

Institution: University of Westminster

Unit of Assessment: 20 LAW Panel C

a. Context

Westminster Law School benefits from having a large number of researchers who are already cognisant of, and oriented beyond, the purely academic sphere. The Law School's strategy draws upon the specificities of the individual colleagues, most of whom are located within one of the five Research Centres, which are the hubs from which the bulk of our research and impact emanates. Research Centres are required to demonstrate a sustainable claim to excellence within their specific area, and this is evidenced by history of high quality outputs, grants, PhD completions, along with a commitment to dissemination and engagement, and strong connections with regulators and policy-makers. The Research Centres, the focus and ethos of which are detailed in REF5, have knowledge exchange and impact as key drivers. For example, knowledge exchange projects are central to the work of the **Centre for Law, Gender, and Sexuality (CLGS)** and their interaction with users is evidenced by the *Conversations* project, where academics, practitioners, activists and pressure groups (such as Stonewall and the Terrence Higgins Trust) are invited to have a recorded and mediated 'conversation', or the *Feminism with a Fizz* annual event, such as 'Feminism, Law and Austerity', in 2012, which aimed at disseminating academic work to trade unions and NGOs. The **Centre for Capital Punishment Studies (CCPS)**, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2012, provides a forum for research and debate on the death penalty and has key users in Government and NGOs. The **CCPS** has been involved in missions in over a dozen countries, acting on behalf of the Council of Europe and UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and has staged roundtables, on behalf of these bodies. The **Centre on Legal Profession (COLP)** includes colleagues who undertake research and consultancy on the legal profession and the legal services market. As part of their remit **COLP** organises events for and with professions and regulators, especially the Legal Service Board (LSB) and the Solicitors Regulation Authority. The **Centre for Law, Society, and Popular Culture (CLSPC)** sees engagement with users outside the academy as key, and their 'Theory Meets Practice' seminar series has attracted a mix of activists (Cory Doctorow, Open Rights Group), musicians (Tom Hingley/Inspirational Carpets), and industry bodies (British Board of Film Classification) amongst others, stressing the links between areas of research and its broader context. Their open seminar *Regulation of the Entertainment Ticket Market* included contributions from Lord Pendry and John Whittingdale MP, and was based on research emanating from the Centre. The **Westminster International Law and Theory Centre (WILT)** has organised a number of high profile events including 'After Guantanamo Bay: Perspectives on the War on Terror' with plenary speakers from Redress, Reprieve and the American Civil Liberties Union, and 'The Use of Foreign Law by Refugee Law Judges' with senior judges from the UK Upper Tribunal, the German administrative courts, the UNHCR, and Asylum Aid. Under the auspices of **WILT**, a number of themes have evolved including a separate Cluster for the Study of the United Nations (**C-Sun**), which fosters knowledge transfer between academics, practitioners and other stakeholders. This has developed a series of activities, including offering a CPD accredited short course on the UN and Human Rights, seed funded by HEIF, drawing upon key users and stakeholders including NGOs, civil service actors, charities and legal professionals.

b. Approach to impact

The Law School's approach to impact, led by the **Faculty Research Director (FRD)** - assisted by the **School Research Committee (SRC)**, has been to focus on those areas of research that are most likely to lead to direct and measurable impact in the wider community. This draws upon the School's expertise in socio-legal and applied research, its professional focus and its doctrinal strength, along with the established core centres of research expertise, noted above. As such, the areas upon which the Law School has focused its impact activity include, for example, the work of the **COLP** for the LSB to influence the working methods of the legal profession so as to promote the rule of law, equality and diversity, and access to legal advice and assistance through promotion of pro bono, and poverty law legal services, in keeping with promotion of the rule of law. The Law School has made use of institutional input and support where the nature of the activity has

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warranted this. For example, the **CLSPC** capitalised on their longstanding relationship with the British Board of Film Classification, nurtured through a series of mutually beneficial activities over the past 10 years, to put on the public exhibition *Classified: The University of Westminster Celebrates 100 years of the BBFC* which showcased our research activity in conjunction with the BBFC's archive and education units and the University Archival Services. The University supported the event as it transcended our activity and tapped into the University's broader mission. In addition, University expertise was crucial in the successful bid for funding for the Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) with Bees United/Brentford Football Club. The KTP led to a long-term relationship with the group Supporters Direct and has led to further collaborative projects including co-authoring two briefing papers launched in the House of Commons in 2011, and a further one in 2013 with Supporters Direct and Locality.

The Law School research has also achieved impact in a variety of other ways, including commissioned research, visiting fellowships (including Princeton, Manitoba, Jeddah and Stetson) and long-term relationships with stakeholders, including the professions. This is in addition to the previously outlined public dissemination activities (see a. above). For example, the **CCPS's** activities on penal and capital punishment reform have influenced the policy on sentencing, life-sentence prisoners, and the treatment of victims of crime in Uganda, Vietnam, Morocco and the Caribbean, through a number of collaborative projects with lawyers and activists in these countries. The **COLP's** most recent research on The Cab Rank Rule and the effect of this rule on consumers and access to justice, is beginning to influence major debate in the way the Regulator and the Bar see their role in the changing legal market.

c. Strategy and plans

The appointment of a **Research Development Officer (RDO)**, in 2010, and a **Business Development Officer (BDO)**, in 2012, with a broader remit of developing third leg income and wider user engagement with industry, civil society and think tanks, has further embedded this approach and has led to a valorising of impact and knowledge transfer by the SRC. An Enterprise Leader role was created, in 2012, with a place on the SRC and direct input into research strategy, and a remit to develop a sustainable approach to external engagement. Both the RDO and BDO are pro-active in galvanising bids for funding, emphasising a hands-on and responsive approach to income generation, and reinforcing the Law School's view that impact is often the product of funded research since most funders now require a detailed impact plan. In the light of this, the Law School encourages, and supports, funded research with impact; equality of opportunity to research, publish and impact is further promoted and delivered through an effective Research Mentoring Scheme (see REF5, section b). The dissemination of research is also prioritised; all staff are encouraged to utilise SSRN and Academia.edu to publicise work in addition to using the University Research Repository. All Research Centres have their own web page and host seminars and short courses that further exemplify impact in terms of building and sustaining strong connections with regulators and policy-makers. These include the **C-Sun** short course noted above, the *Certificate of Higher Education in Licensing law and Practice*, that emanated from research conducted in the last RAE period by **CLSPC** and evolved from a relationship with Westminster City Council, and the *Conversations* and *Feminism with Fizz* initiatives of the **CLGS**.

Going forward, Westminster Law School aims further to support, embed and develop the strategies noted above. The Law School anticipates the continued sustainability of our existing Research Centres, whilst also encouraging the development of new, dynamic and responsive Research Centres. The appointment of a BDO and an Enterprise Leader are intended to further maximise these opportunities. The Law School is also taking advantage of a University restructuring, and the opportunities presented by integration into the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, by entering into a full strategic review of activities. This places research impact and 'third leg' activities to the fore, and encourages individual staff to consider how they 'connect' and 'engage', and to adopt more outward looking approaches, with potential impact at its core. In tandem with the opportunities for multi-, inter- and cross- disciplinary approaches to activities presented by the new Faculty, housing cognate disciplines, such as, Sociology, Criminology and International Relations, the Law School is confident that it will maximise impact potential.

In addition, further development of engagement and dissemination strategies has been prioritised. Colleagues are encouraged to contribute to, and join, advisory boards and similar bodies (such as the Civil Mediation Council, *interlaw* and LegalZoom), and to disseminate research findings and help others use our findings to promote positive change. Colleagues are further encouraged to embrace all forms of media, including social media and related tools, to aid dissemination of impact, and staff development sessions have been provided to this end. Many staff already disseminate their research and activities via a number of media outlets, including *Al Jazeera*, *BBC*, *The Guardian*, *China Daily*, and the Law School strategic review includes a dissemination plan that involves adopting broader approaches to dissemination, including delivering open lectures, participating in panel round-table discussions and writing short articles in practitioner and other non-academic journals. In addition, the use of blogs, such as, *Populaw* (Young Lawyer/Solicitors Journal) and *Random Academic Thoughts*, the social media pages of the *Entertainment and Sports Law Journal* which collate a number of feeds, and the twitter feed of the student led *Westminster Law Review Daily* all illustrate a commitment to reach a broader range of actors.

d. Relationship to case studies

All three of the case studies illustrate how the Law School's approach to facilitating impact has succeeded. In particular, this approach is based on establishing, developing and maintaining sustainable relationships with stakeholders. Thus, with regard to the 'Enhancing Legal Protection for Asylum Seekers' case study, **Lambert** has a long term relationship with senior judges at the Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) that has been embedded over a number of years through invitations to address refugee law judges (Edinburgh 2004, Berlin 2008, 2009, London 2011, 2012), organising and chairing an expert debate on a country guidance case (University of Oxford 2009), and organising a pan-European workshop on judicial dialogue (Westminster, 2008). Similarly, **Phillips** has developed and sustained relationships that have led to his claimed impact. This can be traced through his initial research as part of his PhD, his post-doctoral work at the University of Columbia in 2000-01, and his visiting fellowship at the SAEARC in Zimbabwe (2003- date). This has led him to be called as an expert witness in over 70 cases since 2002 and to provide oral testimony in three of these cases (2011, 2012, 2013).

With regard to the 'Diversity and the Legal Profession' case study, previous research by **Webley** and **Duff** on gender differentials in the promotion and retention of legal professionals (Law Society, 2004) indicated the need for diversity monitoring, and a strong relationship with the regulatory bodies had already been engendered as far back as 1998 and the commissioned project on Entry into the Legal Professions (Law Society, 2000). This relationship has been further embedded and maintained by building relationships with research initiators in key positions in regulatory or professional circles, following up on all tenders for research and providing strategic findings, holding briefings for all stakeholders and running seminars. A holistic approach has informed this relationship building, via a strategy of developing credibility within the profession so as to get access to data subjects to conduct the research and then by closing the loop by feeding back outcomes of the work to stakeholders by way of briefings, seminars, CPD, and the legal press.

The 'Olympics and Law' case study draws upon work by **Osborn** and **Greenfield**. More particularly, **Osborn** has become one of the key experts on Olympic law; for example, he was interviewed for the *Wall Street Journal* in the run up to London 2012 about the impact of Olympic Laws and was commissioned, with Mark James, to write on the Olympics for the British Library. This work is on-going and **Osborn** and James have submitted a Response to the Scottish Government's Consultation on Draft Glasgow Commonwealth Games (Trading and Advertising) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 that draws upon their Olympic Research, and they are already in contact with key personnel for Rio 2016 with a view to further embedding this research and creating a research network.