

Institution: University of Sunderland

Unit of Assessment: 20

a. Context

The Law Unit of Assessment sits within the Faculty of Business and Law, and the research undertaken by all members of the law unit is undertaken within the context of providing impact as part of a civic university actively contributing to the social, political and economic development of the region. Law at the University of Sunderland explicitly encourages impact through engagement with a range of stakeholders through a diverse portfolio of community and third-sector groups. Specifically, individuals within the Unit will seek to influence, shape and define external impact, or can be through collaborative projects working with external academics and other groups (such as the Law Commission, Transparency International, Standards for England, the International Institute for Space Law, and the Institute for Local Government).

b. Approach to impact

The strategic approach taken has been to align staff research interests with research projects and thus seeking to develop research with impact under the umbrella of the International Centre for Research into Innovation, Sustainability and Enterprise (RISE), and specifically the Law Cluster centered around research into Criminal Justice, Anti Corruption and Public and Private International Law. Research seminars and other research events are used as a mechanism to provide opportunities for dissemination to external partners and stakeholders.

Embedding Impact In Research

In addition to the above, individuals actively consider impact as part of their annual research review and rolling research plan, ensuring that a holistic unit wide approach to impact can be explored, and that individuals are encouraged and supported through collaborative internal partnerships to seek out and exploit appropriate impact opportunities. Research bids are actively examined for research opportunities and external impact synergies that may underpin, support and/or be generated by such funding opportunities.

Impact and Partnerships

These events, together with positive engagement through other appropriate networking and social fora enable law research staff to regularly provide informal and formal support and guidance to a range of external characters, including the Police, regional and national charities, the NHS, sexual-health groups, legal practitioners (a mixture of paralegals/legal executives, solicitors, and barristers) alongside the judiciary, Parliament and Government. The Law Unit of Assessment has established close and effective partnerships with other academic institutions, working on both a national and international canvas, with external stakeholders to further embed impact at the heart of our activities. Two key partnerships have been established within this context:

1. **Dr Christopher J. Newman**, Law Cluster Leader has worked as legal adviser on projects funded by Standards for England and Transparency International. Both of these projects were in collaboration with **Dr Michael Macaulay**, Associate Professor in Public Management at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, and a Visiting Professor within the Faculty of Business and Law, and Dr Gary Hickey, employed by the Council of Europe. As a result of this, the Law Unit of Assessment are submitting two impact case studies, clustered around the theme of public integrity and anti-corruption. The Faculty has a reputation for its work on transnational crime (e.g. terrorism; organised crime) and the two case studies drew on its expertise in bringing together several of these threads into two major institutional analyses. By being involved in this project, individuals within the Law Unit have ensured that the legal research has impact as an underpinning element.
2. **Ben Livings**, a member of the Law Cluster, has worked in collaboration with colleagues at Northumbria University on Mental Disorder and Criminal Justice Conference 2013.

This conference examined the interface of scientific and legal conceptions of mental disorder and the role and function of the criminal justice system in responding to this distinct category of defendants. The conference was arranged against the backdrop of the Law Commission considering the Insanity and Automatism defences, and brought together leading national and international experts in the field to discuss the medico-legal constructs. The nature of the conference ensured that there was impact in respect of informing the Law Commission and practitioners working in this area. The event was jointly hosted by the Universities of Northumbria and Sunderland and illustrates the collaborative nature of research undertaken within the Unit and as a result, the conference proceedings led to a joint authored response to the Law Commission and a two part article in the Criminal Law and Justice Weekly which fed into the Law Commission's recent Discussion Paper on this topic.

External Stakeholders and Embedded Impact

As can be seen, the main orientation of research collaboration within the Unit has been the generation of impact within the context of inter-institutional partnerships, under the umbrella of third sector and public sector bodies. The appointment of two visiting Professors within the Unit further illustrates the desire to imbue all relationships and research projects with impact. Similarly, the Unit places a significant emphasis on ensuring that research is disseminated beyond the confines of the academic community. This is done by means of "Research Fairs" whereby individuals from industry, third sector organisations and the wider community are invited to attend research seminars by members of the Unit. These seminars are intended to serve as a two-way knowledge transfer. The most recent of these seminars included Visiting Professor, Michael Macaulay presenting a discussion "Does the UK have a problem with corruption?" This discussion amongst academics and non-academics highlighted the work done within the department on anti-corruption and showcased optimal solutions for those within local government and the wider community.

c. Strategy and plans

The University of Sunderland recognises the significance of applied research, knowledge transfer partnerships and collaboration on both a national and international level. The Law Unit of Assessment retains a commitment to embedding impact at the heart of all forthcoming research activity. There is, therefore a clear strategic plan within the Unit for ensuring that impact is maximized over them. Specifically, there will be three points of reference for all research conducted within the Unit to ensure that research has impact. The first of these points will be at the outset of the research, the next will be ongoing monitoring during the research and the final aspect of the strategy will be ensuring that the impact from the research has been fully maximised and the work has been disseminated beyond the academic community. Appropriate levels of institutional support at both a faculty and central level within the University will underpin this strategy.

Impact at the outset of Research: All research undertaken within the Unit will require an explicit statement to confirm there is stakeholder support and a clear, identifiable point of impact for the research. Such a statement will be contained within individual research plans to ensure adequate support can be provided in respect of work-loading, access to central university resources, such as the Business Services team which has integrated support provided by knowledge transfer professionals who can advise those within the Unit as to how best to integrate impact within the design concept of their research.

Monitoring Research to Maximise Impact: Central to the research strategy will be an on-going process of gathering feedback to ensure that research impact is both measured and recorded. Throughout the research process there will be explicit monitoring of beneficiaries and gaining feedback from these as to the usefulness of research (or not) through ongoing external engagement. The Law Unit plans to deploy a mixture of traditional face-to-face and old media forums combined with increased use of innovative new technologies to encourage as wide as possible a reach for research activity. In addition, a number of colleagues (particularly Newman, Livings and Middleton) have made use of social media and blogs to distribute key research output findings, further influence debate and engage with a diverse range of stakeholders. Engagement with the more traditional print and broadcast media will continue. This will build on the experience of

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colleagues have been quoted and cited as appropriate experts in a range of national and international media, including: The New York Times, The Guardian (London), Sky TV, and the BBC Radio Four 'Today' Programme.

Promulgating Research and Consolidating Impact: All research findings and outputs published by members of the Unit are regularly shared with legal practitioners and other external stakeholders to inform wider policy and legal debates. In addition, as previously adumbrated, there is an ongoing programme of research fairs to promote the research skills offered within the Unit. Additionally, members of the Unit provide representation on the University Research and Innovation Committee, the Faculty Research Committee, and Academic Board to ensure that impact continues to be embedded within the strategic and operational framework at an institutional and faculty level.

Supporting Collaborative Working: The Law Unit of assessment will continue to adopt an inclusive approach to research and encourage academic staff to become engaged in collaborative research activity. Experienced collaborative researchers will undertake a mentorship role to assist colleagues who wish to become involved in collaborative work. Additional encouragement will be in the form of institutional support via the comprehensive workload model that will ensure that research-active staff are given sufficient time to engage in collaborative research. There will also be support provided in the form of funding through the RISE International Research Centre to ensure sufficient resources are provided to facilitate such collaboration. It is recognised that research within the Unit is expected to enhance the curriculum of the Law taught programmes at both undergraduate (LLB) and postgraduate (LLM) levels, thereby emboldening staff to engage in impact intensive research for the benefit of all stakeholders and students.

d. Relationship to case studies

The case studies submitted by the Law Unit of Assessment, taken together, represent the most comprehensive body of work on UK public integrity systems undertaken thus far by any research team. The impact of the case studies have relevance within the context of national, policy-making and international impact regarding the UK corruption index as collated by Transparency International.

Synergistic nature of the Case Studies

The first case centres on research into the UK's National Integrity System (NIS); the second case looks at work on the various Local Integrity Systems (LIS) within England, Scotland and Wales. Both cases were commissioned independently and each has resulted in academic publications in peer-reviewed journals and presentation at the European Group of Public Administration (EGPA) 2013 conference in Edinburgh by Dr Christopher Newman and Dr Michael Macaulay.

Collaboration leading to Impact

The case studies were the result of collaboration, not only in respect of inter-institutional relationships, but also along inter-disciplinary lines. The collaboration on the two case studies led to the appointment of Dr. Michael Macaulay as a Visiting Professor within the Law Unit of Assessment, emphasising the commitment to impact-laden research and also enhancing the overall research environment.

The two case studies illustrate the support for impact as stated above. This has included opportunities for staff to engage with user bodies and partners through both case studies. Socio-legal engagement, doctrinal law in action and practitioner-focused impact are both strongly encouraged. Again, the case studies illustrate how colleagues within the Unit are actively encouraged and supported in external engagement, not only within the confines of the legal profession but also in the wider policy making, policy implementation and policy stakeholder groups.