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| <b>Institution: UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON</b>   |
| <b>Unit of Assessment: LAW</b>  |
| <p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>The organisation of legal research was transformed in 2010 with the creation of the Law Research Centre (“LRC”) which brought together Law and cognate Social Sciences thereby providing the basis for closer working connections between, inter alia, criminology, criminal justice and commercial law. Research overseen by the LRC is based on two broadly defined research clusters, <i>Commercial Law</i> and <i>Criminal Justice</i>. One of the main objectives of the LRC is to ensure that the research conducted under its auspices is published and disseminated beyond the sometimes narrow confines of academia. Examples of this type of dissemination include <b>Glover</b> whose research led him to provide advice the Maritime and Coastguard Agency; <b>Brooker</b>, whose research has been presented to the Civil Mediation Council; <b>Haynes</b> who gave evidence to the House of Lords’ European Union Committee on Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism; <b>Walton</b>’s work on pre-packaged administration which has led to his being consulted by the Government appointed independent review of pre-packs. Funded work undertaken by <b>Moss</b> and <b>Waddington</b> investigates the problems associated with women and children who sleep rough. The impact of this research has been recognised both by the European Parliament and by frontline organisations working with the homeless.</p>   |
| <p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p><b>The unit’s approach to impact during the period 2008-2013:</b></p> <p>Impact is a significant driver for Law research policy at the University. Impactful research is encouraged and planned for strategically to take advantage of the individual and collective expertise of LRC members. All members of the LRC are encouraged individually to carry out research which is capable of producing impact and also, where appropriate, research clusters are encouraged to conduct collective research with an impactful target. The extensive, externally funded empirical work carried out in recent years into the plight of homeless individuals is indicative of the LRC’s commitment to collective impactful research. It demonstrates a willingness to carry out research projects deemed necessary by policy makers within the UK and across the EU.</p> <p>The approach of the LRC to legal research is based upon a philosophy that research outputs should benefit some section of society, whether that be consumers of legal services, public authorities or the public generally. Many of the publications by members of the LRC are designed to influence or inform debate on policy issues and also complex technical legal problems. The criterion of “impact” of research forms a part of the process for the evaluation of research conducted in the LRC and the plans prepared by experienced and new career researchers. Competitively awarded sabbatical support and annual appraisal include an assessment of the prospective research impact of any proposed project. Proposed research plans which can display an impact outside of academia are favoured ahead of those which cannot.</p> |
| <p><b>c. Strategy and plans</b></p> <p><b>Strategy and plans for supporting impact:</b></p> <p>The University has taken a strategic role in supporting the development of impact. In 2010, with the creation of the LRC, its members took part in a survey of research activity organised by the University, which enabled the identification of potential impact studies at a relatively early stage of the REF period. Following this review, the LRC decided that, in order to demonstrate the variety</p>   |

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and extent of impactful research carried on by the members, one impact case study should come from the *Commercial Law* area of research activity and the other from the *Criminal Justice* specialism.

The first case study is based upon the work of **Walton** and is an example of the impact of black letter law research carried out by a member of the LRC. The LRC uses its budget to allocate resources to various research projects. In making such allocations, encouragement is given to research which has or may have practical or policy implications. The majority of the research carried out by members of the *Commercial Law* cluster tends to be doctrinal, black letter law research. As *Commercial Law*, as broadly defined, is an area which changes and develops constantly, it is recognised that by encouraging members of the LRC to conduct research on new developments or to target current issues, the chances of impactful research are increased. The strategy for targeting such research is to ensure that relevant members of the LRC attend both academic and practitioner conferences, create and maintain links with the relevant professions and government bodies and consider every year during the appraisal round, identifying areas of law where impactful research may be carried on. This policy is showing signs of bearing fruit as members of the LRC use their expertise to influence the development of the law, policy and practice in their respective areas.

The second case study relies upon extensive, externally funded empirical research and is indicative of the commitment of members of the LRC to attract external funding for empirical research projects intended to impact upon policy and practice. The research underpinning the second case study is led by **Moss** but also involves other members of CISPP. The University created CISPP in 2009 as a strategic group, which draws on staff from across the University who share a professional interest in the work of the uniformed protective services. The aim of CISPP is to develop and promote the University's increasing activity across the fields of, inter alia, criminal justice and criminology. One objective of CISPP is to work closely with various government and non-government agencies in influencing policy and practice developments. Its policy-focused research on domestic violence and related topics has been a major plank of the University's legal research since 2000.

The re-organisation of Law research following RAE 2008 continued the emphasis on practical research. The creation of CISPP, following the retirement of Professor Cook, continued to build upon the established expertise in bidding for and securing research monies. This strategy has been successful and will continue.

A number of members of the *Commercial Law* section of LRC have applied for research funding with the active support of the more experienced members of the *Criminal Justice* section. This collegiate approach is beginning to bear fruit with **Walton's** recent successful bid in relation to the Jackson reforms.

Our research strategy is to make new appointments which will produce impactful research both at the national and international level. The appointment of **Brooks** at a professorial level has been made to link the research carried out by members of the *Commercial Law* and *Criminal Justice* clusters and is designed to increase the prospect of impactful research on social policy and its links with the legal regulation of fraud and corruption. **Cox's** appointment brings a new area of historical legal research to the LRC which it is hoped will impact the debate on, for example, the areas of sentencing, imprisonment and restorative justice.

#### d. Relationship to case studies

**The relationship between the unit's approach to impact and the submitted case studies** (recognising that individual case studies may not relate directly to that approach given the underpinning research covers a timeframe longer than the assessment period):

Researchers in the Law submission are all members of the LRC, which oversees legal research

**Impact template (REF3a)**

involving different research specialisms and diverse doctrinal, comparative, interdisciplinary and socio-legal methodologies. The LRC encourages both black letter and empirical legal research.

The first submitted case study, from the *Commercial Law* section of the LRC, was a product of actively encouraging **Walton** to attend practitioner conferences and to enable identification of areas where impactful research can be carried out. The LRC encourages its members to forge close links with the profession and relevant government bodies so that areas of law and practice which are uncertain can benefit from an insightful academic consideration. Although there are no guarantees that such research will be recognised by the courts or the government, the LRC strongly believes it remains a primary responsibility of academics to inform and, where appropriate, influence the development of law and practice.

It was evident from previous RAE submissions that the most tangible impactful research was being carried out by those colleagues within what became the *Criminal Justice* section of the LRC. The second case study shows a continuing trend which existed prior to the RAE 2008 and will continue beyond REF 2014. A specific comparison may be made as a clear example of this continuum. The previous work of the Policy Research Institute (the predecessor of CISPP referred to in RAE 2008) under the leadership of Professor Cook led to impactful research being funded by the Home Office into Domestic Violence. Under the leadership of Professors **Moss** and **Waddington**, CISPP has conducted research into the use of video clips in evaluating the public's perception of police conduct, funded by ESRC and research funded through DAPHNE III into the plight of Women Rough Sleepers. The success of the last mentioned project has led to further DAPHNE funding for a project examining the position of Children Rough Sleepers.