

Institution: University of Bedfordshire

Unit of Assessment: 20 – Law

1. Overview

This submission covers the School of Law and its research centre, the Centre for Research in Law (CRiL). The School of Law has not made a submission to any previous research assessment exercise, and should thus be regarded as a new unit for REF purposes.

Research activities within the School of Law are organised around CRiL, established in 2011 to serve as the internal focal point for our researchers, an institutional reference point, and a point of contact with the wider academic community and non-academic actors.

Starting in 2009, the School of Law, in line with the strategic plan of the University, has made the development of a strong research profile one of its core priorities. To that end, it has made significant investments, and continues to do so. Over the assessment period, those investments have resulted in a dramatic expansion of the research base within the School and of the scholarly resources and physical infrastructure supporting research. These human and financial resources have been employed to build a dynamic and internationally recognised research environment which complements CRiL's growing profile for quality research.

2. Research strategy

Research activities within the School of Law and CRiL are driven by an ambitious research strategy adopted in May 2011. The strategic aims include enhancing the vitality of our research community and ensuring its sustainability well beyond the end of the current assessment period. The strategy identifies four Key Strategic Aims (KSAs):

KSA 1: Improving the quality and quantity of our research.

A number of drivers have been put in place to ensure that our research targets are met, and that the knowledge created has impact, in particular by being of tangible benefit to society. These include the recruitment and staffing policies, and the staff development activities described in section 3.1 below. In addition, as also discussed further below, the University and the School of Law provide full support for activities organised by CRiL, as well as for the activities of individual researchers, including the provision of funds for research assistance and to facilitate conference attendance.

KSA 2: Developing a vital and sustainable research environment.

The creation of the position of Research Director in 2009 and the establishment of CRiL in 2011 have put research firmly at the core of the School's activities, on an equal footing with teaching and learning. In order to ensure full coordination and integration between the activities of CRiL and those of the School, CRiL is headed by the School's Director of Research.

CRiL's activities, which include the *CRiL Research Seminars* (section 5.d) and *Research Development Workshops* (section 3.1.b), the expansion and consolidation of our doctoral programme (section 3.2) and visiting fellows scheme (section 5.c), have contributed greatly to the creation of a vibrant research culture within the School of Law.

In order to maximise the opportunities for constructive exchange of ideas within CRiL, researchers have formed several interest groups in which members of staff, research students and visiting fellows working on related topics are able to discuss aspects of their research, identifying overlaps and synergies. The establishment of these interest groups, which meet monthly during term time, has greatly assisted in identifying opportunities for collaboration between researchers, including in the making of funding applications, thereby contributing to the consolidation of a healthy research culture.

KSA 3: Attaining national and international visibility and recognition as a productive and dynamic research community.

A range of measures have been adopted in order to enhance the visibility of research carried out within CRiL, including:

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- Support for dissemination activities: CRiL researchers are fully supported by CRiL and the School of Law in the dissemination of the findings of their research to the wider academic community and to non-academic audiences. Support is provided both in the form of teaching relief and through funding for dissemination activities. Policies governing the grant of financial support for conference attendance ensure that resources are distributed in a transparent and equitable manner. Researchers have been actively encouraged to apply for funds to the full extent needed and all CRiL researchers have made use of these funds in the past three years. Starting from the 2013/14 academic year, each researcher has been allocated a personal research allowance of £1,200.
- Organisation of public events: CRiL regularly organises events open to colleagues from other institutions, as well as to the wider community (see below);
- Online visibility: the CRiL website (www.beds.ac.uk/research/bmri/centres/cril) went live in May 2011 and provides an online presence for the activities of our researchers and of the Centre itself. In addition, the UoB Repository permits pre-publication versions of papers by staff members to be read by the wider academic community. Members of staff have also been encouraged to establish individual online presences by creating personal profiles on websites dedicated to the online dissemination of scholarly research, such as SSRN and Academia.edu.

KSA 4: Preparing our students to become knowledgeable and well-trained researchers.

A number of steps have already been adopted, and further measures are planned, in order to increase student interest in legal research and to nurture future researchers. Those measures include the expansion and consolidation of CRiL's doctoral programme (section 3.2).

3. People

3.1 Staffing strategy and staff development

(a) Staffing strategy and recruitment policies

The School of Law recruits in accordance with the equality and diversity agenda of the University. From 2009 onwards the School, with the full support of the University, has invested heavily in order to establish itself as an active, relevant and sustainable research community. The principal element of these investments has been the recruitment of new active researchers. The post of Director of Research was created in late 2009, and since then has been occupied by two experienced researchers. A proven track record of high quality publications (or, in the case of early career researchers, evidence of strong research potential) is now regarded as an essential requirement in the recruitment of all new members of academic staff, a process in which the Director of Research is closely involved. As a result of the new recruitment policy, the number of research-active academics in the Law School has increased dramatically over the assessment period. Since 2009, the School has recruited ten new members of staff, all of whom are research active. The School's strong recruitment and retention record clearly reflects the overall drive towards the creation of a thriving research community. Finally, the support provided for research, coupled with the fact that research performance is now also taken into account in the context of academic promotions, has resulted in members of staff who had not previously engaged in research (or had stopped doing so) becoming research active.

(b) Staff development

A range of measures and activities aimed at ensuring the development of the research profile of our members of staff have been adopted by the School of Law, CRiL, and the wider University.

- Workload allocation: the School of Law adopts a workload allocation model which aims to ensure the professional development of its researchers. A weekly period of research time is ring-fenced for all research-active members of staff; an appropriate allowance is also given to inactive members of staff who express an intention to engage in research. The amount of research time to which each member of staff is entitled is agreed in advance of each academic year. The process of allocation of research time has been rendered more effective and transparent with the introduction of Individual Research Plans, agreed on a yearly basis

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between each researcher and the Director of Research, and approved by the Head of School.

- Teaching relief and research leave: in addition to the weekly research time allocated to each researcher, the Law School provides teaching relief and periods of research leave for those researchers who, due to submission deadlines or other relevant research-related circumstances, require an uninterrupted period of work on a specific project.

- Research development activities:

CRiL organises a range of professional development activities which focus on research. All members of staff and PhD students, including visiting lecturers, take part in the *CRiL Research Seminars*. Members of staff are given the opportunity to present their ongoing research to colleagues, obtaining constructive feedback in a supportive environment.

In addition, the *Research Development Workshops* organised by CRiL provide valuable information on the more practical aspects of research, such as sources of funding for legal research; the preparation of research proposals and funding applications; publication strategies; the REF; and how to design research so as to maximise its societal impact. Some of the workshops have been led by the Director of CRiL, whilst others have involved external experts.

CRiL researchers also benefit from the broad range of staff development opportunities which are offered by other departments and institutes within UoB, and are given time to attend those events. The Business and Management Research Institute (BMRI), to which CRiL is affiliated, offers a further range of staff development initiatives, including writing retreats and seminars on research methods. CRiL researchers regularly attend these events. An extensive programme of training events for those involved in the supervision of postgraduate research students is provided by the Research Graduate School (RGS); all members of staff supervising doctoral students are required to attend core events and are strongly encouraged to attend others. Finally, funding is available to support participation in research development events organised by other institutions if analogous provision is not offered within the University.

(c) Support for early career researchers (ECRs)

ECRs constitute a significant proportion of our staff and represent a vital component of our research community. As a part of UoB, the Law School subscribes to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. UoB is as an organisation which has a robust and public implementation strategy for improving the career development and management of researchers; this is evidenced, inter alia, by the conferral by the European Commission of the HR Excellence in Research Award in May 2013. One of the priorities of CRiL is promoting and enabling the full realisation of the research potential of each ECR. Specific measures of support for our ECRs include:

- additional funding for conference attendance: the CRiL budget makes provision for extra funds to support attendance by ECRs at national and international conferences. ECRs may apply for financial support not only for giving presentations, but also for simple attendance with a view to forging contacts with colleagues from other institutions. Our ECRs have made extensive use of the opportunities provided by this additional funding.
- mentoring by experienced colleagues: a mentoring scheme operates within CRiL, pursuant to which more experienced researchers provide guidance and feedback on drafts of papers, book proposals and funding applications prepared by ECRs, and provide advice and encouragement in relation to publication opportunities. Where appropriate, ECRs are put in touch with colleagues with relevant expertise at other institutions. With the increase in their number, CRiL is currently designing and implementing a more formalised mentoring programme for ECRs.
- CRiL research seminars: ECRs are given priority in presenting their work at *CRiL Research Seminars*. The seminars are particularly useful for ECRs, as they provide a forum in which they can test run their papers before an academic audience in a supportive environment.
- opportunities for PhD supervision: ECRs are offered the opportunity to develop their academic skill-set via the supervision of postgraduate research students through a scheme of pairing with more experienced second supervisors, as well as involvement in PhD examinations as internal reviewers/examiners. Relevant training is provided by RGS.

3.2 Research students

(a) PhD recruitment

At the beginning of the assessment period the School of Law had no postgraduate research students. The first doctoral student joined in July 2010 (completed October 2013) and our recruitment of MPhil/PhD students since has been substantial. As of October 2013, CRiL has nine registered PhD students (4 home/EU and 5 international). The high number of applications (over thirty in 2013) which we receive is strong testimony of our developing national and international research profile. The University has supported and invested in the expansion and consolidation of our PhD programme, including by providing funds for one PhD bursary per year within the School of Law/CRiL since 2010. As of October 2013, three of our students are in receipt of bursaries awarded by the University and one is the holder of a Vice Chancellor's scholarship.

(b) Research culture

Postgraduate research students are an essential component of our research community, and are fully integrated within CRiL. They are members of the interest group(s) relevant to their research topic and take part in all relevant activities. They participate in the monthly meetings of CRiL researchers and in all research development activities organised by CRiL and the School of Law. As of November 2013, two of our PhD students are part of research teams working on projects led by their supervisors. Research students also have the opportunity to present their research in the *CRiL Research Seminars*.

(c) Monitoring and support mechanisms

Postgraduate research students are selected by CRiL in cooperation with the RGS. They each attend a two-week induction programme, which covers all aspects of research practice, ethics and progression. They also receive initial individual briefings from their supervisors within CRiL and from the Director of CRiL. Each supervisory team comprises a Director of Studies and a second supervisor. The RGS facilitates and ensures regular contact between supervisors and students through our virtual learning environment. Supervisors meet PhD students at least monthly, and meetings are recorded. Second supervisors join the supervisory meetings at least once a term.

(d) Preparing research students for future careers

One of the key strategic aims identified in CRiL's Research Strategy is the preparation of research students to become knowledgeable and well-trained researchers. This includes preparing them for a possible career within academia, supported by developing a track record of high quality publications and forging contacts with members of the academic community in the UK and internationally. Thus, they are alerted by their supervisors or the Director of CRiL to suitable academic events and are encouraged to attend, either as delegates or in order to present their own research. Financial support is provided through the BMRI to support attendance at conferences at which papers are presented, whilst the School of Law provides funding, on an as-needed basis, for attendance at conferences deemed particularly useful for the candidate, including for networking purposes. Supervisors, and on occasion other members of academic staff, work actively with research students in the preparation of discrete pieces of research for publication. CRiL is particularly proud of the record of presentations at national and international conferences by our research students, and their publications.

4. Income, infrastructure and facilities

(a) Research income

Internal funding is available to support research within the School of Law. In addition to the allocation within the School's budget, since 2010 CRiL has been directly allocated QR funds by the University. Those funds have been employed to promote a vital and sustainable research environment; initiatives funded include the monthly *CRiL Research Seminars*; a public workshop organised in July 2012 and an international conference held in June 2013 (see www.beds.ac.uk/knowledgehub/governance). QR funds have also been utilised to support CRiL's institutional membership of relevant academic organisations, such as the British Institute of International and Comparative Law (BIICL), and individual membership of learned societies for

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CRiL researchers. Additional funds have been made available by the University for the acquisition of electronic and hard copy library resources (see below).

CRiL has developed a strategy to enhance its income and environment through the expansion of its doctoral programme. A particular avenue to explore was state and business sponsored students from home and overseas. This has resulted in external funding from fees which has risen from zero in 2008 to approximately £60,000 in 2013.

In line with the School of Law's enhanced emphasis on research, one of CRiL's top priorities is to attract external research income. In order to achieve that aim, a range of measures have been adopted:

- staff development events: two workshops on 'funding research in law' were organised in 2011-12 as part of CRiL's research development workshops in order to raise awareness of the importance of external funding and strengthen the ability of our researchers to identify suitable funding opportunities and prepare high quality applications for funding;
- research funding databases: in order to facilitate the identification of suitable funding opportunities, all research-active members of the Law School have a personal account on the *Research Professional* database and are registered for alerts relating to funding opportunities relevant to their work;
- proactive role of the Director of CRiL: alerting colleagues to relevant funding opportunities and supporting them in the preparation of applications is among the principal responsibilities of the Director of CRiL. In addition, members of the School benefit from the support provided by the research development officers of the UoB Knowledge Hub, who have specific expertise in the preparation of applications for research funding in the social sciences.

(b) Scholarly infrastructure

Over the assessment period, UoB has invested heavily in library resources and information services, as well as in physical library infrastructure. Resources in excess of £300,000 over the assessment period (up to 31 July 2013) have been invested in improving the collection of legal materials available through the University's Learning Resources Centre (LRC). CRiL researchers and postgraduate students have direct access to the Academic Liaison Librarian responsible for the acquisition of legal materials. This has ensured that the funds made available by the University are used effectively and has enabled researchers not only to order the latest publications relevant to their research, but also to remedy any gaps concerning older but essential works in their specific area of expertise. The LRC now offers a broad collection of specialist books across all areas of law, including a broad and expanding collection of electronic books, as well as access to three of the principal legal databases (Westlaw, Lexis-Nexis and Lawtel). The yearly expenditure for subscription to electronic journals has doubled from £12,000 in 2008 to almost £24,000 in 2013. The LRC hosts the UoB Repository, which allows the dissemination of pre-publication electronic versions of articles by members of staff. The Repository also enables CRiL researchers to keep track of the work being undertaken by colleagues elsewhere in the University, thus facilitating possible synergies and collaborations. In addition to the resources available within the University, CRiL researchers and postgraduate students have access to the extensive resources of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (IALS) in London, many of which are accessible remotely.

(c) Organisational and operational infrastructure supporting research

The School of Law is one of the five departments within UoB's Business School. CRiL operates under the umbrella of the BMRI, which manages and supports research throughout the Business School. The Director of CRiL represents the Centre on the BMRI Board, which meets four times a year, as well as in the Research Centre Leaders group, which meets monthly. The research environment within which CRiL operates is further supported by the RGS, which, as detailed above, coordinates the QAA aspects and administrative arrangements for students on all research degree programmes. Research within the wider University is supported by the Office for Research and Enterprise and its Knowledge Hub.

Physical facilities provided by the Law School to all its academics include workspace, a desktop computer and a personal laptop, telephone and internet access and copying and printing facilities.

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A dedicated room with all necessary equipment is available for use by CRiL visiting scholars. The Law School has exclusive use of a Moot Court built in 2010, which is equipped with the latest audiovisual equipment and is regularly used by CRiL for meetings and seminars. Additional physical facilities are available at the Putteridge Bury campus, which provides conference facilities and working spaces designed specifically for postgraduate research. The availability of the excellent conference resources at Putteridge Bury was a crucial factor in the successful organisation of the first large-scale public event organised by CRiL, held in June 2013. The £20 million Postgraduate Centre on the Luton campus opened in early 2013 has further enhanced the range of available physical facilities.

5. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base**(a) Interdisciplinary research and relevant arrangements**

Academics within CRiL have engaged in a number of interdisciplinary/collaborative projects with colleagues in other research centres within the University, including the Institute for Research in Applicable Computing (IRAC) and the Research Centre for Contemporary Accounting and Finance (ResCAF). For instance, since 2011, Dr Richard Lang has been working with colleagues from the National Centre for Cyberstalking Research (a part of IRAC) on a project concerning, among other things, proposals for legal regulation of cyberstalking at the EU and domestic level. Of necessity, this research is interdisciplinary, combining relevant legal aspects with research in the fields of criminology/policing, social sciences and computing/information technology. Going forward, one of CRiL's strategic priorities is to establish further links with other research centres within the University in order to foster further interdisciplinary collaboration.

(b) Research collaborations with industry, commerce, third sector and other users of research

As evidenced in our impact statement and case studies, researchers at CRiL have strong links with stakeholders outside the academic sphere, including in particular civil society organisations. Borelli has collaborated extensively with the third sector, in particular through working with non-governmental organisations specialising in the legal protection of human rights. For instance, in her capacity as a member of the Lawyer's Advisory Committee of Peace Brigades International UK (PBI UK), Borelli regularly advises the organisation on issues concerning the international human rights standards applicable to human rights defenders. Such collaborations have enriched CRiL's research environment, including by providing opportunities for our students to assist with research commissioned by civil society organisations. This has been the case for instance with regard to a report on security legislation and torture co-authored by Borelli and published by REDRESS in 2012; CRiL students were involved in the project as research assistants and were subsequently offered a mini-internship at REDRESS' offices in London.

(c) National and international academic collaborations

Researchers at CRiL regularly work with those at other institutions both within the UK and abroad. For instance, Olleson retains strong links with the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, University of Cambridge and collaborates on a regular basis, both academically and professionally, with colleagues based there, including in the preparation of internationally prominent high-quality research. He was also invited to present a paper (subsequently published in the *Leiden Journal of International Law*) at a conference held in 2011 at the University of Glasgow organised as part of a major international collaborative research project (COST Action IS0602 on International Law in Domestic Courts) led by the Amsterdam Centre for International Law, University of Amsterdam. Borelli has been involved in a number of international collaborative research projects, which include an EU-funded multi-institutional research project which explored the impact of the activities of international courts and tribunals on the domestic prosecution of mass atrocities (see www.domac.is). Borelli was also one of the members of a project on 'The Human Dimension of Cultural Heritage' (2009-12), funded by the Italian Ministry for Universities, which brought together academics from several European universities and the European University Institute. The project resulted in a collective volume published in 2012, of which Borelli is one of the co-editors.

In addition to the wide array of academic collaborations entered into by CRiL researchers, CRiL endeavours to create new opportunities for collaboration with other institutions, both in the UK and internationally. To that end, CRiL set up a programme for Visiting Scholars and Researchers in 2012. As of November 2013, CRiL hosts several legal practitioners and academics who hold

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expertise in a variety of areas, including a barrister specialising in asylum and immigration law; a US attorney specialising in international criminal law; and a barrister who is also an NHS Consultant in Child, Adolescent and Family Psychiatry. In 2012, the Law School concluded an Erasmus Agreement with the University of Genoa, Italy, with the first exchange of staff scheduled for March 2014. Further agreements are currently being discussed with other two European universities.

(d) Seminar series and conferences

CRiL organises a regular series of research seminars, which are held monthly during term time. The seminars were initially designed to provide an opportunity for CRiL researchers (including doctoral students) to present their work in progress and receive constructive feedback in a supportive environment. From 2011-12, thanks to the financial support provided by the University, the seminars were opened to external speakers from other UK and European institutions. Attendance at the CRiL seminars is open to colleagues and postgraduate research students from other UoB departments and the wider public.

In July 2012, CRiL successfully organised its first public event, a workshop on current issues of family law. Building on that experience, in June 2013, CRiL organised an international conference on Corporate Governance (www.beds.ac.uk/knowledgehub/governance). The event, which was financially supported by UoB's Office for Research and Enterprise and through the charging of a registration fee, featured the presentation of papers by world-renowned academics and leading practitioners specialising in corporate governance. The conference attracted a broad academic and professional audience from the UK and abroad. The success of the event, and the experience acquired by CRiL researchers and administrators in the process, constitutes a solid foundation for the organisation by CRiL of further public events. Funding was secured in October 2013 for a conference on asylum and access to justice to be held in Spring 2014.

(e) Contributions to journal editorship and preparation

CRiL researchers are involved with the editorial processes of leading academic journals within their respective fields. For instance, Lang sits on the editorial board of the *New Journal of European Criminal Law* (Intersentia); Seriki is a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Business Law* (Sweet & Maxwell) and joint series editor for *Arbitration Law Library* by Informa Law/Routledge; Olleson serves as a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of International Dispute Settlement* (OUP); and Mortimer sits on the editorial board of the *International Sports Law Journal* (T.M.C. Asser Institute/Springer).

(f) Contribution to professional associations or learned societies, both national and international

As part of its Research Strategy, CRiL encourages its researchers to become involved in the activities of learned societies relevant to their specific field of research. Membership fees are paid by the School of Law. In addition to the participation of CRiL researchers in specialised learned societies relevant to their field of research, since 2011 all CRiL researchers and PhD students are members of the Society of Legal Scholars (SLS). The Law School and CRiL are also institutional members of the British Institute of International and Comparative Law (BIICL). Notable contributions to the activities of learned societies include Black-Branch, who chairs the International Law Association's Committee on Committee on Nuclear Capacity, Non-Proliferation and Contemporary International Law (2010-current); and Olleson, who is a member of the International Law Association's Committee on Baselines under the International Law of the Sea (2011-current). In addition, Olleson presented a paper at a joint SLS-BIICL conference on the international law of diplomatic protection, held in May 2011. Members of staff also contribute to the activities of a variety of professional associations, most notably Mortimer, who is Advisor and Board Member to the National Association of Licensed Paralegals, and Educational Advisor of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators.