

Impact template (REF3a)

Institution: Oxford Brookes University
Unit of Assessment: 20 Law
<p>a. Context: The School of Law has a well-established record of engaging with non-academic users of its research, and a strong commitment to connecting our excellent research with those outside academia. This can be seen in the on-going impact of research, produced well before the current period, such as the work of Woodhouse detailed below, as well as Vickers' earlier work for the NGO Public Concern at Work, and Edge's ESRC project on religious representation in the Manx Tynwald. Two particular areas have been developed during the period to engage more broadly with the wider non-academic community: the Small Jurisdictions Service (Edge, Cooper and O'Brien), based in the School, and the Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice (with Vickers Assistant Director), based in the Faculty of Business. These research groups are actively engaged in developing knowledge exchange activities, based on international research, which generate impact with non-academic users. They are complemented by activities by individual scholars which also have considerable impact.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact: The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences has actively engaged in addressing the emerging impact agenda by establishing structures, policies and procedures to support this including the establishment of working groups to recognise, develop and review knowledge exchange opportunities and impact initiatives, and the appointment of a Faculty lead for knowledge exchange and business development, and a Faculty lead for Impact. The School of Law has taken a strategic approach towards developing high-impact research: institutional mechanisms, financial resources, and training and mentoring have all been utilised to support impact and user engagement more broadly. We have recently reviewed our approach to impact with the support of the JISC. This review revealed demonstrable impact emerging from research across the School. This approach has led us to identify user-engagement, and impact, across the public, private and third sectors; and at domestic, European, and international level.</p> <p><i>Institutional support mechanisms:</i> Drawing on lessons learnt in developing research excellence since 2007, the School has developed strong institutional mechanisms to develop the impact of our work. Staff research time may be used for impact-enhancing activities, linked to our high quality research, and aimed at non-academic users. Within their research plans staff are encouraged to include activities designed to engage with non-academic users, such as participation in conferences, seminars and workshops aimed at both academic and non-academic audiences, blogs, video-blogs, podcasts, press releases etc. Thus, as part of his planned research activity, Cooper produced a report for the Cayman Islands Law Reform Commission to inform their review of succession law. Support and mentoring for grant writing is also available for staff when bidding for external funding to undertake knowledge-exchange activities. This support draws on eight specialist staff based in RBDO, as well as dedicated support at the Faculty level, through the Faculty Lead in Knowledge Exchange.</p> <p>Brookes' strategy on open-access which facilitates dissemination of our research, also contributes to our capacity for impact. RADAR, Brookes' digital archive showcasing research outputs, includes over 450 outputs in law, including complete ebooks under Creative Commons licenses, complete journal articles, and conference papers, as well as summary information on other outputs, normally including links and contact details.</p> <p><i>Targeted resourcing of impact activity.</i> In support of the School's priorities, financial resources have been allocated by the Faculty and University to help staff engage in impact-generating activity with end users. For example, during 2012, Bakalis and Edge received central funding for a project on hate crime in England, bringing together police officers, Crown prosecutors, academics, and civil society organisations seeking to address hate crime (http://tinyurl.com/qaltzjl). Work on this issue has fed into Bakalis' lead contribution to the SLS response to the Law Commission's consultation on Hate Crime (No. 213 2013). International travel funding was also provided for Cooper to attend meetings to liaise with the Cayman Islands Law Reform Commission and local practitioners prior to producing his report. This enabled him to tailor his work to the needs of individual research users. Support is also available to fund and support attendance and participation in conferences attended by research users, and to facilitate dissemination of our research to practitioners. The university has made strategic investments for knowledge exchange activities, including the HEIF funded Small Jurisdictions Service and knowledge exchange workshops run by the Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice.</p>

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Incorporation of impact into the research cycle: Following our JISC-funded review, discussed further below, a School priority has been to encourage colleagues to incorporate user engagement and impact into their normal research cycle. All staff are given research mentors from among the senior academic staff who support their research activity, both in terms of planning for impact and supporting the production of research outputs. Additionally, we are recognising the importance of impact specifically, for instance, with a workshop led by **Edge** in 2012 on increasing our research presence externally; workshops on developing the impact of our work held across the university in 2012; and seminars on developing external partnerships to enhance impact are held by the Faculty Grants Panel.

Strategic review of impact: The School of Law is committed to enhancing the impact of our research. As part of this, we led a JISC funded pilot study *Embedding impact analysis: Learning from law*, which aimed to develop tools and procedures for tracking and recording research impact. This interdisciplinary project brought together library, IT and research management staff to support the development of an impact analysis tool adaptable for other disciplines, but developed specifically within our disciplinary context. The project developed an impact analysis toolkit which can be used by staff to track impact from individual outputs, and allows staff to see interconnections between various forms of dissemination, and eventual impact on end users. The tool facilitates planning for impact at the design stage of projects, and contributes to a more integrated perspective on impact.

Impact as a pervasive activity. The approach outlined above, while recognising that there will be particular projects or moments for particular researchers which provide especially rich impact opportunities, treats impact as a significant part of the work for researchers across the School. The success of this approach can be illustrated by the range of this impact.

Governmental organisations have formed a significant user group for our research, and our work has shaped a number of areas of government policy. For example, **Woodhouse's** work on standards in public life for the National Assembly for Wales led to the appointment of a statutory Commissioner for Standards in 2010. Similarly, her role as Special Adviser to the House of Commons Select Committee's inquiry, 'Government by Inquiry' (2005) led to requests in 2013 from the House of Lords Constitution Committee for her to give oral evidence to inform its investigation into the workings of the Inquiries Act 2006. Government has also used **Edge's** work, such as that on civil partnerships, which was taken into account by the relevant government minister in developing new legislation governing civil partnership ceremonies in religious premises, brought in to effect by the Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) (Amendment) Regulations 2011. The Manx legislature has also drawn on **Edge's** research in developing legislative policy.

Within Europe, **Vickers'** research on religious discrimination and teaching staff in faith schools formed the basis of a complaint by the National Secular Society and British Humanist Association to the European Commission about the UK government's compliance with the EU Equality Directive 2000/78. **Morano-Foadi's** work has been used to assist the Italian Ministry of Research in their policy development on research in Italy under Horizon 2020 as well leading to discussions in March 2011 with the EU Commission on viability of a new legislative proposal on the European Research Area. Her work has also contributed to public understanding of the issue, as evidenced by its use in a European Parliament Report "Main trends in the recent case law of the EU Court of Justice and the ECHR in the field of fundamental rights" (2012). **Cheyne** has been a member of INTERCAFE (EU-funded interdisciplinary group on cormorant-fisheries conflicts) and acted as a Member of Expert Panel in Environmental and Societal Sciences for the Academy of Finland.

Research from the School of Law also has impact internationally. The Law Reform Commission of the Cayman Islands drew on the work of **O'Brien** in its review of legal aid services; while research by Shan (Brookes 2002-13) on Chinese investment law was incorporated in his role as the lead advisor for the Chinese government in the China-USA bilateral investment treaty negotiation in Oct 2012. Yihdego (at Brookes until 2012) has undertaken research on illegal and irresponsible conventional arms trade, which has been used by the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Firearms, in projects designed to help and facilitate an effective national and international implementation of the UN Protocol on Firearms 2001. He has served as a member of the UN Expert Group on the Firearms Protocol, and his research underpinned their development of a global Model Law. Following a visit of the UN's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict to Brookes in 2013, Sedman established a Research Network on this issue, with academics from a number of universities, working with civil society actors such as Oxfam, War Child and other international policy experts

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and government stakeholders. Legal practitioners in a number of small jurisdictions such as the Isle of Man, Cayman Islands, and the Commonwealth Caribbean have benefitted from the work of the Small Jurisdictions Service. (www.sjs.brookes.ac.uk), which offers a range of academic consultancy services to practitioners in the Isle of Man and the Caribbean, for instance **Cooper's** consultancy for Irvin Banks, Attorneys at Law. Additionally, **Cooper's** research on land law fed into a text book which is recognised as the set text for training Cayman Island's lawyers in conveyancing, as well as being used by the conveyancing profession.

c. Strategy and plans The main outcome from the JISC-funded project has been the development of an Impact Analysis System, supported by a toolkit for use by staff. This electronic system enables staff to track the impact of individual outputs and more general areas of expertise. It encourages planning for impact maximisation in future projects. Staff will be trained to use the system, so that they can better plan to develop the impact of future work. The School of Law's system of five-year personal research plans already encourages staff to think about maximising the impact of their work but impact will be given a higher visibility in this process, with plans being considered specifically in terms of impact, and feedback to colleagues being provided accordingly. Funding and time will also be made available for staff to engage with non-academic end users of their work at every stage of the research cycle, reflecting our philosophy that impact is not a post-production research activity. Funding will continue to be available to enable the costs of developing impact, such as travel, to be met.

The University's work on Knowledge Exchange will continue to enhance the impact of our research on non-academic end users. Support through HEIF led to the development of our Small Jurisdictions Service (SJS), launched in 2012 to utilise a distinctive research expertise in small common law jurisdictions, in order to serve the needs of a non-academic audience. The SJS will continue to be part of the School of Law into the next period, and expertise in knowledge exchange developed by the SJS, and by the Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice (discussed below), will be utilised in developing knowledge exchange within other specialisms in the School.

To determine the detail of future strategy, the University and Faculty research strategies will be reviewed following the current REF submission. The review will include: an audit of departmental procedures to recognise, develop and promote activities that will enhance the impact of research, with a view to identifying and disseminating best practice; recognition that impacts from research, and the activities employed to achieve them, should be considered part of the research process; support for staff to develop proposals for externally-funded schemes such as Knowledge Exchange Partnerships; and clear processes and systems for the recording of evidence to support impacts from research using the impact analysis toolkit.

d. Relationship to case studies The first case study *Contributing to public policy on accountability and standards in public life* serves as an example of the approach of the Law School to developing the external impact of our work. **Woodhouse's** original doctoral work at Brookes on *Ministers and Parliament* led to the development of a typology of levels of political accountability which has been used by the National Assembly for Wales, the House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee and the Senate of the Parliament of Australia. The development of impact originally followed the personal interest of the researcher, but was supported in terms of time and financial support to enable the research and follow-up work to be undertaken and then to be disseminated more widely.

The second case study, *Contributing to the policy development in the field of equality in the workplace* demonstrates the high level of institutional support available for impact-generating activity, including support for the Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice, of which **Vickers** is Assistant Director. The Centre generates knowledge exchange activity, such as seminars for human resources managers and legal practitioners on managing age diversity in the workplace; and training relating to equality in research careers. In addition, support was given by the grants panel for bids to Equality Challenge Unit for the project on equality and the RAE 2008 and to HEFCE for research on *Developing Good Practice in Managing Age Diversity in the HE Sector*. At the end of that project the University funded an additional workshop in December 2011 to discuss with users their experiences of using the guide which had been produced as part of the project. Time and some funding has also been made available to **Vickers** to enable her participation in conferences with non-academic users, and the activities of other user groups, such as the European Network on Religion and Belief.