

## Impact template (REF3a)

**Institution: London Metropolitan University**

**Unit of assessment: UoA20 (Law)**

### **Context**

Until the dissolution of the Faculty of Law, Governance and International Relations (FLGIR) on 31 July 2013, Law research at London Metropolitan University (LMU) was undertaken in FLGIR.

On 1 August 2013, Law research-active staff, transferred to a newly-created faculty, the Faculty of Business and Law. From the start of 2008 until 31 July 2013, Law research was primarily focused in three main areas: (1) family law and practice; (2) human rights and data protection; and (3) comparative legal constitutional issues. Most of the information in this Law Impact Template relates to the period when Law research was undertaken under the auspices of FLGIR.

The main types of impact in relation to (1) (2) and (3) are (a) legislative change, and development of legal principle or effect on legal practice; (b) forms of regulation, dispute resolution or access to justice; (c) shaping or influencing policy made by government, quasi-government bodies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and/or private organisations influencing the work of NGOs or commercial organisations; and, (d) policy debate, stimulated or informed by research evidence, which may have led to confirmation of policy, change in policy direction, implementation or withdrawal of policy.

Instrumental figures in producing Law research at LMU, with important public impacts during 2008-2013, include: **Professor Marilyn Freeman**, whose research on family law and practice is primarily disseminated via the **Centre for Family Law and Practice (CFLP)**, which she co-directs (along with Frances Burton) (<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/faculties/law-governance-and-international-relations/lgir-research/lgir-research-centres/centre-for-family-law-and-practice/>). CFLP seeks to disseminate its research outputs to legal practitioners, members of the judiciary, researchers, academics, NGOs, and government departments. Representatives of such entities regularly work with Professor Freeman and her CFLP colleagues, notably co-director and Research Fellow, Frances Burton. What these state and non-state entities have in common is that they are all informed by CFLP's ongoing research outputs and impact.

CFLP research is often used in relation to the resolution of often testing familial disputes, both in the UK and overseas, including the USA, by various research users, including: judges, mediators, and members of the affected families. The CFLP has assisted courts, including the US Supreme Court, with amicus curiae briefs based on Professor Freeman's research (details at: <http://www.familylawclip.co.uk/categories/child-abduction/custody-access>).

**Professor Douwe Korff** leads the Law subject area's research on **Human Rights and Data Protection**. He often collaborates with Dr Ian Brown, Associate Director of Oxford University's Cyber Security Centre, and Senior Research Fellow at the Oxford Internet Institute. Their research focus is on the policies of the European Union and the Council of Europe. This includes how the EU and CoE relate to the Internet, ubiquitous computing, and use of social media, disseminated both to United Kingdom and European governments and to non-state pan-European political movements, including: the Greens and the European Free Alliance, and various NGOs, including: the Centre for Public Reform. Professor Korff is a leading member of the Advisory Council of the Foundation for Information Policy Research (FIPR), the leading think tank on information policy issues in the UK (see [www.fipr.org](http://www.fipr.org)). Professor Korff has carried out several major studies for, among others, the UK Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust.

**Professor Peter Leyland**, Professor of Public Law, works on **legal constitutional issues**, and leads the Law subject area on this research topic. He is a leading authority on Thailand's

constitutional and legal system. He was used during 2008-2013 as a commentator on BBC television and radio, and his research is disseminated via a variety of media, including his series co-editorship of Hart Publishing's *Constitutional Systems of the World* (<http://www.hartpub.co.uk/SeriesDetails.aspx?SeriesName=Constitutional+Systems+of+the+World>). According to Andrew McDonald, Law and Politics Book Review (An electronic journal published by the Law and Courts Section of the American Political Science Foundation, ISSN: 1062-7421; <http://www.gvpt.umd.edu/lpbr/index.htm>): "We are promised contextual analyses, situating constitutions in their national history and explaining their underlying principles. The idea is at once admirable and innovative: it is difficult to think of any other recent series with the same ambition."

#### **b. Approach to impact**

At an early stage of preparation for REF2014, it was decided that Law research-active staff would focus financial resources in family law and practice; human rights and data protection; and comparative legal constitutional issues, linked to Professors Freeman, Korff and Leyland. In 2008, the decision was also taken to seek in the medium-term to demonstrate research impact via both academic (publications, conference keynotes and paper presentations) and non-academic conduits.

In relation to family law and practice, the melding of academic and non-academic forms of impact was demonstrated via the creation in January 2009 of the **Centre for Family Law and Practice** (<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/faculties/law-governance-and-international-relations/lgir-research/lgir-research-centres/centre-for-family-law-and-practice/>). Starting in 2010, the Centre instituted a series of prestigious international conferences, whose latest conference . The 2nd International Family Law and Practice Conference (Parentage, Equality and Gender) was held on 3-5 July 2013. The conference was a sell-out, attracting over 200 academic and non-academic attendees, who gathered to listen to more than 25 internationally-renowned speakers. Full details of this and earlier international conferences can be ascertained via the Centre's website (<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/faculties/law-governance-and-international-relations/lgir-research/lgir-research-centres/centre-for-family-law-and-practice/>).

In relation to public impact for **Human Rights and Data Protection**, Professor Korff undertook during 2008-2013 many public appearances at various European Union institutions and national and international conferences, in particular to disseminate the impact of his research in non-academic contexts. Evidence for the public impact of Professor Korff's work is provided by the dedicated references (compiled in the relevant impact case study) from those who recognise that Professor Korff's work as helping shape or significantly influencing policy or relevant work undertaken by government, quasi-government bodies, NGOs and/or private organisations.

Finally, in relation to **legal constitutional issues**, Professor Leyland also underwent an extensive round of public appearances in, *inter alia*, the UK, Thailand and Italy, where his work in this area was deemed highly relevant by government to the development of those countries' constitutions.

#### **c. Strategy and plans**

Policy was guided not only by faculty preferences but also by LMU's Strategic Plan (2010-2013), which, *inter alia*, sought to focus the university's work in order to "transform lives through education and research of quality, meet society's needs through our socially responsible agenda, and build rewarding careers for our students, staff and partners" (emphases added; LMU's Strategic Plan, 2010-2013; <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/media/london-metropolitan-university/london-met-documents/professional-service-departments/marketing-admissions-and-uk-recruitment/marketing/London-Met-Strategic-Plan.pdf>). In relation to the Law subject area and corresponding research focus, the corresponding research impact was especially guided by and geared towards a "socially responsible agenda"

Law research policy also reflected the belief that research impact should have as wide as possible dissemination, not only to the academic research community but also to a wider "public Public-

focused research was developed in the following ways, including: national and international conferences open to the public; involvement in public debates; efforts to influence government policy; and blogs, media interviews and television and radio appearances. LMU strongly supported Law staff involvement in such areas of public research dissemination and allowed relevant research-active staff time away from teaching and/or administration in order to pursue these areas of endeavour. These included a reduction in the teaching load of Law professors from a maximum of 16 hours to eight hours teaching a week during term time, in order specifically to develop and complete REF-able research outputs, as well as to provide appropriate opportunities to engage in dissemination of research outputs via public engagements.

Following dissolution of FLGIR on 31 July 2013, the erstwhile Law section of that faculty evolved into the School of Law within the Faculty of Business and Law (FBL). The shift from LGIR to FBL offers the research-active members of Law major opportunities to develop their research activities further within the evolving research-active context of FBL, which exemplifies a focused approach both to research and its associated outputs. The benefit of this is that it is likely to enable both individual research-active Law staff to develop their research foci within the context of a faculty where research is central, not least in the ways that it informs teaching at both undergraduate and postgraduate.

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

The aim of the two impact case studies submitted in relation to the Law UoA at LMU is to demonstrate the importance of cutting-edge research, which crucially links into a core university and faculty concern: *meeting society's* needs through our socially responsible agenda. First, the purpose is to highlight research strengths of three key members of Law staff (Freeman, Korff and Leyland) and their research associates both within LMU and outside, in relation to a socially responsible agenda. Second, the concern is to demonstrate the coming together of research goals linking both academic and non-academic audiences. In relation to the Law subject area, involving two impact case studies. Family Law and Practice (Freeman) and Human Rights and Data Protection (Korff).

As noted above, the work of CFLP involves dissemination of its research outputs to a wide, academic and non-academic audience, including: legal practitioners, members of the judiciary, researchers, academics, NGOs, and government departments. Professor Freeman and her CFLP colleagues regularly work with such entities, on a variety of socially-relevant issues. What they have in common is that they are informed by Professor Freeman's continuing research, as well as that of another CFLP member, Frances Burton, Research Fellow. Currently, CFLP research outputs are being employed in efforts to resolve often long-running and contentious familial disputes, both in the UK and overseas, by those parties to the dispute, including: judges, mediators, and members of the affected families. In addition, the CFLP regularly assists courts, including the US Supreme Court, with *amicus curiae* briefs based on the Centre's research outputs.

The second case study centres on the research of Professor Douwe Korff, who regularly works with Dr Ian Brown, Associate Director of Oxford University's Cyber Security Centre, and Senior Research Fellow at the Oxford Internet Institute. Their research focus is on *meeting society's* needs through [a] socially responsible agenda. Their research, mainly on the policies of the EU and the Council of Europe relating to the Internet, highlights a cutting-edge, controversial and contentious issue: the relationship between ubiquitous computing, and social media, and their often unclear legal position. Their research is of great interest to UK and European governments, as well as to pan-European political movements, including: the Greens and the European Free Alliance, and various NGOs, including: the Centre for Public Reform. Finally, in the context of his work with the Advisory Council of the Foundation for Information Policy Research (FIPR), the leading think tank on information policy issues in the UK (see [www.fipr.org](http://www.fipr.org)), Professor Korff further demonstrates commitment to a socially responsible agenda, via major studies for, *inter alia*, the UK Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust