice' and this is now used by AHRC as a case study for public policy engagement.

Internally, Law staff can apply to the Research Support Fund for small amounts of funding to support impact activities (e.g. for travel/accommodation, organising an event etc). Media training is provided centrally by the University and several staff members have attended. Knowledge transfer and impact achievements are now included in criteria for staff promotion, ensuring that impact activity is incentivised at individual level. They are also in criteria for recruitment of new staff so that

our capacity for achieving impact can grow over time. The appointment in late 2012 of **Lee**, a pioneer in the field of law and development, is a good example of the significance we now place on impact in recruitment, in addition to research excellence. Impact activity is also supported through mentoring arrangements and the annual Performance and Development Review (PDR) system which all staff participate in. Information about individual impact activities is collected on an annual basis through the University-wide Research Profiling Exercise and a collective assessment of impact achievements is made at School-level as part of the Annual Performance Review process conducted across the Faculty of Humanities.

c. Strategy and plans

The University of Manchester has a long tradition of seeking to apply knowledge to make a difference in society. The University's *Strategic Vision 2020*, which drives planning and investment across the institution, identifies social responsibility as one of our three core goals, placing impact very clearly at the heart of institutional strategy. The University's research strategy includes impact as one of three central pillars.

Within Law, our strong commitment to impact has been reflected in research strategies and plans for some time: knowledge transfer was identified as a strategic aim in RAE2008 and restated in our 2010-15 research strategy. Our current strategy, which is refreshed annually, includes the integration of impact activities into a culture of research excellence, so that our commitment to provide a world-class research environment (see REF5) complements our promotion of impact. The three main research centres – CCCJ, CSEP and ManReg – all prioritise impact, with ManReg explicitly including engagement with policy-makers and practitioners as one of its strategic aims. Our newest research grouping, the Law & Development Institute headed up by **Lee**, has a similarly explicit commitment to impact as one of its core functions.

Strategic vision

Without compromising on excellence and creativity in research, in the next five years we want to be recognised as a leading centre for impact in the field, to ensure that our research contributes to the wider social, economic and cultural fabric. Through our work in areas such as international development, global drug policy, environmental regulation and organized crime, we aim to make significant contributions to meeting some of the 'grand challenges' of the twenty-first century.

Goals

As indicators of our progress towards this vision over the next five years, we expect to see a range of intermediate outcomes. These will include increased income from work commissioned by research users, increased numbers of invitations to advise research users, enhanced levels of participation in relevant networks and committees, that all PGR students receive training in impact and engagement, and an expansion of the scale and reach of our public engagement and media work. The latter will include development of a comprehensive social media strategy which is becoming an increasingly critical dimension of public engagement and for interactions with a range of potential beneficiaries of our research.

Mechanisms

The approach to impact outlined above in section b will provide the framework and base for achieving this ambitious vision. Specific mechanisms will include the building of an impact support service, comprised of a programme of training and workshops, systems for monitoring and recording impact activities and achievements, and the provision of dedicated administrative support for impact. More generally, impact work is built into processes for annual review of staff and of research centres and into the University's promotions criteria to incentivize academics to 'think impact' and to encourage innovation.

Resources

New investments will be made in administrative support, the establishment of recording systems and a training programme for researchers. The Faculty of Humanities has a dedicated impact support team and has recently appointed a Business Engagement Manager who manages

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relationships with a range of private, public and third sector collaborative partners. There is also an annual Faculty competition for research support (SIRF) which includes a specific call for funding for activities to promote impact. At UoA level, continued investment in our Research Support Fund will ensure ongoing support for impact activities. We will also be able to benefit from the ESRC-funded Impact Accelerator Account Pilot (£500k) which comes on stream from autumn 2013. More generally, staff will also be supported in leveraging in external resources, for example, applying for follow-on funding.

d. Relationship to case studies

All five of the case studies demonstrate how Law's approach to impact can be successful and represent examples of that approach which have resulted in impact of reach and significance.

Each is rooted in high-quality research: e.g. **Thomas's** based on research which produced a prize-winning monograph, **Harris's** on a project rated as 'outstanding' by the ESRC.

The case studies utilised a range of the mechanisms for supporting impact and, more specifically, were all built to some extent on the establishment of relationships with users/beneficiaries. The three main mechanisms for relationship-building, described in section b above, were all relevant.

i) Research commissioned and funded by users/beneficiaries

Thomas's case was based partly on research on family visitor appeals funded by the Home Office, a potential user of the research, and he was seconded there in 2001 to conduct the study. Similarly, part of Smith's underpinning research was funded by Greater Manchester Police.

ii) Invitations to advise or contribute

Invitations to advise users/beneficiaries have also been important for the case studies. For example, in Smith's case study, the invitation by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights to serve as a rapporteur to an expert workshop on police complaints mechanisms, proved to be a crucial step in the pathways to impact, notably the reach of the impact across Europe and beyond. In a similar way, **Harris's** involvement in advising the DfE on the drafting of a new Code of Practice on SEN proved important to the delivery of impact from his research.

iii) Participation in networks, organisations and committees

Invitations to participate have also been important mechanisms. **Brazier's** invitation to Chair a Working Party established by the Nuffield Council of Bioethics was an essential stage in the development of pathways to impact from her large body of influential research in the field.

Extensive media work has flowed from most of the underpinning research for the case studies. For example, Smith has given several radio and newspaper interviews, **Brazier** has been regularly approached by the media and **Thomas** published a piece on his research in *The Times*.

The use of external and internal funding to provide resources for impact activity was also important for several of the case studies, including for **Thomas** (external funding from Nuffield helped support a roundtable seminar with Asylum Tribunal judges) and McCann (internal funding helped to support a visit to Manchester by McCann's collaborator, Dr Murray).

Overall, the experiences of these successful case studies of impact indicate that our developing approach to nurturing and supporting impact has been very effective. We will draw on these experiences in the future development of our approach to embedding impact activity within Law's research culture (see previous section) in order to ensure that it is sustainable in the long term.