

**Institution: University of Leeds**

**Unit of Assessment: 20 (Law)**

**a. Context**

The School of Law (SoL) has a strong record and commitment to research with relevance beyond the academy and to knowledge exchange activities which pre-date the recent impact agenda. Its Centres have histories of ensuring the application of their research to legal and policy agendas and have embedded reciprocal relationships with research users facilitating the co-production of research, knowledge exchange and research funding/access. More recently, user engagement and impact across the life-course of research projects has accelerated, developing into a mainstream element of the research process, embedded from inception to final dissemination, and cementing and extending the SoL's collaborative ethos to research with non-academic research users.

The SoL appreciates the diverse pathways to impact facilitating and supporting a range of activities to translate its research into societal benefits. As its case studies illustrate, the SoL collaborates with a multiplicity of research users internationally, nationally and locally including: *public and governmental bodies* (Case Studies (CS) 1, 2 & 4); *supranational and inter-governmental* (CS3), *commercial* (CS2), *non-governmental and Third Sector* (CS1) organisations; *judiciary, magistrates and the legal profession* (CS2 &4); *professional associations* (CS1); *the media*; and *the public*.

The SoL works to benefit society in the following spheres: *The practical application of law*: all Centres engage in this area of work exemplified by McCormack's work on secured transactions (Scottish Law Commission DP151, 2011). *Official policy and guidance*: all of the case studies exemplify the ways in which the SoL has shaped and influenced government and supranational and intergovernmental bodies. Cram's work on Contempt of Court provides a further example (Law Commission Consultation Paper 207, 2012). *Justice practices*: Centre for Criminal Justice Studies (CCJS) has improved criminal justice practices e.g. policing and anti-social behaviour (CS1), sentence implementation (CS2) and counter-terrorism (CS4) and judicial directions in rape trials (Ellison, Crown Court Bench Book, 2010). *Diversity*: Centre for European Law and Legal Studies (CELLS) has informed European legal and policy frameworks relating to equality and discrimination law and practice (CS3). *Commercial practice*: Centre for Business Law and Practice (CBLP) has influenced the law relating to business practices particularly insolvency (McCormack: Re Stanford International Bank Ltd [2011] Ch 33); administrators practices (Keay: Re OMP Leisure Ltd [2008] BCC 67 at [6]) and Directors' duties to creditors (Keay: Eastford Ltd v Gillespie [2010] CSOH 132 at [22]). CCJS works in partnership with private sector companies delivering criminal justice services (CS2).

**b. Approach to impact**

The SoL maximises the impact of its research for the benefit of society by supporting and developing a broad range of external partnerships and channels of communication to enhance knowledge exchange and by fostering an outward-facing culture that connects research to non-academic user communities and encourages the co-production of research. It recognises that influential legal and criminal justice research encompasses and extends beyond applied research or the utilisation of research in law, policy and practice to influencing public perceptions and policy debates through the media and other forms of dissemination, public engagement and partnerships.

Impact-related activities are driven through Centres, which utilise the most appropriate pathways and user groups, forging strong and enduring partnerships with agencies and individuals which facilitate and inform impact activities and enable a collaborative approach to the design and execution of research. Centres engage in routine activities (funded by the SoL) including: widely disseminated annual reports; seminars, lectures and other events involving research users as co-organisers, speakers and participants; membership of local agencies' steering committees; and, national and international PGR placements. Links between the CBLP and CCJS and non-academic partners are facilitated by formal Advisory Boards comprising senior representatives from regional law firms and relevant professional organisations.

The approach to impact has been multifaceted aiming to maximise opportunities for staff to engage with user communities and the benefits for wider society. It has involved exploiting University of Leeds (UoL) and Faculty initiatives and encouraging and facilitating individuals' endeavours.

**The impact infrastructure:** The SoL has strong support from the Faculty and UoL directed at

## Impact template (REF3a)

capitalising on impact opportunities. The Director of Research and Innovation, a dedicated Research Impact Assistant (0.2 fte) and a Research Support Administrator work in the SoL in partnership with the Faculty Research and Innovation Office and its Impact Officer (0.5 fte). Together they support staff to develop the impact potential of research bids and projects, exploit opportunities and maximise impact activities. Impact resources and training are provided by the UoL and Faculty and the SoL runs impact events, augmented by intranet impact-related resources.

The UoL has a long-term commitment to impact and the SoL is a leader and key participant in its strategic initiatives designed to promote impact. Staff are members of sector-facing innovation hubs, part-funded by Higher Education Innovation Funding (HEIF), which build and strengthen meaningful partnerships with research users. This includes active participation in the Professional Services and the Social Care Sector Hubs. Likewise, the UoL's Transformation Fund – benefitting from institutional investment of over £1 million (2011-15) - has been used to establish cross-disciplinary research initiatives notably the 'Building Sustainable Societies' (BSS) project, via which the Security and Justice research group (Director, Crawford) has forged strategic partnerships with user communities. The Leeds Social Science Institute (LSSI) provides infrastructure support to further promote engagement with end-users through partnership building and engagement 'master classes' e.g. the SoL has actively participated in its placement programme in which PGRs work in local justice agencies over a 10 week period. In addition, it has exploited ESRC White Rose DTC collaborative awards and DTC engagement funding to foster PGR studentship awards that embed external partner supervision.

**Strategic investment:** Centres' activities are promoted and supported by the SoL's Strategic Development Fund and Impact and Innovation Fund (£25k pa in total). These are allocated competitively for activities which promote the co-production of research, exploit dissemination opportunities and develop research links with end-users. For example, Centres regularly organise events in partnership with, and with involvement of, research users e.g. 'Reforming the European Insolvency Regulation – a legal and policy perspective' (CBLP, 2013) and 'Private Sector Involvement in Criminal Justice' (CCJS, 2012). The SoL has supplemented its own funding by successfully exploiting HEIF to: organise events to engage end-users in its research e.g. conferences on 'Responding to Anti-Social Behaviour' (2012) and 'Mentoring in Criminal Justice' (2011); disseminate findings in the UK and abroad e.g. CS4; and produce outputs targeted at end-users e.g. short video presentations made available on the internet.

**Competitive knowledge exchange funding:** Where possible, the capture of external funds is used to foster impact e.g. through ESRC research seminar series - two of which have been led by the SoL since 2008 and a third series was organised jointly with Sheffield University. They have resulted in on-going collaborations with end-users and steered government practice e.g. Hucklesby's seminar series led to a jointly organised event with CLINKS and the National Offender Management Service running workshops for third sector providers to discuss evidence gathering requirements and techniques. Similarly, the SoL has exploited funding from Worldwide Universities Network (WUN) for impact activities in other jurisdictions (e.g. CS4 in Australia).

**Communication with research users:** Research users are involved in all stages of the research process based upon a co-production model e.g. as initiators, funders and collaborators of projects, and partners in dissemination activities (see CS2 & 3). Ensuring that research is accessible, comprehensible and user friendly is a key aspect of the SoL strategy. It is facilitated by the production of briefing papers, short video presentations, articles in non-academic journals, the delivery of papers at practitioner conferences and the organisations of events. Dissemination opportunities in non-academic fora have also been maximised through engagement with the traditional media and utilising the web and social media, e.g. via the Security and Justice blog and CCJS twitter feed. Such activities are supported by SoL and UoL funding and training.

### c. Strategy and plans

Beyond REF 2014 the goal is to shape law, policy and practice in public spheres and in commercial and not for profit organisations in areas of expertise to bring about safer, fairer and more inclusive societies in the UK and beyond based upon human rights and public interest principles. Strategic objectives and sustained investment will further embed a culture of impact, ensuring that it pervades all research activities enabling the SoL to reach out to its key user communities. The following mechanisms are central components of the SoL's planned enhancement of impact-related activities. Progress towards these objectives will be reviewed

regularly against a set of qualitative and quantitative benchmarks by the Research Committee, augmented by case study authors (as impact mentors).

**Partnerships with key user groups** will be developed further, expanding and strengthening their involvement throughout the research process. Formal strategic partnerships with key organisations including research mediators (e.g. think-tanks and NGOs) and individuals will be developed to strengthen the SoL's ethos of the co-production of research e.g. via the N8 Partnership Crawford has forged a strategic partnership with northern Police and Crime Commissioners and police forces generating co-produced research funding bids following a CCJS conference in 2013. Greater involvement in University-wide initiatives including the Transformation Fund, Sector Hubs and the LSSI will assist in fostering these and wider strategic alliances.

**Impact activities will be diversified and internationalised** by investing internal resources, financial and administrative, and exploiting institutional mechanisms to support the impact potential of the SoL's research. Developing areas of impact in which staff, as individuals or groups, are involved (e.g. regulation of the body, food security, intellectual property, public order policing, insolvency and corporate governance) will be fully supported. Particular attention will be focused on improving the breadth and effectiveness of knowledge exchange in other jurisdictions drawing on lessons from current activities in international arenas, including Walker's work with the Australian Government (CS4) and Subedi's work as an UN Special Rapporteur.

**Increase and diversify external income for knowledge exchange and impact** by encouraging and supporting staff, via existing structures and mechanisms (see REF5), to apply for external funding including ESRC/AHRC Knowledge Exchange, WUN grants and European schemes. The latter include European Commission Action Grants in which staff have already had success e.g. Lawson and the Mental Health Disability Advocacy Center's project investigating access to justice for children with disabilities (€1.5 million) and Hucklesby's electronic monitoring project (€622k).

**Recruitment and staffing** policy and practices have been revised during the review period to ensure effective engagement with the impact agenda. Recruitment decisions take account of the capacity and track record of staff to work with user communities and generate impact although research excellence remains the key driver. An impact dimension has been embedded in staff review processes e.g. Annual Research Plans (see REF5) and UoL promotion criteria have been revised to give greater prominence to knowledge exchange and external engagement activities. Mentoring and other training encourages and fosters end-user engagement and these activities will be strengthened by the involvement of current case study authors who are taking a leading role in championing impact activities, becoming 'impact mentors' advising staff and PGRs.

**The engagement strategy** is being reviewed to enhance strategic contact with user communities and dissemination opportunities and to ensure the most effective use of websites, social media and open access storage systems, including the White Rose repository.

**More systematic approaches to tracking impact** are being further embedded into SoL structures and procedures following a review of current practices and lessons learnt about the complex task of tracking impact during REF preparations. A range of methodologies including web searches/monitoring and searches of relevant databases will be used to monitor outcomes.

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

The case studies have been selected to showcase the impact activity in the SoL and exemplify its established tradition of end-user engagement with its research which has flourished and been supported by the SoL and UoL. They demonstrate that research users are co-producers in the research process from beginning to end having: initiated and funded research leading to impacts beyond the initial projects (CS1 & 2), been Advisory Board members (CS1), research participants (CS1-3) and recipients of research communicated via appropriate channels to user group audiences (CS1-4). The SoL has supported case study authors through funding (CS1 & 4) and the employment of a Research Impact Assistant to help trace impact - lessons from which will assist in improving future tracking of impact. The approach has also been flexible enabling researchers to exploit opportunities when they arise. The case studies have, in turn, enriched understanding of the diverse pathways and barriers to impact and have strengthened the SoL approach to generating future impacts ensuring that it continues to build upon its solid foundation to improve and diversify impact performance and to shape law, policies and practice to bring about significant societal benefits.