

<p>Institution: University of Liverpool</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 20 - Law</p>
<p>a. Context</p>
<p>The Department's research strategy includes our commitment to the pursuit of socially relevant legal scholarship, closely linked to our identity as part of the School of Law and Social Justice. Our research has engaged directly with a broad range of audiences beyond the purely academic: from legal practitioners and third sector organisations, to policymakers and legislators. The types of impact achieved are equally far-reaching and varied, directly informing legislative and policy developments at regional, national and international level, shaping procedural and institutional reforms, and informing judicial proceedings. Our six Research Clusters are crucial in supporting the building of external partnerships, providing a platform for knowledge exchange, and coordinating timely responses to current legal and policy developments.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p>
<p>Pursuing work of relevance and value to a wide audience, in a way that responds to current priorities and concerns, has been integral to the Department's social justice agenda during the current REF period. This has been promoted by 3 main methods:</p>
<p>1) Building and deepening partnerships with a variety of external stakeholders. Many staff act as members of or advisors to a diverse range of external bodies (see REF5e). Moreover, our Research Clusters secure end-user input for their own activities: e.g. Charity Unit's Steering Group (which determines research priorities) includes 3 senior charity law practitioners (Mummery LJ among them); e.g. Children's Unit maintains formal associations with NGOs such as UK charity "Investing in Children" and European network "Eurochild". Various funded research activities have been conducted in direct collaboration with policy actors: e.g. EU Unit's events with the European Commission Representation in the UK on the Single Market (2009) and Citizens' Initiative (2011).</p>
<p>2) Strategic dissemination of research findings through KE events. As well as hosting major conferences interfacing law and practice (e.g. BILETA in 2013), the Department frequently organises events targeted at broader audiences, especially policy actors, tackling contemporary controversies: e.g. on the "British Jobs for British Workers" strikes (2009); e.g. on the Syria conflict and international law (2013). The Charity Unit and Children's Unit each mould their annual seminar series around scholarly topics that will also appeal to legal practitioners, social services and civil society: e.g. Children's Unit 2010 colloquium provided evidence-based insights into the UK's poor performance on the UNICEF child well-being index, with the participation of MPs and the OECD.</p>
<p>3) Active engagement with external end-users through participation in public consultations. In addition to our case studies, many other written and/or oral evidence submissions to public authorities have been cited in the relevant final reports: e.g. Currie by the Lords' Committee on the future of EU enlargement (2012); Cengiz by the Commons' Foreign Affairs Committee on UK-Turkey relations (2012); Thompson by the Commons' Communities and Local Government Committee on the Local Government Ombudsman (2012); Gordon and Thompson by the Commons' Political and Constitutional Reform Committee on the need for a UK Constitutional Convention (2013); Dougan in HM Government's Internal Market Synoptic Report on the EU-UK balance of competences (2013). Staff have also acted as expert witnesses: e.g. Gibson on legal and faith-related matters in a Rastafarian cannabis use criminal case (2010). We recognise the value of digital media as a means of sharing research insights with a large and diverse audience. With this in mind, staff regularly contribute to online research and policy for: e.g. Gordon on UK Constitutional Law Group Blog; e.g. Cengiz on Open Democracy Blog.</p>
<p>As well as fostering impact at the national and international levels, the Department has engaged with local stakeholders with a view to understanding and responding better to the needs of Liverpool. The Law School Advisory Board was established in 2009 to improve dialogue with legal practitioners in the City-Region. Our bi-annual Newsletter is circulated to over 800 external readers, providing details of recent and upcoming research projects of particular relevance to</p>

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practitioners. In 2012 and 2013, the Department secured full funding from a local charitable trust to create our Hodgson Doctoral Scholarships, supporting research projects that combine scholarly importance with local impact through end-user engagement: e.g. Waite (commenced 2013) will work with practitioners through the Liverpool Law Society to address the impact of legal aid cuts on access to justice. Promising research-based partnerships have also been initiated with other organisations in Liverpool, e.g. as with Human Rights Unit and the International Slavery Museum, based on their joint conference on critical approaches to international criminal law (2012).

The mechanisms put in place by the Department to support research have actively fostered such endeavours. Staff are encouraged to use **research allowances** for impact-related work: e.g. Cengiz undertook field trips to Istanbul to build NGO networks linked to her work on the situation of Kurdish LGBT (2013). **Research mentors** provide support to ECRs in developing their own policy-based external collaborations, e.g. as with Farrell's work on State Security in China, commissioned on behalf of the European Commission (2013). **PGR training** now includes a dedicated session on "understanding the impact agenda", encouraging emergent scholars to realise public benefit from their work. The Department draws on **University initiatives to stimulate research-based impact work**. Central resources support cross-cutting research themes of pressing social relevance: e.g. Governance Unit's seminar on renewable energy and international economic law (2012), including participants from the Department of Energy, OECD and UNCTAD, was funded by Liverpool's "Living with Environmental Change" programme. The University also runs an annual competition to fund research that fosters new external relationships: e.g. Charity Unit won £5K (2013) to collaborate with Liverpool Specialist Advice Services on the impact of legal aid reforms upon charities, generating considerable media debate and endorsed by the Liverpool Law Society's "access to justice" campaign. The Department also recognises the importance of **external funding** in realising impact and fully supports staff in that regard (see REF5d). E.g. Thompson's funded work on administrative justice has directly influenced legislative reform proposals in Northern Ireland: the public consultation papers on ombudsmen (2010) and tribunal reform (2013) each drew significantly upon Thompson's joint research – the former based on a £75K ESRC grant with Thompson as PI, the latter based on collaboration in a major Nuffield Foundation-funded project.

c. Strategy and plans

The Department's future strategy is founded on two core objectives. **1) To further embed impact-related considerations within daily academic life:** promoting the social relevance of our research is a responsibility shared by all staff, and will form part of the conceptualisation of any major project, whilst also consciously informing plans for broader academic activities. **2) To support staff in identifying and pursuing opportunities for realising the potential impact of their research:** not only by encouraging staff to achieve impact in a direct and targeted manner, e.g. by funded consultancies and responses to public consultations; but also through engaging stakeholders in research design, through more active external profile-raising, and through adapting and disseminating research findings to different audiences.

To those ends, the Department plans to **mainstream impact firmly within its core activities**. Impact now forms an **explicit part of annual research planning** and staff will be expected to discuss projected impact plans in all research leave applications. Indeed, impact achievements are now recognised and rewarded in the University's annual review processes for career progression. **Impact also informs decisions around recruitment:** we are keen to appoint new colleagues with experience in major impact projects and able to share best practice, e.g. Garde was appointed as Chair in 2013, with extensive impact experience relating to the prevention of non-communicable diseases; her plans for new projects with key European policy actors and the World Health Organisation have been awarded pump-prime funding through the annual University competition.

The **Research Clusters** also play a central role in our strategy to maximise the impact potential of our research. Each cluster must now detail dissemination and external engagement plans in their annual reports. Staff are encouraged to be ambitious in their collaborative plans and to build upon links already forged: e.g. EU Unit has begun formally to coordinate joint staff responses to a wide range of public consultations under the Government's ongoing Review of the Balance of Competences between the UK and the EU (2013-14); the Unit is also developing plans for funded

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activities both evaluating the eventual outcome of that Review and contributing to the subsequent public debate about the UK's future place within the EU (2014-15); e.g. Children's Unit will deepen its existing links with the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNICEF through a range of research and KE events on the theme of "European responses to global children's rights issues" (2014-2015). To supplement the Research Clusters' activities, the Department recently launched a **series of impact workshops** (2013-14) based upon presentations by key external stakeholders: e.g. officials from BIS and DWP in March 2013, with future speakers confirmed from the Ministry of Justice, the Houses of Parliament and major NGOs. Those workshops will enable staff and PGRs to engage in intimate discussions with key policymakers on how to achieve a more impactful approach to academic research, and to explore future avenues for collaborative investment, e.g. based upon co-hosted seminars and exchange internships.

In addition, the Department **plans to invest further in and expand our Liverpool-based partnerships**. First, the Department is keen to participate in **University initiatives** focused on creating collaborative opportunities for significant impact: consider the new Heseltine Institute for Public Policy and Practice, whose policy-based research themes the Department is playing a leading role in developing, e.g. as when Charity Unit organised the 2013 external workshop on "The Future of the Third Sector". Secondly, the Department is determined to realise greater impact with and for our **local community**. E.g. building on our existing (education-based) relationships with the Liverpool Football Club Foundation and the Premier League, Children's Unit is now planning a major collaborative study on child migration in the context of elite sports. Similarly, the Department has invested considerably in the staffing and premises of our pro bono Law Clinic, including the development of a dedicated asylum and immigration advice service for Merseyside. This initiative will enrich the research and impact opportunities for staff in the EU, Charity, Human Rights and Children's Units. That potential can already be seen in a £40K donation from a charitable trust (Sept 2013) to support a two-year research-led advice service on statelessness (endorsed by the UNHCR and Asylum Aid), including academic support for strategic litigation.

d. Relationship to case studies

Our case studies illustrate how the Department's approach has supported research with far-reaching and diverse impacts. The **Charity Unit's** study was the product of long term engagement with key sectoral stakeholders, leaving staff well positioned to promote the social impact of their research in response to new policy developments. The **Children's Unit** study was born from a targeted funding call by a European agency, to create novel research methodologies of direct practical application, but also drew upon an international network of established stakeholder relationships. The **EU Unit's** study was more serendipitous, insofar as existing research caught the attention of key policy actors; but it too involved important elements of proactivity, through focused responses to public consultations. Each pathway to impact is equally valuable, though each received tailored support: e.g. EU Unit seminars allowed Dougan and Gordon to test their written evidence before submission to Parliament; the Department financially supported all relevant trips to London; Dougan also received University training before giving oral evidence at the Commons.

Our case studies also illustrate how **the entire breadth of the Department's activity is capable of producing public benefit**. The potential for legal impact is neither a matter of chance judicial citation, nor a monopoly reserved for empirical researchers. As the EU study demonstrates, even doctrinal/conceptual work can be promoted to external actors in a way that responds to a pressing public need. Moreover, the case studies have taught us invaluable lessons about the process of **incorporating impact into our research strategies**, e.g. achieving social relevance is easier when integrated into research projects from conception; new collaborations lay the foundation for long term relationships based upon a reputation for objective expertise. In particular, **pairing ECRs with more established colleagues** in genuine collaborations was central to the success of the EU and Children's Unit studies, benefiting ECR career development and building new capacity, e.g. Gordon has since submitted sole-authored written evidence to the Commons' Political and Constitutional Reform Committee on House of Lords reform (now cited repeatedly in its final 2013 report). Those experiences have informed our strategy of **mainstreaming "impact thinking"** into doctoral training, staff and cluster research planning, and professional development reviews.